

WAR AND POLITICS IN MID-19TH CENTURY SIAM AND BURMA: THE HISTORICAL
CONTEXT OF THE CHIANG TUNG WARS

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies
(Interdisciplinary Program)
Graduate School
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2011
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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)
เป็นแฟ้มข้อมูลของนิสิตเจ้าของวิทยานิพนธ์ที่ส่งผ่านทางบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย

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สงครามและการเมืองในสยามและพม่ากลางศตวรรษที่ 19:
บริบททางประวัติศาสตร์ของศึกเชียงตุง

นายจอห์น สเตอริง ฟอริชเซ็น สมิธ

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)
บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
ปีการศึกษา 2555
ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

Thesis Title WAR AND POLITICS IN MID-19TH CENTURY SIAM AND
 BURMA: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHIANG
 TUNG WARS
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Field of Study Southeast Asian Studies
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จอห์น สเตอร์ลิง พอร์ซเซิน สมิธ : สงครามและการเมืองในสยามและพม่ากลางศตวรรษที่ 19 :
บริบททางประวัติศาสตร์ของศึกเชียงตุง. (WAR AND POLITICS IN MID-19TH CENTURY
SIAM AND BURMA: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHIANG TUNG WARS)
อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: รศ.ดร. สุเนตร ชุตินธรานนท์, 248 หน้า.

งานวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นการศึกษาศึกเชียงตุง ซึ่งเป็นเรื่องราวของความขัดแย้งที่เกิดขึ้นใน
ดินแดนภายใต้การปกครองของชาวไทเหนือแม่น้ำโขงและล้านนาระหว่างปีคริสต์ศักราช 1802 ถึง
1854 ตลอดจนนัยยะสำคัญทางประวัติศาสตร์ภายใต้การปกครองของชาวไท โดยที่มาของความ
ขัดแย้งครั้งนี้ สามารถแบ่งได้เป็นสามประการ ได้แก่ การฟื้นฟูการปกครองของล้านนา, ราชวงศ์และ
การเมืองของสิบสองปันนา และการแข่งขันทางการเมืองการทหารระหว่างสยามกับพม่าที่ยาวนาน
โดยใช้ข้อมูลทั้งจากไท พม่า และสยาม ตลอดจนข้อมูลจากชาติตะวันตก. งานวิทยานิพนธ์นี้ได้ตาม
รอยความสัมพันธ์ของดินแดนต่างๆ ภายใต้การปกครองของไทย ตลอดจนดินแดนที่อยู่ภายใต้การ
ปกครองและอำนาจสยาม พม่า จีน และอาณานิคมของอังกฤษ ในช่วงเวลาของความขัดแย้งดังกล่าว
โดยในศึกเชียงตุงครั้งสุดท้ายระหว่างปีคริสต์ศักราช 1852 ถึง 1854 เกิดจากความขัดแย้งโดยตรง
ระหว่างสยามกับพม่าในช่วงศตวรรษที่ 19 ซึ่งนับเป็นจุดเปลี่ยนสำคัญทางด้านนโยบายของสยาม
เกี่ยวกับอาณาเขตการปกครอง ทั้งนี้ ผู้ปกครองของทั้งสยามและพม่าต่างพยายามขยายและรวบรวม
อาณาเขตทางอำนาจของตน ซึ่งต่อสู้กันอย่างอ้อมๆ กับความแข็งแกร่งของอังกฤษที่เพิ่มขึ้น

สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

ปีการศึกษา: 2011..

ลายมือชื่อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก

5387645920: MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

KEYWORDS: BURMA / NORTHERN THAILAND / SHAN STATE / TAI HISTORY /
SIPSONGPANNA

JOHN STERLING FORSSEN SMITH: WAR AND POLITICS IN MID-19TH CENTURY
SIAM AND BURMA: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHIANG TUNG WARS.
ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. SUNAIT CHUTINTARANOND, Ph.D., 248 pp.

This paper examines the Chiang Tung wars, a series of conflicts that occurred in the Tai principalities of the upper Mekong and Lan Na from 1802 to 1854, and demonstrates their significance within the 19th century history of the Tai principalities. These conflicts had their origins in three regional conflicts, namely, the restoration of the principalities of Lan Na, the dynastic politics of the Sipsongpanna, and the long political and military rivalry of Siam and Burma. Making use of Tai, Burmese, and Siamese as well as western sources, this paper traces the relations between the Tai principalities, as well as between the individual principalities and the regional powers of Siam, Burma, China, and the British Tennasserim, over the course of the conflict. The final Chiang Tung War, fought from 1852 to 1854, was the only direct conflict between Siamese and Burmese forces in the 19th century, and marked a turning point in Siam's policy towards its tributaries, with the Siamese and Burmese rulers campaigning to, respectively, expand and consolidate their political domains, in indirect competition with the increasingly aggressive British.

Field of study: Southeast Asian Studies

Student's signature.....

Academic Year: 2011

Advisor's signature.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All Thai sources referenced in this work were translated for the author by Ms. Sirinya Siriyannun. Without her assistance, this thesis would not have been possible.

Special thanks to my thesis committee, whose support, encouragement, and constructive criticism were invaluable in completing this work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the 19th century, a series of conflicts occurred between the Tai Khoen principalities of Chiang Tung^{*}, and the principalities constituting modern day northern Thailand and Laos. These conflicts began at the start of the century, with an invasion of Chiang Tung by the forces of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang in 1802. They escalated following the fall of Chiang Saen and the final removal of Burmese influence over the Lan Na^{**} region in 1804. From 1808 to 1812, the conflict intensified, with the forces of the Lan Na principalities fighting yearly campaigns against the Burmese in the Chiang Tung region, in support of Cao Mahakhanan, the youngest son of the ruler of Chiang Tung. The defeat of Cao Mahakhanan's allies in 1812 led to Cao Mahakhanan's switch of loyalty to the Burmese, and when hostilities again flared in the Chiang Tung region, in 1849, the forces of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang fought against those of Cao Mahakhanan, then the ruler of Chiang Tung. The conflict continued to escalate, and from 1852 to 1854, Siamese forces from Bangkok, commanded by Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit, the younger brother of the newly

*

For the sake of this paper, I have attempted to romanize the names of Tai places as consistently as possible. Therefore, I will use Chiang Tung rather than Kengtung or Kyaingeton, and Chiang Rung, instead of Jinghong.

**

Lan Na is the traditional name for the Tai regions associated with the successive kingdoms centered in the basins of the Ping River at Lamphun and Chiang Mai, and the Kok River at Chiang Saen and Chiang Rai. For the sake of this paper, it will refer to the principalities of the four river valleys that feed the Chao Phraya, as well as the associated Mekong tributaries which today form part of northern Thailand. Justification for this terminology will be provided in Chapter 2.

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crowned King Mongkut, conducted an extended campaign against Chiang Tung, supported by the majority of Bangkok's Tai vassals. Burmese involvement, reduced due to the Second Anglo-

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Burmese War, was resumed in 1853, and the conflict reached a peak with a massive, protracted, and violent campaign in 1854, which lasted well into the rainy season and caused devastating casualties to the Siamese. Following the conclusion of the 1854 campaign, King Mongkut opted to terminate hostilities with Chiang Tung, and it was relations with the western powers which dominated Siamese policy for the remainder of the century.

The Chiang Tung Wars, however, did not occur on their own, and were themselves a part of a large series of conflicts, dating back to the 18th century. These conflicts began with the rise of the Konbaung Dynasty of Burma, and the ensuing wars between Burma and Siam, as well as the concurrent Sino-

Burmese border wars. Although Burma was successful in both of these conflicts, destroying Ayutthaya and repelling multiple Chinese invasions, the Tai principalities, all of which were, at the time, loyal to Burma, were devastated, and in some places lost their entire population to Burmese conscription. Lan Na

was, arguably, the hardest hit region of all, with Chiang Mai and Lamphun forcefully seized and depopulated by the Burmese, and with large-

scale conscription efforts conducted in Lampang, Phrae, and Nan. Following the fall of Ayutthay

a, the Tai leaders of Lan Na thus switched their allegiance to Siam, supporting the efforts of King Taksin of Thonburi^{*} to wrest the region from the control of the Burmese, and, for the first time in history, to place it under the suzerainty of a coastal Siamese power. The ensuing policy of King Taksin and his successor, King Rama I of Rattanakosin^{**}, was the support and protection of the Tai principalities of Lan Na, in order to create a strong defensive buffer against future incursions by the Burmese. As the principalities of Lan Na regained their footing, they began to conduct a series of campaigns into the neighboring territories to gather population, through a combination of persuasion, diplomacy, and force, to participate in the cultivation and defense of the principalities. These campaigns escalated significantly towards the start of the 19th century, and in 1802, the first expedition against Chiang Tung occurred, followed by the fall of Chiang Saen, the termination of Burmese involvement in Lan Na, and the start of a series of large-scale expeditions against the relatively populous *muang* of the Sipsongpanna. This extensive campaigning allowed the Lan Na principalities to bolster their population and create relatively large spheres of influence, but at the cost of the depopulation of those regions in which the campaigns occurred. In short, the Tai principalities of Lan Na regained their power and influence using similar strategies to those which the Burmese had used against them previously.

* Thonburi, on the western bank of the Chao Phraya River across from modern-day Bangkok, was the capital of Siam under Taksin from 1767 until 1782.

** Rattanakosin is the island in the Chao Phraya River which forms the nucleus of the modern-day city of Bangkok, and which has served as the seat of power of the reigning Chakri Dynasty since the time of its founder, Rama I.

While the vicissitudes of the late 18th century ultimately resulted in the strengthening of the principalities of Lan Na, the same cannot be said for those of the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna*. During the Sino-Burmese border conflicts of the 1760s, Chiang Tung was abandoned multiple times, having already suffered from extensive civil war in the early 18th century, and sporadic war with the Tai Lu of the Sipsongpanna occurred for the remainder of the reigning prince Cao Muang Sam's long reign. By the time that the Lan Na forces came to Chiang Tung for the first time in 1802, Chiang Tung was a weak and stagnant principality, unable to resist the inroads of its southern neighbors. The Sipsongpanna, by contrast, experienced far more devastating long-term consequences of the Sino-Burmese war, both for the stability of the region's principalities, and for the Tai region in general. Their troubles began with the deposition of the reigning Saenwifa** of Chiang Rung by the Chinese in 1767, and the eventual deposition of his successor in 1773. Burmese efforts to exert influence over the affairs of the Sipsongpanna led to a crisis in 1796, when the Burmese and the Chinese both nominated separate candidates for the throne of Chiang Rung, thus beginning the first of several succession crises which would periodically escalate into actual violence. These conflicts, although of an ostensibly separate origin, were intrinsically linked to those which occurred in the Chiang Tung region, and the forces of both Chiang Tung and the Lan Na principalities occasionally interv

* The Chiang Tung region refers to the Tai-inhabited highlands between the Mekong and the Salween and north of Lan Na, while the Sipsongpanna refers to the coalition of Tai states centered around Chiang Rung on the Mekong, in the far southwest of modern-day China.

** Saenwifa, which will be discussed further below, is a title of Chinese origin and was customarily given to the ruler of Chiang Rung and the Sipsongpanna.

ened in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna. It was the effort of one faction in one of these crises to gain a third suzerain that would eventually involve Siam and trigger the conflicts of 1849 and 1852-1854.

All these events took place against the backdrop of a changing world. By the end of the 18th century, the British had become the dominant power in India, and had established minor footholds throughout Southeast Asia. By the end of the 19th century, the entire region, with the exception of those lands controlled by the Siamese and the Chinese, would fall under the rule of European colonialism. In 1825, during the First Anglo-

Burmese War, the British invaded the Tennesseim coastal region in the south of Burma, and in the following year, with the Treaty of Yandabo, formally annexed their conquests, thus joining the Burmese, Siamese, and Chinese as the fourth major power in the vicinity of the Tai principalities. The British changed Southeast Asian politics by demanding firm delineation of boundaries, and absolute territorial control, rejecting indigenous concepts of tributary relations and shared suzerainty. In the long run, this forced the Siamese and the Burmese, whose territory now bordered directly that of the British, to reconsider the political constitution of their extended empires, and to exert tighter and less ambiguous control over the frontier regions. In the short run, although the autonomy of the Tai principalities would remain strong, the interests of the Siamese and the Burmese in the affairs of their most far-

flung tributaries would gradually intensify. Although this intensification of interest cannot be said to have been the cause of the Chiang Tung wars, it certainly influenced the way in which the later w

ars were fought. The final Chiang Tung war of the 19th century was a conflict unlike any previously, in which Siamese and Burmese forces clashed in a region far from the central realms of either Siam or Burma. Whereas the earlier conflicts had largely been the affair of the Tai principalities, and had been fought more for political influence and manpower than for territorial gain, King Mongkut of Siam and King Mindon of Burma fought an unprecedented battle in the final Chiang Tung War, with the former attempting to capitalize on a Burma weakened by the assaults of the British and extend Siamese military influence farther north than at any point in the past, while the latter sought to demonstrate his kingdom's strength and to protect the regions which remained under his control following the cession of the entire coast to the British after the Second Anglo-Burmese War. Thus, although concrete borders did not yet form a major concern in the relations between Siam and Burma, the final Chiang Tung War can be seen as a conflict in which territory was beginning to hold an increasingly intrinsic strategic value, and in which the land itself was being fought for to the same degree as the loyalty of the population that held the land. In this sense, the final Chiang Tung War was a modern conflict of the colonial period, and foreshadowed the later drawing of national and colonial boundaries throughout Southeast Asia.

1.1 Defining the Chiang Tung Wars

The Chiang Tung Wars are conventionally discussed as a series of three, or, occasionally, four separate conflicts. Of these, three are numbered, with the First Chiang Tung War denoting the invasion

ion of Chiang Tung by Lan Nain 1849, while the Second Chiang Tung War and the Third Chiang Tung War refer to the two major campaigns of the Siamese invasion, respectively, the campaign of 1852, and the campaign of 1854. This approach was pioneered by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, who categorizes three Chiang Tung Wars, with the first occurring in the reign of King Rama III, and the second and third in the reign of King Mongkut¹. This approach has since been adopted by a number of historians, for example, Sarassawadee² and Wyatt³. These three Chiang Tung Wars are conventionally linked with the Siamese invasion of Chiang Tung during World War 2, as for example, by Sarassawadee. The earlier war of Lan Nain in the Chiang Tung region are rarely discussed, and if discussed, are mentioned as a background to the conflict, rather than as part of the conflict itself, as in Sarassawadee. There are a number of problems with this approach. For one, rather than three wars, only two wars occurred between 1849 and 1854. Between 1852 and 1854, the army raised for the so-called Second Chiang Tung War did not disband or return to Bangkok, and indeed, recruitment efforts continued for the following year. Also, this approach draws attention away from the larger conflict between Lan Na and Chiang Tung, and between Siam and Burma, dating back to before the fall of Ayutthaya. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the approach which portrays a single Chiang Tung War, conducted between 1852 and 1854, to which the 1849 expedition to Lan Na was

¹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1919), Pages 735-62.

²Sarassawadee Oongsakul, A History of Lan Na, trans. Chitraporn Tanratanakul (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005), Pages 157-66.

³David K. Wyatt, Thailand: A Short History (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004), Page 182.

mply a prelude. This approach dates back to Chaophraya Thiphakorawong⁴, who, dividing his narrative by reign, portrayed the final Chiang Tung war as a single, albeit interrupted conflict. While the three wars approach tend to be favored by Thai historians, the new war approach was adopted in the earliest western studies, and has been used, for example, by Brailey⁵ and Terwiel⁶. The earlier series of conflicts in the Chiang Tung region are not normally categorized along with the Chiang Tung Wars of the mid-19th century, even though it was these conflicts which set the stage for their outbreak, and even though the conflicts of both periods shared many characteristics. Rather than being categorized along with the later Chiang Tung Wars, the early Chiang Tung Wars are usually considered as part of the restoration of Siam under Rama I or the restoration of Lan Na under Cao Kavila. This is, for example, the approach taken by Wyatt⁷ and Sarassawadee⁸. Indeed, this approach dates back to the events themselves, and 19th century Thai historians such as Saenluang Ratchasomphan⁹ and the anonymous author of the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*'s Hans Penth version¹⁰ offer detailed accounts of the early Chiang Tung Wars as a component of larger essays recounting the restoration of their

⁴Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, the Fourth Reign, BE 2394-2411, trans. Chadin Flood (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965).

⁵Nigel J. Brailey, "The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Laos" Doctoral dissertation, School of Asian Studies, University of London, 1968, Pages 89-109.

⁶B.J. Terwiel, Thailand's Political History: From the 13th Century to Recent Times (Bangkok: River Books, 2011), Pages 152-3.

⁷Wyatt, Thailand, Pages 155-6.

⁸Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Pages 129-154.

⁹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, trans. David K. Wyatt (Ithaca: Southeast Asian Studies Program, 1994), Pages 118-9.

¹⁰David K. Wyatt and Aroonrut Wichienkeo, trans., The Chiang Mai Chronicle, (Chiang Mai: Silk Worm Books, 1998), Pages 174-194.

espective principalities. Indeed, these may be considered the first historians to discuss the early Chiang Tung Wars, and their analysis remains influential to this day.

The approach illustrated above is very suitable for a study of the Chiang Tung War that forms part of a larger work on a larger theme. Brailey and Wilson¹¹ both discuss the later Chiang Tung Wars as part of a larger process, with Brailey demonstrating quite effectively the negative impact which the Chiang Tung War had on the long-

term relations between Bangkok and Lan Na, and Wilson using the war to demonstrate how out of touch the Bangkok leadership was with that of Lan Na. The later Chiang Tung Wars also receive a non-obligatory mention in most general overviews of 19th century Thai history, Lan Na history, or Shan history, and their presence is felt in many focused studies as well. They receive a paragraph in Wyatt, a page in Terwiel, and a chapter in Sarassawadee, which places the Chiang Tung wars into the context of Lan Na history, describing the long-

standing plans for a Thai attack on Chiang Tung, and linking the conflict with the Thai invasion of Chiang Tung almost a century later, during World War 2. Vella¹² briefly mentions the 1849 war as one of the few events of significance occurring in the Tai Yuan principalities during the Third Reign. Yawng hwe¹³ suggests that the later Chiang Tung

Wars boosted the confidence of rebellious factions amongst the Shan, citing the example of

¹¹ Constance M. Wilson, "State and Society in the Reign of King Mongkut, 1851-1868: Thailand on the Eve of Modernization", Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Graduate School, Cornell University, 1971.

¹² Walter Vella, *Siam Under Rama III, 1824-1851* (Locust Valley: J.J. Augustin, 1957), Pages 92-3.

¹³ Cao Tzang Yawng hwe, *The Shans of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan Exile* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 1987).

the warrior Sang

Hai, who fought at Chiang Tung, and later renewed the rebellion in Hsenwi. Grabowsky and Renoo¹⁴ discuss the impact of both the earlier “Wars of Kavila”

and the later Chiang Tung Wars on the political situation in Chiang Khaeng in the early and mid 19th century, mentioning the massive depopulation, as well as its eventual vassalage to Chiang Tung following the latter's expansion of power following the final Chiang Tung War. Prince Damrong, the pioneer of the historical study of the later Chiang Tung Wars, lists the three Chiang Tung Wars, as enumerated above, as collectively constituting the final Siamese-

Burmese War, and the 10th such war of the Rattanakosin period. Of the above studies, all of which discuss the later Chiang Tung Wars as part of a historical process, some focus on the wars as they relate to the relations between the regional powers, such as Siam and Burma, and the Tai principalities, while some focus on the relations between the Tai principalities themselves. Of the former category fall Brailey, Wilson, and Vella, all older, western studies, which focus primarily on the relationship between Bangkok and Lan Na, with Lan Na being equated primarily with Chiang Mai. Into the latter category, Grabowsky and Renoo's study stands out as the only truly Tai-centric analysis, focusing heavily on the human impact of war and forced deportations on the principality of Chiang Khaeng. Ratchasomphan also falls into this category, glorifying Cao Anantawararidet's exploits in support of the Siamese, and emphasizing the spoils of the attack on the Sip

¹⁴Volker Grabowsky and Renoo Wichasin, trans., ed., The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng: A Tai Lu Principality of the Upper Mekong (Honolulu: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), Pages 32-5.

songpanna. In discussing the early conflicts in Chiang Tung, the author of the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* takes a similar approach, placing the primary focus on Chiang Mai and its sister cities, and relatively little emphasis on events in Bangkok. Ratchasomphan's discussion of Nan's early wars in the Sipsongpanna, concurrent to the early Chiang Tung Wars, fits a similar pattern. Sarassawadee and Yawnghwefall into both categories, taking as their focus the conditions within the Tai principalities, and examining, respectively, the relationships of Lan Na and the Burmese-aligned principalities with both the other principalities and with their lowland suzerains.

Having shown the various perspectives from which the Chiang Tung Wars have been examined, it remains to be said that in the English language, dedicated studies of the Chiang Tung Wars are virtually non-

existent, with the only significant study the researcher was able to locate being that of Melchers¹⁵.

Melchers' analysis covers only one small part of the conflict, consisting of the 1849 war, and the events in Chiang Rung from the death of Cao Mahawang until the outbreak of the war, and argues that it was a direct result of a series of successful raids into Chiang Tung territory in 1837, and that its failure, and the failure of subsequent attacks, led to the strengthening of Chiang Tung against the influence of both Siam and Burma.

The conventionally defined Chiang Tung War thus forms part of a different historiographic period than the similar conflicts which preceded them, but they are nonetheless part of the same long

¹⁵K. William Melchers, "The Thai Invasion of Kengtung During the Reign of King Rama III," in Anuson Walter Vella, Ronald D. Renard, editor (Honolulu: Southeast Asia Papers, 1986), Pages 193-207.

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term conflicts and historical processes. These include the rise and decline, over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, of the Tai principalities tributary to Siam, Burma, and China, and, as part of that process, the struggle of the regional powers to exert control over their tributaries, and the simultaneous struggle of the Tai principalities to maintain their independence. Possibly as a result of this fragmented view of the Chiang Tung Wars described above, they are rarely studied in their own right, and there has yet to be a comprehensive study of the wars completed in English. This study will make use of the three war definition which group together Cao Mahawang's succession crisis with the series of three expeditions in 1849, 1852, and 1854, but will alter that approach in characterizing the campaigns of 1852 and 1854 as being part of a single war. In addition to this, the later Chiang Tung Wars will not be examined on their own, but as part of a longer series of conflicts in Chiang Tung, and related conflicts in the Sipsongpanna, beginning from 1802, and having their roots in still earlier events. The final Chiang Tung War, lasting from 1852 to 1854, will be considered as the culmination of these conflicts, and the point at which the Chiang Tung Wars escalated to their bloodiest peak and came to an end, or were put on hold until World War 2.

1.2 Sources for the Chiang Tung Wars

Primary sources and early secondary sources are available for the Chiang Tung Wars in many languages, including Thai, English, Burmese, Chinese, and the various Tai languages, most of which

have been translated into either Thai or English. Of the Thai sources, the three most prominent are the *Chotmai het Ruangthap Chiang Tung*¹⁶, or the “Records of the Chiang Tung War”, and the *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin*^{17,18}. The former is a collection of primary sources relating to the Chiang Tung Wars, and consisting of troop rosters, catalogues of supplies, accounts of meetings, and, most significantly, correspondence between the commanders of the war, with the lettersexchanged between King Mongkuta and Krommaluang Wongsathiratsani forming the most important part of the volume. The *Phongsawadan*, or *Dynastic Chronicles*, were written by Chaophraya Thiphakorawong in the late 19th century, in the tradition of the early historical writings of Ayutthaya. They are generally rather accurate, as Thiphakorawong lived through many of the events described, but contain a number of errors in regard to the affairs of the more remote principalities. Blurring the line between Siamese and Chiang Rung sources is the *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung*, a Siamese history of the Chiang Rung crisis²⁰. The chronicle discusses the lineages of Chiang Rung and Muang Phong as well as the course of the events following Cao Mahawang's passing, and centers around the exploits of Cao Mahachai, the ruler of Muang Phong. This bias is likely a result of either the fact that Mahachai

¹⁶ *Chotmai het Ruangthap Chiang Tung* (Bangkok: Thai Thanon Rong Muang, 1915), hereafter **CRCT**.

¹⁷ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *The Dynastic Chronicles, the Bangkok Era, the First Reign*, trans. Chadin Flood, ed. Thaddeus Flood (Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, Tokyo, 1978), hereafter **PKR1**.

¹⁸ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakanthi 3*, (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 1993), hereafter **PKR3**.

¹⁹ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, the Fourth Reign, BE 2394-2411*, trans. Chadin Flood (Tokyo: The Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965), hereafter **PKR4**.

²⁰ *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung in Prachum Phongsawadan 9* (Bangkok: Ongkankha Khreusa pha Seuksa Phan Phanit), Pages 1-37, hereafter **PCR**.

stood as the most vigorous champion of the Siamese because in the Sipsongpanna, or that many of the Tai Lu of the Sipsongpanna came from Muang Phong.

Aside from the Siamese sources, the indigenous chronicles, or *tamnan*, of the Tai principalities, form the main source of information regarding the Chiang Tung Wars. These texts normally relate the entire history of a principality, from the legendary origins until the time of the text's compilation, and as such, are more useful for determining a general course of events than the small details of specific events. Two *tamnan* which directly mention the later Chiang Tung Wars are Ratchasomphan's *Nan Chronicle*²¹, and the *Jengtung State Chronicle*²². Both of them, as well as the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, which ends its narrative in the 1820s, also provide extensive accounts of the violent events of the late 18th and early 19th centuries from which those principalities had emerged. The latter work, focusing on Chiang Mai, is possibly the most useful source of information on the early Chiang Tung Wars, providing a detailed account of the events from 1802 to 1812 that resulted in Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Tung's rise to power. Like the Siamese *phongsawadan*, the later sections of these works covering the late 18th and 19th centuries were written by people, or through interview with people, who had lived through the times described, and as such, they are also reasonably accurate, particularly in regard to the principalities around which they focus. Tai Lu sources form a rather unique category, and bear a strong resemblance to the *tamnan* of the other Tai principalities.

²¹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages 118-9.

²²Sao Saimong Mangrai, *The Padaeng Chronicle and the Jengtung State Chronicle Translated* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), Page 256.

ies. The most useful of these is the *Cheu Khreu Cao Saenwi Sipsongpanna*²³, or *Lineage of the Cao Saenwi Sipsongpanna*, which traces a reign-by-reign history of the ruling dynasty of Chiang Rung from the time of Phraya Coeng to that of the last Cao Kham Lu, the final Saenwi. Like the *phongsawadan*, it is a primarily political history with a linear format, acknowledging only one Saenwi at any given time. Most significantly, it provides detailed narratives of the reigns of Cao Mahanoi and Cao Suchawan, in which the Chiang Tung Wars occurred, and presents a version of events regarding Cao Mahawang's succession crisis which stands at odds with that discussed in the sources above. A handful of other Tai Lu sources exist which mention either the Chiang Tung Wars or the related Chiang Rung Crisis. Some of these have been summarized in English by Liew-

Herres²⁴, and show a remarkable consistency with the events portrayed in the *Lineage*.

European sources for the Chiang Tung Wars are scarce. The most substantial European source available, for both the Chiang Tung Wars and for Tai history in general, is J.G. Scott and J.P. Hardiman's *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*²⁵. Although written many years after the Chiang Tung Wars occurred, the *Gazetteer* contains detailed discussions of the local histories of the various principalities, drawn from a combination of oral and chronicular sources. Scott and Hardiman subject each principality's history to individual scrutiny, and their work thus provides a

²³Renoo Wichasin, tr., *Cheu Khreu Cao Saenwi Sipsongpanna*, (Chiang Mai: Silk Worm Books, 1998), hereafter CKCS.

²⁴Foon Ming Liew-Herres, "Intra-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts in the Old Kingdom of Moeng Lu in Southern Yunnan", *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 5 (Spring and Autumn, 2007): Pages 51-112.

²⁵J.G. Scott and J.P. Hardiman, *The Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, 5 vol., (Rangoon: Government Printing, 1900-1901), hereafter GUBSS.

ne, but multiple perspectives on the conflict. It is particularly useful for examining the role of the Tai Ya principalities west of the Salween, most of whose chronicles have not been published since Scott and Hardiman's work was conducted. Possibly the only westerner to directly witness the war was Thomas Knox, a British soldier employed by King Mongkut to train his artillery, who accompanied the army in the final Chiang Tung War. Although Knox did not produce any known written account of the war, he spoke with John Bowring about it during the latter's mission to Siam in 1855. King Mongkut also related the 1854 campaign of the final war to Bowring, and both accounts are published in Bowring's *Kingdom and People of Siam*²⁶. If Bowring can thus be considered an indirect witness to the final Chiang Tung War, another indirect witness can be found in Thomas Spears, a British agent at the court of King Mindon, who observed the departure and return of the Burmese troops who fought in the war, and who discussed the battle with King Mindon himself. His letters reporting on the events to Sir Arthur Phayre are published as part of an edited volume by Hall²⁷. The account of William C. McLeod, one of the first westerners to travel in the Tai region, is also very useful for the insight it provides into the beginning of the Chiang Rung Crisis which sparked the first of the later Chiang Tung Wars²⁸. Compiled between the times of the early Chiang Tung Wars and the late

²⁶ John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam* (London: J. W. Parker, 1857), Pages 364-7.

²⁷ D. G. E. Hall, ed., *The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence 1852-1856* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1932).

²⁸ Volker Grabowsky and Andrew Turton, ed., *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship: The McLeod and Richardson Diplomatic Mission to Tai States in 1837* (Chiang Mai: Silk Worm Books, 2003), Pages 267-456.

rChiangTungWars,the*BurneyPapers*²⁹areprimarilyconcernedwiththeaffairsofsouthernSiam,andmakevirtuallynomen-tionofSiam'snortherntributaries.

AsmallnumberofBurmeseourcesarealsoavailablefortheChiangTungWars.Themostsubstantialoftheseisthe*YodhayaNaingMawgun*,anepicpoemcommemoratingthevictoryovertheSiameseintheChiangTungWars,andwrittenbythepoetUPonnyainhonorofKingMindon³⁰.Despitethepanegyricnatureofthework,andthefactthatitisnot,theoretically,aworkofhistoricalscholarship,itisonethellessquitehistoricallyaccurate.Manyoftheeventsdescribedwithinthepoemcanbeconfirmedinothersources,andtheauthorshowsathoroughunderstandingofthetacticsusedandthegeographyofChiangTung.AnothersourcewhichisusefulforthestudyoftheChiangTungWarsisthe*RoyalOrdersofBurma*,which,thoughonlycontainingscarce-mentionoftheChiangTungWars,nonethelessprovidearareBurmese-perspectiveontheconflict³¹.AseriesofEnglishtranslationsofpassagesfromthe*HmannanYazawin*relatingtoSiamese-BurmeserelationsappearedintheearlyeditionsoftheJournaloftheSiamSociety.Ofthese,thethirdpart³²dealswiththe18thcenturyconflictsbetweenSiamandBurmaduringtheRattanakosinperiod,thetheeventsofwhichsetthestagefortheChiangTungWars.

²⁹HenryBurney,*TheBurneyPapers*(Bangkok:CommitteeoftheVajirananaNationalLibrary,1910).

³⁰TaungGoe,trans.,*UPonny'sChronicleonOvercomingtheSiameseIncursionof1853:AnEnglish TranslationbyTaungGoe*(Yangon:PyiZonePublishingHouse,2008), hereafter *YNM*

³¹ThanTun,trans.,*RoyalOrdersofBurma,A.D.1598-1885,PartEight,A.D.1819-1853*(Kyoto:TheCenterforSoutheastAsianStudies,1988), Page 279, hereafter *ROB*.

³²LuangPhraisonSalarak, "Inter-coursebetweenBurmaandSiam.AsRecordedinHmannanYazawindawgi",*JournaloftheSiamSociety*13(1919): Pages 1-65.

CHAPTER II

THE TAI PRINCIPALITIES

The Tai principalities were the theater in which the Chiang Tung Wars were fought, and the Tai people were the people who fought them. Although the interests of the larger kingdoms of Siam and Burma were often at stake in the wars, and the wars would eventually escalate to involve the troops of both kingdoms, the underlying causes of the wars originated and ended within the Tai principalities, and the involvements of both Siam and Burma can thus be seen as interventions in a predominantly Tai conflict. As such, in order to come to an understanding of the historical context of the Chiang Tung wars, it is necessary to understand the state of the Tai principalities in the early to mid 19th century, and how the conditions for war arose.

Although Tai speaking people can be found throughout Southeast Asia, the principalities which played the largest role in the Chiang Tung Wars belonged to three distinct cultural and geographic groups. These included the Tai Yuan principalities of the Lan Na region, the Tai Khoen principalities of the mountainous Chiang Tung region, and the Tai Lu principalities of the Sipsongpanna. These were not the only players in the Chiang Tung Wars. Luang Prabang also played a significant role, as did the Tai Ya principalities west of the Salween, and both will be considered as well. However, it can be said that the Chiang Tung Wars were a conflict which arose from the unique historical and cultural situation of the Yuan, Khoen and Lu principalities, all of which share a common culture and a common historical bond.

The purpose of this chapter will therefore be the examination of the Chiang Tung Wars as a Tai conflict, rather than a conflict between Siam and Burma, and an examination of its origins in the affairs of the Tai principalities.

2.1 The Geographical Situation of the Tai Principalities

Geography has played a significant role in Tai history from the earliest times. When the Tai began to migrate into northern Southeast Asia, they settled in the fertile basins in the upper reaches of the major Southeast Asian river systems. From the earliest Tai kingdoms until the 20th century, these basins were home to a succession of principalities based on sedentary wet rice agriculture, for which the flatness of the land and the ruggedness of the surrounding mountains, the latter home to Lua, Akha, Tai Loi, and other state-avoiding highland peoples, were decisive in regard to the principality's sway of life and long-term success. This importance was not diminished by the start of the 19th century. Although technology had improved, and extensive intercourse conducted with the surrounding lowland kingdoms, land was still in far greater abundance than manpower, and society was still largely divided between the sedentary rice cultivators of the river basins, and the swidden cultivators of the high country. Mountains served as a physical barrier to be overcome, either by an invading army or by merchant traveling the "gold and silver road" to and from southern China. They also served as a potential source of refuge, for those hostile to the

eruling forces of the state and for those wishing to avoid the power of the state entirely. Rivers, by contrast, formed the source of potential power for the core of the realm, providing low-lying fields suitable for rice cultivation, and which had, indeed, been used for that very purpose for many centuries already. Successful cultivation and defense of the land relied upon manpower, which was, for these sedentary principalities, a resource at least as valuable as the land itself.

2.1.1 Chiang Tung and the Surrounding Region

Between the roughly parallel courses of the Mekong and the Salween, and north of the valleys of the Lan Na region, lie the rugged highlands of what is today Myanmar's Eastern Shan State. Of all the lands settled by the Tai around the start of the 2nd millennium, this region possesses, arguably, the most hostile terrain. The early British surveyors identified as many as ten major dividing ranges in the region³³, throughout which flat, cultivateable land is a scarcity, the "scattered valleys" having been described by the early surveyors as "but islands in a sea of hills"³⁴. The largest such area of lowland is occupied by Chiang Tung, which has, since its foundation, been the dominant power in the region. It occupies the southern end of a long valley in the heart of the state. Unlike the *chiang* of the Lan Na region, the walls, which were built in the early 19th century, are neither regular nor square. Rather, they are a system of fortification

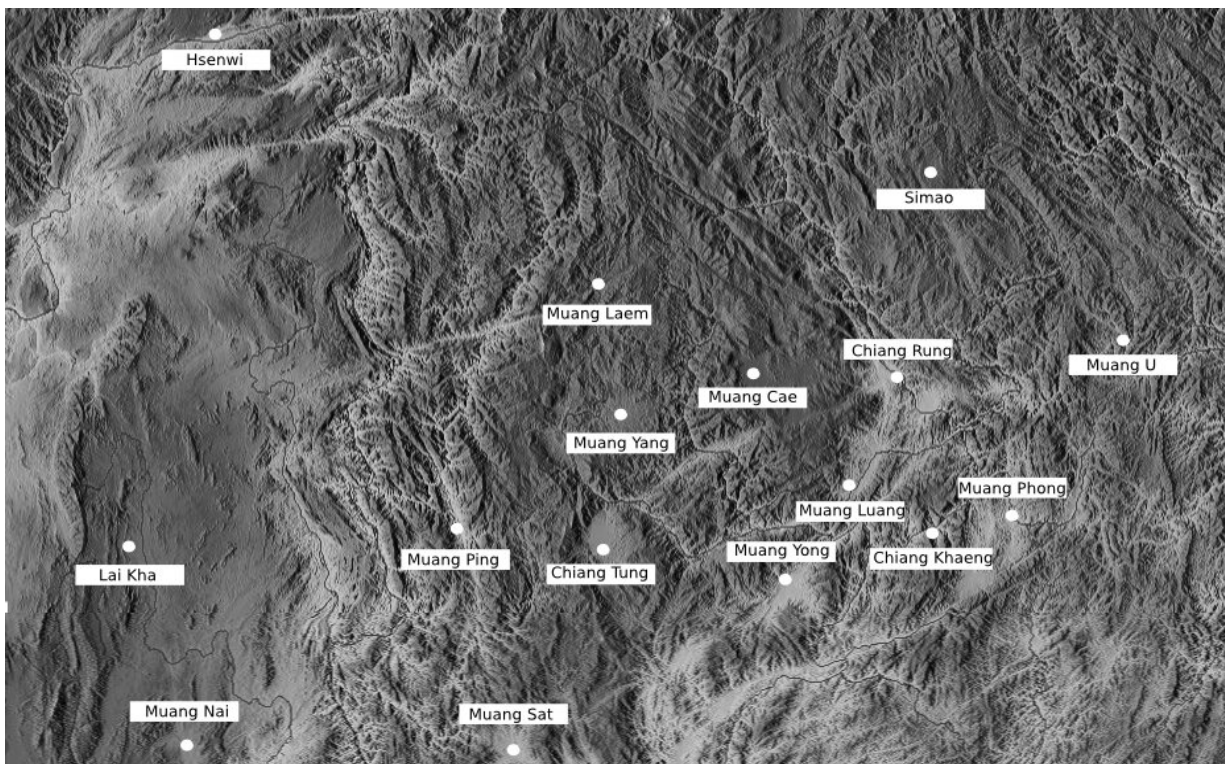
³³Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 1, Vol. 1, Pages 375-6.

³⁴Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1, Page 375.

ns, winding around the city in an irregular course, holding, as best as possible, to the highest and most advantageous ground. To the south, west, and east of Chiang Tung, rolling hills rise to the precipitous peaks which form the barrier of the valley, where lie the headwaters of the Khoen and La p Rivers. These two streams and their tributaries form the drainage of the Chiang Tung valley, the majority of which, to the north of the city, consists of flat agricultural land. Although the Chiang Tung valley contains much more flat, irrigated land than the rest of the Chiang Tung region, it is considerably smaller than the basins of the Lan Nare region, and as such, the swidden cultivators of the mountains have always played a larger role in the life of the city. This can be seen in the traditions regarding the foundation of the city, which recall the city's foundation by the Lu prior to its colonization by the Tai³⁵, and is equally apparent in the present day, with a strong representation by the people of the hills at the city's morning market.

Map 1: The Tai Principalities from Hsenwi to Muang Sat

³⁵Ibid., Pages 392-3.



The historical domain of the Tai Khoen can be roughly identified by examining the “thirty-twomuang” which are conventionally believed to have fallen under the suzerainty of Chiang Tung³⁶. All of these cities lie within the watersheds of the Luai, Kha, and Sim Rivers, the former of which, feeding the Mekong, forms the backbone, and is the largest and most abundant watershed³⁷ of the Tai Khoen realm. The Khon and Lap Rivers, which drain the valley of Chiang Tung, feed the Luai to the north of the city. Within the scope of this paper, the most significant *muang* of the Chiang Tung

³⁶Ibid., Pages 373-4.

³⁷Ibid., Page 378.

region include Muang Yang, which lies in the basin of the Pa River, itself a tributary of the Luai³⁸, to the north of Chiang Tung³⁹, the *muang* along the middle course of the Luai River, including Muang Luai⁴⁰ and the *muang* in the valley Ping Rivers, that tributest to the Kha River⁴¹, the predominant of which are Muang Ping⁴² and Muang Pu On⁴³. All of these towns were numbered among the thirty-two *muang*, and can be considered to be relatively key components of the Chiang Tung polity. Culturally and geographically more peripheral to Chiang Tung, although in the present day eastern Shan State, are the towns of Muang Yong, Muang Phayak, and Muang Sat. The former lies in proximity to the Mekong, due east of Chiang Tung, and south of the Doi Pang Nao, at all ranges that separate the watershed of the Yong River, a direct tributary of the Mekong, from the Luai River⁴⁴. Like Chiang Tung, Muang Yong was a fortified town in the 19th century⁴⁵, lies in the midst of an east-west traderoute through the Chiang Tung region⁴⁶, and is easily accessible from the Kok River basin to the south, thus making it a strategic crossroad of the Tai region. Muang Sat, like Muang Yong, lies close to the Siamese sphere of influence, occupying a small valley to the north of Chiang Mai and to the southwest of Chiang Tung, in the headwaters of the Kok River⁴⁷.

³⁸Ibid., Page 374.

³⁹Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Pages 497-8.

⁴⁰Ibid., Page 384.

⁴¹Not to be mistaken for the Ping River that tributest to the Chao Phraya, and along which Chiang Mai and Lamphun are relocated.

⁴²Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Pages 471-2.

⁴³Ibid., Page 476.

⁴⁴Ibid., Pages 500-1.

⁴⁵Ibid., Page 501.

⁴⁶Ibid., Page 500.

⁴⁷Ibid., Page 364.

It seems counter-

intuitive that a region so rugged and mountainous would be the subject of many decades of warfare. The historical significance of the Chiang Tung region was derived, however, not from natural resources but from its strategic location between the historic power centers of the Shan Plateau, Lan Na, the Sipsongpanna, and Lan Xang. The most frequently used route through the region was that from Yunnan to Chiang Mai. Starting in Chiang Rung, a merchant caravan would travel west a short distance along the Ha River, then southwest through the valley of the Laem River, which itself was the location, far to the north, of the basin of Muang Laem, a small principality with close ties to Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna. The caravan route then crossed the Luai River and traversed southward through the Chiang Tung valley, and out of the Chiang Tung valley by the southern pass. Several routes then run southward to the Khok River basin, one to the east, through Muang Phayak, and the other due south, to the west. Both are very rough and cross numerous ridges and watersheds⁴⁸. Thus, the Chiang Tung region links Yunnan and the Sipsongpanna with the Kok River basin and Lan Na, allowing access to markets in central Siam, Lower Burma, and the Tenneserim. Another, more mountainous route, passes west to east, from the Salween, through the valley of the Ping River of Chiang Tung, through Chiang Tung valley, and then eastward through the valley of the Luai River, from which it traverses the Doi Pang Naoto Muang Yong. Starting from Chiang Tung, this route took the traveler over the mountains to the east of Chiang Tung, past the

⁴⁸This was the route followed by William C. McLeod in 1837. See, Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Pages 267-437.

towns of Muang Lai⁴⁹ and Muang Ngom⁵⁰, through the small basin of Muang Kai⁵¹, then southeast over the Doi Pang Nao into the Muang Yong valley. This was a difficult, precipitous route, and it would challenge the 1854 expedition to Chiang Tung. Therefore, although a difficult place to either settle or travel, the Chiang Tung region lies at a strategic crossroads, linking the political and population centers of the Irrawaddy and Mekong River Systems.

2.1.2 Lan Na

The Chao Phraya River, which forms the backbone of central Thailand, comes into existence at the heart of the Siamese plains at the conjunction of the Ping and Nan Rivers. Northwards, its waters are hemmed in by the drainages of the Irrawaddy and the Salween, and while those latter rivers are of Tibetan origin, the Chao Phraya's entire drainage is contained within the present-day borders of Thailand. The four rivers which form the source of the Chao Phraya rise in what is today northern Thailand, and the basins of these rivers are the location of the cities of Lan Na, today's northern Thai provinces, which, in previous centuries, formed largely independent city-states. The geography of this region stands in sharp contrast with that of the Chiang Tung region. Whereas the Chiang Tung region is entirely mountainous, with only small interruptions of flat, ara

⁴⁹Ibid., Page 384.

⁵⁰Ibid., Page 439.

⁵¹Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 375.

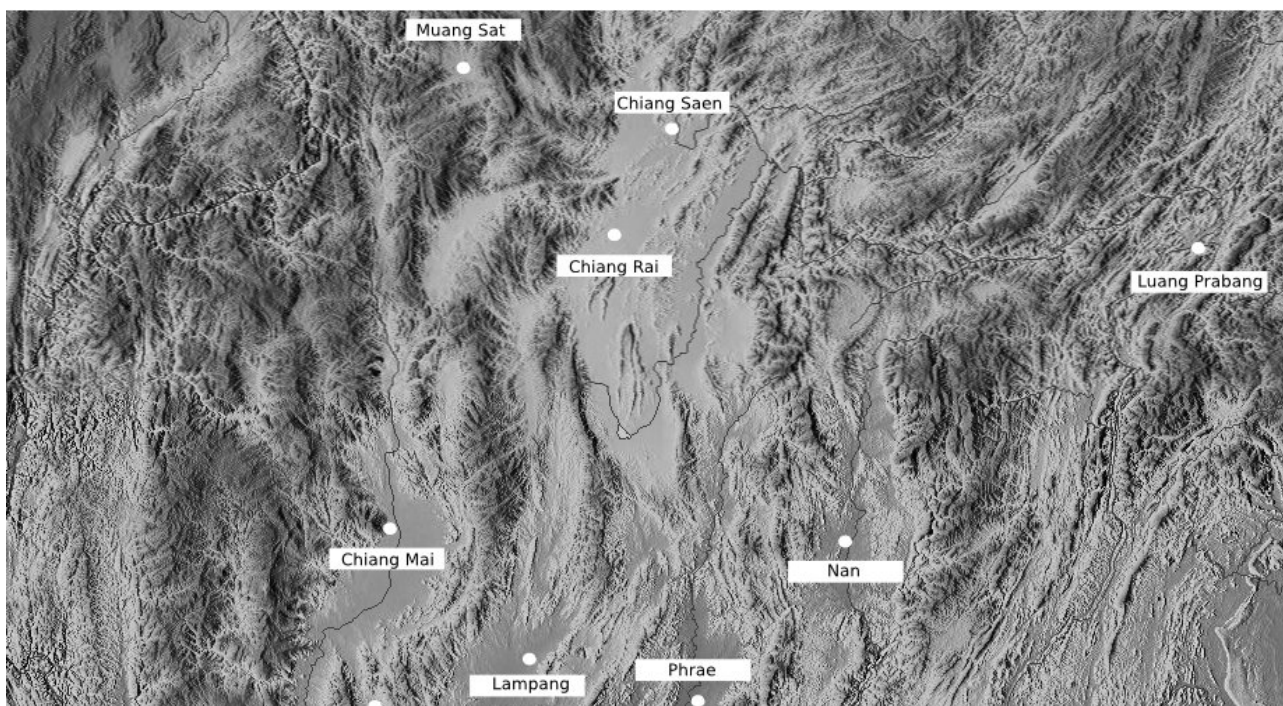
bleland, the rivers of Lan Na are endowed with massive, deep, flat plains, surrounded by sheer ranges of mountains of a height similar to those of the Chiang Tung region. The westernmost of them a tributary is the Ping River, the upper basin of which contains Lan Na's oldest city, Lamphun, formerly the titular heart of the Hariphunchai civilization, and Chiang Mai, the present-day capital of northern Thailand. This is the largest basin of Lan Na, and has, for most of history, the city-states of the Ping River have been the dominant power of the region, a dominance periodically challenged by the similarly large connected basins of the Kok and Ing Rivers, the tributaries of the Mekong which lie northeast of the Ping River, and north of the other three major rivers of Lan Na. The Ping River basin, like the valley of Chiang Tung, lies on a crossroads, and a traveller from the coastal region of Moulmein could, historically, travel northwards into the Chiang Tung region in the vicinity of Muang Sat, or to the Kok River basin, from which onward travel to the Sipsongpanna or Lan Xang was possible, or could travel eastwards and southwards to the other river valleys of Lan Na and the plains of Siam.

The Wang River basin, dominated by the city of Lampang, also plays a significant role in the context of the Chiang Tung wars. Long and narrow, it parallels the Ping River valley almost exactly, and the two basins share a long historical bond, having been the twin centers of the Hariphunchai civilization. Eastwards, the upper reaches of the Yom River contain the smallest of the basins of the Lan Na region, centered upon the city of Phrae. Phrae was, by the 19th century, the least powerful of the pri-

ncipalitiesofLan

Na,and,althoughitwouldparticipateintheChiangTungwars,itwouldnotplayadecisiveroleindeterminingthecourseofthewarstothesamedegreeastheneighboringprincipalities.

Map 2: The Tai Principalities from Muang Sat to Phrae



Withinthecontextof19thcenturyTaihistory,themosignificantcity-stateofLanNa,asidefrom,possibly,ChiangMai,wasNan,whichdominatedthevalleyoftheNan River,theeasternmostofthefournortherntributariesoftheChaoPhraya.Thiswasaremote,ruggedbasin,considerablysmallerthanthatofthePingRiver,butwithalonghistoryofindependence, andstrongtiestonotonlytheLanNacultureofthePingandKokRivers,buttocentralSiamandLan Xangaswell.Untilthe15thcentury,Nanhadbeenanindependentprincipality,andwasonlyincor

porated into the Lan Na kingdom during the reign of King Tilokarat in 1448⁵². In the early 19th century, it emerged again as a powerful city-

state, independent of the rest of Lan Na, and would play a critical role in the course of the Chiang Tung Wars.

Unlike the towns of the Chiang Tung region, the towns of Lan Na did not possess naturally defensible terrain beyond the mountainous barriers far from the cities themselves, and all of the major cities of the region possess brick walls, usually dating to the 19th century. Also differing from the Chiang Tung region is the relative equality of resources between the four river basins. While Chiang Tung's dominance in the Tai Khoen region has never been seriously disputed, and most of its wars conducted outside the Tai Khoen region, Chiang Mai, although undoubtedly predominant within the Tai Yuan region for much of history, has had its predominance disputed many times. The apotheosis of centralized power in Lan Na occurred during the reign of King Tilokarat of Chiang Mai, who controlled the entire region, in addition to much of the upper Mekong watershed⁵³. In addition, while the Chiang Tung region was largely barren of resources, or at least barren of resources that would have been useful to an early 19th century Southeast Asian lowland polity, any of the valleys of Lan Na, with their extensive lowland capable of supporting a robust agrarian culture, would have served as a valuable source of tribute, as well as the nucleus of a powerful tributary empire. The Lan Na pr

⁵²Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 53.

⁵³Dhida Saraya, "The Development of the Northern Tai States from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries", Doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney, 1982, Pages 79-109.

incipalitieswerethusvaluableintheirownrightasasourceofstabilityandwealth,whereastheChiangTungregionwasprimarilyvaluableforitsstrategiclocation.

Mostsignificantly,however,the Lan Na

regionwasalandwithahistoryallitsown,whichhadbeenhometopowerfulkingdomssuchasHariphunchaiandLanNa,andforwhom200yearsofvassalagetothetheBurmesehadonelittleto tame this sense of independence.

2.1.3TheUpperMekongPrincipalities

The middle and upper reaches of the Mekong can be said to form the backbone of the Tai world, and that not in history was this more evident than the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Beyond the coastal flood plains of Cambodia, the river was home to a seemingly endless succession of Tai principalities, from Champasakt to the Tai principalities of Yunnan. The lowest two principalities, Champasak and Vieng Chan, will play only a minor role in this analysis, and so the first of the principalities which will need to be examined is Luang Prabang. The latter city, which, with the two former, constituted one of the centers of the powerful Lan Xang kingdom until its division at the start of the 18th century⁵⁴, lies at a bend of the Mekong, almost on a parallel with the cities of Lan Na. This is a heavily mountainous region, its terrain more closely resembling that of the Sipsongpanna, or even Chiang Tu

⁵⁴Martin Stuart-Fox, The Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang: Rise and Decline (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1998), Pages 100-3.

ng, than the broad intermountain basins of Lan Na. Strategically, in the context of 18th and 19th century Southeast Asia, it stood between the lowlands of Siam, the Sipsongpanna, and Vietnam. The Burmese were able to exert control over it in the campaigns against Ayutthaya⁵⁵, but the loss of Chiang Mai permanently removed it from the Burmese sphere of influence.

Upstream from Luang Prabang lie the valleys of the In and Kok Rivers, both of which feed the main stream of the Mekong from the west. Of these, the In is the southern, as well as the smaller of the two, and is associated with the medieval kingdom of Phayao. In the 18th century, the region was largely uninhabited, and in the 19th century fell under the control of Nant to the southeast. The In River basin is also joined inland by the lowlands of the Kok River basin to the north, a region which today enters upon the city of Chiang Rai, but which, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was ruled by the city of Chiang Saen, which formed the center of Burmese power in the region. The basin of the Kok River is vast and flat, and is presently and historically considered part of Lan Na, as the birthplace of Lan Na's founding ruler, Mangrai.

Continuing north along the Mekong, one comes to the Sipsongpanna. Although lacking the vast plains of the Lan Na region, the Sipsongpanna region is nonetheless far more blessed with useable land than Chiang Tung. Lying closest to the Chinese sphere of influence, it is also a politically important region, and by the late 18th century, had become an important frontier state between China and the Southeast

⁵⁵David K. Wyatt, "Siam and Laos, 1767-1827", *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2 (September 1963): Page 14.

Asian empires. The Sipsongpanna of the 18th and 19th centuries was centered on Chiang Rung*, a city located in a basin of the Mekong, near the confluence of the Ha River. Located at the center of the principalities associated with the Sipsongpanna, and on the west bank of the Mekong, Chiang Rung was the center of what was, effectively, one of the oldest of all the Tai kingdoms, with a ruling family which claimed to trace itself back to the 11th century warrior Phaya Coeng⁵⁶. A definitive enumeration of the twelve panna would likely be impossible to determine, but those listed by William McLeod in 1837 give an impression of the which Tai Lu principalities were the most politically important in the mid-

19th century. This list, not counting Chiang Rung, included Muang Cae, Muang Luang, Muang Khang, Chiang Khaeng, Muang Phong, Muang La, Simao, Muang Ham, Bo La Luang, Muang U, Chiang Thong, and Muang Hing⁵⁷. Of these, Muang Cae, Muang Luang, and Muang Khang all lay to the west of the Mekong, lying north of Muang Yong, northeast of Chiang Tung, and east of Muang Yang and Muang Laem. Muang Luang was the southernmost of the three, lying in the long, narrow valley of a river which ran northeast into the Mekong to the south of the Chiang Rung basin. Muang Luang provided the most convenient entrance into the Sipsongpanna from the south and to the west of the Mekong, and as such, became quite significant in the 19th century⁵⁸. A similar significance was held by Muang Cae, a city located in the largest basin of the Sipsongpanna, lying in the watershed of the Ha River, due west of Chiang Rung. In addition to possessing some of the best land in the

* Modern-day Jinghong.

⁵⁶Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Pages 754-6.

⁵⁷Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 225.

⁵⁸Ibid.

Sipsongpanna, MuangCaealsoderivedagreatdealofitsimportancefrombeinglocatedontheroutesbetweenChiangRunganditswesternandsouthwesternneighbors,MuangLaemandChiangTung⁵⁹. EastoftheMekong,threeprincipalitiesdemandspecialattentionforthesakeofthisstudy. Theseinclude,fromnorthtosouth,Simao,MuangPhong,andChiangKhaeng. SimaostoodontheroutefromtheSipsongpannatoChina⁶⁰,andbythemid-19th century,containedaChinesesettlementandagarrisonofChinesesoldiers,whichwasseparatedfromtheattachedTailutownofMuangLaLuangbyasmallstream⁶¹. Itislocatedinasmallbasin, farfromtheMekong, andwasthecenterofChinesepowerintheSipsongpanna, inmuchthesamewaythatChiangSaenandlaterMuangNaiwerethecentersofBurmese powerintheLanNaandTaiYairegions. Inthesouth,MuangPhongoccupiedanoblongvalleyeastoftheMekong, providingaccessbetweentheSipsongpannaandtheLaoprincipalities⁶². Farthersouthstill,ChiangKhaengwasaprincipalitylocatedonthebankoftheMekongtothewestofMuangPhong, which, bythetimethatMcLeodvisitedtheTai principalities, hadclosertiestoChiangTungthantheSipsongpanna⁶³.

2.2 The Tai Principalities in the 18th Century

⁵⁹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 368.

⁶⁰Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 225.

⁶¹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 381.

⁶²Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 225.

⁶³Ibid.

The expansion of Burmese power under the early Konbaung dynasty in the mid-18th century, and the subsequent restoration and expansion of Siamese power under Taksin and the early Chakri dynasty, had a devastating effect on the Tai principalities of Lan Na. At the time, the Tai regions between the Salween and the Mekong, which had formerly constituted the independent Lan Na kingdom, paid tribute to the kings of Burma, but were largely independent in practice. Between the Burmese invasion of 1762, and the Siamese counter-invasion of 1775, the Lan Na principalities became almost completely abandoned, losing the majority of their population to war, conscription, or starvation. The rulers of these kingdoms, including the Cao Chet Ton dynasty of Lampang, and later of Chiang Mai and Lamphun, and the Luang Toen Mahawong dynasty of Nan, were forced, in the coming years, to withstand attacks from both the Burmese and the Siamese, while attempting to rebuild their domains. In this effort of restoration, the Tai rulers began relocating entire communities from the surrounding territory, using diplomacy and occasional force. This began on a small scale toward the end of the 18th century, and escalated into huge campaigns into the Mekong watershed, involving the movement of thousands, following the defeat of the Burmese at Chiang Saen in 1804.

These efforts would lead to the rapid growth of the Lan Na principalities, at the expense of the Tai principalities of the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna. This would mark the beginning of a whole new series of migrations and conflicts, involving the principalities of the Sipsongpanna, centered around Chiang Rung, and the highland principalities between the Salween and the Mekong, centered around Chiang Tung. Most of the

ese states would be visited by their representatives and warriors of the Lan Na principalities, and their leader either convinced or compelled to formally submit to the kings of Bangkok. These measures were directly opposed by the Burmese, and often escalated from peaceful negotiations into violent raids. No measures were taken, however, to ensure continuing rule, and powerful, independent rulers, including Cao Mahakhanan in Chiang Tung, and Cao Mahawang in Chiang Rung, soon emerged.

The division of the ruling families and populations of Chiang Tung and Chiang Rung, established by the population movements of the late 18th and early 19th century, set the stage for the outbreak of violence which would occur in the Tai principalities in 1849, and which would escalate into a full-scale war involving Siam and Burma in 1852. In addition, the restoration of Lan Na left many of the cities of the region, Chiang Mai and Nan in particular, with large populations drawn from the areas north of Lan Na, which would be the location of the fighting in the mid-19th century conflicts. This, combined with the defensiveness of the restored Chiang Tung, contributed to the conditions under which the mid-19th century wars would be fought.

2.2.1 The Restoration of the Lan Na Principalities, 1762-1801

In 1762, a massive army, under the command of the Burmese general Bo Akhiakamuni, began a sweep through the Tai regions which would culminate in the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767. Entering the Ping River valley, the Burmese settled in for a five-month siege of Chiang Mai, which culminated

ated in the fall of the city⁶⁴. Chiang Mai had, at the time, been under the indirect control of the Burmese since the fall of the Mangrai dynasty in the 16th century had brought an end to the Lan Na kingdom's golden age. Along with the neighboring cities of the region, it fell under the administrative jurisdiction of Chiang Saen, which housed a Burmese governor, or myowun⁶⁵. At the time of the fall of the city, Chiang Mai was ruled by the Ong Kham dynasty, a clan from Lan Xang⁶⁶, who had taken power in 1727, ushering in three decades of relatively uneventful stability in the Ping River watershed⁶⁷. This ended with Chiang Mai's fall; the entirety of the city's population was either recruited for the impending assault on Ayutthaya or carried away to serve the king of Inwa, and the city was destroyed, leaving an abandoned ruin⁶⁸. The destruction of Chiang Mai was followed by the destruction of Lamphun, and the establishment of military rule, headed by Akhiakamuni, over the entire Ping River valley⁶⁹. The destruction of Chiang Mai and Lamphun seem to have been the only message that the rulers of the other cities of Lan Na needed, for all of them offered tribute to the Burmese commanders and offered up sons and citizens for the assault on Ayutthaya. The ruler of Lampang at the time was Cao Chai Kaeo, the son of Thippachak, a local adventurer who had wrested control of the city during the first half of the 18th century. Chai Kaeo had fled to Phrae after the rebellion which had a

⁶⁴ Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 83, lists the date of the fall of Chiang Mai as 1761, and Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 138, place the campaign as having occurred in late 1762 and early 1763.

⁶⁵ Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 130, mention the appointment of the *myowun* Phaya Saphaek.

⁶⁶ Maha Sila Viravong, History of Laos (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), Page 105, says that Cao Ong Kham, after being deposed from the throne of Luang Prabang, fled to Chiang Mai.

⁶⁷ Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Pages 135-8, recounts the reign of the Ong Kham dynasty.

⁶⁸ Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Pages 126-7.

⁶⁹ Wyatt and Aroonrut, Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 138.

accompanied his succession, and, along with the ruler of Phrae, submitted to the authority of the Burmese generals⁷⁰. The ruler of Nan was Cao Aliyawong, the son of Cao Toen Mahawong, a Chiang Mai nobleman who had been appointed ruler of Nan by the Burmese in 1727. Cao Toen Mahawong, upon his death in 1752, had left behind a strong dynasty, which would oversee one of the most powerful Tai principalities of the coming century⁷¹. Aliyawong sent his nephew and eventual successor, Cao Nai Ai, to lead the Nan forces in the campaigns against Ayutthaya⁷². Cao Nai Ai was present at the sack of Ayutthaya, and the *Nan Chronicle* claims that he spent time at the court of Inwa and participated in defending Burma against the incursions of the Chinese⁷³, which occurred contemporarily to the campaigns against Ayutthaya.

Despite the eventual success of the Burmese against Ayutthaya, the campaigns devastated the lands and populations of Inwa's Tai allies, with large segments of the populations of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan conscripted into the service of the Burmese, as soldiers or laborers. The chronicles vividly describe a time period marked by political chaos and constant warfare, which laid waste to much of the region. An anonymous Chiang Mai scholar would later write of the period,

“at that time, all of Lan Na Chiang Mai was in chaos: villages and fields were deserted, all wild and overgrown. To the south there were tigers; to the north were elephants. The land was unstable, and

⁷⁰Ibid., Pages 145-6.

⁷¹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages 82-91, provides a detailed account of Toen Mahawong's extensive lineage.

⁷²Ibid., Page 84.

⁷³Ibid.

herewas nolord/orruler totakecharge; therewerebutfewleadersandfewfollowers”⁷⁴. Therulers ofNanareshowninthatcity'schronicleashavingbeenforcedtofleethecityonmultipleoccasion s⁷⁵. *The Nan Chronicle* elements,

“duringthisperiod,allofLanNawasoppressedbytheBurmese,whotookawayallthehorses,stri ppedthecountryofvaluables,/andcarriedawaycountlessprisoners”⁷⁶. BoththechroniclesofC hiangMaiandNanrecallfrequentrebellion.

Thefirstmajorrebellionoccurredin1765. ThechronicleslistPhraMuangChaiofLamphun, thePh rayaChabanofChiangMai⁷⁷, andCaoAliyawongofNanashavingbeenamongtheleadersofthis revolt. TherebellionoccurredwhilelargeportionsoftheBurmeseandTaiforceswereoccupiedc ampaingagainstbothAyutthayainthesouthandtheChineseinthenorth, andthescaleofther evoltseemstohavepromptedtheflightofBoAkhiakamuniandCaoChaiKaeo⁷⁸. A Burmesecoun ter-

attackfromLaoswasdefeatedattheNgaoRivernorthofNanbyCaoAliyawong⁷⁹. Therebellionw aseventuallysuppressedbythecombinedforcesofBurmaandtheTaiYaiprincipalityofLaiHka

⁸⁰. AfterdefeatingtheforcesofPhraMuangChaiandtherulerofChiangMaiinaprotractedsiegeof Lamphun, theBurmesearmysweptthroughLampangandPhrae, beforeseizingNan, forcingth

⁷⁴WyattandAronrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 158.

⁷⁵Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages83-4.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, Page 83.

⁷⁷Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page84. PhrayaChabanisatitlewhichhasbeenusedforthegovernorofChiangMaiatvariouspointsinhistory. Th isPhrayaChabanwasnotnecessarilythesamepersonasPhrayaChabanBunma, wholaterrebelleddin1771.

⁷⁸WyattandAronrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page139.

⁷⁹Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page84.

⁸⁰WyattandAronrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page139.

city's evacuation⁸¹. Following Aliyawong's rebellion, Cao Nai Ai, having returned from the campaign against the Chinese, was appointed ruler of Nan⁸². His reign was too short, and he passed off an illness on an embassy to Laos seven months after assuming power⁸³.

The rebellion which would eventually force the Burmese out of the region began in the year 1771, when Phraya Chaban Bunma, the ruler of Chiang Mai, mutinied and attacked the Burmese governor Bo Huakhao, Akhiakamuni's successor, within the walls of Chiang Mai⁸⁴. Although the initial mutiny was unsuccessful, Chaban Bunma soon formed an alliance with Cao Kavila, the eldest son of Cao Chai Kae of Lampang. Lampang was, at the time, a relatively prosperous city, due to Chai Kae's allegiance to the Burmese, and the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* recounts that, due to the cooperation and tribute of Lampang's population,

“the Burmese did no ill or oppression of any sort”⁸⁵. Despite his father's allegiance, Cao Kavila did not hesitate to form allegiances of his own, and in late 1774 and early 1775, joined Chaban Bunma in assisting King Taksin of Thonburi's invasion of the north⁸⁶. This marked the beginning of an extended war between the Siamese and their vassal states, and the Burmese and their vassal states, which would lead to the first expedition to Chiang Tung in 1804.

The war for the Tai principalities began with a campaign fought by Chaophraya Chakri, the future King Rama I, and his younger brother Chaophraya Surasi, and aided by their northern allies, Phra

⁸¹ Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 84.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Pages 84-5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Pages 85.

⁸⁴ Sarassawadee Oongsakul, *History of Lan Na*, Page 130.

⁸⁵ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 146.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 149-51.

ya Chaban Bunma and Cao Kavila. Driving the Burmese from Lampang and Chiang Mai, the Siamese acknowledged Phraya Chaban Bunma as the ruler of Chiang Mai, and Cao Kavila as the ruler of Lampang, while Chaophraya Surasi began what would become a lasting connection between the Chakri and Cao Chet Tondynasties, with his marriage of Sri Anocha, Kavila's younger sister⁸⁷. In Nan, Cao Manolot, the younger brother of Cao Nai Ai, had been appointed as ruler by the Burmese in 1768, following the latter's death, and did not join in the rebellion of Lampang and Chiang Mai⁸⁸. Cao Witun, a son of Cao Aliyawong and the cousin of Cao Nai Ai and Cao Manolot, was serving the Burmese governor in Chiang Mai at the time of the invasion and rebellion, and, when the city was captured by Siamese-aligned forces, he was appointed ruler of Nan as a vassal prince of Thonburi⁸⁹. Upon his arrival in Nan, Cao Manolot conceded the rulership to him, thus bringing Nan under Siamese suzerainty for the first time⁹⁰. During the ensuing Burmese counter-attack, the rulers of Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Nan were forced to contend with numerically superior Burmese forces as well as a dearth of manpower and resources. Bo Huakha returned to take the region in April 1775, forcing the flight of Chaban Bunma from Chiang Mai to Rahaeng, Kavila and his brothers from Lampang to Sawankhalok⁹¹, and Cao Witun from Nanto Ban Calim, while his father, Cao Aliyawong, and brother, Cao Cantapacot, fled to Vieng Chan⁹². One ruler taken by the

⁸⁷Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Pages 151-2.

⁸⁸Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 85.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., Page 86.

⁹¹Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 153.

⁹²Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 86, and Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang

Burmese in 1775 was Cao Mang Chai, the ruler of Phrae, who would play a significant role in a later conflict between the Burmese and the Siamese⁹³.

By the end of the 1770s, the emerging Siamese of Thonburi had gained a precarious suzerainty over Lan Na, with appointed rulers presiding over the remaining people of Chiang Mai, Lampang, Nan, and Phrae⁹⁴. This suzerainty was challenged by the Burmese, who still maintained a military presence at Chiang Saen in the Kok River watershed. However, the greatest challenge to the budding network of Tai tributaries to Bangkok was the starvation and depopulation wreaked by the war between Siam and Burma. In the years following the Burmese counter-attack, Phraya Chaban Bunma and his followers suffered starvation, "with nothing to eat, even lizards, crickets, and grasshoppers", thus preventing the re-establishment of Chiang Mai⁹⁵. Cao Witun also found himself unable to re-establish Nan, and in 1778 established a temporary capital at a place called Muang Uan, south of modern-day Pua⁹⁶. The Siamese invasion of Vieng Chan in 1778 struck another blow to the Tai principalities of Lan Na. Cao Aliyawong and his son, Cao Cantapacot of Nan, having fled to Vieng Chan following the previous Burmese invasion, were captured by the invading Siamese forces⁹⁷. Cao Witun hi

Mai Chronicle, Page 154.

⁹³Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR1, Page 132.

⁹⁴Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 88, mentions Phrae's participation in a raid on Chiang Saen in 1781, and Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 155, list Phrae as among those cities subject to Siamese inspection in 1778/9.

⁹⁵Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Pages 154-5.

⁹⁶Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 86.

⁹⁷Ibid.

himself was arrested, shortly after, by Cao Kavila, who accused him of disloyalty to the King of Thonburi, and was also sent south⁹⁸. Kavila and Chaban Bunma were soon arrested themselves, Kavila for attacking a group of Siamese commissioners, and Chaban Bunma for the execution of his Uparata and nephew in the wake of the 1775 Burmese invasion⁹⁹. Of the arrested noblemen, Phraya Chaban Bunma, Cao Witun, and Cao Aliyawong are said to have died in the south, while Kavila and Cao Cantapacot would return to rule their principalities. In 1782, Kavila, having survived the events of 1778, offered tribute to the newly-ascendant King Rama of Bangkok, and was awarded ruler-ship over the still-

abandoned Chiang Mai, thus formally extending his clan's dominion to the Ping River watershed

¹⁰⁰.

Kavila and his six brothers thus found themselves tasked with managing two separate principalities on behalf of the Siamese. They responded to this task with a series of expeditions into surrounding territories to collect the manpower necessary to manage the cities and farmlands of the Ping and Wang River valleys. In 1782, having appointed his brother Cao Kham Som as the ruler of Lampang¹⁰¹, Kavila began a series of expeditions from a temporary capital, Vieng Pa Sang, in the Ping River basin, beginning with the settlements on the Salween River, with the objective of gathering enough people to re-

⁹⁸ Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 87.

⁹⁹ Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 155.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Page 156.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

establish Chiang Mai¹⁰². These were initially peaceful expeditions, in which Kaviola offered gifts and land to cultivate in return for the loyalty of his new followers. The first people gathered were from the Tai and Karen communities of the Salween watershed, to the west of the Ping River valley, and the first violent expedition recorded in the chronicle was against Baan Tha on the Salween's western bank¹⁰³. These expeditions would increase significantly in scope over the following decades.

The expansion of Chao Chet Ton power to the Ping River valley also marked the beginning of what one scholar has referred to as the family-

based oligarchy¹⁰⁴, wherein Lampang and Chiang Mai, and, after 1807, Lamphun, were all controlled by members of the same clan, the Cao Chet Ton dynasty, allowing for a degree of political unity, and enabling the Cao Chet Ton to extend their influence over a large region. Despite this de facto unity, the three principalities were, according to Bangkok, independent, and each was required to pay tribute separately¹⁰⁵.

Nan, in the mean-

time, remained deserted. Cao Cantapacot remained in the south, and Cao Aliyawong and Cao Witun had passed away, leaving Cao Manolot, the same ruler who Cao Witun had formerly deposed, as the reigning member of the Toen Mahawong dynasty in Nan¹⁰⁶. Following the capture of his relatives, Cao Manolot sheltered with his followers at a place called Muang Ngua, likely located in the

¹⁰² Sarassawadee Oongsakul, *History of Lan Na*, Pages 132-3.

¹⁰³ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Pages 159-60.

¹⁰⁴ Brailey, *Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement*, Page 31.

¹⁰⁵ Wilson, *State and Society*, Page 514.

¹⁰⁶ Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages 86-7.

esouthoftheNanRivervalley¹⁰⁷. InadepictionoftheToenMahawonglineageattheNationalMuseumofNantoday,thisperiod,lastingfrom1778to1783,standsoutasaninterregnumbetweenthe reignsofCaoWitunandChaophrayaMongkholwalayot. Theseyearsrepresentedthelowpoint oftheToenMahawongdynasty'spower. In1780,CaoKavila,thenstilltherulerofLampang,attackedthepeopleofNanalongsidetherulerofSawankhalok,butwasrepulsed¹⁰⁸. Laterinthesameyear,however,ManolotandhisfollowersweretakenbyaBurmese raid,supportedbythepincipalityofMuangYong, andrelocatedtoChiangSaen¹⁰⁹. Acontestformanpowerwasthusplayingout,betweentheBurmese, representedbytheChiangSaen*myowun*and,formuchofthe1780s,thePaganPrince,andtheSiamese, representedbyCaoKavilaandhisbrothers, theCaoChetTondynasty. Intheearly1780s, LampangandthePingRiverbasinwereunderthecommandoftheCaoChetTon, whiletheKokandIngRiverbasins, northof Lan Na andfeedingintotheMekong,wereunderthecommandoftheBurmese. Phrae,aswillbeseen, foughtonthesideoftheSiamesein1781,andNanremaineddepopulatedanditsrulingfamilydivided,withCaoManolotwiththeBurmeseinChiangSaen,andCaoCantapacotwiththeSiameseinThonburiand, later, Bangkok.

ThefirstconcertedefforttodrivetheBurmeseoutofChiangSaenoccurredin1781,witha combinedforcefromChiangMai,Lampang,Phrae,andLuangPrabangsuccessfullytakingthecity,alth

¹⁰⁷Wyattin SaenluangRatchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page87n.

¹⁰⁸Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page87.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, Pages 87-8.

ough the *myowun* was able to evacuate the population, and re-took the city in the following year¹¹⁰. In 1782, Cao Manolot was ordered by the *myowun* to re-establish Thoeng in the Ing River valley, and, following Manolot's passing in 1784, Cao Attawalap anno, the son of Manolot's soldier brother, succeeded to the rulership of Thoeng and was ordered to re-establish Nanasa Burmes tributary¹¹¹. The previous year, 1783, Cao Cantapacot, having been promoted and given the name Chaophraya Mongkholwalayot, had been appointed ruler of Nan by the Siamese as well, ruling from Ta Pa, in modern-day Uttaradit Province¹¹². The potential conflict between Attawala and Mongkholwalayot would never come to a head, however, as a massive Burmese invasion of Lan Na and Siam was launched in the following year¹¹³, with an army under the command of the Pagan Prince attacking the Taistates of Lan Na, as part of a larger attempt to take Bangkok. Thoeng and Nan, in their weakened state, both surrendered to the advancing army, and Phrae followed suit¹¹⁴. Lan Na then hushed upon Lampang and Vieng Pa Sang, and an army of 18,000 soon advanced on Lampang from Chiang Saen¹¹⁵. After a protracted siege, lasting from January to March 1785, a large force from Bangkok ar-

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, Page 88.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²*Ibid.*, Page 89.

¹¹³Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*,

Page 160, describes the siege of Lampang as beginning on 1 January 1785, while Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*,

Page 89, offers a contradictory chronology, describing the sack of Thoeng as occurring over a year later on 10 January 1786.

¹¹⁴Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 89.

¹¹⁵Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 89.

ived to drive off the Burmese¹¹⁶. On the retreat, the Pagan Prince captured people from Phrae and Nant to settle in Chiang Saen¹¹⁷. The Burmese invasion of 1785 has been called the first great challenge to Rama I's new Siam¹¹⁸, and it marked yet another blow against the principalities of Lan Na. Despite this, the position of the Burmese garrison at Chiang Saen seem to have grown more precarious following the failure to take Lampang. In 1787, Cao Mang Chaiof Phrae, alongside the ruler of Muang Yong, a small principality north of Chiang Saen and east of Chiang Tung, launched a rebellion that succeeded in capturing Chiang Saen from the Burmese¹¹⁹. The *myowun* fled, but was captured by his supposedly, the ruler of Chiang Rai, and sent to Bangkok¹²⁰. Kavila and his brothers proceeded to attack Cao Mang Chai at Chiang Saen, and sent him to Bangkok as well¹²¹. In the massive invasion that the Burmese launched later in the same year, Chiang Saen was re-captured, with its population having been evacuated to Lampang, and the people of Thoeng, under the command of Cao Attawalapanno, having fled to Nan¹²². As one army marched through the abandoned plains of the Kok and Ing River basins, bound for Lampang, another attacked the Ping River basin from the west, across the Salween and over the Thongchai Range, and besieged Vie

¹¹⁶Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Pages 160-1.

¹¹⁷Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 89.

¹¹⁸Wyatt, Thailand, Page 132.

¹¹⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKRI, Page 133.

¹²⁰Ibid. Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle,

Page 162, claims that the ruler of Phrae, rather than capturing Chiang Saen, was captured by the Burmese and brought to Chiang Saen. The role of the ruler of Chiang Rai in both chronicles indicates that Chiang Rai must have existed as a Burmese-aligned principality at this point.

¹²¹Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle,

Page 162, while it claims that the ruler of Phrae was being assisted by Chiang Mai and Lampang, admits that he was forcefully removed.

¹²²Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Pages 89-90. Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 163, confirm the evacuation of the Kok River basin, and other, more remote areas, to Lampang.

ngPaSang¹²³. After a siege of two months, the forces of Bangkok again intervened, and the Burmese were forced to retreat¹²⁴.

Although the Burmese had re-

captured Chiang Saen, and maintained control over the Kok and Ing River basins, the tables continued to turn against them, as Cao Attawalapanno, after peacefully receiving the sole ruler-

ship of Nan from Chaophraya Mongkolwalayot, paid tribute to King Rama in 1788¹²⁵. It was under Attawalapanno's reign that the restoration of Nan would truly begin. The *Nan Chronicle* describes extensive meritorious works in the following five years, and relatively little conflict, and Nan's participation in later campaigns against the Burmese indicates that the principality must have regained a degree of its power. Tensions continued to simmer throughout the region, however, with Lan Na and Burmese forces engaging in small-

scale clashes across the Salween in 1789¹²⁶, and at Fang in 1792¹²⁷. In 1794, the combined forces of Lampang, Phrae, and Nan launched a massive attack on Chiang Saen, with an army that the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* describes as exceeding 10,000 men, but failed to take the city and were forced to withdraw¹²⁸. In 1798¹²⁹, the final Burmese attack on the Siamese-

aligned Tai principalities targeted the newly re-

established Chiang Mai. Two Siamese forces were dispatched, from Bangkok, under the comm

¹²³Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 163.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, Pages 163-4.

¹²⁵Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 92.

¹²⁶Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 165.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, Page 167

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, Page 168.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, Page 169. Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 247, lists 1802 as the date.

and of the Uparat, the former Chaophraya Surasi, and from the northern central provinces, under the command of Krommaluang Thepharirak and Phraya Yommarat, and they were joined by a Tai force from Vieng Chan, under the command of Cao Anuvong, the heir apparent of Vieng Chan¹³⁰. The Siamese and Tai army deployed to break the siege advanced from the south, via Muang Li, where an advance force clashed with and defeated the Burmese¹³¹. The Burmese had fortified themselves in the vicinity of Lamphun, where a second clash occurred, sending the Burmese retreating northwards and leaving the way open for the Siamese to break the siege of Chiang Mai¹³². At the start of the 19th century, the Cao Chet Ton polity formed the most powerful principality of Lan Na, with Cao Kaviaruling over a restored Chiang Mai, and Cao Duang Thip, the fourth of these seven brothers, over Lampang¹³³. Nan and Phrae were considerably weaker, and, prior to the 19th century, seem to have launched no expeditions of their own, against either the Burmese or the Siamese. Despite lacking the strength of the Cao Chet Ton, Nan was nonetheless in a very advantageous position, having a relatively stable population that contained both the people of Nan who had taken refuge in Ta Pa with Mongkolwalayot, and the people of Nan and Thoeng who had fled the Ing River basin with Attawalapanno. This population was boosted by refugees from Muang Yong, Chiang Khong, and Chiang Rai, who arrived in 1790, after a Burmese campaign had ended at Muang Yong-

¹³⁰Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR1, Page 248.

¹³¹Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 170.

¹³²*Ibid.*, Pages 169-70. See Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR1, Pages 247-54, for a vivid description of the entire campaign.

¹³³Sarassawadee Oongsakul, The Nan Chronicle, Page 138.

led rebellion, which will be discussed below¹³⁴. This population boost seem to have benefited Nan considerably, and in 1801, the old city of Nan was formally re-established¹³⁵. To the east, Luang Prabang, another power which would later play a role in the Chiang Tung Wars, had also fallen under Siamese suzerainty¹³⁶. The Burmese, however, remained in Chiang Saen, and the effort to drive them out would bring the Tai principalities of Lan Nain to Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna for the first time.

2.2.2 The Decline of Chiang Tung and its Neighbors

Chiang Tung seem to have held its ground quite well in the 16th century wars between Siam and Burma. It was not directly invaded by Bayinnaung during the first Burmese conquest of Ayutthaya, and the ruling line of Chiang Tung was not broken by the Burmese in the ensuing conflict¹³⁷. In the two centuries between Bayinnaung's rule and the rise of the Konbaung dynasty, the *Jengtung State Chronicle* presents the vision of a far more stable principality than that of Chiang Mai. The reign of Cao Kham Tao, the first ruler after the death of Bayinnaung, is described by the chronicle as a time of "happiness and tranquility"¹³⁸. Aside from one violent war with the Tai Ya principalities of Muang

¹³⁴Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages 94-5.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, Page 98.

¹³⁶Wyatt, "Siam and Laos", Page 21.

¹³⁷Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 246.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, Page 249.

Nai and Muang Lon across the Salween¹³⁹, the following reigns come across as being largely uneventful, with a clear and linear succession of rulers, most of whom enjoyed long reigns¹⁴⁰. In the mid-18th century, however, around the time of Alaungpaya's accession to the throne of Burma, Chiang Tung was engaged in a violent civil war, prompted by a rebellion against the ruling prince Maung Myo, which culminated in the desertion of Chiang Tung city, and a brief period of interregnum¹⁴¹. After the death of Maung Myo, his rival, and, according to the chronicle, half brother, Cao Muang Sam, was appointed ruler of Chiang Tung¹⁴². It was in Muang Sam's reign that the wars between Burma and the Chinese would occur, the opening battle of which would be fought in Chiang Tung¹⁴³. In 1765¹⁴⁴, a Burmese force marched through the Chiang Tung region to attack Chiang Rung, conscripting men from Chiang Tung, including Cao Muang Sam himself, on the advance¹⁴⁵. Whether the attack was successful or not is left vague in the chronicle, which describes a victory by Cao Muang Sam and one of the Burmese commanders, followed by the defeat of the other Burmese commander by the Chinese. Regardless, the Chinese counter-attack was swift, and resulted in the evacuation of Chiang Tung, and the brief appointment by the Chinese of Cao Bin, one of the sons of the late Maung Myo, as the ruler of Chiang Tung¹⁴⁶. Cao Muang Sam proceeded to launch a-

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 250, and Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, Pages 404-5.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Pages 250-2, and Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, Page 406.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Pages 253-5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Charles Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), Page 100.

¹⁴⁴ Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 255, gives a date roughly corresponding to 1763, but 1765 is the accepted date of this event.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 255.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

invasion of Chiang Tung, with the help of the Burmese, capturing not only Chiang Tung, but Muang Yang, a small principality to the north of Chiang Tung, which was, at the time, ruled by Cao Kang Jai, another son of Maung Myo and one of Cao Muang Sam's chief rivals¹⁴⁷. In 1766, after retaking Chiang Tung, Muang Sam was forced to abandon the city again, as Cao Kang Jai and Cao Bin, supported by the forces of Muang La and Chiang Rung, launched a second effort to capture the city¹⁴⁸. As in Lan Na, war took its toll. An attack by Cao Muang Sam's rivals, supported by Chiang Rung, forced him to flee and resulted in the burning of Chiang Tung¹⁴⁹. Cao Muang Sam, with assistance from Chiang Saen and Chiang Rai, a region then still under Burmese control, was able to retake the city, but the conflict ended in a stalemate, with Cao Muang Sam unable to decisively defeat his rivals¹⁵⁰. The chronicles describe a year of famine, possibly a result of the frequent wars, which led to Cao Muang Sam being sent to Inwa and briefly replaced as ruler of Chiang Tung by Cao Kang Jai¹⁵¹.

In 1780, Cao Muang Sam fell ill during a Burmese campaign against the Sipsongpanna, and some time later passed away, and was succeeded by his son, Cao Kong Tai¹⁵². It is at this point that the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* recounts the earliest Lan Na expeditions into the Tai regions of the upper Mekong. In 1787, following the fall of Chiang Saen to the ruler of Phrae, but prior to the ensuing Burmese

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Pages 255-6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Page 256.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, Page 407, names this ruler as "Sao Mong Kang" (Cao Muang Kang).

¹⁵² Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 257, places his passing in the same year as the expedition, but the same source, Page 258, places it in about 1786. Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, agrees with the second date, placing Cao Muang Sam's passing in 1786.

se assault on Lan Na, Cao Kavila launched a raid against Muang Pan, a Tai state west of the Salween¹⁵³, and sent a delegation to Chiang Tung and Muang Yong, and letters to the rulers of Chiang Rai, Fang, Phrao, Muang Sat, and Muang Pu, encouraging rebellion against the Burmese¹⁵⁴. The ruler of Chiang Tung, presumably Cao Kong Tai, responded negatively to the offer presented by Kavila, claiming, according to the chronicle, that he feared for the safety of his people¹⁵⁵.

Many of the other principalities, however, responded favorably to the offer. Chief among these was Muang Yong, a small principality to the east of Chiang Tung, whose rulers would later play a key role in the events leading up to the Chiang Tung Wars. As with many of the Tai principalities, Muang Yong had its own legends and its own history, which recounted its vassalage, at various points in the past, to Chiang Rung, Chiang Mai, and Burma¹⁵⁶. Muang Yong had, following Bayinnaung's invasion in the 16th century, been placed under the suzerainty of the principality of Chiang Khaeng¹⁵⁷. In 1746, the ruler of Muang Yong had rebelled unsuccessfully against still powerful Chiang Khaeng¹⁵⁸. In 1780, as mentioned above, Muang Yong forces had fought alongside the Burmese in the raid against Muang Ngu in the Nan valley that had relocated Cao Manolot and his people to Chiang Saen. At about the same time, Muang Yong seem to have received a boost in its power, as

¹⁵³Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 162. Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Pages 456-9, discuss the history of Muang Pan. It does not mention the Chiang Mai raid, but confirms the name of the ruler – Cao No Kham – who the Chiang Mai chronicle claims was captured.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., Pages 162-3.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., Page 163.

¹⁵⁶Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Pages 503-7, contains a translation of the Muang Yong chronicle. It offers little in the way of concrete dates prior to the 19th century, but offers valuable insight into the cultural memory and oral history of the Muang Yong people.

¹⁵⁷Grabowsky and Renoo, The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng, Page 96.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., Page 102.

themisruleofCaoFaWaeninChiangKhaengin1781ledtotheflightoflargenumbersofthepopulationacrosstheMekongtothevicinityofMuangYong¹⁵⁹.MuangYongdidnotpassbacktoChiangKhaenguntiltheriseofCaoFaWaen'ssuccessor,aneventthatthe*ChiangKhaengChronicle*placesin1788,ayearafterthecity'srebellion¹⁶⁰.In1787,therulerofMuangYong,havingrebelledagainsttheBurmesewiththerulerofPhrae,aneventforwhichtheLanNadelegationisgivencreditinth*ChiangMaiChronicle*,wasforcedtoevacuateacrosstheMekongtoLuangPhukhaaheadoftheBurmeseadvance¹⁶¹.The*ChiangMaiChronicle*claimsthattheMuangYongarmywasdefeatedin1778,butthe*NanChronicle*depictstherulerofMuangYongashavingshelteredatLuangPhukhauntilaBurmeseattackin1780resultedinhiscapture¹⁶².Itispossiblethathisson,whoth*NanChronicle*claimswasbeingraisedatthecourtofInwa,wouldhavebeenappointedtosucceedhim.ChiangKhaeng'sruleoverMuangYongseemstohavebeenbrokenbytheBurmesein1797,shortlybeforethefinalassaultonLanNa¹⁶³.

2.2.3TheOriginsoftheChiangRungCrisis

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., Page103and

Page139n.GrabowskyandRenooarguethatitwasMuangYong'srebellionagainsttheBurmesehatprompteditsturntoChiangKhaeng.

¹⁶¹WyattandAroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle,

Page163.TheflightofthepeopleofMuangYongisconfirmedin Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page90.

¹⁶²Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page94.

¹⁶³GrabowskyandRenoo,The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng, Pages 104-5.

One political casualty of the Sino-

Burmese border wars of the 1760s was the reigning Saenwifa of Chiang Rung, named in the chronicles as Tao Sao Wun¹⁶⁴. As damaging as the war had been to Chiang Tung, they seem to have ca-

used proportionately more damage to the more populous Sipsongpanna. The chronicles describe frequent raids from Burma, and the flight of large numbers of refugees from the Sipsongpanna, exacerbated by the supposedly "weak and incapable"

rule of Tao Sao Wun, who, in 1767, was promptly deposed by the Chinese¹⁶⁵. He was succeeded as Saenwifa by his eldest son, Cao Namphung¹⁶⁶, while his second son, Cao Tian, was appointed

Uparat¹⁶⁷. Under suspicion of collaborating with rebellious leaders in Muang Nai and Muang Yong, Cao Namphung was arrested by the Chinese in 1773, and he and Cao Tian were deposed, ab-

and being placed on the succession of Cao Namphung's son Cao Can, and Cao Tian's sons, Cao Mahaphom and Cao Mahakhanan¹⁶⁸. In 1777, the Chinese appointed Cao Suwan, the younger brother of Cao Namphung and the Uparat, as Saenwifa¹⁶⁹.

Cao Suwan reigned for 19 years, and upon his death in 1796, was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Cao Mahawong¹⁷⁰. The Burmese,

however, sparked a crisis by, instead of approving Cao Mahawong, appointing his uncle, Cao

¹⁶⁴Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 377.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., Pages 89-

90. The Chiang Rung sources tend to disagree with the other sources about a number of dates, but the date 1767 is quite believable for this event, as it occurred contemporary Sino-Burmese border wars. McLeod suggests that he died rather than being deposed.

¹⁶⁶McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 377.

¹⁶⁷Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page

90, gives the name of the Uparat as Tao Cao Tian, while McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 377, names him Chou Upa Raja. For the sake of this paper, he will be referred to as Cao Tian.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., Page 90-1.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., Page 91. McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 377, names this ruler Chou Thi Wan.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

Thian, the deposed Uparat, as Saenwifa¹⁷¹. Although there is no record of any actual fighting surrounding this disputed succession, it is clear that tensions were raised, and the crisis which would later bring first Lan Na and then the Siamese into war with Chiang Tung would be fought by the descendants of Cao Namphung and Cao Thian against those of Cao Suwan¹⁷². In the meantime, Cao Thian's death put an end to the crisis¹⁷³, and Cao Mahawong was confirmed by the Burmese in 1800¹⁷⁴. Cao Mahawong passed away two years later, sparking another succession crisis¹⁷⁵. With Cao Mahawong's son, Cao Mahanoi, deemed too young to rule, Cao Can, the son of Cao Namphung who had been blocked from the succession by the Chinese, was appointed Saenwifa by the Burmese, despite the objections of the Chinese¹⁷⁶, who appointed Cao Mahanoi despite the matter of his age¹⁷⁷. Upon taking the throne, Cao Can immediately sent a contingent of guards to attack and murder his cousin, Cao Mahaphom, the son of Cao Thian, at Chiang Lo¹⁷⁸. This prompted an uprising in the *muang* east of the Mekong, who supported Cao Mahaphom, which succeeded in forcing Cao Can to flee to Chiang Tung. The uprising was led by a ruler of Muang Phong¹⁷⁹, likely Cao Motkham, who enjoyed a relatively long reign and later passed away in 1834¹⁸⁰. Cao Can, accused of

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 377.

¹⁷⁴ Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 92.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 377.

¹⁷⁸ Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 92.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *PCR*, Pages 1-2.

attempting to instigate a war between Burma and China, was arrested by the Burmese less than a year after his ascension to the throne, and exiled to Muang Nai¹⁸¹.

2.3 Chiang Rung Crises and Chiang Tung Wars, 1802-1837

The first campaign in the long 19th century rivalry between Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung occurred in 1802, shortly before the fall of Chiang Saen. Following the fall of Chiang Saen, the conflict escalated dramatically in both scope and aggressiveness, and occurred simultaneously with the expansion of Nan's power and influence into the Tai Lue region. This was the same time that the reign of Cao Mahawong was coming to an end, and the first of several 19th century succession crises was about to occur in Chiang Rung. The first involvement of the Tai of Lan Nain in the succession of the Sipsongpanna subsequently occurred in 1806, and, in a sequence of events which would repeat themselves in the mid-19th century, interference in the Sipsongpanna would escalate to war against the Burmese in the Chiang Tung region. These campaigns were a continuation of the 18th century efforts to restore the Lan Na principalities, and, following several decades of detente from 1812 to 1847, they themselves would be continued in the later Chiang Tung Wars of the mid-19th century.

¹⁸¹Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 93.

The movement of population from the principalities of the Chiang Tung region, such as Chiang Tung, Muang Yong, and Muang Sat, held a dual purpose to the Lan Na principalities. In addition to bolstering to the manpower of the Lan Na principalities, it would also create an empty zone between Lan Na and the Burmese, and prevent the Burmese from making use of the resources and population of Chiang Tung and its neighbors in their campaigns against Lan Na.

2.3.1 The First Chiang Tung Expedition, 1802

Following the defeat of the final Burmese invasion in 1798, attacks from the Lan Na principalities in to the Tai Yai and Tai Khoen regions intensified significantly. Muang Pu, on the eastern bank of the Salween west of Chiang Tung, and formerly one of the states which had rebelled during the 1787 Burmese invasion, was the site of heavy fighting during this period¹⁸², and its resettlement by Tai Yai following the Chiang Tung Wars¹⁸³ seem to indicate that a degree of depopulation occurred. In 1802, a sizable Lan Na force took Muang Sat, and, departing Muang Sat, advanced on Chiang Tung for the first time in the 19th century¹⁸⁴. Cao Kong Tai responded by evacuating the city, and the Lan Na forces entered Chiang Tung unopposed, but abandoned the city shortly after, and returned to Chiang Mai¹⁸⁵. Although Lan Na's brief occupation of Chiang Tung in 1802 is not confirmed by the Chiang Tung chronicles, it indicates a principality significantly weakened by the Sino-

¹⁸²Ibid., Pages 170-3.

¹⁸³Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS. Vol. 2, Part 2, Pages 474-5.

¹⁸⁴Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 174.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., Page 175.

Burmese hostilities of the late 18th century. From the disastrous reign of Maung Myo to the accession of Cao Kong Tai, Chiang Tung had suffered over three decades of dynastic conflict, interspersed by invasions from Burma, Chiang Rung, and China. This, when compared with the relative peace enjoyed by Chiang Tung from the 16th century onwards, indicates that this was a period of severe decline for Chiang Tung. The dynastic conflict of the reigns of Maung Myo and Cao Muang Sams seem to have largely burnt itself out by the ascension of Cao Kong Tai, and receives no mention in the records of the latter's reign. However, if Chiang Tung had found stability under Cao Kong Tai, it was a precarious stability, as indicated by the newly-ascended prince's refusal to rebel against the Burmese in 1787, and by the ease with which the Lan Na forces took the city in 1802. Although the Burmese still held Chiang Saen in 1802, the forces of Lan Na were on the advance throughout the Tai principalities, and everything would change in the coming years.

The brevity and relative bloodlessness of the campaign is also worthy of note. The previous Lan Na mission to Chiang Tung, in 1787, had been purely diplomatic, but the 1802 campaign was the first military expedition to the region.

It did not prove to be a violent campaign, and although the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* explicitly states that Cao Kong Tai feared the approaching Lan Na forces and evacuated his population in anticipation of the Lan Na advance¹⁸⁶, the campaign ended without a major confrontation.

¹⁸⁶Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 174.

2.3.2 The Fall of Chiang Saen, 1803-1804

In 1803, a two-year war began which would see the final expulsion of the Burmese from Chiang Saen and a dramatic expansion of power for the Lan Nap principalities. In early February¹⁸⁷, an army from Bangkok, commanded by Krommaluang Thepharirak and Phraya Yommarat¹⁸⁸ was joined by armies from Chiang Mai, commanded by Cao Kavila¹⁸⁹, Nan, commanded by Cao Attawalapanno¹⁹⁰, and Vientiane, commanded by Cao Anuvong¹⁹¹, with the force totaling around 20,000 men¹⁹². The siege lasted for three months, and ended with the withdrawal of the Siamese and Thai forces ahead of the rainy season in early May¹⁹³. A second attempt was made by the combined force in early 1804, but dwindling supplies forced the Bangkok forces to withdraw from the north¹⁹⁴. Having failed to take Chiang Saen with a large force and protracted siege, a smaller expedition was launched, commanded by Cao Attawalapanno of Nan and the Uparat of Chiang Mai, and numbering approximately 3,000 men¹⁹⁵. It is unclear how the small force managed to take the city, but the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*

¹⁸⁷Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 176, says 6 February, while Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 99, says 4 February.

¹⁸⁸Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 257.

¹⁸⁹Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 176.

¹⁹⁰Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 99.

¹⁹¹Chaopheaya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 257.

¹⁹²Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 99.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, Page 99, says 4 May, and Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 176, says 1 May.

¹⁹⁴Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Pages 269-70.

¹⁹⁵Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 177, lists 1,200 men commanded by the Uparat, while Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*,

ic describes a battle outside the wall, and both the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* and the *Nan Chronicle* describe the death of the *myowun* as the Tai forces entered the city¹⁹⁶. The *Dynastic Chronicles* provide a slightly different version of events, claiming that the Burmese commander opted to flee the city due to lack of supplies, and was killed by the pursuing armies, which, in the narrative of the *Dynastic Chronicles*, were still supported by troops from Vieng Chan¹⁹⁷.

The fall of Chiang Saen in 1804 effectively ended Burmese control over the Kok River valley and marked a fundamental shift in the politics of the Tai regions. The Burmese found themselves unable to effect control over the Lan Na region, and were unable to mount any further efforts against the Kok or Ping River valleys. Whereas all of Lan Na had been a disputed region previously, in 1804 the dispute ended definitively, with the entire region having fallen under the control of a handful of independent Tai principalities under Siamese suzerainty. Although Kavila's interest in Chiang Tung had preceded the fall of Chiang Saen, it clearly escalated afterwards, as the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna became the new disputed regions. The decisive expedition against Chiang Tung occurred simultaneously with the attack on Chiang Saen. A small force was dispatched directly from Chiang Mai, with orders to bring the people of Chiang Tung to Chiang Mai¹⁹⁸.

The events by which Cao Kong Tai and his family were brought to Chiang Saen remain somewhat mysterious. The *Jengtung State Chronicle* states that Cao Kong Tai, along with the ruling family a

Page 99, lists 3,000 men, with Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Nan, each contributing a third of the total force, and Cao Attawal commanding the Nan contingent.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 177-8, and Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 99.

¹⁹⁷ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 70.

¹⁹⁸ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 179.

nd population of the Chiang Tung valley, were captured¹⁹⁹. Cao Mahakhanan, the youngest son of Cao Kong Tai, managed to escape from the Siamese and fled to Muang Yang, north of Chiang Tung, with a small group of followers²⁰⁰. Meanwhile, Cao Kong Tai, having offered tribute to Cao Kavil, was temporarily settled with his family and followers in Chiang Saen²⁰¹. By contrast, the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* describes the movement as having been entirely voluntary, with Cao Kong Tai having graciously accepted the protection of Chiang Mai and the suzerainty of the Siamese, and Cao Mahakhanan having remained, not to defy Chiang Mai, but to take care of the remaining population and oppose the Burmese²⁰². Similarly, the report received by Scott and Hardiman during their survey of Chiang Tung contrasts sharply with that given received by McLeod over 70 years earlier. Scott and Hardiman discuss this themselves, noting that while the people of Chiang Tung insisted that the Lan Na forces had forcefully invaded their territory and carried off their rulers, that McLeod's report instead gave the impression that the rulers of Chiang Tung had schemed with Lan Na and the Siamese to turn against the Burmese, and that the Lan Na invasion of 1804 had simply been to remove the ruling family of Chiang Tung to safety²⁰³. Both reports are equally likely to be true, and in deed, both may have been true in their own right. McLeod as much admits that "some of those [in Chiang Mai] were afterward taken and brought away against their will"²⁰⁴, while Scott and Hardiman suggest that it was the brother of Cao Kong Tai who had brought in the Chian

¹⁹⁹Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 258.

²⁰⁰*Ibid.*

²⁰¹*Ibid.*

²⁰²Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 179.

²⁰³Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Pages 411-2.

²⁰⁴McLeod in *Ibid.*, Page 412.

gMaiforces, and that Cao Kong Tai was unaware of the scheme²⁰⁵. Considering the nature of the times, an invitation for assistance would have likely had the same effect as an unsolicited invasion, with the entire population removed to Lan Nain either case, and even in the event of an unsolicited invasion, the Chiang Mai forces would likely have found allies within the ruling family of Chiang Tung. Indeed, they did, in the end, find an ally in the person of Cao Mahakhanan, who they would support in a protracted war in the coming decade. Also, due to subsequent events, and the eventual outbreak of hostilities between Siam and Chiang Tung, it is likely that the people of Chiang Tung interviewed by Scott and Hardiman would have developed far more negative views of Lan Na and the Siamese than those interviewed by McLeod in Chiang Mai in 1837.

In 1805, a force of 1,000 was sent to Chiang Tung a second time. Marching northward through the Chiang Tung valley, this force penetrated as far as Muang Laem, and clashed with the Burmese at Muang Nga and Pang Sang²⁰⁶ in the Luai River valley²⁰⁷. Muang Yang had been the location to which Cao Mahakhanan had previously withdrawn, and as such, it is possible that the Burmese force which the Chiang Mai force clashed with was engaged in attacking Cao Mahakhanan. This would merely be the start of what the *Jengtung State Chronicle* describes as over a decade of defensive battles against the Burmese and the Tai Yai²⁰⁸. Chiang Mai's expeditions northward would continue with a campaign to Muang Yong later in the same year. As with the previous year's expedition to Chiang Tung, sources conflict in regard to the events of this campaign. The *Chiang Mai Chronicle*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Page 411.

²⁰⁶ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 180.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Page 191.

²⁰⁸ Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 259.

cle describes a large force led by Cao Kavilah himself that impressed the ruler of Muang Yong into submitting²⁰⁹. Rather than describing the movement of Muang Yong's population in 1805, the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* instead describes the Chiang Mai forces as having assisted in the development of the *muang*²¹⁰, and used the Yong River valley as a base of operations in subsequent campaigns. By contrast, the Muang Yong sources used by Scott and Hardiman describe the population as having been carried away in 1803, a date likely corresponding to the 1805 expedition described in the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*. In this version of events, a number of people of Muang Yong revolted against their captors at Muang Hua Pong and fled to join Cao Mahakhanan, gradually re-establishing the principality of Muang Yong over the coming decades²¹¹. Considering that in the ensuing years, the Lan Na principalities would conduct extensive campaigns in the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna, it is highly unlikely that the depopulation of Muang Yong would have served any purpose in 1803 or 1805. Although the Yong people were eventually moved to Lampun and Chiang Mai, and although some of them did eventually return to ally with Cao Mahakhanan and re-establish their principality, this would have occurred at a later date. The dating of these events will be discussed below, within the chronological narrative. It also must be emphasized that, in the years following 1805, Cao Mahakhanan would not be an enemy of Chiang Mai, but an ally, and that th

²⁰⁹Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 180.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*, Page 181.

²¹¹Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Page 508.

e Burmesewould soon return to challenge the forces of the Lan Na principalities in the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna.

Following the submission of Muang Yong, a large effort was launched by the Lan Na principalities to exert influence to the east of the Mekong and in the Sipsongpanna. The *Chiang Mai Chronicle* interprets the massive campaigning which occurred in 1805 as nothing less than the revival of old Lan Na, observing that the towns of the Sipsongpanna raided by Kavila's followers had formerly been ruled by Mangrai²¹². These expeditions are confirmed by the sources of the Sipsongpanna, that describe the advance of a Lan Na force, the establishment of an encampment at Muang Tha Lo, and the submission of all the *muang* of the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna to Chiang Mai²¹³. Instead of Muang Tha Lo, the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* describes Kavila as having advanced from Muang Yong to Chiang Khang, a small principality on the Luai River between Muang Yu and Muang Wa²¹⁴, where he remained for over a month, taking tribute from Muang Wai in the Chiang Tung region, a number of principalities of the Sipsongpanna, including Muang Luang, Muang Cae, Muang Hon, Muang Rai, and Chiang Coeng, and various highland groups²¹⁵. It is worth noting that the five principalities of the Sipsongpanna listed as having offered tribute to Cao Kavila in the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* are all located to the west of the Mekong.

²¹²Ibid., Page 181.

²¹³Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 93.

²¹⁴Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 383.

²¹⁵Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Pages 181-4

Simultaneous events to the east of the Mekong are recorded in the *Nan Chronicle*, which describe an expedition by Cao Attawalapanno through Chiang Khaeng and into the Sipsongpanna²¹⁶. Given the Nan forces' advance through Chiang Khaeng, it seems likely that while Chiang Mai focused their forces west of the Mekong, Nan focused their forces to the east. This arrangement is strongly implied in the *Chiang Khaeng Chronicle*²¹⁷. In addition to Chiang Khaeng, the Nan forces also advanced through Muang Phong, and, although Chiang Rung is located west of the Mekong, received the tribute of the rulers of that city as well²¹⁸. As with Chiang Mai's expeditions west of the Mekong, the interpretation of Nan's expeditions vary in interpretation. The *Nan Chronicle* provides a similar narrative to the *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, describing the Nan forces as having been prepared for war, but the rulers of Chiang Khaeng and Chiang Rung having submitted voluntarily, without a struggle²¹⁹. The *Chiang Khaeng Chronicle* is ambiguous as to whether or not the Nan forces were resisted, but defines it fairly clearly as having been an invasion²²⁰. The representative of the Sipsongpanna subsequently sent back with the Nan forces is named as Cao Nammawong in both chronicles. The *Nan Chronicle* identifies him as the uncle of the reigning Saenwifa²²¹. Nan consolidated their control over the eastern bank of the Mekong with the creation of a settlement at Luang Phukha

²¹⁶Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 100.

²¹⁷Grabowsky and Renoo, *The Chronicle of Chiang Khaeng*, Page 107.

²¹⁸*Ibid.*, Page 138.

²¹⁹Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 100.

²²⁰Grabowsky and Renoo, *The Chronicle of Chiang Khaeng*, Page 107; Page 138.

²²¹Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 100.

²²², due south of modern-day Muang Sing and due north of modern-day Nan, which would form Nan's main outpost east of the Mekong until the end of the 19th century. The chronicles of Chiang Mai, Chiang Khaeng, Nan, and the Sipsongpanna, as well as the *Dynastic Chronicle*, describe missions to Bangkok, with the captive princes in tow, to offer tribute to King Ramal. For Nan, this was the start of an involvement in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna which would eventually lead to the outbreak of the Chiang Tung Wars. Ramal seems to have been pragmatic in his acceptance of tribute from the upper Mekong principalities, and Thiphakorawong writes that he rejected the tribute of Chiang Rung, due to the impossibility of defending Chiang Rung from the Burmese and Chinese, and allowed the Chiang Rung prince to return²²³. While Bangkok's remoteness from Chiang Rung made it impossible for the Siamese to defend, the Lan Na principalities were much closer, and as such, had far greater interest in controlling the regions which had been opened up to them, as well as far greater ability to do so. Therefore, although Chiang Rung, at the end of 1805, was not a Siamese tributary, it had fallen within the spheres of influence of both Nan and Chiang Mai.

2.3.3 The War of Cao Can of Chiang Rung, 1806-1808

²²² Grabowsky and Renoo, *The Chiang Khaeng Chronicle*, Page 138.

²²³ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKRI*, Page 21.

In late 1806 and early 1807, a new round of campaigning began in the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna. In 1806, the Burmese governor of Muang Nai²²⁴ appointed Cao Canto accompany a force of Burmese to attack a Lan Na force encamped at Muang Tha Lo²²⁵. The army was defeated, and Cao Can seized upon the opportunity to defect to Kavila's side. This expedition, and the ensuing defection, would mark the start of a protracted period of warfare, in which the Burmese and the Lan Na principalities would battle for control of the Sipsongpanna and the land east of the Salween. Cao Can's defection prompted a large-scale Burmese invasion of Chiang Rung. Cao Kavila was alerted to the advance of the Burmese force by Muang Yong²²⁶. An army was then drawn from Lamphun, and joined by the forces of Phrae and Nan, and moved to attack the Burmese force at Chiang Rung²²⁷. After the defeat of this army, the Lan Na force sacked the city, capturing both people and supplies²²⁸. Upon the withdrawal of the Tai forces, however, the Burmese returned to occupy Chiang Rung with a 10,000 strong force²²⁹. An army from Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, and Nan, supported by some of the captive Tai Lur princes, was sent to fight at Chiang Rung, while Cao Kavila sent a force of 5,000 men to garrison Chiang Saen, and a second force, from Lamphun, crossed the Salween to block a second Burmese advance at Chiang Thong²³⁰. Defeated at Chiang Rung, the Burmese fled up the Luai River valley, and

²²⁴Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 424, lists a Bohmu Mingyi Maha Mingaung as having governed Muang Nai from 1802 to 1806, while Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 93, names the governor as Ngon Moang Meng.

²²⁵Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Pages 93-4.

²²⁶Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 190.

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Ibid., Pages 190-1.

²²⁹Ibid., Page 191.

²³⁰Ibid.,

were ambushed at Pang Sang by a Lan Na force commanded by Cao Phutthawong, forcing flight northwards, towards Muang Laem, where they were caught and defeated by the Siamese-aligned forces²³¹. This marked the end of the conflict as related in Sipsongpanna sources²³², and in the ensuing years, the focus of the fighting would drift away from the Sipsongpanna and towards the high country east of the Salween. The fighting had, however, already taken a devastating toll on the Sipsongpanna, with Tai Lu sources describing the total depopulation of a number of the Sipsongpanna's cities, including Chiang Rung itself²³³.

2.3.4 The War of Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Tung, 1808-1812

In 1808, the Burmese and the Tai of Lan Na clashed again, as the former launched an assault on Muang Yang and Muang Luai, where Cao Mahakhanan had established his rule, independent, for the time, of either the Burmese or the Siamese²³⁴. Attacked by a massive Burmese army²³⁵, Mahakhanan was forced to flee, and appealed to Lan Na for help. A small army from Lamphun and Chiang Mai moved to Muang Yong and launched a large-scale conscription effort into the surrounding territories. In 1809, a Lan Na force of about 4,300 wa

Page 191. Chiang Thong (Keng Tawng) is located between Muang Nai and the Salween. See Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1, Page 368.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 94.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 192.

²³⁵ Ibid., describes the army as consisting of 12,000 men, while Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 259, says it contained “the nine cawfas of the western states and Burmese troops”.

sdefeatedbytheBurmeseataplacelcalledMuangPhiang,andforcedtowithdrawtoMuangYongfortherainyseason,whileCaoMahakhananencampedatMuangMa²³⁶,tothenortheastofChiangTung,inthewatershedoftheLaemRiver²³⁷.Followingtherainyseason,theLanNaarmyinMuangYongwasreinforcedbyabout1,700menfromChiangMai,Lamphun,andLampang,andaprotractedwarbeganwhichwouldlastuntil1812²³⁸.In1811,aBurmeseattackforcedCaoMahakhanantofleeacrosstheMekong,andappealoncemoretoLanNaforhelp²³⁹.Inresponse,anarmyofLamphunandChiangMai,commandedbyCaoKavilahimselfandsupportedbytheexiledChiangTung rulers,joinedtheLanNaarmybasedatMuangYong,andadvancedtoMuangMa²⁴⁰.FromMuangMa,theLanNaforces,numbering5,000,besiegedtheBurmeseatMuangYangfromApriluntilJuly,beforerunningoutofsuppliesandretreatingtoMuangYong²⁴¹.

ThisfinaldefeatatMuangYangmarkedaturningpointintheinvolvementoftheLanNa principalitiesintheChiangTungregion,anduntilthe1849invasionofChiangTung,itmarkedtheendoftheviolence.ThebesiegingforceswithdrewtoMuangYongandencampedfortherainyseason²⁴².ItwasatthispointthatthemassmigrationofpeoplefromMuangYongtoChiangMaiandLamphun occurred,notin1805.WhentheLanNaforcesbegantheirfinalwithdrawalfromMuangYong,theywereaccompaniedbythepopulationsofbothMuangYongandthesurroundingprincipalities,includingMuangPhayak,MuangLen,MuangKai,andChiangKhang,whileCaoMahakhananand

²³⁶Ibid.

²³⁷ScottandHardiman, GUBSS,Part2,Vol.2, Page396.

²³⁸WyattandAroonrut,The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 192-3.

²³⁹Ibid., Page 193.

²⁴⁰Ibid.

²⁴¹Ibid., Page194.

²⁴²Ibid.

his followers were arranged to be settled at Chiang Saen²⁴³. It is clear that Cao Mahakhanan's cooperation with the Lan Na forces was voluntary, as he was a Lan Na ally and had suffered defeat along with the Lan Na forces, but it is ambiguous as to whether or not the people of Muang Yong moved voluntarily. It seems likely that it was a voluntary movement, given the scale of the migration, as well as the positive relations between Muang Yong and the other Lan Na principalities. Nonetheless, a rebellion clearly did occur.

En route to Chiang Saen, Mahakhanan received word from a follower, Thao Kham Wang, who had remained at Muang Yang and sworn allegiance to the Burmese, that the Burmese were willing to make an alliance with Mahakhanan in exchange for tribute²⁴⁴. In 1813, Cao Mahakhanan fled Chiang Saen with his followers, joined by the people of Muang Yong, and returned to Muang Yang, offering tribute to the Burmese²⁴⁵. Two years later, he moved his people to the Chiang Tung valley and began the restoration of the city²⁴⁶. In 1814, Muang Yong was formally recognized as a tributary of Chiang Tung, and a ruler named Cao Phutthawong was appointed to rule the principality with the title of *myoza*²⁴⁷.

At the same time that the people of Muang Yong were being relocated to the Ping River valley, Nan launched a similar expedition, with a similar purpose, to the east of the Mekong. The ruler of Nan, at the time, was Cao Sumanadevarat, the youngest son of the late Cao Aliyawong, and the brother of

²⁴³Ibid.

²⁴⁴Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 259.

²⁴⁵Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Page 194.

²⁴⁶Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 260.

²⁴⁷Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 508.

he former rulers Chaophraya Mongkolwalayot and Cao Witun. He had succeeded Cao Attawalapan after the latter's death in 1810²⁴⁸. In 1812, he brought this force east of the Mekong and launched a massive series of raids against Muang La and Muang Phong in the Sipsongpanna²⁴⁹, as well as Chiang Khaeng and Luang Phukha²⁵⁰. These sources all agree that these were aggressive raids, with the *Nan Chronicle* describing the 6,000 people moved to Nanas' prisoners²⁵¹, and the *Chiang Khaeng Chronicle* describing the Nan forces as having 'raided, and deported the caofao of Chiang Khaeng and all the inhabitants [of Chiang Khaeng] and of Muang Luang Pukha'²⁵². As in 1805, the captive rulers were brought before the King in Bangkok, this time Ram II, and offered the allegiance to the Siamese²⁵³.

2.3.5 Cao Mahanoi and Cao Mahawang

In Chiang Rung, the chain of succession crises that had begun in 1767 continued. In 1817, having newly come of age, Cao Mahanoi, son of the late Cao Mahawang, was formally made Saenwifa by the Chinese, and his uncle, Cao Mahawang, was appointed regent²⁵⁴. Regardless, the Burmese refused to acknowledge the appointment of Cao Mahanoi, and the following year²⁵⁵, appointed

²⁴⁸Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 104.

²⁴⁹*Ibid.*, Pages 104-5.

²⁵⁰Grabowsky and Renoo, *The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng*, Page 108.

²⁵¹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 105.

²⁵²Grabowsky and Renoo, *The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng*, Page 108.

²⁵³Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 105.

²⁵⁴Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 95.

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*

dCaoMahawangashissuccessor²⁵⁶. ThetwoSaenwifaruledsimultaneouslyforsometime,after whichtimeMahanoisoughtoutsideassistance²⁵⁷. TheTaiLusourcesstatethathesenttoNanandPhraeforhelp,whileMcLeod'saccountstatethathereceivedtheassistanceofNanandLuangPrabang,andwasrumoredtohavetakenrefugeinLuangPrabangfollowinghiseventualdefeat²⁵⁸. SiamesesourcesclaimhefledtoLuangPrabang²⁵⁹. Mantaturat,therulerofLuangPrabang,respondedbylaunchingacampaign,commandedbyCaoOunkeoandCaoSuttarat,whichadvancedeastoftheMekong,attackingfromMuangLaandMuangPhong,allthewaynorthwardtoMuangNunintheareaofChiangRung²⁶⁰. TheythenclashedwithCaoMahawang'sforcesatMuangRam,southeastofChiangRung,andweredefeatedandforcedtoreturntoLuangPrabang²⁶¹. TheBurmesethensentasmallforcetotheSipsongpannatoarrestCaoMahanoi,andheremainedinAmarapurauntil1825,atwhichpointthewasreturnedtotheSipsongpannaonthedemandsoftheChinese²⁶². CaoMahawangdidnotforgetLuangPrabang'sattack,andin1829,heretaliated,sendinganarmyagainstLuangPrabangwhichwasdefeatedbyCaoOunkeoandCaoAphai,whochasedhimandcapturedanumberofTaiLu²⁶³. In1833,Mahanoimadeonefinalbidforpower,hiringanarmyofLua,Luohei,andotherhighlandgroups,andbeingdefeatedbyCaoMahawangatDoiNamYang,afterwhichtheChineseremovedtheirsupportforhim²⁶⁴. Afterthreeyearsofruling

²⁵⁶McLeodinGrabowskyandTurton, Gold and Silver Road, Page377.

²⁵⁷Liew-Herres,Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page95.

²⁵⁸McLeodinGrabowskyandTurton, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page377.

²⁵⁹ML Manich Jumsai, History of Laos (Bangkok: Chalermmit, 1967), Page 238.

²⁶⁰Ibid., Pages238-9.

²⁶¹Liew-Herres,Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page96.

²⁶²Ibid., Pages96-7.

²⁶³ML Manich Jumsai, History of Laos, Page239.

²⁶⁴Liew-Herres,Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 97.

the entire Sipsongpanna, Cao Mahawangfa fell ill, and in late 1836, he passed away²⁶⁵. The ensuing crisis would culminate in the First Chiang Tung War.

2.4 Peacetime Developments of the Tai Principalities

The withdrawal of the Lan Na forces from Muang Yong in 1812 marked the end of hostilities in the Chiang Tung region, until the outbreak of the 1849 Chiang Tung War. In describing the following decades, the chronicles of the Lan Na principalities place a strong emphasis on public and meritorious works. Cao Mahakhanan also seem to have spent much time forming relationships with his neighboring rulers. In 1817, he swore an “oath of friendship”, with the Tai Lu of the Sipsongpanna²⁶⁶, and received a delegation from the Sipsongpanna in 1830²⁶⁷. In 1837, following the passing of his wife, he married an noble woman of Chiang Khaeng²⁶⁸. At some point prior to 1837, he had betrothed his daughter to Cao Suchawan, the son of Cao Mahawang of Chiang Rung²⁶⁹. Unlike the larger principalities of Lan Na, Chiang Tung does not seem to have conducted any population raids during the years of its restoration, and although the chronicle recounts the arrival of a prince of Muang Lae in 1818, the small size and isolation of the Chiang Tung valley would have made restoration of the city possible with a much smaller

²⁶⁵ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 377.

²⁶⁶ Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 261.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 378.

opulation²⁷⁰. What the chronicle does recall in these years is the construction of walls, which began in 1833²⁷¹. These were powerful, extensive fortifications, which would prove crucial in deciding the outcome of the later Chiang Tung Wars. Neighboring Muang Yong underwent much the same process. From Cao Phuttawong's ascension to power in 1814, three years passed until the construction of a permanent capital began, with the construction being completed in 1821²⁷².

From 1813 onwards, the principalities of Lan Na enjoyed a period of peace and expansion, with the chronicles recording little conflict, but extensive construction of public and meritorious works. In Nan, for example, the construction of an irrigation system following Sumanadevarat's raids into the Sipsongpannain in 1813 involved the conscription of, the chronicle claims, 10,000 laborers²⁷³, and in 1817, the construction of the city of Nan which stands today was begun²⁷⁴. In 1826, Phraya Phuttawong, the cousin of Cao Kavila and his brothers, became the ruler of Chiang Mai, ushering a 20-year reign that would earn him the name *Caoluangphaendinyen*, or Lord of the Peaceful Kingdom²⁷⁵. This peace had been accomplished, however, at the expense of those regions from which Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan had drawn their populations, and the people taken from those regions now formed large portions of the populations of Lan Na²⁷⁶. Although not all of these people had been taken by force, they nonetheless maintained a

²⁷⁰ Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 261.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 508.

²⁷³ Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 105.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Page 107.

²⁷⁵ Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Page 140.

²⁷⁶ Wyatt and Aroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle,

Page 62n. For a primary account of one such community of Muang Yong people in the Lamphun area, see McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 284.

ongtietotheirplaceoforigin,andwouldeventuallyformasignificantpartoftheArmywhichtheSiamewouldconscripttofightagainstChiangTungin1852.Moreover,by1813,theexpeditionstherepopulatetheLanNa principalitieshadgrownviolent,andbadbloodhadformedbetweenthe rulersofLanNaandtherulersofthoseprincipalitieswhichhadrejectedLanNa'scontrol.Tensions alsobegan to rise in 1828,whenacaravanboundfromYunnantoLanNawasdetainedinChiangTung,andthegoodsconfiscated,promptingBangkoktoorderanassaultonChiangTung²⁷⁷.Noevidence,however,indicates thatsuchanattackwas carried out.

It can be seen, in this time period, that with the exception of the troubled Tai Lu principalities, the Tai states of the early 19th century enjoyed, for the most part, a period of peace and prosperity. Chiang Tung, after its re-

establishment by Cao Mahakhanan, was, for the most part, a peaceful and isolated principality, and it was not until the Chiang Rung crisis that Cao Mahakhanan would re-

involve himself and his kingdom with the political affairs of the Tai principalities. The various Lan Na principalities also enjoyed long, uneventful periods, in which the development of infrastructure was far more frequent than the execution of war. However, new problems presented themselves.

The British had arrived, claiming the Tenneserim from Burma, and with them they brought new conceptions of territorial control, as well as the implicit threat of colonization. With the arrival of the B

²⁷⁷R. Boileau Pemberton, Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1835), Page 185.

ritish, so to began the long, protracted process of territorial centralization, which would result in the final loss of sovereignty for the vast majority of the tributary states of Siam, Burma, and China.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL POWERS

From 1825 onwards, four major regional powers bordered on the Tai principalities. Traditionally, the neighbors of the Tai had included the lowland polities of the Chao Phraya and Irrawaddy river systems, as well as China, but, from the First Anglo-

Burmese War onwards, the Tenasserim Province of British India formed a fourth power, lying between the Siamese and the Burmese, and bordering on the Tai principalities of Lan Na. Although the Burmese and the Siamese had, for much of their history, made use of a complicated system of tributary relations and patronage to maintain control over their outlying territories, the British introduced into mainland Southeast Asia the conception of absolute territorial control, with the first concrete boundaries the region had ever seen being drawn around the British provinces conquered from Burma. Although much has been considered regarding the impact that this had on the major lowland courts, including Burma, which eventually lost its independence, and Siam, which “lost territory”

to the expansion of the French and the British, little consideration has been given to the impact that this had on the smaller tributary states, which also lost their sovereignty by the end of the colonial era, in no less absolute a manner than the Burmese court, and, in most cases, never regained it. Rath

er than examining this period as the gradual expansion of European colonial power over the entirety of mainland Southeast Asia, this paper will regard the period as a gradual centralization of power on the part of the lowland states, leading to the eventual creation of absolute centralized authority within the delineated boundaries of a modern nation-state.

The Chiang Tung wars occurred in the early stages of this process, at a time when local autonomy was still very strong. The Tai states became the site of intense intrigues between the governments of the major lowland powers, with the Siamese, Burmese, Chinese, and British competing for trade, territory, and influence. In the early phases of this competition, the crowded field of potential suzerains tended to work against the interests of the lowland powers, and more than one Tai principality seem to have taken the coming of the British as a blessing, with no more power present to counter the influence of the traditional suzerains. The eventual involvement of the Siamese and the Burmese in the Chiang Tung Wars was a direct result of these intrigues. While it can be said that the Tai principalities sought the support of the regional powers in their internal struggles, and attempted to balance the influence of one regional power against another, it can equally be said that the lowland powers sought to maintain a strong influence over the Tai regions, and on certain occasions attempted to make a role for themselves in the conflicts which were occurring. A fifth power, which will not be considered within the scope of this paper, is the Nguyen Dynasty of Vietnam. Although the Vietnamese were reactive in the affairs of the Lao principalities, and as such were an adversary which the Siamese took into account when formulating their policies toward their northern principalities, they played no direct role in setting the stage for the outbreak of the Chiang Tung Wars.

Viewing the process from the perspective of the regional powers, this period is characterized by a three-way conflict for influence in the Tai territories, which became a four-way conflict with the arrival of the British. Although the Chinese and the British would play no direct role in the Chiang Tung wars, both would play a significant role in the tensions leading up to the outbreak of the wars.

3.1 The Regional Powers and the Tai Principalities

The 18th century introduced new administrations throughout the Tai regions. In the 1720s, a significant expansion of Chinese power occurred in the Sipsongpanna. In the 1760s, the Burmese Konbaung dynasty burst into the region, overrunning Lan Na and Siam, and sparking a bloody conflict with China. In the 1770s, the resurgent Siamese under Taksin invaded Lan Na, boosting Cao Kavila's faction to dominance. These conflicts, although ostensibly resolved by the early 19th century, had a long-lasting impact, and marked the beginning of loyalties which would continue through the Chiang Tung wars until the formation of nation-states in the 20th century. The regional powers would make use of sharply different forms of tributary administration, which would provide each with its own unique advantages and disadvantages in exerting its influence over its principalities. For Siam, this would consist of a loose system of personal loyalty, backed up with the promise of reward and the threat of force, whereas for Burma, prov

vincial governors and garrisons would be deployed to the major tributaries to represent Burmese interests. The Sipsong panna stood as the closest of the Tai principalities to the Chinese sphere of influence, and as such, with the expansion of Siamese power to the south, the lords of the Sipsong panna found themselves with the unique ability to call in the support of three different regional powers.

3.1.1 The Bangkok Empire

The Bangkok Empire of the Chakri Dynasty was, in many ways, the galactic polity par excellence. As described by David Wyatt, it consisted of a number of concentric rings of territorial control, with Bangkok at its center, followed by the provincial realms under the direct control of Bangkok, and, on the far extremities, the Tai principalities, the Malay principalities, and Cambodia²⁷⁸. Autonomy in these remote principalities was strong, and loyalty based on a combination of persuasion and force. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, tributary princes in the Tai principalities were given support by Bangkok in the form of legitimacy and protection, and encouraged to expand their power outward on Bangkok's behalf. No permanent garrisons were placed in the tributary principalities, although in the event that a tributary found itself threatened, Bangkok would intervene on its behalf, as, for example, occurred when the Burmese attempted to overrun Lan Nain in the late 18th century. The loyalty of the principalities was at first maintained, in no small part, by the presence of fam

²⁷⁸Wyatt, Thailand, Pages 158-60.

enacing Burmese enemy, but also due to close familial connections, rewards granted to the principalities upon victories, and the implicit threat that the Siamese military force, so effective in driving the Burmese from the region at the end of the 18th century, could be turned against an unruly vassal. Thus Siam surrounded itself with strong, subservient neighbors, capable of representing its interests and, after several decades of gathering strength under Siamese protection, blocking any Burmese effort to invade either Siam or Lan Na. There were no Siamese governors in the Tai principalities. Rather, the Siamese court acted as the patron, offering assistance in times of need and promotions and gifts for the ruling elites, and in exchange receiving a strong and loyal power guarding the Siamese frontiers. In this sense, Bangkok's "Empire" was not, in the early 19th century, an empire, in that it exerted no direct control over any territories outside of the Siamese heartland of the Chao Phraya lowlands and the upper Malay peninsula. Rather, it was a form of hierarchical confederacy, wherein the supremacy of Bangkok was acknowledged, but wherein the tributary states were given what amounted to complete autonomy in both foreign and domestic affairs.

The relationship between Siam and its tributaries would encounter several major crises in the reign of King Rama III, and it would be at the end of his reign that the Chiang Tung Wars would begin. At the start of the reign, Siamese-aligned tributaries could be divided into two major groups, the Malay tributaries of the south and the Tai tributaries of the north and northeast, with Cambodia forming a third and separate category as Siam's largest tributary. Siam proper consisted mainly of the central plains, although by the sta-

of the Third Reign, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Songkhla had been incorporated as provinces²⁷⁹. In Lan Na, Kavila's passing and succession in 1816 had sparked a fundamental shift in the politics of the Tai principalities. While the Burmese had previously stood as an outside threat with which to control the Tai principalities, that threat had diminished with Burma's increasing attention on expanding to the west, and, in the absence of an imminent Burmese threat, the power that Lan Na had obtained during Kavila's reign began to appear less reassuring and more threatening to Bangkok²⁸⁰. Even more threatening was the power accumulated by Cao Anuvong of Vieng Chan. This latter would lead to the first major crisis involving Siam's Tai tributaries, and in 1827, Vieng Chan was invaded and burnt to the ground.

The Siamese were thus perfectly capable of exercising military force to ensure the loyalty of their principalities. A foreign observer of the era described the Siamese as having “almost always been at war with their neighbors”²⁸¹. In the early reign of King Mongkut, the Siamese possessed a small standing army of about 10,000 troops, trained as infantry and artillery by British officers²⁸². In wartime, orders would be sent to provincial governors to furnish reinforcements for the regular army²⁸³. Rather than the highly trained and disciplined force which emerged in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, this was a small, largely untested force, commanded in wartime by pr

²⁷⁹Vella, *Siam under Rama III*, Page 59.

²⁸⁰Brailley, *The Siamese Forward Movement*, Page 39.

²⁸¹Jean-

Baptiste Pallegoix, *Description of the Thai Kingdom or Siam: Thailand Under King Mongkut*, tr. Walter E. J. Tips (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000), Page 165.

²⁸²*Ibid.*

²⁸³*Ibid.*

vincial rulers and hereditary nobility²⁸⁴, rather than by career officers. The navigable rivers of the Chao Phraya basin served as the arteries of Siamese advanced during wartime, and when marching overland, equipment was carried by the elephantry, while all soldiers except those of noble status marched on foot, with the latter riding elephant-back²⁸⁵. Notably, the extensive warfare against the Burmese and Cambodians conducted during the early Chakri dynasty was conducted in the flat plains of the lower Chao Phraya and Mekong river systems, and by the time of Mongkut, this was the form of warfare to which the Siamese were accustomed, as evidenced by their vast, elaborate battle formations²⁸⁶. Exceptions to this rule had occurred, most notably in the sporadic campaigns northwards into Lan Na and middle Mekong. However, despite a degree of challenge in clearing the mountain ranges and narrow valleys that separated Lan Na from the lower Chao Phraya plains, the fighting itself was generally conducted in the flat plains of the river basins. Thus, as Siam's northern frontier was pacified and brought under control, the possibility of a very different form of warfare, conducted in the mountainous terrain beyond Lan Na, began to present itself.

3.1.2 Konbaung Burma

²⁸⁴Ibid.

²⁸⁵Ibid., Page 166.

²⁸⁶Ibid., Pages 166-7.

Siam's loose network of personal loyalties stood in sharp contrast to the system employed by the Burmese of the Konbaung Dynasty. From the invasion of Chiang Mai in 1763 until the fall of the Konbaung Dynasty, the presence of Burmese military governors and standing troops in the Tai region under Burmese control was almost constant. At first, this consisted of the *bo-*
hmus stationed to Chiang Mai during the campaigns against Ayutthaya, and later, the *myowun* of Chiang Saen. Following the fall of Chiang Saen in 1802, a military governor, bearing the rank of *feith*
erbo-
hmuorsittke, was present at Muang Nai, with a garrison of about 400 to 500 Burmese soldiers²⁸⁷. Other, more remote Tai principalities under Burmese control also had appointed *sittke*. In relation to the Chiang Tung Wars, these included the *sittke* of Chiang Rung, whose ostensive purpose was to represent the Burmese interests in the court of the Sipsongpanna²⁸⁸, as well as the *bo-*
gyok of Chiang Tung, with his following of about 50 men, and the *sittke* of Chiang Khaeng²⁸⁹. The presence of the officials in far-
 flung principalities such as Chiang Rung, Chiang Tung, and Chiang Khaeng did not in itself allow the Burmese to directly interfere in the affairs of the principality. Rather, the officials served as they and ears of the Burmese government, attending the ruler of the principality to which they were appointed, and delivering reports to the Burmese court²⁹⁰. The *bo-*
gyok was considered the equal of the ruler of Chiang Tung, and sat at the same level as him within the

²⁸⁷ Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Pages 418-9.

²⁸⁸ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 377.

²⁸⁹ Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 432.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Pages 432-3.

ecourt²⁹¹. For those states west of the Salween, the Burmese were able to exert a much stronger degree of control, thanks to the presence of a standing army at Muang Nai. As has been seen previously, between the start of the Konbaung Period and the outbreak of the later Chiang Tung Wars, Burmese armies were deployed to the Chiang Tung region on multiple occasions, including against the Chinese in the 1760s, and against Lan Na and Chiang Tung from 1806 to 1812. On both of these occasions, the Burmese forces fought in the Sipsongpanna as well. They had also fought in the eastern terrain of Lan Na, where they had maintained a constant presence until 1804. Outside of the Tai region, the Burmese were no stranger to long, arduous campaigns, and had, prior to the Treaty of Yandabo, possessed a military empire that extended far to the west of the Irrawaddy valley. Arakan was administered, not as a tributary kingdom, but as a tightly controlled military commandery²⁹². Assam, although nominally an autonomous tributary, was the site of extensive military campaigning, which led, eventually, to the first clashes with the British²⁹³. Therefore, although the relationship that Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna enjoyed with the court of Burma was much the same as the relationship between the principalities of Lan Na and the court of Siam, the overall system of power employed by Burma was very different, and far more prone to direct involvement and interference in the affairs of the principalities, whether by use of military force or political intrigue. The empire of Konbaung Burma can truly be called an empire, and, although Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna lay on the margins of this empire, they nonetheless fell within its sphere of influence.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Page 433.

²⁹² Thant Myint-

U, *The Making of Modern Burma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Page 14.

²⁹³ Sir Arthur Phayre, *History of Burma* (London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1883), Page 235.

The overall effect of this system was that the Burmese, in the event of a crisis, were quickly informed and capable of responding with a force from Muang Nai. Thus the Burmese court maintained a presence in the Tai principalities, which could be used to discipline rebellious principalities, maintain peace and order, and protect against the incursions of hostile powers. This would have helped them to maintain, and ultimately win, the protracted warfare of the Salween from 1806 to 1812, and it would prove an advantage when forces from Bangkok attacked Chiang Tung in the 1850s.

3.1.3 The Sipsongpanna and the Regional Powers

Of all the Tai principalities, the Sipsongpanna lay closest to the Chinese sphere of influence. As discussed previously, the Chinese had indirectly administered the Sipsongpanna since the 14th century, conferring upon the ruler of Chiang Rung the title of *xuanweishi*, or “pacification commissioner”, recognized in the courts of Southeast Asia as Cao Saenwifa. This influence had been balanced from the 16th century onwards by the Burmese. The rulers of the Sipsongpanna were thus more experienced than most of the Tai princes at balancing the influence of regional powers in pursuit of autonomy. The Sipsongpanna was also a far more politically cohesive entity than most of the Tai regions. While, by the 18th century, the Lan Xang kingdom had evaporated into independent principalities, and the greater Lan Na kingdom of Tilokarat was a thing of the distant past, the Sipsongpanna remained a largely united entity. This political cohesion is apparent in the extensive inter-

marriage and interaction between the *muang* of the Sipsongpanna, as well as the manner in which the court of Chiang Rung was held, with the presence of the rulers of the various *muang* holding court with the Saenwifa or his representatives in what amounted to a capital city²⁹⁴. Due to this political cohesion, and the maintenance of the influence of numerous regional powers at the court of Chiang Rung, the tributary relations of the Sipsongpanna are best examined from the perspective of the Sipsongpanna rather than the perspective of any of the regional powers.

In the early 18th century, Chinese power was dominant in the Sipsongpanna, and the Chinese held an unprecedented amount of control over the Tai regions of Yunnan. This interference had increased dramatically during the Yongzheng Reign of the Qing Dynasty. In the 1720s, the Governor of Yunnan, Ortai, launched a campaign against the Tai regions which brought them under much closer control of the provincial administration²⁹⁵. The court of Chiang Rung had, by the mid-19th century, adopted heavy Chinese influences. In 1837, McLeod described a palace built in the Chinese style, with court officers dressed in Chinese costume, Chinese officials in attendance at court²⁹⁶, and Chinese banquets served within the palace²⁹⁷. The language of the court was Chinese as well, and was more widely spoken among the upper classes than the Tai or Burmese languages²⁹⁸. McLeod was led to conclude that Chiang Rung was far closer to the Chinese than the Bu

²⁹⁴McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Pages 371-2.

²⁹⁵Madeleine Zelin, "The Yung-Cheng Reign", in Cambridge History of China, Vol. 9: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800 (hereafter CHC 9), Willard J. Peterson, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Page 225.

²⁹⁶McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Pages 371-2.

²⁹⁷Ibid., Page 374.

²⁹⁸Ibid., Page 375.

mese²⁹⁹. In addition to the predominance of Chinese influences at the court of Chiang Rung, McLeod's conclusion was confirmed by the jealousy with which the Chinese officials guarded their territories against foreign trade and influence. McLeod discovered that officials from Chiang Tung, and thus from Burma, were not allowed to venture beyond the town of Puer³⁰⁰, where the Chinese maintained a garrison³⁰¹. Another magistrate, with a supporting garrison, was located at Simao³⁰². The Chinese thus exerted, or purported to exert, a much stronger degree of control over the affairs of the Sipsongpanna than either the Siamese or the Burmese exercised over their respective principalities. It also must be noted that the Burmese were quite active, politically, in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna. The numerous crises of the Sipsongpanna, from the deposition of Cao Thian onwards, had at their core the struggles inherent to a system of dual suzerainty. Cao Thian was unilaterally deposed by the Chinese, thus reducing Burmese influence. Cao Thian was later reappointed by the Burmese, over the Chinese nomination of Cao Mahawang. Upon Cao Mahawang's death, the Burmese continued the crisis with the unilateral appointment of Cao Can. The Burmese then supported Cao Mahawang against the Chinese-appointed Cao Mahanoi, and, with Mahanoi's defeat, gained their first ever victory in the perpetual struggle of the Sipsongpanna. Finally, the Burmese *sittke*, acting on his own and against the orders of the courts of Burma and China, played a key role in the coup d'état against Cao Mahawang's son and successor, sparking the crisis which would culminate with the 1849 attack on Chiang Tun

²⁹⁹Ibid., Page 373.

³⁰⁰Ibid., Page 375.

³⁰¹Ibid., Page 376.

³⁰²Ibid., Page 381.

³⁰³. It must be said that it is possible to interpret this perpetual struggle, not only as a conflict between China and Burma for control over the region, but as an internal conflict, wherein a prince who was not favored with the succession had the option of calling in support from the suzerain powers. A gradual decline in Chinese influence is also apparent if one follows the history of the Sipsongpanna from the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries. The crises began, as discussed above, with the unilateral deposition of a Saenwifa by the Chinese during the Sino-Burmese border wars. This was in the reign of the Qianlong Emperor, during which the Qing Dynasty was at the peak of its power. In the late 18th century, the Qing Dynasty began to decline, with a series of rebellions in the border provinces of Sichuan, Guangxi, Hunan and Guizhou³⁰⁴, all of them ordering on Yunnan. The first of these rebellions occurred in the borderland of Hunan and Guizhou, and consisted of a decade-long uprising by the Miao, from 1795 to 1806³⁰⁵. Almost simultaneously, the rebellion of the White Lotus Society began in the western provinces, centered on the borderlands of Sichuan, Hubei, and Shaanxi in 1796³⁰⁶, and continued until around 1805³⁰⁷. Although both of these rebellions were far-

removed from the Sipsongpanna, they had the indirect effect of pulling Chinese troops away from

³⁰³Ibid., Page 378.

³⁰⁴Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Khun, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion", in Cambridge History of China, Vol. 10: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part I, John K. Fairbank, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Page 132.

³⁰⁵Ibid., Page 133

³⁰⁶Ibid., Page 138.

³⁰⁷Ibid., Page 143.

in Yunnan province³⁰⁸. The protracted, bloody, guerilla warfare³⁰⁹, and the increased use of mercenaries in place of regular troops³¹⁰ were also indicative of the increasing inability of the Qing to control their outlying regions. Considering this condition, it is not surprising that the Qing would have made every effort to maintain stability in the Sipsongpanna, a region even further removed from the rebellions which for a decade challenged their authority. The White Lotus rebellion demonstrated the Qing Dynasty's weakness to an even greater degree than the later, and better known, Opium War, and demonstrated the necessity of cooperation with local elites if the Qing were to maintain control over any of their far-flung provinces³¹¹.

Despite this, the Burmese took a considerable amount of time to exert their interests in the Sipsongpanna. The Burmese appointment of Cao Thian in 1796 was followed by a general lack of activity, indicative of an inability on one side or both to accomplish any strong degree of change. In 1802, the Burmese appointee, Cao Can, had the opportunity to challenge Chinese rule, being appointed against the very young Cao Mahanoi, and being supported by the nobility of the Sipsongpanna. Ultimately, however, Cao Can was the first ruler to bring in Lan Natos support, unsuccessfully, his bid for power. Chinese dominance in the Sipsongpanna thus continued uncontested until 1817, when Cao Mahawang was appointed by the Burmese. In this conflict, the Chinese were ultimately unable to effect the outcome, and, following Cao Mahanoi's defeat, were forced to withdraw their support for their candidate and cede victory to the Burmese. Chinese political influence on the

³⁰⁸Ibid.

³⁰⁹Ibid., Pages 141-3

³¹⁰Ibid., Page 143.

³¹¹Ibid., Pages 143-4.

ss remained very strong, as observed by McLeod in 1837. The strong adoption of Chinese culture, which was most likely an ongoing process from the beginning of Chinese suzerainty in the 14th century, would also have tended to push the Tai of the Sipsongpanna in the direction of the Chinese, regardless of the latter's ability to intervene in their internal conflicts. The Siamese-aligned tributaries bordering on the Sipsongpanna, although a threat in the previous decades, would have begun to appear, with a weakened Chinese dynasty, as a possible counterweight to the Burmese.

It also must be noted that the employment of assistance from the regional powers was, for the most part, purely pragmatic, and that the same faction, or, at times, the same prince, would frequently employ the assistance of multiple regional powers on multiple occasions. During the 1767 crisis, Cao Namphung and Cao Thian were initially supported by the Chinese, but later turned against the Qing, bringing themselves into alignment with Muang Yong and Muang Nai³¹², both the tributaries of Burma. The Qing's placement of a succession ban on the descendants of Cao Namphung and Cao Thian then ensured that, should any of those princes wish to obtain control of the Sipsongpanna, they could only do so with the backing of the Burmese. Simultaneously, the Qing Court's support for Cao Suwan meant that, should the Burmese choose not to challenge the succession ban, his descendants would have an easier time obtaining and holding power, with the children of his elder siblings having been made ineligible. However, in 1796, following Cao Suwan's succession, the Burmese did opt to challenge the ban, with the appointment of Cao Thian, while the Chinese

³¹²Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Pages 90-1.

supported Cao Suwan's son, Cao Mahawang. In 1802, the conflict continued along the same lines, with the Burmese supporting the son of Cao Namphung, while the Chinese continued to support the descendants of Cao Suwan. With the defeat of Cao Can, and his defection to Lan Na, Cao Namphung's line lost all claim to the throne, leaving the lineages of Cao Tian and Cao Suwan to contest the subsequent succession. In the 1817 succession, the lineage of Cao Tian suffered a blow, and the Chiang Rung contest underwent a reverse, when the Burmese switched their support to Cao Mahawang, a son of Cao Suwan, and the regent and uncle of the reigning Cao Mahanoi³¹³. Further complicating matters was the fact that, during his regency, Cao Mahawang had wedded Cao Mahanoi to Nang Cham Kham, the granddaughter of Cao Tian³¹⁴. Thus, the Chinese found themselves supporting a prince whose children were descended from the line of Cao Tian, while the Burmese found themselves supporting a prince who was a son of Cao Suwan.

During his reign, Mahawang was able to stabilize the Sipsongpanna and win the support of both the Chinese and Burmese courts, while the descendants of Cao Tian had lost all support from the regional powers. In the previous century, the Cao Namphung lineage had first been supported by the Chinese, then the Burmese, and then Lan Na, the Cao Tian lineage had first been supported by the Chinese, then the Burmese, and finally by the Chinese again, and the Cao Suwan lineage had first been supported by the Chinese and then, with the ascension of Cao Mahawang, had gained the support of the Burmese as well. To the Burmese and the Chinese, the most important consi

³¹³Ibid., Page 95.

³¹⁴PCR, Page 6.

deration in dealing with the Sipsongpanna was the presence of a strong prince who could be relied upon to represent their interests, whereas to the princes of the Sipsongpanna, the most important consideration in dealing with the regional powers was the ability of the lowland power to grant them power, in the form of either military aid or political prestige. Although loyalties would develop between certain factions within and outside of the Sipsongpanna, ultimately, these loyalties could be altered. In the analysis of a famous Thai historian, the loyalty of the Sipsongpanna shifted depending on who was the strongest³¹⁵, and the regional power who took the initiative, and attempted to exert their influence in the region on behalf of the winning faction, was the most likely to be successful.

3.2 The Coming of the British

Over the course of the late 18th century, the British became an increasingly formidable presence in the politics of mainland Southeast Asia. At first, this presence was mainly felt by the major powers, and British relations were primarily conducted with the courts of Siam and Burma. Both of these kingdoms were, at the time, at the peak of their power, and neither expressed much apprehension about the growth of British dominion in neighboring India. In 1825, however, the British defeated the Burmese, and changed the face of mainland Southeast Asia. In addition to upsetting the regional order, and humiliating a power which, until their defeat, had been considered the most formidable

³¹⁵Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 740.

able empire in the region, the British created their first significant territorial presence in Southeast Asia, taking the Tennesse and Arakan, and occupying a space bordering on Burma, Siam, and Lan Na. The latter power, having, in 1810, seen the end of the partnership of Rama and Cao Kaila, wasted no time in attempting to develop their own relations with the British. In the Taidealings with the British, the rulers of the various principalities emerge as autonomous players, struggling to maintain their autonomy and independence.

3.2.1 The British and the Regional Powers

In the late 18th century, the British made their approach to the mainland of Southeast Asia from two different directions. The first of these directions was from the south, where the Straits Settlements oversaw the British trade between India and China, and from the west, where the territory of British Bengal stood as a growing power which would soon come into conflict with Burma³¹⁶. British involvement in Siamese affairs during this period was initially minimal, with the British East India Company's factory in Ayutthaya, once the center of British interests in Siam, having been enclosed at the

³¹⁶Eric Tagliacozzo, "Ambiguous Commodities, Unstable Frontiers: The Case of Burma, Siam, and Imperial Britain, 1800-1900", Comparative Studies in Society and History 46 (April 2004): Page 357.

nd of King Narai's reign, in 1684³¹⁷. In Burma too, the British involvement was minimal, with the factory at Syriam having closed in 1657, although British merchants continued to maintain a presence at Syriam, from which a steady trade continued with Madras throughout the end of the 17th century³¹⁸. The eventual destruction of the British outpost at Syriam by the Mon in 1743 coincided with the early phases of the Austrian War of Succession, which would trigger a fundamental shift in Britain's interests in India, and, by extension, the rest of Asia, from the purely commercial to the political³¹⁹. British relations with the Konbaung Dynasty began in 1755, with the mission of Captain George Baker and Lieutenant John North to the court of Alaungpaya³²⁰. Both Alaungpaya and the British were concerned with an ancestral rival competing for influence in the region. In the case of Alaungpaya, this was the Mon of Pegu, and in the case of the British, this was the French. The embassy succeeded in obtaining Alaungpaya's permission, in exchange for a quantity of armaments for use against Syriam and Pegu, for the British East India Company to build outposts at Negrais and Bassein, and to maintain a presence at Dagon³²¹, the latter a small pagoda town which would later become the British capital of Rangoon. No treaty was signed, however, due to Alaungpaya's expressed mistrust of the British³²². Although Alaungpaya's subsequent letter to King George II would propose

³¹⁷ML Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 2000), Page 43.

³¹⁸D. G. E. Hall, *Early English Intercourse with Burma* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), Pages 8-10.

³¹⁹*Ibid.*, Page 12.

³²⁰George Baker in *Oriental Repertory*, ed. Alexander Dalrymple (London: G. Biggs, 1793), Page 143.

³²¹*Ibid.*, Page 154.

³²²*Ibid.*, Pages 158-9.

alastingalliancebetweenthe twopowers, itwasignored, thusdisillusioningAlaungpayaastoth
 esincerityoftheBritish³²³.

In1756, thestartoftheSevenYearsWarmarkedaresumptionofAnglo-

FrenchhostilitiesinIndia, andtheensuingconflictwouldseethedramaticopeningmovesinthen
 ascentKonbaungDynasty'srelationswithbothFranceandGreatBritain. On27June1757, Robe
 rtLesterdepartedfromtheBritishsettlementatNegraistoconducttheBritishEastIndiaCompan
 y'ssecondembassytoAlaungpaya³²⁴, whostoodatthepeakofhispower, havingcompletedthe
 conquestofPeguthesameyear. Onthemorningof23July, atDagon, LestermetAlaungpaya, an
 d, despiteaseriesofculturalmisunderstandings, theBurmeseKingandtheBritishenvoyagree
 dtoaninitialTreatyofAlliance³²⁵, whichwasfinalizedthefollowingmonth, on12August³²⁶. The17
 57treatyallowedforacontinuedBritishpresenceatNegrais, theconstructionofanoutpostatBas
 sein, andagreementsofmutualdefenseandunrestrictedtrade³²⁷.

BritishinvolvementinLowerBurma would, however, declineinthecomingdecades. Theoutpost
 atBasseinnevercametofruition, andin1759, theoutpostatNegrais, whichhadbeenconstructe
 dlessthantenyyears prior, in1751³²⁸, wasattackedbytheforcesofthegovernorofBassein, anditsi

³²³ThantMyint-
 U, TheRiverofLostFootsteps: A Personal History of Burma (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), Page 95.

³²⁴RobertLester,
 "Proceedings of an Embassy to the King of Ava, Pegu, & C. in 1757", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research 3 (Spring
 2005): Page 129.

³²⁵Ibid., Pages 134-6.

³²⁶Ibid., Page 140.

³²⁷"Treaty Between Alaung-
 Hpaya and the British East India Company in 1757", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research 3 (Spring 2005): Pages
 123-5.

³²⁸Michael Symes, "An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava, Sent by the Governor-
 General of India, in the Year 1795", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research 4 (Spring 2006): Page 64.

nhabitants massacred³²⁹. A third embassy was sent in the following year, and conducted by Captain Walter Alves, formerly a witness to the Negrais massacre. Rather than Alaungpaya, who passed away while Alves was en route to the Burmese court³³⁰, Alves was received by the newly-ascendant Naungdawgyi, who refused to grant reparations for the Company's losses at Negrais, while agreeing that British trade could continue within Burma, as long as the British made their primary settlement at Bassein³³¹. In short, despite an eventual semblance of an understanding, the first decade of Anglo-Konbaung relations can hardly be said to have gone well, and neither side left the other with an impression that they could be trusted.

In the years following the fall of Ayutthaya, as Siam was being restored under King Taksin, the British East India Company entered relations with the Sultan of Kedah, and in 1786, the first British colony in the vicinity of Siam was established on the island of Penang³³². The Sultanate of Kedah, at the time, a Siamese vassal, administered, in times of Siamese strength, via the provinces of Nakhon Si Thammarat and Songkhla³³³. British involvement intensified in the following decades, with the island being ceded to the British in 1791, and the British then acquiring Province Wellesley, on the mainland facing Penang, in 1800³³⁴. The fundamental misunderstanding regarding Penan

³²⁹Walter Alves, "Account of the Loss of Negrais", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research 3 (Autumn 2005): Pages 66-72.

³³⁰Walter Alves, "Diary of the Proceedings of an Embassy to Burma in 1760", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research 3 (Spring 2005): Pages 149-50.

³³¹*Ibid.*, Pages 157-8.

³³²Hall, Early English Intercourse, Page 46.

³³³*Ibid.*, Pages 46-7.

³³⁴*Ibid.*, Page 47.

gandProvinceWellesleyescalatedintoacrisisin1821,whenSiaminvadedKedah,accusingthesultanofdisloyalty³³⁵.

In1822,JohnCrawfurdwasthussentbytheBritishEastIndiaCompanyattheheadofthefirstmajordelegationtoBangkok,withthegoalofresolvingthestatusofPenangandWellesleyandestablishingpositiverelationsbetweenSiamandtheBritish³³⁶.Ultimately,thisembassyreturnedempty-handed,illustratingthereluctanceoftheSiamesetoengageintradewiththewest³³⁷.Inoneofthefirst,albeitindirect,BritishdescriptionsoftheTaiprincipalitiesunderRattanakosin,CrawfurddescribedtheSiamese'Empire'asconsistingofthe

“propercountryoftheSiameserace”,aswellasanumberoftributaryrealms³³⁸.FortheformerislistedtheChaoPhrayalowlands³³⁹.ThetributarieslistedbyCrawfurd,inadditiontotheMalaystatesofthesouth,included “thecountryoftheLao”,aland

“dividedbetweentheSiamese,theChinese,andtheBurmese”³⁴⁰.CrawfurdlistedfourTaiprincipalities tributarytoSiam,specifically “Chang-mai,Lan-chang,Pasak,andLuang-phra-

bang”³⁴¹.IndicativeoftherelativelylowdegreeofunderstandingbetweentheBritishandtheTaisCrawfurd'sdismissalofreportsregardingViengChanbeingaspopulousasBangkok,onthegroundsthat

³³⁵GrabowskyandTurton, Gold and Silver Road, Page4.

³³⁶Ibid.

³³⁷Tagliacozzo, “Ambiguous Commodities”, Page 357.

³³⁸JohnCrawfurd, JournalofanEmbassytotheCourts ofSiamandCochinChina, Vol.2 (London:HenryColburnandRichardBentley,1830), Page199.

³³⁹Ibid., Page214.

³⁴⁰Ibid., Page215.

³⁴¹Ibid.

“it has comparatively little foreign trade, is not much resorted to by the Chinese, and is not these seats of a court”³⁴². At least two out of three of these statements were, of course, flatly untrue. Crawford contradicted these second statements himself, describing the report of a population of about 8,000 Chinese of Yunnan living in Vieng Chan³⁴³.

Most striking, however, is the third statement, seemingly a product of pure ignorance and speculation, seeing that at the time, Vieng Chan was thriving under the rule of Cao Anuvong³⁴⁴. Crawford's statement that Vieng Chan was “not these seats of a court” thus implies a two-dimensional understanding of Siamese politics and the tributary system. This is reinforced by Crawford's conceptualization of the “division” of the “Lao” states between Siam, China, and Burma. The impression is much like that which would emerge in the late 19th century, with lines drawn across the region, dividing the political territories of Siam, France, Britain, and China. The three statements indicate not only a degree of ignorance, on the part of both the Siamese and the British, but a degree of disinterest on the part of the British. As the British saw the Tai states, not as autonomous political entities, but as subservient components of the Bangkok Empire, located far inland, there was little they could do to help or hinder British trade, and as such were treated as, largely, an afterthought compared to coastal Bangkok and militant Burma. Following the Alves mission, relations between the British and the Burmese had remained stalled, for the most part, for the remainder of the 18th century, as the two empires slowly expanded in each

³⁴²Ibid., Page 216.

³⁴³Ibid.

³⁴⁴Maha Sila Viravong, History of Laos (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), Pages 111-2.

others directions. Prevention of hostilities due to this continued expansion was the goal of the mission of Captain Michael Symes in 1795. Konbaung Burma was, by this time, a thriving regional power, despite the decline of their power in the Tai regions, and Symes, in his account of the Burmese polity of the late 18th century, described it as “pre-eminent among the nations inhabiting the vast peninsula that separates the gulf of Bengal from the Chinese sea”³⁴⁵. By this time, the Burmese and British spheres of influence had come into direct contact with each other, with the Naf River forming a boundary between British-held Chittagong Province and the Burmese governorship of Arakan³⁴⁶. Tensions had erupted two years prior, in 1793, when a Burmese army of 5,000 pursued a group of Arakanese refugees across the Naf into British territory³⁴⁷, and the stated purpose of the 1795 delegation was thus “to prevent the recurrence of a like misunderstanding; to form a commercial connexion on equitable and fixed principles, and to establish a confidential and authentic correspondence, such as ought to subsist between two great and contiguous nations”³⁴⁸. Although Symes' language was that of mutual respect, with mutual respect came a degree of concern for strategic interests, and the eventual outbreak of the First Anglo-Burmese War has been interpreted as the eventual answer to Symes' concern regarding maintaining influence over the Burmese court³⁴⁹.

³⁴⁵ Symes, “Account”, Page 98.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 98-9.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Page 99.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Page 100.

³⁴⁹ Michael Symes in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 5.

Unlike Crawford, Symes' account does not offer a detailed discussion of the extent of Burmese territory, and contains no mention of the Tai principalities. However, his contemporary, Father Vincentius Sangermano, a resident of Amarapura from 1782 to 1808, offers a similar description to that which Crawford made of Siam almost 30 years later. In this account, the territories of "Ava" and "Pegu", or Lower and Upper Burma, were considered to be the backbone of the Burmese "empire"³⁵⁰, surrounded by a number of outlying territories. Among these were those of "a numerous nation called Sciam, who are the same as the Laos"³⁵¹, in other words, the Tai principalities. Like Crawford, Sangermano clearly did not witness the Tai principalities with his own eyes, and harbored some fundamental misunderstandings regarding their political configuration and their relations with the central Burmese court. For example, he declared that "their kingdom is divided into small districts under different chiefs, called Zaboas, or petty princes"³⁵², thus assuming that not only were the Tai an integral part of a bounded Burmese empire, but that within that empire they possessed a politically unified kingdom. Like Crawford, Sangermano was aware that certain Tai principalities were realigned with the Siamese, and unlike Crawford, he demonstrated an understanding of how they came to be that way³⁵³. Sangermano interpreted the rebellion of the Siamese-aligned principalities, and Burma's failure to bring them back into its sphere of influence, as evidence

³⁵⁰Father Sangermano, *A Description of the Burmese Empire*, trans. William Tandy (Rome: The Oriental Translation Fund of Britain and Ireland, 1833), Page 43.

³⁵¹*Ibid.*, Page 34.

³⁵²*Ibid.*

³⁵³*Ibid.*

nce of a fundamental weakness of the Burmese polity, arguing that a Siamese attack, at the time of his residence, would have

“forced [Badaupaya] to yield up his crown, or become a tributary of Siam”³⁵⁴.

The First Anglo-Burmese War, of 1824-

1826, although it would not directly affect the Tai principalities subject to either Siam or Burma, would bring the British into direct contact with the Tai for the first time, and would profoundly impact the geo-

political balance of the region, contributing to the circumstances under which the later Chiang Tung Wars erupted. As such, that conflict will be discussed in the following section.

3.2.2 The British and the Tai Principalities

For most of their history, the Tai principalities of inland Southeast Asia were almost completely unknown to the Europeans. When John Crawfurd recorded his embassy to Bangkok in 1822, in describing the Chao Phraya River, he conceded that

“with the exception of about eighty miles up to the old capital [Ayutthaya], Europeans have really less acquaintance with it than the Niger”³⁵⁵. Crawfurd implied that the reason for this was that Europeans could not navigate farther north than Ayutthaya³⁵⁶. Although this was certainly a contri-

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁵⁵ Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy*, Page 200.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Page 201.

buting factor, the political realities of 17th century Southeast Asia would have contributed to the lack of exploration just as much, it being an area where the Lan Na region was simply not connected, politically, with central Siam. In his account of Siam in 1689, Simon de La Loubere described a Tai people, "altogether savage, which are called the *Tai Yai*, or *great Siams*, and which do live in the Northern Mountains"³⁵⁷. Although La Loubere's account demonstrates that a sense of kinship existed between the Tai of Siam and Lan Na prior to the 18th century, and that this sense of kinship was relayed to those western observers who passed through in this period, it also demonstrates a poor understanding of the northern Tai, on behalf of both the western observers and the Siamese. It was only in the 18th century that the Tai of Lan Na would move within the Siamese sphere of influence, and it was only in this context that the Europeans would begin to take an interest in the region.

In the years leading up to the First Anglo-

Burmese War, and as late as 1822, there is little evidence of any European interest or knowledge of the Tai principalities, except insofar as they related to the more powerful kingdoms of Bangkok and Amarapura, and this will be illustrated below in the accounts of the relations between the British hand, respectively, the Siamese and Burmese. This would all change, beginning in 1824. In 1821, King Bagyidaw (r. 1819-

1837³⁵⁸), Bodawpaya's grandson and successor, launched a successful invasion of Assam, wh

³⁵⁷ Simon de La Loubere, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (London: F.L. for Thomas Horne, 1693), Page 7.

³⁵⁸ Phayre, *History of Burma*, Page 287.

ichsucceededindrivingtheAssameseruler,ChandraKanta,intoexileinBritishterritory³⁵⁹.InJune1822,tensionsrose,whenaBurmeseembassy,requestingthereturnofChandraKantatotheauthorityoftheBurmese court,wasrejectedbytheBritish,andtheBurmese respondedbyraidingvillagesalongtheedgesofBritishterritory³⁶⁰.Tensionssimmeredforatime,andexplodedintoo penhostilitiesinJanuary1824,whenBurmese forcesoperatingfromManipurandAssamentere dBritish-

heldCachar,clashingwithaBritishforce³⁶¹.OnMarch5th,theBritishdeclaredwar³⁶².Thewarlast edtwoyears,thelongestwareverfoughtbytheBritishEmpireinIndia,andcostthelivesof15,000 Britishsoldiers³⁶³.InFebruary1825,asthewarragedintoitssecondyear,therulersofChiangMai ,Lamphun,andLampang,independentoftheBangkokcourt,openedtheirowncommunication swiththeBritish,sendingalettertoSirArchibaldCampbell,wishinghimsuccessintheconquest ofBurma,and,notably,declaringthatLanNawasanindependentkingdom,notsubjecttoanylar gerregionalpower³⁶⁴.On24February1826,thewarconcludedwiththesignatureoftheTreatyof Yandabo,andthecessionofAssam,Arakan,andtheTennasserimtotheBritish³⁶⁵.

TheTreatyofYandabofundamentallyalteredthepoliticallandscapeofmainlandSoutheastAsi a,notonlyduetoincreasedwesterninfluence,butduetotheadedpresenceofanewpower,mor

³⁵⁹Ibid., Page 234.

³⁶⁰Ibid.

³⁶¹Ibid., Page 235.

³⁶²Ibid.

³⁶³Myint-U, River of Lost Footsteps, Page 113.

³⁶⁴The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies 20 (1825): Pages 354-5.

³⁶⁵Phayre, History of Burma, Page 257.

epowerfulthaneithertheSiameseortheBurmese,andmaintainingalargeterritorialpresencea
 djacenttoBurma,Siam,andLanNa.Theissueofassigningboundariesimmediatelyarose,and
 HenryBurney,whohadbeensentasaBritishenvoytoBangkokthepreviousyear,immediatelyat
 temptedtosetnegotiationsinmotionwiththeSiamese³⁶⁶.TheprocessofnegotiatingSiam'sbou
 ndarywiththenewlyacquiredBritishTenasserimprovedtobeanordealisticaffair,fraughtwithm
 isunderstanding,inwhichtheBritishviewedterritoryasexclusive,markedbyageographicalbo
 undaryline,aconceptwhichwasnewtotheSiamese³⁶⁷.WhereasthebordersbetweenBritishan
 dBurmese territory were, from 1826, chosen unilaterally by the British, friendly relations with the S
 iamese dictated a process of negotiation, and this negotiation required the clarification of a numb
 er of issues, not least of which was the nature of the political relations between Bangkok and its trib
 utaries. The early 19th century was a time period in which the powers of Europe were faced with the
 uncomfortable task of balancing imperialistic ambitions with the post-
 Westphalian ideas of international law³⁶⁸. This led to a shift in legal theory, in which internationall
 aw was only seen to apply to Christian nations and "civilized" non-
 Christian nations³⁶⁹. Although Siam would soon be subject to the unequal treaties characteristic
 of 19th century imperialism, the first Anglo-
 Siamese treaty, negotiated by Henry Burney and signed in 1826, was painstakingly worded to pr

³⁶⁶Thongchai Winichakul, Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-
 Body of a Nation (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), Page 63.

³⁶⁷Ibid., Pages 68-74.

³⁶⁸Richard S. Horowitz,
 "International Law and State Formation in China, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire During the Eighteenth Century
 ", Journal of World History 15 (December 2004): Page 452.

³⁶⁹Ibid., Pages 452-3.

provide equal benefits to both signatories, and was accompanied by trade concessions by Siam and British acknowledgement of Siamese control over Kedah³⁷⁰.

Having established dominance over Burma with the First Anglo-

Burmese War and gained territorial presence in Southeast Asia, the British interest in the Tai principalities seem to have, in the following decades, manifested itself stronger through dealings with

Bangkok and directly with the Tai through Burma. Part of this may have been geographical

. The closest and most powerful Tai neighbor of the British Tennesse was Lan Na, which, by 182

6, had fallen firmly within Siam's sphere of influence, where it would remain. John Crawford, in the

account of his 1827 embassy to Amarapura, lists Muang Nai and Hsenwi as the two most prominent

Tai principalities subject to Burma³⁷¹, and both of these were separated from the British Tennesse

by large stretches of non-British territory. In the years following the First Anglo-

Burmese War, the rulers of Lan Na continued their correspondence with the British Tennesse.

A second letter was sent to Moulmein in 1829, inviting the British to the court of Cao Bunma of Lam

phun, Kavila's youngest brother, and the same year, Dr. David Richardson conducted the first official

British expedition to Lan Na³⁷². He was brought to Lamphun by a long and circuitous route, an attempt

by his Tai guide to obscure the main route to Lamphun in case of an attempted British invasion

³⁷³. Richardson's first expedition was short, and he found his welcome much less warm than ha

³⁷⁰Vella, *Siam under Rama III*, Pages 119-21.

³⁷¹John Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Court of Ava*, Volume 2 (London: R. Bentley, 1834), Page 234.

³⁷²Brailley, *Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement*, Page 62-3.

³⁷³*The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China, and Australasia*, Vol. 3 (London: Parbury, Allen, and Co., 1830), Page 254.

dbeenexpected,hisreportleadingHenryBurneytobelievethattheinvitationwasan
 “emptycompliment,thechiefactingontheimplicitbeliefthatnoEnglishofficercould,orwould,b
 eabletoundertakeandgetthroughthejourney”³⁷⁴.Strikingly,BunmadeclaredtoRichardsonth
 athiskingdomwasnottributarytoSiam,anexplanationwhichtheBritishrejected,HenryBurney
 declaringthatLamphunanditsneighboringterritorieswerepartofSiam³⁷⁵.ThefirstRichardson
 expeditionmarkedthestartofBritisheconomicinterestinthearea,andlefthopesthatEnglishclot
 handcutlery,highlyprizedinthePingRiverbasin,couldbeexchangedforthecattleandoreabun
 dantinthearaaswellasthegoodsfromtheChinesecaravanswhichpassedthrough³⁷⁶.Onhisfir
 stexpedition,RichardsonsoughttopurchasebuffaloandcattletorestorethepopulationoftheM
 onterritoryafteranepidemic,andhispurchasesweresoextensivethattherulersoftheregionwer
 eforcedtobanfurthersales³⁷⁷.DespitetheautonomyofLanNawhichhadbecomeapparenttohi
 monhismission,RichardsonsenthiscomplainttotheBangkokgovernment³⁷⁸,anactionindicati
 vebothoftheBritishrejectionoftheautonomyoftheTaiprincipalities,aswellasthewillingnessof
 theBritishtousesthehierarchicalrelationbetweenthe lowlandkingdomsandthehighlandprincip
 alitiestotheiradvantage.In1834,RichardsonconductedasecondmissiontothePingRiverbasi
 n,thistimetobothLamphunandChiangMai,againwiththeobjectiveofencouragingtradebetwe
 enLanNaandtheTennasserim³⁷⁹.

³⁷⁴Ibid.

³⁷⁵Ibid.,Page 255.

³⁷⁶Ibid., Page 255-6.

³⁷⁷Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Page168.

³⁷⁸Ibid.

³⁷⁹Pemberton, Report on the Eastern Frontier, Pages186-7.

In addition to marking the first direct intercourse between Lan Na and the British, the correspondence of the nobility of Lan Na and the subsequent Richardson missions are representative of the shifting power dynamic in the Tai principalities. Whereas, prior to the First Anglo-

Burmese War, the presence of a powerful Burma had served as a boost to Siamese control over Lan Na, the defeat of Burma by the British newcomers reduced the threat, thus increasing the potential autonomy, not just of Lan Na, but of all the Tai principalities which had formerly existed under the shadow of the Burmese threat. It is thus telling that no Tony was contact made with the British before the First Anglo-

Burmese War had even come to a close, but that, in the first letter to the British, the rulers of Lan Na identified themselves, not as vassals, but as sovereigns. In short the British served not only as a counter-weight to the Burmese, but as a potential counter-weight to the dominance of Bangkok.

British interest in the Tai principalities peaked in the 1830s, as indicated by the missions of Dr. Richardson to the Tai principalities west of the Salween, and Captain William McLeod to Chiang Mai, Chiang Tung, and Chiang Rung, both of which occurred in early 1837. On his third mission into Tai territory, Dr. Richardson, instead of visiting the Ping River valley as before, travelled northwards along the Salween, first into the Karenni principalities, then the Tai principalities west of the Salween, ending his mission in Amarapura. McLeod followed Richardson's 1835 mission as far as Chiang Mai, then crossed into the Kok River basin and journeyed northwards into the Sipsongpannaby way of Chiang Tung, ending his mission at Chiang Rung and returning by the same route. McLeod, following upon Richardson's earlier missions in the region, was tasked with encouraging trade be-

tween China and the British Tennesse in the Taiping principalities, while Richardson was tasked with a similar mission to the Taiping principalities west of the Salween, with the added responsibility of opening contact with those principalities³⁸⁰, as he had done at the request of Cao Bunma with the Lan Na principalities in 1829.

Following upon his mission, McLeod was struck by the mistrust, apparent on behalf of both the Siamese and the Taiof Lan Na, of “all connected with Ava”

and predicted that, due to this tension and mistrust, the authorities of Bangkok and Lan Na would never allow the British permission to trade with Chiang Tung through their territory, proposing, as an alternative to trade with China via Chiang Tung, trade via Nan and Luang Prabang³⁸¹. Indeed, the passage through the Ping and Kok basins saw McLeod embroiled in a mess of conflicting agendas. The road to Chiang Tung he found

“closed, even against the Chinese, for the excessive jealousy of the Siamese towards the Burmese”³⁸². Warned by the Ratchawong of Lamphun that the rulers of Chiang Mai

“did not look upon [the British] in the same light” and “did not share the same friendly feelings”

as those of Lamphun³⁸³, McLeod found himself met with discouragement and even suspicion from

the Chiang Mai court, being encouraged on multiple occasions to approach via Nan instead of

Chiang Tung^{384,385}. Trade was jealously guarded, a caravan of Chinese merchants from Chiang T

³⁸⁰T.H. Maddock in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 249.

³⁸¹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Pages 268-9.

³⁸²*Ibid.*, Page 290.

³⁸³*Ibid.*, Pages 288-9.

³⁸⁴*Ibid.*, Page 290.

³⁸⁵*Ibid.*, Pages 293-4.

ung having been turned back by the Uparat

and Ratchawong of Chiang Mai, acting on the orders of Bangkok, shortly before McLeod's arrival

³⁸⁶

McLeod's report also shows extensive evidence of the autonomy and individual interests, not only of the major principalities, but of the minor principalities and the common people. When asked by a prince of Muang Yong, resident in Lamphun, to free that smaller principality from the control of Lan Na and Siam, McLeod responded that the British had no intention of intervening on behalf of someone else's subjects, and reminding the prince that his people had

“voluntarily placed themselves under the Siamese Shans”³⁸⁷, a statement which, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, was not necessarily true. The Muang Yong people near Lamphun were clearly unhappy with their situation, and in addition to the desperate plea of their leader, McLeod took note that their village had been subject to vandalism, the dwelling of their ruler having been demolished by Lan Na nobles³⁸⁸. McLeod was also assured by the Ratchawong of Lamphun that the presence of the British in the Tennesseerim was beneficial to the peace and stability of Lan Na³⁸⁹, a statement indicative of strong autonomy despite the fact that, at the time, the leadership of Lan Na was largely supportive of the Siamese agenda.

In addition to the direct political and economic results of British interest in the Tai principalities, the Anglo-

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Pages 302-3.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Page 283.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Page 288.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 286.

Burmese War had a profound economic effect on the region. Damrong argues that the Anglo-Burmese Wars indirectly resulted in the troubles of the Tai principalities, by bankrupting the court of Burma and forcing the Burmese to tax their principalities³⁹⁰. In this context Cao No Kham of Chiang Rung's offer of tribute to King Tharawaddy, which will be discussed below, and which caused him later to support Cao No Kham over the reigning Saenwifa, Cao Suchawan, comes across as having been a bribe exacted by a sovereign in distress³⁹¹. The similarly outrageous sum later offered by Cao Suchawan to Amarapura comes across as the same³⁹². Whether these exactions were truly the result of any debt which the Burmese owed to the British, or they were simply the actions of a dynasty in decline is unclear. However, considering that that dynasty owed its decline to the British, it can certainly be said that the Anglo-Burmese Wars indirectly effected the Chiang Rung Crisis, which was itself the cause of the Chiang Tung Wars.

3.3 The Regional Powers and the Chiang Tung Wars

Of the four regional powers considered in this paper, only two, Siam and Burma, became directly involved in the Chiang Tung Wars. However, throughout the entire course of the Chiang Tung Wars, from the wars of the early 19th century until the three campaigns of the mid-

³⁹⁰ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 736.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Page 741.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, Page 743.

19th century, all four powers were actively involved in the Tai principalities in one capacity or another. For the Siamese and Burmese, involvement in the affairs of the Tai principalities meant a power struggle, as the two lowland empires attempted to compete for influence, in a protracted continuation of the Siamese-

Burmese war of the 18th century. For the Chinese, the primary interest was ensuring the continued loyalty of the Sipsongpanna, and for the British, the expansion of trade, and the stability of British-controlled territory was the primary interest. As the Siamese-

Burmese conflict was the most important regional conflict with regard to the Chiang Tung Wars, it will form the core of this analysis. However, the tangential involvement of the British and the Chinese will also be examined, as will the response of the Siamese and Burmese to the actions of the former.

3.3.1 Siam-Burmese Relations

The latter half of the 18th century was, for Burma and Siam as for the rest of the world, a revolutionary era. In the 1750s, against the backdrop of the Seven Years War, Alaungpaya (r. 1752-1760) came to power, defeating a combined French and Mon force at Syriam, and courting an alliance with the British³⁹³. In the following decade, Phraya Taksin (r. 1767-1782) captured Thonburi and set about restoring the power of the broken and fragmented Siame

³⁹³Myint-U, River of Lost Footsteps, Pages 94-7, recounts these sieges of Syriam.

sekingdom³⁹⁴. Both monarchs would reign for less than a decade, and in that time would accomplish greater conquest than any of their successors. In 1757, Alaungpayatook Pegu, putting an end to the reign of his Mon rival, and gaining control of the entire Irrawaddy basin³⁹⁵, and by his death before the walls of Ayutthaya in 1760, he had undertaken the first of several Konbaung invasions of Manipur³⁹⁶. He died of an illness during the first, unsuccessful campaign against the Siamese³⁹⁷. Seven years later, after the cataclysmic fall of Ayutthaya at the hands of Alaungpaya's son Hsinbyushin had torn the Siamese kingdom apart, the governor of the city of Tak in the lower Ping River valley, styling himself Phraya Taksin, captured the town of Thonburi, south of Ayutthaya, and began a whirlwind conquest that would rival that of Alaungpaya³⁹⁸. By his deposition and execution in 1782, Taksin had eliminated all of his rivals, at Phimai, Phitsanulok, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Fangonghel lower Nan River³⁹⁹, had conquered Battambang and Siem Reap in the east of modern-day Cambodia⁴⁰⁰, and had received the tribute of the neighboring Malay principalities to the south⁴⁰¹, and Tai principalities to the north and east⁴⁰². In 1782, Taksin was succeeded by the Chaophraya Chakri, who subsequently took the throne as King Ramathibodi, referred to historically as Rama⁴⁰³. In the same year, Bodawpayaput an end to the six day reign of the young King Maung Maun

³⁹⁴Wyat, Thailand, Pages 123-4.

³⁹⁵Phayre, History of Burma, Page 166.

³⁹⁶Ibid., Page 167.

³⁹⁷Ibid., Pages 168-70.

³⁹⁸Wyatt, Thailand, Pages 123-4, describes the beginnings of Taksin's reign.

³⁹⁹Ibid., Page 123.

⁴⁰⁰Ibid., Page 124.

⁴⁰¹Ibid., Page 125.

⁴⁰²Ibid., Pages 125-7.

⁴⁰³Ibid., Page 127.

g⁴⁰⁴ and began a reign which would bring the Konbaung Dynasty to the peak of its power. Although Bodawpaya would conquer extensively in his early reign, Ramal would focus on the consolidation of his power.

It was in this context that the contest for the vassal states truly began. The Burmese, in the early years of the Chakri dynasty, presented an existential threat to Siam, as great in the context of the times as the threat of the British and the French a century later. They had successfully conquered Siam twice, in 1569 and 1767, and stood, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, at the peak of their power. Ramal, after taking power, had ruled for three years, during which Bodawpaya launched his two-year invasion of Arakan⁴⁰⁵, before the first large-scale Burmese attempt to retake Lan Na and Siam, an attempt that one historian describes as the first major challenge to Ramal's Siam⁴⁰⁶. Ramal's policy towards Lan Na seems to have been quite active in this period. In 1782, he took the allegiance of Cao Kavila of Lampang, and granted him sovereignty over the Ping River watershed. In 1783, he named Cao Cantapacot, a captive of the Siamese since the sack of Vieng Chan in 1778, as Chaophraya Mongkolwalayot, and sent him to rule the basin of the lower Nan River.

The Burmese, by this point, kept a number of captured princes in their aligned cities, including Cao Manolot of Nan at Chiang Saen, and Cao Mang Cha of Phrae at Muang Yong. The center of Burmese power was Chiang Saen, which, by the 1780s, was becoming an increasingly isolated city. In deed, throughout Bodawpaya's early reign, Burma seems to have maintained a very loose grip on

⁴⁰⁴Phayre, History of Burma, Page 209.

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., Pages 213-5.

⁴⁰⁶Wyatt, Thailand, Page 132.

n the Tai principalities east of the Salween, including those which were, ostensibly, still aligned with the Burmese. Of these, Chiang Tung seem to have been the most reliable ally. Cao Kong Tai had been raised in the court of Bodawpaya's predecessors⁴⁰⁷, and ruled over a principality weakened by decades of war. His wariness of supporting Lan Na and the Siamese is indicated by his refusal, in 1787, to support the rebellions which sprung up elsewhere east of the Salween. The rest of the region, however, was only very loosely tied to the Burmese, as indicated by the widespread rebellion prior to the 1787 invasion. Following the rebellion of 1787 and the defection of Cao Attawalap anno of Nan in the following year, Chiang Saen became ever more isolated, with the expansionistic, anti-

Burmese Chao Chet Ton principalities to the west, and Nan and Phrae to the south, closer than ever before to the Siamese sphere of power.

Chiang Mai seem to have provided one of the largest strategic obstacles to the Burmese, in both their campaigns against Thonburi and Bangkok, and in their efforts to maintain control over Chiang Saen. In both Bayinnaung and Hsinbyushin's invasions of Siam, Chiang Mai had played a significant role. It was the center of power of the Mangrai dynasty in 1558, when the Lan Na kingdom submitted for the first time to the Burmese⁴⁰⁸, and ten years later, in 1568, as Bayinnaung's forces advanced to their final, victorious assault on Ayutthaya, the Tai principalities of the Lan Na region and

⁴⁰⁷ Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 256.

⁴⁰⁸ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Pages 122-3.

the Mekong watershed provided large amounts of conscripts⁴⁰⁹. Similarly, the successive invasions of Siam by the Konbaung dynasty, following Alaungpaya's first, unsuccessful attempt in 1860, also made use of the forces of Lan Na, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, Chiang Mai was once again one of the first cities to fall. This, combined with the relative strength of Kavila's re-established Lan Na, serves to explain the Burmese pre-occupation with the region. The invasion of 1775 marked the only time that the Burmese would capture Chiang Mai following the rise of Taksin. The subsequent invasions, in 1784, 1787 and 1798, would focus the brunt of the war effort against Chiang Mai and Lampang, and each would fail. At the time of the 1784 invasion, the attack was focused on Lampang, and Kavila's defense of the city seem to have prevented a sizeable Burmese force from entering the Chao Phraya plains. In 1787, the Burmese seem to have made their first outright effort to capture Lan Na itself, with the army sent against Lampang and Vieng Pa Sang alone, rather than attacking in tandem with an invasion of Siam, as in 1784. This, combined with the fact that the 1787 invasion immediately followed widespread uprisings throughout the Tai principalities, indicates that the Chao Chet Ton polity was becoming increasingly threatening to the Burmese. Following the 1787 defeat, the Burmese would wait over ten years before launching another major offensive in Lan Na. It was early in Bodawpaya's reign, and, following his failed campaign against Siam, Burma entered a peaceful period of development⁴¹⁰. In addition to focusing his man power on bui

⁴⁰⁹Wyatt, Thailand, Page 82.

⁴¹⁰Phayre, History of Burma, Page 218.

ding, Bodawpaya found himself faced with conflict within his empire. In 1792, a rebellion and Siamese invasion of Martaban and Tavoy triggered a conflict in the Tennesse which would consume most of a year before its resolution in Bodawpaya's favor⁴¹¹. In addition, in 1794, a flight of refugees from the Arakan into British territory precipitated a crisis, discussed below, which marked the start of the Anglo-Burmes tensions which would culminate in war.

The Burmese invasion of 1798, on the surface, was quite similar to that of 1787. Again the Burmese attacked, this time laying siege to the newly-reestablished Chiang Mai. Again, a large Siamese force was brought up from the Chao Phraya plain to repel the attack. However, by all accounts, the 1798 invasion was by far the largest yet thrown against Lan Na, with one source describing an army of 99,000⁴¹². Indeed, the massive Siamese force allied to break the siege, discussed in the previous chapter, seems proportionate to an invasion of such a scale. This would also mark the last serious Burmese attempt to crush Kavila's polity. Following the defeat of the invasion, the strength of the Chao Chet Ton dynasty, centered at Chiang Mai, became well known, and was remarked upon by Father Sangermanoin Amarapura, as discussed above. Kavila's able commanding of the defense of Chiang Mai was also remarked upon and praised in the *Dynastic Chronicles*⁴¹³.

The defeat of the Burmese at Chiang Mai marked a reversal in the contest for vassals, and the start of a massive expansion in power for those polities aligned with Siam. In 1801, the Burmese made o

⁴¹¹Ibid., *History of Burma*, Pages 219-20.

⁴¹²Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Page 169.

⁴¹³Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR1*, Page 248.

nelastatempttoneutralizethethreatofLanNa,sendingRajaComHongofMuangSattoattempttoconvinceKavilatoswearallegiancetotheBurmese⁴¹⁴.Theplanbackfired,leadingtothedestructionofMuangSatandaLanNaexpeditiontoChiangTung,where,purportedly,aBurmeseagenttravellingtoVietnamtorecreateanalliancebetweenthe twokingdoms,wascaptured⁴¹⁵.Theseexpeditionsetthestageforthe1804destructionofChiangSaen.ItisworthyofnotethatSiameseforcesfromBangkokweresentagainstChiangSaenin1803.ThiswasthedeepestthattheforcesoftheChakriDynastypenetratedintotheTairegionpriortothe1852campaignagainstChiangTung,and,like,thelatter,itwasunsuccessful,withtheTaiforcesofLanNasubsequentlyprovingthemselvesmorecapableofconductingwarwithintheregionthantheSiameseforcesfromBangkok.ThefactthatSiameseforcesweresentdemonstratesthestrategicsignificanceofChiangSaentothetheBurmese,aswellastheSiamesemotivationincompletelyremovingtheBurmeseabilitytointerveneintheaffairsoftheirnortherntributaries.WhilethelossofChiangMaihadcrippledtheBurmeseabilitytointerveneinSiamandtheSiamesetributaries,thelossofChiangSaenremoveditcompletely,andnofurtherlarge-scalemilitaryeffortsweremadeagainsttheSiamese-alignedTairprincipalities.

Atthispoint,ChiangMai,Lampang,andNanwerepowerfulkingdoms,loyaltoBangkok,atpeacewithoneanother,andcommandinganalmost undisputedmasteryofthelandseastoftheSalween.WhereasthebattlegroundhadpreviouslybeenLanNa,withthefallofChiangSaen,itbecame

⁴¹⁴WyattandAroonrut, The Chiang Mai Chronicle, Pages173-4.

⁴¹⁵Ibid., Page 175.

the upper Mekong and the land east of the Salween. While Siamese forces had been heavily involved in the defense of Lan Na from Burmese attacks prior to 1804, they remained uninvolved in the ensuing battles, which were conducted exclusively by the forces of the principalities of Lan Na. The Burmese, however, remained active in the region. Thus, in the extended conflict which lasted from 1806 to 1812, discussed in the previous chapter, the forces of Lan Na acted alone, without Siamese assistance, against opposing armies consisting of local Burmese-aligned Tai forces, supported by Burmese forces from the Irrawaddy basin. The eventual victory of the Burmese-aligned forces at Muang Yang, and the subsequent re-establishment of Burmese suzerainty over Chiang Tung under Cao Mahakhanan marked a second reversal, this time checking Siamese progress in the region and marked the beginning of a stalemate which would be challenged, but not altered, by the later Chiang Tung Wars.

By the end of King Rama I's reign in 1810, Siam was surrounded by a ring of friendly Tai principalities to the north, with Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Luang Prabang, Vieng Chanan and Champassak forming a buffer between central Siam and the neighboring Burmese, Vietnamese, and Chinese spheres of influence. These principalities were given an extensive degree of autonomy, and allowed to become quite powerful, as long as they did not rebel against Bangkok or threaten Bangkok's interests. Burma enjoyed largely unchallenged control over the Tai principalities west of the Salween, and after 1812, the mountainous Chiang Tung region east of the Salween. Tracing the relations between Siam and Burma, from the first campaigns against Ayutthaya to the cessation of the Chiang Tung Wars, it is possible to identify an almost continuous succession of

and conflict. This began with direct conflict between the forces of Siam and the forces of Burma, during which the Burmese dominated the Siamese with the assistance of their Tai allies. The long Siam-Burmese war continued as King Taksin restored Siam from the flames of Ayutthaya, and began to gather allies in the Tai principalities to assist in the expulsion of the Burmese from Lan Na. Lan Na thus became the battlefield, with Burmese, Siamese and Tai forces clashing sporadically in the late 18th century, and Siamese-aligned Tai forces conducting almost constant campaigns to gather population and bolster defenses. By the early 19th century, the Tai principalities were largely capable of acting on their own, and the final Siamese expedition until 1852 occurred against Chiang Saen in 1803. Following this, fighting continued on a yearly basis, albeit without Siamese involvement, until 1812, at which point the defeat at Muang Yang and the shift in allegiance of Cao Mahakhan marked the end, for a time, of the involvement of the Lan Na principalities in the affairs of the Chiang Tung region. Although the following decades were peaceful, tensions remained high, sporadic violence still occurred, and in 1822, and the Chiang Rung crisis continued to simmer. In short, when war broke out in Chiang Tung in 1849, it was not the start of a new conflict, but the continuation of the old.

3.3.2 The British, the Chinese, and the Siamese-Burmese Conflict

As the Burmese of the late 18th century began their campaign against Ayutthaya, their incursions into the Tai principalities brought them into conflict with China. This conflict involved the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna, and was directly related to the earlier expansion of Qing power into the region, discussed above. There is much speculation as to the exact manner in which this conflict broke out, but the course of events would mirror simultaneous events in Lan Na. Only the first campaign, occurring around 1765-

1766⁴¹⁶ would occur in Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna, with the conflict moving northward to Bhamo in subsequent campaigns⁴¹⁷. As with the conflicts of Lan Na, it laid waste to the principalities in which it was fought. Unlike the latter conflicts, however, it was strictly a border conflict, neither Beijing nor Amarapura ever being in any serious danger from enemy forces, and as a border conflict, the result was largely inconclusive, with the Chinese forces losing every campaign, and the Burmese being unable to challenge the ambiguous treaty eventually presented by the Chinese⁴¹⁸. As a result, the principalities of the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna remained marked only on the periphery of both Burmese and Chinese control, whereas the Siamese were eventually able to decisively drive the Burmese from Lan Na by the early 19th century, and to indefinitely keep their region from falling back into their hands.

The jockeying for power in the Sipsongpanna engaged in by the Burmese and Chinese was thus, for the remainder of the 18th century, of a considerably more sporadic and mild nature than the full scale

⁴¹⁶Alexander Woodside, "The Ch'ien-Lung Reign", in *CHC9*, Pages 264-5.

⁴¹⁷*Ibid.*, Page 265.

⁴¹⁸*Ibid.*

warfare conducted by the Siamese and the Burmese in Lan Na. While the latter rival had experienced, respectively, catastrophic defeat, and decisive victory followed by a catastrophic reversal that lost them half their empire, the former rival had simply experienced a horrific, protracted war which had gained neither side anything substantial. When the Burmese were decisively driven from Chiang Saen in 1804, the weakened principalities of the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsong panna found themselves on the receiving end of militant Lan Na expansionism developed over a quarter of a century of near-

constant war. While the late 18th century had seen Chinese influences square off against Burmese influence in the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsong panna, and the Siamese and Burmese compete for dominance in Lan Na, the early 19th century saw the Siamese, proxied by the Lan Na principalities, compete with the Burmese for dominance in the Chiang Tung region, while all three regional powers maintained a degree of influence in the Sipsong panna. The Chinese role was, by this point, largely political, and the indigenous chronicles make little mention of their direct military involvement –

it is thus likely that their continued ascendancy until Cao Mahawang's victory in 1822 can be attributed to cultural and political influence, compared to the force and coercion employed by the Burmese and Lan Na. Nonetheless, they continued to maintain their garrisons at Simao and Puer, and with the assistance of their Tai Lu allies, Burmese influence was halted at the Mekong. The Burmese, reflecting the imperial nature of the Burmese polity as discussed above, stood as the only regional power which most frequently employed actual troops from their kingdom's heartland in the

the Chiang Tung region and the Sipsongpanna between 1804 and 1822. Nonetheless, even though they were forced to rely on the support of the Tai principalities west of the Salween. Thus, although the regional powers were undoubtedly engaged in a three-

way contest for influence at this point, it can be said that the conflict was first and foremost a Tai conflict, with the local principalities playing a far greater role in starting, fighting, and ending the wars and crises than any of the lowland kingdoms.

In this context, the arrival of the British increased local autonomy, if anything. By weakening the Burmese, the British reduced the power of what had formerly been the kingdom most proactive in campaigning against the Tai. By entering into a territorial presence between Siam and Burma, the British created a new political entity in the region. Moulmein had the potential to be a powerful patron or ally, or the British expressed little interest in, or a lucrative trading partner, or the British expressed much interest in. Although the British would play no direct role in the contest for the Tai principalities until after coming into suzerainty over Chiang Tung after 1885, the potential implications of their presence would profoundly impact the course of events, with Cao Mahakhanan court in getting their suzerainty as late as 1837⁴¹⁹, and the actual results of their presence would play a direct role in the course of the Chiang Tung War of 1852-1854.

⁴¹⁹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, The Gold and Silver Road, Pages 404-5.

CHAPTER IV

WAR IN CHIANG TUNG AND THE SIPSONGPANNA, 1836-1855

The crisis that would lead to direct Siamese involvement in the Chiang Tung Wars began in 1836, when Cao Mahawang's death prompted a bid for the rulership of Chiang Rung by the clan of Cao Thian. Over the following decade, Cao Suchawan, Mahawang's son and chosen successor, maintained a precarious grip on power with the help of his allies, challenged frequently by Cao No Kham, the grandson of Cao Thian, and Cao Mahachai Ngadam, the son of Cao Mahanoi. In 1847, No Kham and Mahachai Ngadam joined forces and succeeded in sacking Chiang Rung. Most of Cao Suchawan's party then fled to Siam, while Suchawan himself fled first to Simao, and then to the court of Burma. During the Chiang Rung Crisis, Chiang Tung, a considerably stronger power than it had been during Cao Can's rebellion in 1806, played a larger role in determining the victors, effectively manipulating the Burmese court into supporting Cao No Kham.

Thus, when the Siamese-

aligned principalities became involved in the Chiang Rung Crisis in 1847, it led to the reignition of the Chiang Tung Wars, with the Chao Chet Ton principalities conducting an invasion of Chiang Tung in 1849. The failure of this attack, and the failure of the Chiang Rung Crisis to subside, led King Mongkut, who succeeded to the throne of Siam following King Rama III's passing in 1851, to launch a Siamese invasion of Chiang Tung in 1852. This invasion was also motivated by the Second Angl

o-

Burmese War, which presented a simultaneous opportunity, in the form of a weakened Burma, and a threat, in the form of the potential expansion of British influence into the Tai regions. The Siamese army, commanded by Krommaluang Wongsathiratsani, made two attacks on Chiang Tung in 1852 and 1854, the latter of which proved the culmination of the Chiang Tung Wars and the last major battle between Burma and Siam in the 19th century, with Siamese, Burmese, Tai, and Karen forces facing each other on the battlefield.

4.1 The Chiang Rung Crisis, 1836-1849

In 1836, the dormant tensions of Chiang Rung and the Sipsongpanna began to rumble once again, and soon escalated into a protracted crisis. As in previous succession crises of Chiang Rung, there were two factions, one supported by the Chinese and led by Cao Suchawan, the son of Cao Mahawang, and the other supported by the Burmese, and led by Cao No Kham, a descendent of Cao Thian. This crisis continued for over a decade, escalating at times to full-scale war, and laying waste to the stability of the Sipsongpanna. The conflict involved numerous forces from outside the Sipsongpanna, including China, Burma, Chiang Tung, Luang Prabang, and Nan. It was these last two, as Siamese-aligned principalities, which, in the end, brought first the remaining Lan Na principalities and then Bangkok into the conflict. The main player in enlisting Bangkok's involvement was an ambitious

arlord, Cao Mahachai of Muang Phong, the brother-in-law of Cao Suchawan, who was close to the rulers of Nan. Whether Cao Suchawan, or his Uparat, Cao Alammawut, the latter of whom is regularly interpreted in the Thai sources to be a supporter of the Siamese, actually endorsed Siamese involvement in the Sipsongpanna is left ambiguous by the indigenous chronicles.

As the primary champion of the Siamese cause in the Sipsongpanna, Cao Mahachai dominates the narrative of the Siamese accounts of the Chiang Rung crisis. Mahachai was the son of his predecessor, Cao Fa Mot Kham, and Nang Kuay Fong, the daughter of Cao Suwan and sister, by a different mother, of Cao Mahawang⁴²⁰. He was thus Cao Suchawan's first cousin, and a blood relation of the Chiang Rung royal family. On 25 March 1837, the day of Captain McLeod's departure from Chiang Rung, Mahachai was present in Chiang Rung, and paid a visit to McLeod, asking him to remain for two more days⁴²¹. Upon the fall of Chiang Rung to Cao No Kham's forces, Mahachai withdrew to Muang Phong⁴²². Cao Mahachai's role in the crisis is of particular importance to the Siamese due to the suzerainty that Nan, itself a vassal of the Siamese, claimed over Muang Phong. Lying south east of Chiang Rung, Muang Phong was one of the 12 *muang* of the Sipsongpanna⁴²³, and had, along with Muang La, Chiang Khaeng and Luang Phukha, paid tribute to Bangkok in 1813, after being raided by Nan⁴²⁴.

⁴²⁰PCR, Page 2.

⁴²¹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 395.

⁴²²Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134.

⁴²³McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Pages 393-4.

⁴²⁴Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Pages 104-5.

4.1.1 The Succession Crisis, 1836-1837

In 1836, Cao Mahawang of Chiang Rung, having achieved undisputed rulership of the Sipsongpanna following the defeat of his nephew Cao Mahano some years earlier, travelled to receive his confirmation as Saenwifa from the Chinese governor of Yunnan. Upon his return to Chiang Rung, he fell ill, and, after several months, passed away⁴²⁵. Chiang Rung was home to a Burmese *sittke*, who, supported as a small force of Burmese soldiers, acted as a representative of Burmese interests in the Sipsongpanna. The *sittke* had previously been entrusted with documents from the Burmese court appointing Cao Mahawang's son, Cao Suchawan, as successor to the throne⁴²⁶. Suchawan, in addition to being Mahawang's favored successor, was supported by the Chinese, who had banned the sons of Cao Mahano from the succession⁴²⁷. What should have been a smooth succession was challenged by Cao Mahakhanan*, the son of Cao Thian⁴²⁸, with the assistance of the *sittke*, who withheld the documents from the Burmese court⁴²⁹. Opposing Cao Mahakhanan were the ruler of Tha Lo⁴³⁰, who was, at the time, serving as the Cao Chiang Ha, or spokesman of Chiang Rung's council of princes⁴³¹, and Nang Suriyaphomma⁴³², the Mahathewio of the late Cao Mahawan

⁴²⁵McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 377.

⁴²⁶*Ibid.*, Page 378.

⁴²⁷Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 680.

* Nott to be mistaken for Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Tung.

⁴²⁸Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134.

⁴²⁹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 378.

⁴³⁰Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 228n.

⁴³¹Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts,

Page 99. The council of princes is called the *nuasanam*.

g⁴³³. The two opposing factions were linked by a network of family ties. Cao Mahakhanan's soldiers on, Cao No Kham, was married to the late Cao Mahawang's daughter, while his second son, Cao Phom, was married to the daughter of the *sittke*⁴³⁴. The Mahathewi was the sister of Cao Mahachai, the ruler of Muang Phong, by a different mother⁴³⁵. Cao Suchawan was betrothed to the daughter of Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Tuong⁴³⁶. Cao Suchawan's faction also commanded the support of both the Burmese, who, as mentioned above, had sent letters to the *sittke* appointing him as heir apparent, and the Chinese, who had approved Cao Mahawang's petition to make Cao Suchawan his successor in 1834⁴³⁷. Cao Mahakhanan was himself closely linked to the faction of Mahawang's rival, Cao Mahanoi, who was his son-in-law, having married Mahakhanan's daughter Nang Cham Kham, with whom he had two children, Nai Lin Dang and Cao Mahachai Ngadam⁴³⁸. Cao No Kham, his old son, was also married to a daughter of Cao Mahawang, and his young son, Cao Phom, was married to the daughter of the Burmese *sittke*⁴³⁹. Cao No Kham was thus the brother-in-law of Mahanoi, Suchawan, and the Burmese *sittke*. While the elderly Cao Mahakhanan had been

⁴³² PCR, Page 5.

⁴³³ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 378.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ PCR, Pages 1-2.

⁴³⁶ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 378.

⁴³⁷ Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 97.

⁴³⁸ PCR, Page 6.

⁴³⁹ McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page 378.

excluded from the succession many years prior, he had clearly massed a formidable political network over the course of his lifetime.

4.1.1.1 *The Crisis*

Despite the

legal support commanded by Cao Suchawan's faction, it was the support of the *sittke* and his soldier that proved critical, and the seizure of power by Cao Mahakhanan's faction seem to have taken their opponents by surprise, forcing an initial

“feigned acquiescence”⁴⁴⁰. The coup seem to have been carried out with a relatively small force of about three hundred fighting men⁴⁴¹, leaving the newly-

enlisted party vulnerable. The Cao Chiang Haw wasted no time in appointing Cao Mahachaitotak e Suchawan and Alammawut to safety on the far side of the Mekong and from there to China⁴⁴². Hav

ing sent the young prince to safety, the Cao Chiang Haw proposed the enlistment of Cao Nokha mas Saenwifa⁴⁴³, while simultaneously colluding with the other rulers of the Sipsongpannat to gat

her a large force near Chiang Rung⁴⁴⁴. These forces were allegedly gathered under the pretence

of being used to fight off an impending attack by Cao Suchawan and Cao Alammawut⁴⁴⁵. Things sc

⁴⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 98.

⁴⁴²Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 680.

⁴⁴³Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 99.

⁴⁴⁴McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 378.

⁴⁴⁵*PCR*, Page 7.

ametoaheadthedaythatCaoNoKhamwastobecomeSaenwifa.AsCaoNoKhamandhisfollowersproceededtothepalacetoreceivetheirtitles,theywereattackedbytheCaoChiangHa'ssupporters⁴⁴⁶.CaoNoKhamsucceededinescaping,butthemajorityofhissupporters,includinghisfather,CaoMahakhanan,werecapturedandexecuted⁴⁴⁷.Alltheseeventsoccurredbetweenthe deathofCaoMahawangtowardstheendof1836,andpriortolateFebruary1837,atwhichtimeCaoMahakhananofChiangTungreportedonthesituationtoCaptainWilliamMcLeod⁴⁴⁸.FollowingMcLeod'sdeparturefromChiangRunginlateMarch⁴⁴⁹,CaoSuchawanreturnedtriumphantlytoChiangRung,acceptingthetitleofSaenwifa⁴⁵⁰.Atthesametime,hisbrother,CaoAlammawut,tookthetitleofUparat⁴⁵¹,having,priortothedeathofCaoMahawangandtheoutbreakofthecrisis, receivedappointmenttothetitlebytheBurmese⁴⁵².

4.1.1.2 Analysis the Start of the Crisis

These early events of the Chiang Rung Crisis sent a ripple through the Burmese-aligned principalities, and word of the events reached both McLeod and Richardson, in

⁴⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, Gold and Silver Road, Page345.McLeodmetCaoMahakhananofChiangTungon22February.

⁴⁴⁹Ibid., Page397.McLeoddepartedon26March.

⁴⁵⁰Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page134.

⁴⁵¹Ibid.

⁴⁵²Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page98.

Chiang Tung and Muang Nai respectively. Although the Lan Na principalities and Chiang Tung had experienced several decades of relative peace, the Sipsongpanna had enjoyed only three years of peace since the defeat of Cao Mahanoi. Although Cao Mahanoi had been supported by the Chinese, and Cao Mahawang, his rival, by the Burmese, in 1836 the battle-lines returned to their more conventional form, with Cao Mahawang's son, Cao Suchawan, the grandson of Cao Suwan, being supported by the Chinese. Cao No Kham had not yet managed to obtain the appointment of the Burmese, although he would in the near future, and the Siamese-aligned principalities remained, for the time, uninvolved, possibly due to Chiang Mai's continued support of Cao Can.

4.1.2 War Against Cao No Kham, 1837-1843

Although the events of the following years are easy to trace in sequence, constructing a definitive timeline is considerably more difficult, and there are few if any definitive dates in the following years. In early 1837, with his faction defeated, Cao No Kham fled first for Muang Phan, west of Chiang Rung⁴⁵³, and from there to the high country, where he gathered support amongst the Akha, Lua, and Lahu⁴⁵⁴. His main rival was clearly the Cao Chiang Ha, who commanded the support of the rulers of the Sipsongpanna, as well as other highland groups⁴⁵⁵.

⁴⁵³Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 681.

⁴⁵⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵Liew-Herres, Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts, Page 100.

4.1.2.1 *The Battle of Baan Pha Phueng*

Making his base at a town called Baan Pha Phueng, he launched a raid into the lowlands of the Sipsongpanna, and was defeated by the forces of the Cao Chiang Ha⁴⁵⁶. It was at this point that Chiang Tung became involved. As the Cao Chiang Ha directed the war effort against Cao No Kham's allies, Cao No Kham was himself attacked by the son of Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Tung*. Capturing Cao No Kham, the Chiang Tung forces launched a bloody rampage through the towns west of the Mekong, before returning to Chiang Tung, where Cao No Kham requested the support of Cao Mahakhanan⁴⁵⁷. Even during McLeod's time in Chiang Rung, evidence was appearing of tension between the Cao Chiang Ha and Chiang Tung. McLeod heard a rumor that the Mahathewi intended to marry the Cao Chiang Ha, thus allowing him to usurp Cao Suchawan as Saenwifa⁴⁵⁸. Cao Suchawan was young, about 13 years old⁴⁵⁹, and Cao Alammawut, his newly-appointed Uparat, younger still⁴⁶⁰, and the Cao Chiang Ha and Mahathewi were clearly the truer

⁴⁵⁶Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 681.

*

Cao Mahakhanan had three sons by 1837, including Cao Mahaphrom, the heir apparent, about 25 years old, Cao Patawun, about 18 years old, and a young son, a monk in February 1837, who was 12 years old. See McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Pages 342-3.

⁴⁵⁷Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 100.

⁴⁵⁸McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 378.

⁴⁵⁹*Ibid.*, Page 377.

⁴⁶⁰Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 97.

lers of Chiang Rung. Regardless of what truth there was to the rumors, Cao Mahakhanan chose to cast his lot with Cao No Kham.

4.1.2.2 *The Battle of Baan Na Ngoi, and the Involvement of Chiang Tung*

The forces of the Sipsongpannawerestill engaged in a war against Cao No Kham's highland allies⁴⁶¹, and soon Cao No Kham himself returned with an army from Chiang Tung, commanded by Cao Mahakhanan's son, Cao Mahaphrom⁴⁶², who would later fight against the Siamese. Against Cao No Kham and the Chiang Tung forces was the army of the Cao Chiang Ha, supported, this time, by an army from Muang Laem⁴⁶³. The combined Sipsongpanna and Muang Laem forces clashed with the Chiang Tung army at Baan Na Ngoi near Muang Phan, and defeated them, forcing their retreat, and once again thwarting Cao No Kham's attempt to become Saenwifa⁴⁶⁴. A much-quoted Siamese source states that a force of Tai Yai and Burmese accompanied the Chiang Tung forces, commanded by *sittke*, likely the same which supported Cao No Kham in the first place, and that through the maneuvering of the Mahathewi, who offered to marry the *sittke* in exchange for his support, the *sittke*'s forces brought Cao No Kham all the way to Chiang Rung and had him appointed Saenwifa before abandoning him, thus allowing the Cao Chiang Ha's forces to defeat him

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 681.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

asily, and forcing his flight to ThaLo⁴⁶⁵. Some sources describe a second clash then occurring at ThaLo, resulting in a second victory by the Sipsongpanna forces⁴⁶⁶. The force led by Cao No Kham was, by all accounts, in the range of between 2,000 and 3,000 men⁴⁶⁷, and the Chiang Rung forces which they were up against, not including the supporting forces from Muang Laem, consisted of a round 6,000 men and were led by the Cao Chiang Ha and Cao Phrommawong⁴⁶⁸, the ruler of Muang Nun, and the brother-in-law of Cao Mahachai⁴⁶⁹. There is no evidence in Chiang Rung sources that the Mahathewi actually offered to marry the Burmese *sittke*, and indeed, no evidence that any forces partook in the battle aside from those of Chiang Tung, the Sipsongpanna, and Muang Laem. Although it is plausible that at the *bo-hmu* of Chiang Tung or the *sittke* of Chiang Rung would have supported Cao No Kham and Cao Mahaphrom's army, it is equally clear that the Chiang Tung forces were unable to gather a force formidable enough to challenge that gathered by the Cao Chiang Ha.

4.1.2.3 *The Waning of the Conflict*

⁴⁶⁵Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134.

⁴⁶⁶CRCT, 2; PCR, 8.

⁴⁶⁷Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134, says 3,000, while PCR, Page 8, says 2,000. The indigenous Chiang Rung sources don't give a number.

⁴⁶⁸PCR, Page 8.

⁴⁶⁹Ibid., Page 1.

In the following years, the crisis relented somewhat, as the courts of China and Burma began to take an initiative to end the conflict. Peace negotiations were organized, to be attended by delegates of the three combatant factions, Chiang Tung, Muang Laem, and the Sipsongpanna, as well as the courts of China and Burma⁴⁷⁰. The delegates consisted of the leaders of the armies of the three principalities, as well as the district magistrates of Sima representing the Chinese, and the *sittke* of Chiang Tung, along with a high-ranking official, likely from Muang Nai, representing the Burmese⁴⁷¹. The treaty guaranteed the safety of Cao No Kham as long as he remained in exile in Chiang Tung, and as long as the rulers of Chiang Tung made sure to prevent him from causing any problems in the Sipsongpanna⁴⁷². However, if Cao Suchawan was to pass away without an heir, Cao No Kham would be allowed to return to the Sipsongpanna, and would be granted the title of Saenwifa⁴⁷³. The treaty was finalized at Wat Yang Panin Tha Lo, five copies made for the five parties, and the five delegates drank the sacred water and swore to uphold the treaty⁴⁷⁴. One indigenous source dates the finalization of the treaty to 1839⁴⁷⁵, although it theoretically could have been any time within three years of 1837.

4.1.2.4 *The Collapse of the Treaty*

⁴⁷⁰Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 682.

⁴⁷¹Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Pages 100-1.

⁴⁷²Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 682.

⁴⁷³Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 101.

⁴⁷⁴Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 682.

⁴⁷⁵Liew-Herres, *Inter-Dynastic and Inter-Tai Conflicts*, Page 101.

In 1840, the treaty collapsed. As with the events of the earlier conflict, the early Siamese sources conflict occasionally with the indigenous sources regarding how exactly this occurred. Chaophraya Thiphakorawong narrates that, following the earlier episode in which the Mahathewi scheme with the Burmese *sittke* to overthrow Cao No Kham, that Cao No Kham, who had previously paid a large sum of money to the king of Burma in exchange for his support, complained to the king of the treachery of the *sittke* and of the party of Cao Suchawan, and that, at the urging of Cao Mahakhanan, the king responded by deploying a massive army to attack the Sipsongpanna and reinstate Cao No Kham as Saenwifa⁴⁷⁶. Leaving aside the scheming of the Mahathewi and the *sittke*, as well as the fact that this course of events ignores the peace negotiations which had, in theory, ended the conflict, it is quite clear that in 1840, Cao Mahakhanan somehow managed to convince King Tharawaddy to support Cao No Kham against the Sipsongpanna. One Chiang Rung source claims that the Burmese king became angry with Cao Suchawan after the latter refused to pay tribute in person in 1840⁴⁷⁷. The justification for this offered by Cao Suchawan was that his oath of loyalty to the Chinese forbids him to leave his kingdom without their permission⁴⁷⁸. When the Burmese king sent three emissaries to him to request tribute again, he sent one of the three back to Burma to explain the nature of his obligation to the Chinese and ask if he could send Cao Alammawutin in his place⁴⁷⁹. The Burmese emissaries who remained in Chiang Rung, upon their departure, informed Cao Mahakhanan of Cao Suchawan's recent withdrawal to Muang Ram, east of the Mekong, as

⁴⁷⁶Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134.

⁴⁷⁷Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Pages 682-3.

⁴⁷⁸*Ibid.*, Page 683.

⁴⁷⁹*Ibid.*

well as the militarization of certain key cities, including Chiang Rai and Muang Phong⁴⁸⁰. This, combined with Suchawan's earlier flight of the Burmese king, prompted Tharawaddy to appoint Cao No Kham as king and send an army to enforce the appointment⁴⁸¹. Hearing that the Burmese emissaries and Cao Mahakhanan had accused him, Suchawan sent Cao Alammawut to Amarapura in an attempt to defuse the situation, but Alammawut was detained in Muang Nai along with No Kham, as both awaited a response from the Burmese king⁴⁸². The *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung* generally follows this course of events, but describes Cao No Kham as having travelled in person to the court of Amarapura and asked the king for help, claiming that Cao Suchawan had started the conflict⁴⁸³. These events are listed as having occurred between 1840 and 1841, with the growth of tensions between the Burmese court and the Sipsongpannab beginning in 1840, and the deployment of Burmese forces to attack Chiang Rung occurring in 1841⁴⁸⁴.

4.1.2.5 Cao No Kham Takes Chiang Rung

The Burmese army sent with Cao No Kham was considerably larger than the Chiang Tung army which had attacked the Sipsongpannab in the previous years. The Siamese sources describe a massive assault by a 10,000 strong army of Burmese, Chiang Tung and Tai Ya forces, led by Cao No K

⁴⁸⁰Ibid., Page 684.

⁴⁸¹Ibid.

⁴⁸²Ibid., Pages 684-5.

⁴⁸³Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴Ibid., Pages 682-4.

ham and the children of Cao Mahanoi, Cao Mahachai Ngadam and Nai Lin Dang⁴⁸⁵. Burmese troops were sent from Amarapura, and Tai Yaiforces were drawn from Muang Nai, Saenwi, Mok Mai, and a place named in the chronicles 'Muang Rayat'⁴⁸⁶. According to the Chiang Rung sources, the force was considerably smaller at first, consisting of No Kham at the head of an army of about 5,000, including 2,000 Burmese⁴⁸⁷. While the Siamese sources describe the attack as having occurred immediately⁴⁸⁸, the Chiang Rung sources say that No Kham remained in Muang Nai until 1842. The event which then prompted the Burmese to proceed with the invasion was the arrival of a Chinese emissary at Muang Nai, which violated a previous agreement that emissaries from China would approach Amarapura from the headwaters of the Irrawaddy⁴⁸⁹. This emissary had been one of those sent by the Chinese to formally protest to the Burmese court, claiming Cao Suchawan as her rightful Saenwifa⁴⁹⁰. Upon the emissary's arrival in Muang Nai, Alammawut was arrested and sent to Burma, along with his mother, Nang Bin Kaew, and his sister, Nang Waen Kaew⁴⁹¹, while Cao No Kham was ordered by the ruler of Muang Nai to gather more forces and launch an attack on the Sipsongpanna⁴⁹². With a massive army loyal to Cao No Kham advancing on Chiang Rung, Cao Su

⁴⁸⁵ PCR, Page 8. Cao Mahachai Ngadam is not to be mistaken for Cao Mahachai.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., Page 9.

⁴⁸⁷ Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 684.

⁴⁸⁸ PCR, Page 9.

⁴⁸⁹ Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 685.

⁴⁹⁰ PCR, Page 9.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 685.

chawan abandoned the city and took refuge with the Chinese⁴⁹³, and Cao No Kham and his army entered Chiang Rung unopposed⁴⁹⁴.

4.1.2.6 Cao Mahachai Retakes Chiang Rung

Cao No Kham's hold on power was weakened significantly by the fighting which occurred between him and the sons of Cao Mahanoi, and Thiphakorawong bluntly declares that the three princes "fought and killed each other"⁴⁹⁵. The massive force with which No Kham seized Chiang Rung seems to have remained an imminent threat, however, and Cao Mahachai withdrew from Muang Phong to Luang Phukha, a city which lay within Nan's sphere of influence⁴⁹⁶. Alarmed by the outbreak of hostilities, the Chinese entered into two months of negotiations with the Sipsongpanna and Burma, while gathering forces at a place called Chiang Laenge east of the Mekong⁴⁹⁷. During these negotiations, the Chinese argued in favor of Suchawan's faction, arguing that he was the rightful ruler of Chiang Rung, and that the Burmese should not have appointed No Kham⁴⁹⁸. Following the Burmese rejection of the Chinese protest, and the execution of two nobles who supported Suchawan

⁴⁹³Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴Ibid., Page 686.

⁴⁹⁵Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 134.

⁴⁹⁶Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 742.

⁴⁹⁷Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 686.

⁴⁹⁸PCR, Page 10.

,theChinesedecidedtotakeaction⁴⁹⁹.Mahachaiwasplacedinchargeofanarmyofaround7,000,andlaunchedanattackonChiangRung,whichsuccessfullydroveCaoNoKhamandhissupportersfromthecity,andfromtheSipsongpanna⁵⁰⁰.ThisarmywasassembledbytheChinese⁵⁰¹,andmayhavecontainedChineseforces.The*Lineage*describesitashavingconsistedofforcesfromMuangPhong,MuangLa,Simao,andaplacereferredtoas“MuangLusu”⁵⁰².RatherthanwithdrawingtoMuangPhong,CaoMahachairemainedinChiangRungwithhisforces⁵⁰³.

4.1.2.7 The Burmese Support Cao Suchawan

FollowingCaoNoKham'sdefeat,theBurmese withdrewtheirsupportforhim.TheministerwhopromptedthischangeofheartwasMaungTalai,who,accordingtothe*Lineage*,spokeunderinterrogationbythePaganPrince⁵⁰⁴.TheBurmese courtorderedtheministerswhohadsupportedCaoNoKhamarrested,includingMaungTalaihimsel⁵⁰⁵,andtheremainingfourwereexecutedatMuangNai⁵⁰⁶.Despitethis,tensionsbetweenChiangRungandChiangTungremainedhigh,andearlierinthesameyear,violencehadoccurredbetweenthetwosides,withaforcefromChiangTun

⁴⁹⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰Ibid.

⁵⁰¹Ibid.

⁵⁰²Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page686.

⁵⁰³PCR, Page10.

⁵⁰⁴Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page686.

⁵⁰⁵Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶PCR, Pages 11-2.

gattacking Muang Long, a principality of the Sipsongpannawest of the Mekong⁵⁰⁷. This attack was conducted by the forces of Chiang Tung supported by the Burmese, and the attacking force consisted of just over 3,000 men, considerably smaller than the previous attack⁵⁰⁸. The smaller force, and the fact that the attack targeted a principality located west of the Mekong indicates that the intention must have been that of a raid rather than an invasion. Also notable is Cao No Kham's absence from the invading force, with the attack instead being led by a prince of Chiang Tung⁵⁰⁹. The attack was ultimately defeated by an army of 2,500 led by Cao Mahachai, and resulted in the death of one of the commanders⁵¹⁰. In the same year, a delegation from Nan arrived at Luang Phukha, heralding a deeper degree of involvement by the Siamese-aligned principalities. The ruler of Nan at the time was Cao Mahawong, a ruler remembered by the *Nan Chronicle* as more of a builder than a conqueror⁵¹¹. An emissary, likely Mahawong's son, Cao Tui⁵¹², was sent to Muang Phong, and Cao Mahachai, then the dominant player in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna, sent tribute to Nan⁵¹³. Muang Phong was thus, in the early 1840s, an active tributary state of Nan, a situation which would contribute to pulling Bangkok into the war ten years later.

4.1.2.8 Analysis of the First Phase of the Crisis

⁵⁰⁷Ibid., Pages 10-1.

⁵⁰⁸Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹Ibid.

⁵¹⁰Ibid., Page 11.

⁵¹¹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Pages 116-7.

⁵¹²Ibid., Page 167, names 'Cao Tui' as Mahawong's youngest son, while PCR, Page 11, names the emissary to Muang Phong as 'Nai Tui'.

⁵¹³Ibid.

The conflict between Cao Suchawan's supporters and Cao No Kham marks the first phase of both the Chiang Rung Crisis and Cao Suchawan's reign. A short period of relative peace would follow, after which the crisis would resume in 1845, with Cao Suchawan challenged by Cao Mahachai Ngadam. For the duration of the first phase of the crisis, the only regional powers involved in the Sipsongpanna were Burma and China. Aside from Nan's tributary relations with certain principalities of the Sipsongpanna, most notably Muang Phong, the Lan Na principalities remained largely uninvolved.

The events by which Cao No Kham became the Burmese candidate to rule the Sipsongpanna are worthy of analysis, and would be reflected in other events, later in the crisis. At the start of the crisis, Cao No Kham lacked any support by the regional powers, with both Burma and China having accepted Cao Suchawan. The abrupt coup d'etat of his father, Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Rung, was swiftly defeated, and accomplished little aside from forcing Cao No Kham to flee to the hills. Ultimately, it was not the Burmese who chose Cao No Kham as their candidate, but the rulers of Chiang Tung. As discussed above, there had been tensions apparent between Chiang Tung and Cao Suchawan's faction when McLeod visited Chiang Rung. Chiang Tung's proximity to the Sipsongpanna would have meant that they would have been involved in all of the previous crises, in support of the Burmese candidates, and Cao Kong Tai and

Cao Mahakhanan had likely developed close ties with the descendents of Cao Namphung and Cao Thian, and would have developed a mistrust of the Chinese as well. Regardless of Cao Mahakhanan's motivations in supporting Cao No Kham, it was a decision that the Burmese were eventually compelled to accept. Burmese campaigns in the Tai regions were invariably dependant on the support of the local principalities, and without the support of Chiang Tung, the Burmese would not be able to campaign or exert their influence in the Sipsongpanna at all.

The true turning point in this phase of the crisis seems to have been the expulsion of Cao No Kham from Chiang Rung by Cao Mahachai. It was after this expulsion that the Burmese dropped their support for him. In future conflicts, the Burmese would invariably support Cao Suchawan, but would not field another army as far as the Sipsongpanna. Cao No Kham lost a considerable degree of personal power as well, and although he would be involved in the later phases of the struggle, he would no longer be the leader of the opposition to Cao Suchawan, with that title being usurped by Cao Mahachai Ngadam. In the ensuing period of peace, from 1843 to 1845, the Chinese would withdraw their support for Cao Suchawan, and, unable to exact sufficient assistance from the Burmese, Suchawan would be forced to turn to another faction, the Tai principalities of Lan Na.

4.1.3CaoSuchawanReignsAlone.1843-1845

In 1843, Nan's involvement in the Sipsongpanna increased. As in the previous year, a delegation was sent to Luang Phukha, this time to negotiate an agreement between Nan and the Sipsongpanna regarding the regions of Chiang Khaeng and Chiang Rai, which both Nan and the Sipsongpanna ostensibly claimed vassalage over at the time⁵¹⁴. In exchange for the right to take tribute from Chiang Khaeng and Chiang Rai, Mahachai, negotiating on behalf of the Sipsongpanna, requested the return of Phraya Singkhalu, a Tai L nobleman who had been resident in Nan for the past ten years⁵¹⁵. Mahachai and the representative of Nan, Phraya Si Song Mun, then conducted a ritual, confirming friendship and alliance between Nan and Muang Phong, a connection which would play a key role in the conflict to come⁵¹⁶. That year, Cao Suchawan paid tribute to both Nan and Burma⁵¹⁷, and as Mahachai conducted a ritual of friendship with Nan, Suchawan conducted a ritual of forgiveness with the Burmese at Hsipaw⁵¹⁸. As 1844 began, Cao Suchawan and his faction had thus become the undisputed leaders of the Sipsongpanna, having won the Burmese court to their side, and having gained a third patron in Cao Mahawong of Muang Nan. The return of Cao Alammawut to Chiang Rung, accompanied by coronation regalia, and the arrangement of a marriage between Cao Alammawut and Nang Sunanda

⁵¹⁴Ibid., Page 12.

⁵¹⁵Ibid., Page 13

⁵¹⁶Ibid.

⁵¹⁷Ibid., Pages 13-4.

⁵¹⁸Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 687.

⁵¹⁹, give the impression that Cao Suchawan and Cao Alammawut had, for the most part, emerged victorious from the crisis ⁵²⁰.

4.1.3.1 Cao Mahachai's Rebellion

Within a year, however, it became apparent that any stability gained via Cao Suchawan's victory was not to last. An impression of the literal price of victory can be gleaned from the various sources.

The *Dynastic Chronicle* describes Cao Suchawan as having been forced to pay a sizeable fine to free Cao Alammawut from imprisonment in

Amarapura ⁵²¹. The *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung* talks extensively about the massive tribute paid, not merely to Burma and China, but to Nana as well, and suggests as well that Cao Alammawut remained indebted to the Burmese for their hospitality during his imprisonment ⁵²². In short,

Cao Suchawan and Cao Alammawut's victory had bankrupted them, and this would have been exacerbated by a general scarcity of resources and irregularity of trade as a result of the frequent violence of the preceding years. In 1845, therefore, a massive taxation effort was launched, with every household down to the rank of *phrai* being forced to pay ⁵²³. From Cao Mahachai, once again based in Muang Phong, the rulers in Chiang Rung requested two horses, to be given as a wedding gift

⁵¹⁹Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 261, names the daughter of Cao Mahakhan as sent to wed in Chiang Rung in 1847 as Sunanda. This name is confirmed in PCR, Page 16.

⁵²⁰PCR, Pages 14-5.

⁵²¹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR3*, Page 135.

⁵²²PCR, Pages 15-6.

⁵²³*Ibid.*, Page 16.

ift to the rulers of Chiang Tung⁵²⁴. Tensions seem to have once again risen in the Sipsongpanna, this time between Cao Mahachai and Cao Suchawan, because when the Cao Saenmuang* rejected the gift, violence once again erupted in the Sipsongpanna, this time between the former allies⁵²⁵. An irate Cao Alammawut demanded additional money from Cao Mahachai, Mahachai refused, and soon the Cao Chiang Ha announced to the court of Chiang Rung that Cao Mahachai had betrayed the Sipsongpanna and was planning an attack on Chiang Rung, assisted by Cao Mahachai Nigadam⁵²⁶. Complicating matters, Cao No Kham had never abandoned his designs on the rulership of Chiang Rung, and found that the Tai Khoen still were inclined to support him⁵²⁷.

4.1.3.2 Analysis of the Second Phase of the Crisis

Following the defeat of Cao No Kham, it proved to be the new-found support of the Burmese that ironically proved Cao Suchawan's undoing. The major taxation effort which led to Mahachai's rebellion was conducted in order to pay the Burmese, in order, most likely to maintain this support. This effort was complicated by the fact that the rulers of Chiang Tung were still clearly ambivalent towards Suchawan's regime, as evidenced by their rejection of Cao Mahachai's wedding gift. However, most significantly, the taxation

⁵²⁴Ibid.
*

Cao Saenmuang was the title held by the heir apparent of Chiang Tung, under Cao Mahakhanan's reforms. See Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, Page 408.

⁵²⁵PCR, Page 16.

⁵²⁶Ibid.

⁵²⁷Renoo Wichasin, Page 688.

of the Sipsongpanna turned the Chinese against Cao Suchawan. The revolt led by Mahachai, which would spark the third phase of the crisis and eventually lead to the outbreak of the later Chiang Tung Wars, was, ultimately, supported by the Chinese. Mahachai had previously led the Chinese-aligned forces in the war against Cao No Kham, and Cao Mahachai Ngadam, who was subsequently appointed to lead the Sipsongpanna, was appointed by the Chinese. Thus, in 1845, the support for the two factions had reversed again, with Cao Mahachai Ngadam, a descendant of both Cao Suwan and Cao Thian, supported by the Chinese, and Cao Suchawan, a descendant of Cao Suwan, supported by the Burmese. In the violent two years that followed, the Burmese support for Cao Suchawan would prove largely ineffective, leading him to call upon first the Siamese-aligned Tai principalities, and then Siam itself, for support.

4.1.4 War against Cao Mahachai Ngadam, 1845-1847

It is unclear as to whether or not Mahachai had truly formed an alliance with Cao Mahachai Ngadam, as the latter did not participate in the ensuing battle, in which Mahachai's army defeated that of his brother-in-law Phrommawong, and proceeded to capture Chiang Rung, forcing Cao Suchawan and Cao Al

ammawut to flee the city once again, after only a year back in power⁵²⁸. However, following Cao Mahachai Ngadam's subsequent appointment as ruler of the Sipsongpannaby the Chinese, Mahachai refused to pay tribute⁵²⁹. Cao Mahachai Ngadam's reign was short, and consumed with an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to dispose of Cao Alammawut, who was sheltering at Baan Wa, a growing district west of the Mekong⁵³⁰.

4.1.4.1 Cao Mahachai Ngadam's Early Raids

The first major event of the reign mentioned in the *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung* was an attack against Chiang Coeng, in which Cao Mahachai Ngadam's ragtag army of about 1,000 Chinese and ethnic minorities was defeated⁵³¹. The following year, Cao Mahachai Ngadam boosted his small army with recruits from among the Akha and launched a second, successful attack against Chiang Coeng, as well as neighboring Muang Wang and Muang Ngat⁵³². The campaign then turned against Ban Wa, but was defeated by a 3,000 strong army of Muang Phong under the command of Nai Phrommawong⁵³³. Conspicuously, the *Lineage* does not mention either the capture of Chiang Rung by Mahach

⁵²⁸PCR, Pages 16-

7. Both armies would have consisted of about 3,000, the chronicle claiming Muang Phong army enjoyed a slight numerical advantage.

⁵²⁹Ibid., Page 17.

⁵³⁰McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 391.

⁵³¹PCR, Page 17.

⁵³²Ibid., Page 18.

⁵³³Ibid.

ai, nor the appointment of Cao Mahachai Ngadam by the Chinese, the events of which only appear in the *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung*.

4.1.4.2 The 1847 Campaign

Cao Suchawan and Cao Alammawut's return to Chiang Rung in 1846 proved once again to be short. By 1847, Cao Mahachai Ngadam had bolstered his forces with recruits from the highland groups, and had joined forces with the former contender for Saenwifa, his uncle, Cao No Kham⁵³⁴.

Despite the Burmese acceptance of Cao Suchawan, Cao No Kham continued to maintain the support of Chiang Tung, and as in the earlier phase of the crisis, this support would prove

critical⁵³⁵. The *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung* thus reports an extended military campaign in 1847. An engagement at Muang Sung, between the army of Cao Mahachai Ngadam and Cao No Kham, consisting of at least 2,000 recruits from the Chinese and the highland groups, and the 4,000-

strong army of Mahachai and Cao Alammawut, at Muang Sung, ended with the defeat of Cao Mahachai Ngadam's forces⁵³⁶. A captured enemy informed Mahachai and Alammawut that the enemy force was regrouping at Muang Cae, but, upon the approach of Mahachai and Alammawut, C

⁵³⁴Ibid., Page 19.

⁵³⁵Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 688.

⁵³⁶*PCR*, Page 19.

aoMahachaiNgadam'sarmywithdrew,successfullyavoidingasecondengagement⁵³⁷.MahachaiNgadamandNoKhamthenhiredaChinesemercenary,namedbyWongsathiratasChitChuang,tocrosstheMekongandraidChiangNeuainthenorthoftheSipsongpanna⁵³⁸.Afterburningthecity,theraidingforcemovedsouthwards,andclashedunsuccessfullywithMahachaiandAlammawutatMuangYang⁵³⁹.AfterpursuingChitChuang'sforcesnorthwardsandhaltingtheirarmyatChiangNeua⁵⁴⁰,MahachaiandAlammawutreceivedwordfromCaoSuchawanthatCaoMahachaiNgadamandCaoNoKham'sarmywaslocatedatMuangWang⁵⁴¹,acrosstheMekongandanequaldistancefromChiangRung,thusallowingthemtoreachthecitythanMahachaiandAlammawut.AsMahachaiandAlammawutreturnedtheirforcestoMuangYang,NoKhamandMahachaiNgadamlauchedanattackdirectlyagainstChiangRung,forcingSuchawan'sflighttoMuangHam,eastoftheMekong⁵⁴².CaoMahachaiandCaoAlammawutmadehatetoChiangRung,onlytofinditdesertedonceagain,withCaoMahachaiNgadamandCaoNoKhamhavingwithdrawntheirforcestoMuangSung⁵⁴³,afterraidingandburningthecity⁵⁴⁴.WhileAlammawutremainedtoholdthecityforSuchawan,MahachaireturnedtoMuangPhongtoraise2,000moremen⁵⁴⁵.Anticipatingthatanotherattackcouldoccur,CaoSuchawanwithdrewtoSimao,leavingMahac

⁵³⁷Ibid.

⁵³⁸Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitto KingMongkutinCRCT,Page 121.

⁵³⁹PCR, Page19.

⁵⁴⁰Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitto King MongkutinCRCT, Page121.

⁵⁴¹PCR, Page19.

⁵⁴²Ibid.

⁵⁴³Ibid., Page 20.

⁵⁴⁴Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitto King MongkutinCRCT, Page121.

⁵⁴⁵PCR, Page20.

hai and the Mahathewi to defend Chiang Rung⁵⁴⁶. Mahachai then withdrew to Muang U with the Mahathewi⁵⁴⁷. Cao No Kham's next assault targeted Mahachai's own seat of power, Muang Phong, and the attack was driven off by the ruler of Muang Luai⁵⁴⁸.

4.1.4.3 Analysis of the Third Phase of the Chiang Rung Crisis

The events that occurred between 1845 and 1847 ultimately led to Cao Suchawan's faction calling on the Siamese-aligned Tai principalities for assistance. In 1845, with the appointment of Cao Mahachai Ngadam, Suchawan had lost the support of the power which had supported him and his faction from the earliest years of his reign. Ostensibly, this support should have been replaced by the support of the Burmese, but following Mahachai Ngadam's rise to power, no Burmese support came. This was largely the responsibility of Chiang Tung. They had, during the taxation, rejected Cao Mahachai's wedding gift, and they had supported No Kham, who had been their ally from the start of the crisis, in cooperating with Mahachai Ngadam against Suchawan. As in the earlier phase of the crisis, the lack of support from Chiang Tung meant that the Burmese had no way to intervene in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna. Suchawan, though supported by

⁵⁴⁶Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 688.

⁵⁴⁷Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸Ibid.

the Burmese, was clearly unable to obtain the support of Chiang Tung, and was thus forced to look in new directions to regain his power.

The events of the 1847 campaign ultimately resulted in the flight of most of Cao Suchawan's allies of Luang Prabang and Nan, and set in motion the events which would culminate in the wars of 1849 and 1852-

1854. It is clear that the entire Sipsongpanna was in a state of chaos, and a small diversion east of the Mekong was all that Cao No Kham and Cao Mahachai Ngadam needed to sack Chiang Rung with a relatively small force.

Although the Chinese appointment of Mahachai Ngadam is not confirmed by any of the Tai Lue sources, it is nonetheless clear that the Chinese had either become unwilling or unable to assist Cao Suchawan. Moreover, despite having lost Burmese support, No Kham was, for the first time since the beginning of the crisis, able to launch repeated attacks on the eastern bank of the Mekong. It was this that drew the attention of Nan and Luang Prabang, and the lack of Chinese or Burmese support that prompted Cao Suchawan's supporters to capitalize on that attention and attempt to gain a new source of outside assistance.

4.1.5 The Involvement of the Siamese-aligned Principalities

For the duration of the Chiang Rung crisis, Luang Prabang was ruled by Cao Sukaseum, who had succeeded Manturata after the latter's death. In 1841, Sukaseum launched an attack on the Sips

ongpanna, successfully gaining a number of vassals for Bangkok in the region⁵⁴⁹, and making Luang Prabang the second polity, along with Nan, to claim power over portions of the Sipsongpanna. In 1847, Sukaseum began to take a strong interest in the affairs of Chiang Rung, initially sending spies to monitor the situation as it developed⁵⁵⁰. He was in Bangkok when Cao No Kham and Cao Mahachai Ngadam captured Chiang Rung, and, upon returning to Luang Prabang and hearing about Chiang Rung's capture, he ordered Cao Ounkeot to gather an army and move north to Muang Sai⁵⁵¹, due north of Luang Prabang and about halfway to Muang Phong. It was Nan, however, whose involvement would prove decisive. Cao Mahawong of Nan was aware of the situation of his vassal, Cao Mahachai, and sent an army to the Sipsongpanna to intervene on Mahachai's behalf⁵⁵². This army made its way to Muang U, where Mahachai and the Mahathewi were taken under Mahawong's protection, and escorted to Luang Phrabang⁵⁵³. Hearing that the Mahathewi had been sent to Luang Phrabang, Suchawan followed her to Muang U, and by the time he arrived, she had already been sent to Bangkok⁵⁵⁴. Thiphakorawong claims that, at about the same time, Cao Alammawut fled of his own accord to Luang Phrabang, and was sent from there to Bangkok⁵⁵⁵.

4.1.6 The Significance of the Chiang Rung Crisis

⁵⁴⁹Stuart-Fox, Lan Xang, Page 134.

⁵⁵⁰Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 135, and PCR, Page 20.

⁵⁵¹ML Manich Jumsai, History of Laos, Page 240.

⁵⁵²Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 688.

⁵⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 137.

The early Chakri dynasty, as discussed above, took little interest in the affairs of the Chiang Tung region or the Sipsongpanna. Rama I's polity, although portrayed at times as a sprawling empire, was in truth a concise and compact grouping of tributary states, providing Siam with a thorough defense, while not overextending the Siamese military capabilities. Thus, for Rama I and his immediate successors, the ability of those Tai principalities bordering directly on the Siamese heartland to maintain a defensive buffer was of paramount importance, and the actual internal affairs of those principalities, and their relations with their northern neighbors, was not considered to be within the scope of Bangkok's concerns. By the time that the Chiang Rung Crisis reached its peak, however, three decades had passed since Rama I's passing, in which the Siamese-aligned Tai principalities, particularly those of Lan Na, had reached the peak of their power. Although the Chao Chet Ton principalities largely had their political network confined to the Ping, Wang, and Kok River valleys, with the Burmese having expelled them from the Chiang Tung region, Nan and Luang Prabang possessed political networks which extended as far north as the southern Sipsongpanna, and were thus able to play a direct role in the events of the Chiang Rung Crisis.

In 1847, as has been discussed above, Cao Suchawan's allies, Cao Alammawut and Cao Mahachai, turned to Nan and Luang Prabang for support, after their faction was abandoned by both the Chinese and the Burmese. Nan held, at the time, a direct tributary relationship over Cao Mahachai's Muang Phong, and as such, intervened in

defense of their own interests, on behalf of their vassal. Rather than simply handling the affair on their own, Nan and Luang Prabang opted to send to Bangkok with news of the crisis and the flight of the nobles of the Sipsongpanna. Rama III, rather than letting the Tai principalities handle their own affairs, ordered the attack on Chiang Tung and summoned the fugitive nobles to Bangkok, where they offered their allegiance to Siam. Bangkok thus made a commitment to offer assistance, in one way or another, to its new-found vassals in the Sipsongpanna. Although Rama III's motivation in summoning the Sipsongpanna nobles to his court is far more difficult to pinpoint than the later motivation of Mongkut to involve Siamese forces directly, it is clear that the decision would have been supported by a number of the Siamese-aligned Tai principalities, in particular Chiang Mai, Nan, and Luang Prabang. Cao Phuttawong had just been succeeded by Cao Khanan Mahawong in Chiang Mai⁵⁵⁶, and the newly-ascendant ruler would have been eager to prove his strength with an expedition to Chiang Tung. In Nan and Luang Prabang, however, the motivation was far greater, and the effort to put a sympathetic prince on the throne of Chiang Rung would have served as both a defense against Chinese and Burmese influences in their own principalities, as well as a dramatic expansion of power.

4.2The1849ChiangTungWar

⁵⁵⁶Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Page 140.

In response to the request for assistance by the nobles of Chiang Rung, Ramall ordered Chiang Mai to attack Chiang Tung⁵⁵⁷. Cao Mahachai and Cao Alammawut were subsequently summoned to Bangkok for an audience with King Ramall⁵⁵⁸, along with Nang Suri yaphromma, the Mahathewi⁵⁵⁹. It is apparent that Cao Mahachai, then resident in Nan, was reluctant to travel south to Bangkok. Upon receiving word that King Ramall had summoned him to an audience, and that a delegation from Bangkok was en route to Nan to bring him south, Mahachai fled Nan with his family. Cao Mahawong of Nan ordered his pursuit and capture, and he was caught along with 1,800 of his followers⁵⁶⁰. Mahachai was then escorted to Bangkok, while his followers were settled in Chiang Khong⁵⁶¹. It is likely that they remained resident in Bangkok for much of the coming decade. Ramall expressed his desire for them to return to their home in the Sipsongpanna⁵⁶², but added his concern that Chiang Rung would not be safe from the Burmese for as long as Chiang Tung remained a Burmese vassal⁵⁶³. These words, attributed to Ramall by Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, compared Chiang Tung's geographic relationship with Burma and Chiang Rung to Chiang Mai's geographic relationship with Burma and the Lao principalities, with both Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung being strategic bases from which to control the more distant regions⁵⁶⁴. Thus, c

⁵⁵⁷Ibid., Page 161.

⁵⁵⁸PCR, Page 25.

⁵⁵⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 138.

⁵⁶⁰Ibid.

⁵⁶¹Ibid.

⁵⁶²PCR, Page 25.

⁵⁶³Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 138.

⁵⁶⁴Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 744.

ontrol of Chiang Tung would prevent the Burmese from ever interfering in the affairs of Chiang Run g. Nonetheless, the refugees from the Sip song pan naw would wait for two years until any action was taken, and when that action occurred, would not participate in that first campaign.

Although Rama III ordered the ensuing campaign, it was conducted, not by the forces of Bangkok, and nor by the forces of Luang Prabang and Nan, to whom Cao Suchawan's party had appealed for assistance, but by the forces of the Chao Chet Ton

principalities. There was little to distinguish this attack from the earlier raids into the Chiang Tung region conducted between 1802 and 1812, aside from, perhaps, the lack of a Burmese presence. Most of the information we have regarding the 1849 Chiang Tung War was compiled after the 1852-

1854 war had already taken place, and as such, it is normally seen through the lens of that conflict.

The fact that it would later be used as a precedent to justify the Siamese attack on Chiang Tung early in

Mongkut's reign has had the effect of retroactively increasing the conflict's significance, and casting it as a conflict controlled by Rama III from a distance. Nonetheless, it marked a key turning point in the Chiang Tung conflict. In addition to bringing the hostilities between Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung back into the open after several decades of detente, it brought the internal affairs of the Tai principalities into the court of Bangkok, and set the stage for the eventual Siamese expedition against Chiang Tung.

4.2.1 The Lan Na Forces

In 1849, a force of 6,500 men was mobilized by the Chao Chet Ton principalities to invade Chiang Tung. 5,000 men were raised by Chiang Mai, 1,000 by Lampang and 500 by Lamphun⁵⁶⁵. The assembled forces were divided into two armies. The first, consisting of four brigades, was placed under the command of Phraya Phimphisan, the Uparat of Chiang Mai and the son of Phraya Khamfan, the third King of Chiang Mai and a brother of Cao Kavi I who had been deposed in favor of Phraya Phuttawong in 1825⁵⁶⁶. In addition to Phimphisan's brigade, this army consisted of three brigades, commanded by Phraya Rattana Muang Kaeo - the future Cao Kawilorot Suriyawong, who would rule Chiang Mai following Cao Khanan Mahawang's reign⁵⁶⁷ - and Nai Nan Thampanyo, another son of Phraya Khamfan and the future Uparat of Chiang Mai⁵⁶⁸, as well as Nai Noi Dao Ruang⁵⁶⁹, the son of Cao Chaiyalangka of Lamphun, who would later rule Lamphun himself as Cao Daradirek Rattanapairot⁵⁷⁰. The second army, consisting of eight brigades, was placed under the command of Cao Ratchabut Mahaphrom, the son of Cao Khanan Mahawang⁵⁷¹. In addition to the Ratchabut, the brigades were commanded by Nai Roi Phrom and Nai Noi Mahaphrom of Chiang Mai, the Uparat and Ratchabut of Lamphun, and four other command

⁵⁶⁵Ibid., Page 744.

⁵⁶⁶Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Page 144.

⁵⁶⁷Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 744.

⁵⁶⁸Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 138.

⁵⁷⁰Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 744.

⁵⁷¹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 138.

ers, Nai Nan Suriyawong, Nai Noi Mahawong, Nai Noi Thepwong, and Phraya Rattana Muang Kao⁵⁷². Of the Ratchaburi's commanders, the most significant was Nai Noi Mahaphrom, the son of Cao Khanan Mahawong⁵⁷³. The Uparat's army advanced to Chiang Rai in the Kok River basin, while the Ratchaburi's army advanced northward to Muang Sat⁵⁷⁴.

4.2.2 The Lan Na Advance

The war began with the capture of Muang Sat by the Ratchaburi's army, in which the city was overrun completely, and its entire population captured⁵⁷⁵. The Ratchaburi's army then divided, with one force, under the Ratchaburi, advancing northwards into the valley of the other Ping River, tributary of the Kha, passing through Muang Mang to Muang Ping⁵⁷⁶, before advancing eastwards past Muang Pu⁵⁷⁷ to Chiang Tung. Upon arriving in the Chiang Tung basin, the Ratchaburi's army encamped at Chomsiri, a slowly rising hill to the southwest of Chiang Tung's fortifications⁵⁷⁸. The new force, under the command of Nai Noi Mahaphrom, the nephew of Cao Khanan Mahawong, having

⁵⁷²Ibid.

⁵⁷³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 745.

⁵⁷⁴Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 138.

⁵⁷⁵Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 365.

⁵⁷⁶Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 261.

⁵⁷⁷Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 397.

⁵⁷⁸Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 261.

plitted from the Ratchaburi's main army, advanced to the northeast and attacked the town of Muang Kok, located in a small basin directly between Muang Sat and Chiang Tung⁵⁷⁹, in the uppermost reaches of the Kok River watershed⁵⁸⁰. Advancing forwards, Mahaphrom's army launched an attack against the Chiang Tung-aligned forces at a place called Muang Khat⁵⁸¹. The battle lasted an entire day, during which the ruler of Muang Khat, a son of Cao Mahakhanan, was shot and killed⁵⁸². The town was then abandoned, and a retreat, of both soldiers and civilians, began towards Chiang Tung, with the army of Mahaphrom following close behind⁵⁸³. Meanwhile, the Uparat, marching past Chiang Rai, sent forces under Phraya Rattana Muang Kaew and Nai Nan Thammaphanyo, respectively, to attack Muang Phayak and Muang Lin⁵⁸⁴, two towns on the southern route to Chiang Tung, the latter attack being recorded in western sources⁵⁸⁵. His main force then advanced beyond the two captured towns to Muang Yong, and having obtained an agreement from the rulers of that city not to exchange hostilities, encamped⁵⁸⁶.

4.2.3 The Course of Battle

⁵⁷⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 149.

⁵⁸⁰Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 378.

⁵⁸¹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 149.

⁵⁸²Ibid.

⁵⁸³Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 149.

⁵⁸⁵Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 387.

⁵⁸⁶Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR3, Page 149.

The exact course of these events is shrouded in obscurity. In April, after the unsuccessful return of the Lan Na forces, Cao Khanan Mahawong, in his report to the court of King Rama III, latched onto the Uparat as the scapegoat for the failure of the expedition⁵⁸⁷. This explanation was subsequently picked up by Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, and has become the standard explanation, in modern historiography, for the failure of the First Chiang Tung War⁵⁸⁸. However, the Uparat's successful reduction of the strategic towns of Muang Phayak and Muang Lin would have been quite strategically advantageous to the army of Mahaphrom, which was able to focus its effort against Muang Khachat, without worrying about being surprised by the forces of Chiang Tung's neighboring towns. The chronicle describes the approach of two forces, one by way of Muang Ping, obviously being those of the Ratchaburi and Mahaphrom, both of which advanced through the lands of Muang Ping, and the other by way of the Nam Kai⁵⁸⁹. The Nam Kai, or Kai River, is a tributary of the Luai River that rises between the basins of Muang Yong and Muang Kai⁵⁹⁰. This river lay on the route between Muang Yong and Chiang Tung, which would later be taken by Krommaluang Wongsathiratsani's army in 1854. Considering that the Chiang Tung sources describe the approach of a force from this direction, it is possible that the Uparat's forces had an impact on the course of the siege, although the poor coordination, of both forces, was still likely the cause of failure.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ See, for example, Sarassawadee Oongsakul, History of Lan Na, Page 161.

⁵⁸⁹ Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 261.

⁵⁹⁰ Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 612.

The best chance for success came during the flight of the refugees of Muang Khat for Chiang Tung. By this time, the Ratchaburi's army had already arrived and encamped outside the fortifications of Chiang Tung. It is unclear how the refugees succeeded in entering the city, but the *Dynastic Chronicle* says that the flight continued all the way to the gates of Chiang Tung⁵⁹¹.

4.2.4 Retreat

After besieging the city for a time, the Lan Na forces ran out of provisions and withdrew⁵⁹². Cao Khan Mahawongse sent a letter to Bangkok, reporting on the failure of the expedition, blaming the Uparat and a general lack of troops for said failure, and requesting that troops from Phrae and Nan be called up for a second attack on Chiang Tung⁵⁹³. Despite the success of Cao Mahakhanan in defending Chiang Tung from invasion, the crisis raged on in Chiang Rung. In Amarapura, it was reported that the rival claimants to the throne had been killed⁵⁹⁴. Mahachai and Alammawut remained in Bangkok, awaiting news from home. Meanwhile, Rama III's health deteriorated, and the affairs of Siam's northern frontier were put on hold for a time, as Bangkok prepared for the succession.

4.2.5 Analysis of the 1849 Chiang Tung War

⁵⁹¹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR*, Page 149.

⁵⁹²Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 745.

⁵⁹³Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR3*, Pages 149-50.

⁵⁹⁴Than Tun, *ROB, Part 8*, Page 279.

The 1849 Chiang Tung War marked the first major Lan Na incursion into the Burmese-aligned principalities since the Lan Na defeat at Muang Yang in 1812, although the forces of Nan, and possibly Luang Prabang and Phrae, had, as has been seen above, intervened on behalf of Cao Mahanoii in 1822. However, it marked a definite escalation of the Chiang Rung Crisis. Whereas Chiang Tung had mainly worked behind the scenes in the Sipsong Pannas since Burma had switched their support to Cao Suchawan, they were abruptly brought back into the conflict with an attack by a previously neutral party. The complex chain of events that brought this about involved the Siamese in the conflict, due to Mahachai and Alammawut's request for Siamese help in the Chiang Rung Crisis. The 1849 war was still, however, very much a Tai confrontation. In fact, the absence of the Burmese from the conflict was unprecedented, with the main garrison of the Burmese being located at Muang Nai, west of the Salween. Although the Lan Na forces would be very reluctant participants in the final Chiang Tung War, they conducted the 1849 war with speed and enthusiasm, and came far closer to taking the city than the large-scale Siamese invasion would in the coming years. Between 1847 and 1849, the three most powerful Tai principalities loyal to Siam had become involved in the Chiang Rung Crisis, and had succeeded in dragging Chiang Tung back into the war. The stage for a major regional confrontation had been set.

4.3 The Final Chiang Tung War – The Campaign of 1852

Siamese preparations for an attack on Chiang Tung were delayed by the declining health and eventual death of King Rama III. In addition, between 1849 and 1852, both Siam and Burma were experiencing increased tensions with the West, which would culminate in the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852. From the Burmese perspective, 1849 marked the possible return of the aggressive Lan Na of the early 19th century that had involved the Burmese in a six-year long war that left their tributaries east of the Salween devastated. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1851, a force of 10,000 was sent from the lowlands of the Irrawaddy to reinforce the garrison at Muang Nai⁵⁹⁵. However, the Siamese, and the Burmese to a much greater degree, had more on their minds between 1850 and 1852 than the fate of their Tai tributaries. In 1852, war abruptly broke out between the British and the Burmese. With the Burmese embroiled in war with the British, the question of Chiang Rung's suzerainty again arose.

4.3.1 The Chiang Rung Crisis Continued

The *Lineage* records that between Cao Alammawut's arrival in Bangkok in the late 1840s, and the start of the final Chiang Tung War in the early 1850s, Cao Mahachai was

⁵⁹⁵Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2 Part 2, Page 418.

allowed to return to the Sipsongpanna⁵⁹⁶. The *Phongsawadan Muang Chiang Rung* also records Mahachai's return, saying that it occurred sometime between King Mongkut's ascension and prior to Alammawut's return after the Chiang Tung Wars had ended⁵⁹⁷. Upon his return, Mahachai claimed that King Mongkut had requested tribute from the Siamese, in response to which a mission was organized to Bangkok, including four Tai Lu nobles and a Chinese delegate sent by the governor of Puer⁵⁹⁸. Although Thiphakorawong claims that, by 1852, Cao Alammawut and Cao Mahachai were still resident in Bangkok, he also recalls an emissary from Cao Suchawan offering a regular payment of tribute and requesting the return to the Sipsongpanna of the nobles and their followers who had taken refuge in Siam⁵⁹⁹. Although Mongkut rejected the tribute of the Sipsongpanna, he agreed to the return of the nobles, and set in motion preparations for a Siamese attack against Chiang Tung.

In 1850, Cao Suchawan, who had found his way to the court of Amrapura, was sent back to Chiang Rung with regalia for a new coronation, and orders for the *bohmuat* Muang Nai and Cao Mahakhanant to send him with an armed escort⁶⁰⁰. The same order, signed by Mindon, who had, by that

⁵⁹⁶Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 688.

⁵⁹⁷*PCR*, Page 27.

⁵⁹⁸Renoo Wichasin, *CKCS*, Page 689.

⁵⁹⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR4*, Pages 93-4.

⁶⁰⁰Than Tun, *ROB, Part 8*, Page 280.

time, obtained the rank of a lesser king, contains a rare Burmese summary of the 1849 Chiang Tung War and associated events: 'Due to discord among the rulers of Kyaing Yon Gyi, Jotinagara Province [Chiang Rung], there was a state of unrest... One faction under Saw Nga Khan [Mahachai Ngadam] tried to get Chinese help while another under Naw Khan [No Kham] allied with the unruly Lawas. Kalaungs of Chieng maitook advantage of the situation and came to loot and plunder in that province.'⁶⁰¹ Given that the Burmese described Mahachai Ngadam and No Kham as having been the leaders of opposing factions, it seems likely that by 1850, the two factions had turned against each other. The *Lineage* describes Cao No Kham's defeat at the hands of a force drawn the *muang* to the east of the Mekong, including Muang U, Chiang Thong, and a number of others, and led by Nai Phrommawong⁶⁰². The force numbered about 4,000, and was joined by a second force from the west of the Mekong at Chiang Rung⁶⁰³. Cao No Kham fled the city and was captured and killed at Muang Hun⁶⁰⁴, a town west of the Mekong in the vicinity of Muang Luang⁶⁰⁵. With the death of No Kham, Chiang Tung had lost their candidate, and the rulers of the Sipsongpanna were able to unanimously agree to reinstate Cao Suchawan, a petition for which was promptly sent to Amarapura⁶⁰⁶. Mindon seems to have personally taken up the cause of Cao Suchawan.

⁶⁰¹Ibid.

⁶⁰²Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 689.

⁶⁰³Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵Grabowsky and Renoo, Gold and Silver Road, Page 231.

⁶⁰⁶Than Tun, ROB, Part 8, Page 280.

On 26 July 1850, he granted Suchawan a petition postponing the repayment of the Sipsongpanna's debts by two years on account of the hardship suffered during the preceding crisis⁶⁰⁷. On 25 August 1850, further orders were sent, informing that refugees from the Sipsongpanna who had taken refuge in neighboring Burmese-aligned principalities could return to their homes, provided that their return was voluntary⁶⁰⁸.

These events, occurring as they did between the 1849 Chiang Tung War and the final Chiang Tung War, set the stage for the next phase of the Chiang Rung Crisis. Cao Suchawan's previous rivals had both been removed, and he had obtained the support of both the Burmese and the Chinese. However, due to the involvement of Lan Na and the Siamese, a third grouping of regional powers now held a direct interest in the affairs of the Sipsongpanna, and as a result, Cao Suchawan's reign would soon be challenged again, this time by his former allies.

4.3.2 Mongkut's Decision to Attack Chiang Tung

King Mongkut chose to continue the Siamese effort against Chiang Tung at the urging of his ministers, who observed, as King Rama III had previously, that Chiang Tung lay at the center of a Burmese

⁶⁰⁷Ibid., Page 285.

⁶⁰⁸Ibid., Pages 286-7.

elineofsupply,stretchingfromMuangNaitoChiangRung,andthatbycontrollingChiangTung,it wouldbepossibletocutoffBurmesecontroloftheSipsongpanna⁶⁰⁹.Byallaccounts,Mongkuthi mselfwasquitereluctanttointerveneintheSipsongpanna,noting,asRamalhadpreviouslynote d,thatitsdistancefromBangkokrendereditextremelydifficulttointervenedirectly⁶¹⁰.However, planshadalreadybeenmadetowardstheendofRamall'sreign,whichwereforcedtobeputonh oldbyhisillnessanddeath,andaftersucceedingthethrone,Mongkutfoundhimselfunderastro ngdegreeofpressuretocarrythoseplansout⁶¹¹.

TheeventwhichpushedMongkuttolaunchhisattack,however, wastheoutbreakoftheSecond Anglo-

BurmeseWar.Inalettertohisbrother,KrommaluangWongsathiratsanit,whomongkutplacedin commandoftheexpedition,MongkutgavevoicetoallhishoughtsregardingtheTai,theBurmes e,theBritish,andtheChinese,andleftaninvaluablerecordofthemotiveswhichledtheSiameset olaunchwhatwouldbecomeoneoftheirmostdisastrousmilitaryexpeditionsinthemid- 19thcentury.Itwasanexpeditiondrivenbyconflictingmotives,bothbeholdentothepast,andrad icallyforward-thinking.Mongkutdeclaredhisdutytothe legacy of his predecessor,tocontinuewhatRamallhadstarted,andexpressedawarenessofthenecessityt oprovehisstrengthinordertoenjoyastable,uncontestedreign⁶¹².Healsoexpressedhisfearan dadmirationoftheBritish,andadeepunderstandingofthecauseswhichhad,atthattime,ledtoth

⁶⁰⁹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR4, Pages94-5.

⁶¹⁰Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page747.

⁶¹¹Ibid., Pages 748-9.

⁶¹²King Mongkutto Krommaluang WongsathiratsanitinCRCT, Page 101.

eSecondAnglo-

BurmeseWar.HefirmlybelievedthattheBurmese couldnotdefeattheBritish,and suggestedthat bythetimethewarended,theBurmese monarchstoodachanceofbeingannihilatedbytheBritish⁶¹³.Mongkutunderstoodthat,withBurmagone,thestrengthoftheBritishcouldthenbeturned againsttheSiamese,andexpressedconcernthatanunrulytributarycallinginBritishaidcould causetheBritishtodeclarewaronSiam⁶¹⁴.Inadditionto providing an increasinglyrelevantthreat,theBritishalsoprovidedanimminentopportunity,bydistractingthe forcesofBurmafromtheTaiprincipalities.Withthisinmind,MongkutsuggestedthattheSiamese hadonlyonesummertocompletethewar,andthatiftheywereforcedtocontinueintothe following year,thattheirprospectswouldbediminishedsignificantlyduetotheabilityoftheBurmese toassistinthedefenseofChiangTung⁶¹⁵.Thisinitsself,however,addedtothesenseofurgency,withMongkutdeclaringthatifhepasseduptheopportunitytoattackChiangTungwhileBurma wasweak,thatitwouldreflectpoorlyonhisabilitiesasaruler⁶¹⁶.Withthisinmind,Mongkutwishedtousewhatever means necessarytoobtainandkeeptheloyaltyoftheSipsongpanna,andtowinthe hearts andminds oftheTai.HeproposedthatChaoSuchawanbeinvitedtoBangkoktobecomeavassal, andofferedtogivehimabettertitlethanthatwhichhecurrentlyheld⁶¹⁷.HeurgedWongsathiratan

⁶¹³Ibid.,Page 100.

⁶¹⁴Ibid., Page 102.

⁶¹⁵Ibid., Page 101.

⁶¹⁶Ibid.

⁶¹⁷Ibid., Page 103.

his fellow commander, Chaophraya Yommarat, to form good relations with their Thai subordinates, and to refrain from plundering their supplies, even if they believed they were being withheld⁶¹⁸.

4.3.3 The Start of the War

The Lan Na raid against Chiang Tung in 1849 seem to have attracted Burmese attention.

Mindon's diplomatic maneuverings in the Sipsongpanna 1850, and the arrival of the

Burmese army at Muang Nai in 1851 make it quite apparent that the Burmese were

preparing to become involved in the defense of their interests in the Chiang Tung region

and the

Sipsongpanna. They were ultimately, however, prevented from involving themselves heavily in the

1852 battle due to the outbreak of war with Britain.

Although the final Chiang Tung War was a traditional war, and the end result of a series of hostilities

dating back almost a century, it was a new type of war for the Siamese. As discussed in the previous

chapter, the Siamese soldiers had not, like the Burmese soldiers, campaigned from the Brahmaputra

in the west to the Mekong in the east, and despite the martial vigour of the reigns of Taksin, Rama

II, and Rama III, the Siamese had rarely if ever ventured farther than their immediate

sphere of influence. Chiang Tung lay on the far periphery of that sphere of influence, and until 1852

, had never been the site of any expeditions from the Siamese heartland. Even those areas which

⁶¹⁸Ibid., Pages 96-7.

and fallen firmly under Siamese suzerainty, most notably Lan Na, remained culturally distinct from Bangkok, and had rarely hosted forces from the Siamese here and for extended periods of time. These were also autonomous kingdoms in their own right, as indicated by the sovereignty professed to Dr. Richardson in 1829. Thus, the Siamese in 1852 would find themselves fighting in what amounted to a foreign country, in which not only their enemies, but their allies as well, looked, dressed, and talked differently than the soldiers from Bangkok. Nor would this be a short expedition, followed by the prompt return of the Siamese army to Bangkok, but rather the beginning of three years in which a large Siamese army would shelter in Chiang Mai and Nan.

4.3.4 Siamese-aligned Forces

In 1852, the Siamese took encouragement from the near success effected by the forces of Lan Na in 1849. While in that earlier attack, a portion of the total force of 6,500 had succeeded in almost capturing Chiang Tung, the Siamese believed that, with the reinforcement of additional troops from Bangkok, as well as the oversight of a Siamese command to prevent fighting between the commanders as had occurred in the 1849 campaign, Chiang Tung could be taken⁶¹⁹. With this goal in mind, King Mongkut appointed Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit, his younger brother, and Cha

⁶¹⁹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Pages 748-9.

ophraya Yommarat, at the head of the two armies which were to attack Chiang Tung⁶²⁰. In addition to the forces from Bangkok and the inner Siamese provinces, forces were raised from most of the Tai principalities under Siamese suzerainty. Ultimately, three forces were raised, including two combined Siamese and Tai forces commanded by Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit and Chaophraya Yommarat, and one entirely Tai force, commanded by Cao Anantawararitidet of Nan.

4.3.4.1 Forces from Bangkok and the Provinces

3,077 fighting men were recruited from Bangkok, and 3,328 from the Siamese provinces⁶²¹. Of the Bangkok recruits, 2,151 were assigned to Wongsathirat's army, while 926 were assigned to the army of the Yommarat, while of the provincial recruits, 2,402 were assigned to Wongsathirat and 1,009 to the Yommarat⁶²². The provincial recruits would have been furnished by the local governor as the army from Bangkok advanced northwards, as described in Pallegoix's description, referenced above, of the Siamese military of the time.

4.3.4.2 Forces from the Lan Na Principalities

⁶²⁰ Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR4*, Page 95.

⁶²¹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Page 749.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

As the two armies advanced out of the Siamese heartland, Wongsathirat was ordered to recruit forces from the Siamese-

aligned principalities of Nan, Phrae, and Lomsak, while Chaophraya Yommarat's army was ordered to recruit forces from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang⁶²³. The two forces rendezvoused at Chiang Saen, by which time the army had swelled to about 30,000 individuals, the majority of which were porter-stasked with manning the supply lines⁶²⁴. Cao Mahaphrom, the Ratchabut of Chiang

Mai, was again given a chance to help take Chiang Tung, and was served as commander of the Chiang Mai forces, who were replaced at the head of Chaophraya Yommarat's vanguard force⁶²⁵.

4.3.4.3 Forces from Nan and the Sipsongpanna

At that time, Nan was ruled by Cao Anantawararitet, the second ruler of Nan to be given the title of Chaophraya Mongkhonwalayot, who had ascended to the rulership of Nan a few short months prior⁶²⁶. Upon returning to Nan from Bangkok, he received

⁶²³Ibid.

⁶²⁴Ibid., Page 750.

⁶²⁵Saenluang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 118.

⁶²⁶Ibid.

orders to lead a raid into the Sipsongpanna, in coordination with the larger armies, which were to assault Chiang Tung directly⁶²⁷.

4.3.4.4 *Supplies of the Siamese-aligned Army*

In addition to exacting recruits from the provinces and tributaries, rice was also exacted from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, and Lampang, and was gathered and catalogued in Chiang Sae before the army departed⁶²⁸. In addition to small arms, the Siamese force was equipped with artillery of varying size, and possessed 349 elephants and 157 mixed livestock to assist in carrying supplies⁶²⁹. Although a number of the principalities offered up less in terms of supplies than they were supposed to, the expedition proceeded regardless, as Mongkut urged Wongsathiratto attack quickly, before the British managed to obtain victory over the Burmese⁶³⁰.

4.3.5 Chiang Tung Forces

As has been discussed above, Cao Mahakhanan and the Burmese had taken effort to prepare for an incursion from Siam. In addition, with the massive army advancing into Lan Na and the proportionately large recruitment effort in the Siamese-

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.* *The Nan Chronicle* places these events in 1853 instead of 1852.

⁶²⁸ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 751.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 750.

⁶³⁰ King Mongkut to Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitin *CRCT*, Pages 101-2.

aligned principalities, the surprise of the 1849 attack could not be replicated. As such, the defending force was better prepared than that which had defended the city in 1849. Details are scarce on the exact number of the defenders, but given that the defending force in 1854 would include only 7,000 men of Chiang Tung⁶³¹, it is clear that the defenders were far inferior in number to the attackers. Damrong argues that there were no forces present from either Burma or Muang Nai, that the former were unable to assist Chiang Tung due to the war with the British, and that Cao Mahakhanan had rejected the assistance of the latter, believing that his own forces could defend Chiang Tung on their own⁶³². This version of events is supported by the *Jengtung State Chronicle*, which makes no mention of any outside support to the defenders of Chiang Tung during the 1852 attack⁶³³. Regardless of what sort of outside support Cao Mahakhanan truly did receive from the Tai Yai and the Burmese, he successfully bolstered his defenses by gathering the people and resources of the villages lying within the Siamese line of advance into the walls of Chiang Tung, and as the Siamese army began to advance northwards, they reported no resistance, merely a succession of abandoned towns and villages⁶³⁴.

Damrong also observes that Cao Mahakhanan was honor-bound to the Tai Yai and Tai Lu principalities, and proposes that, though he was sympathetic to the Siamese and even may have wanted to place himself under Siamese suzerainty, that this mutual

⁶³¹ John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 365.

⁶³² Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 752.

⁶³³ Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Pages 262-3.

⁶³⁴ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 753.

loyalty amongst the Tai principalities, and the fact that the children of Cao Mahakhanan and the other Tai princes were being held by the Burmese court, prevented him from surrendering to the invading force⁶³⁵. It is worth noting that Damrong, a historian whose sympathies would lie firmly on the Siamese side, admits that in truth, Cao Mahakhanan needed no outside assistance, and that his logistical planning ultimately allowed him to outlast the Siamese and win the siege⁶³⁶.

Conventionally, largely due to Damrong's interpretation, no outside forces are considered to have assisted the defenders of Chiang Tung against the Siamese in 1852. However, a number of sources offer evidence, though not proof, to the contrary.

4.3.5.1 Burmese, Tai Yai, and Tai Lu Forces

UPonnyclaimsthattheChiangTungforceswereboostedbyabout600ChiangRungsoldiers, under the command of a 'veteran warrior Bala Jeyya Kyaw, who had served close to the governor of Keng Yung [Chiang Rung]⁶³⁷, as well as a small number of Burmese soldiers from Tagaung and Mo Dar, likely sent from Muang Nai⁶³⁸.

This is not an implausible claim. Chiang Tung was, after all, the seat of a *bo-hmu*, and the *bo-hmu* and his followers would have participated in the defence of the city. These

⁶³⁵Ibid., Page 752.

⁶³⁶Ibid., Page 753.

⁶³⁷Taung Goe, YNM, Page 75.

⁶³⁸Ibid., Page 78.

were most likely the surviving followers of Cao No Kham, who had remained in Chiang Tung after their leader's death.

4.3.6 Siamese Advance

From Chiang Saen, the Yommarat's army departed first, moving northward to Muang Phayak⁶³⁹. From Muang Phayak, the Yommarat sent Cao Mahaphroma ahead to Chiang Tung, while the army of Lamphun was ordered to raid Muang Long, while the armies of Phrae and Lampang were sent to raid Muang Yong⁶⁴⁰. Krommaluang Wongsathirat's army began their advance thirteen days after the departure of the Yommarat, and followed the same route, via Muang Phayak and the southern pass into the Chiang Tung valley⁶⁴¹. As in 1849, the advancing force left a trail of destruction. Muang Lin was sacked a second time⁶⁴², and while in 1849, the Uparat of Chiang Mai had amiably agreed with the rulers of Muang Yong for his passage through the principality, the armies of Lampang and Phrae instead burnt the city, conscripted the population, and raided the crops for the sustenance of the army⁶⁴³. As was the case with the Uparat in 1849, Krommaluang Wongsathirat's army arrived significantly later than that of the Yommarat, and the *Jengtung State Chronicle* plac

⁶³⁹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 751.

⁶⁴⁰Ibid.

⁶⁴¹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 751.

⁶⁴²Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 2, Page 397.

⁶⁴³Ibid., Page 502.

estheforcefromMuangYongashavingarrivedafulllunarmonthaftertheforcefromMuangPhayak⁶⁴⁴.

4.3.7 Tactics of the Siamese and Chiang Tung Forces

The campaign of 1852 is the first event of the Chiang Tung Wars for which we have the tactical details of the battle, and this is largely due to the *Chotmai het* and the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*. For the sake of this analysis, before attempting a chronological reconstruction of the battle, the individual tactics described by both the Siamese and their allies, and the defenders of Chiang Tung will be examined.

4.3.7.1 Tactics of the Siamese-aligned Forces

While the invading force of 1849 had entered the Chiang Tung valley from the west, and thus encamped at Chomsiri to the west of the city fortifications, the Yommarat's force in 1852 entered from the south of the valley, arriving via the Muang Phayak route. The initial encampment was at a place called Peng Sam⁶⁴⁵, located about three kilometers⁶⁴⁶ to the southwest of the city⁶⁴⁷. Scott and Hard

⁶⁴⁴ Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

⁶⁴⁵ John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 365.

⁶⁴⁶ Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 81.

⁶⁴⁷ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 753.

imansaythattheSiamesebuiltafortificationonthebankoftheKhoenRiver⁶⁴⁸.Itisunlikely,however,thatthisfortificationwaslocatedatPengSam,asDamrongplacesinitialtheSiameseencampmentonhighground,andremarksthatitwasquitefarfromthecitywalls,andthattheSiamesewereforcedtomoveduetothedrynessofthelocation⁶⁴⁹.Atalaterpoint,theinvaderswerereorganizedintofourencampments,includingoneatChomsiri⁶⁵⁰.Theotherthreelocationsarereferredtointhe*JengtungStateChronicle*as 'HokhoFaro,Yanglo',and 'Ban-Id'⁶⁵¹.Theformerisreferencedinthe*YodhayaNaingMawgunas* 'KhoPaho',andtheYommarat'sarmyisdescribedashavingmoved 'fromPyengSam,theiroriginalposition,toSawmsiliwestofKengtungaftermakingadetourofKhoPaho'⁶⁵².ThissamemanueverisdescribedbyDamrong,whodescribestheSiameseashavingattemptedtomovenorthwardstowardsthecity,andhavingbeenattackedbythedefenders,andlater,afterunsuccessfullybesiegingthecityforatime,havingfortifiedChomsiri⁶⁵³.Itisworthnotingthatthelocation named as Peng Sam wastwiceasfarfromthecityasChomsiri,whichismeasuredinthe*YodhayaNaingMawgunas* beingjustoverakilometerfromthecity⁶⁵⁴.Boththe*YodhayaNaingMawgun*andthe*JengtungStateChronicle*agreethatPengSamwastheinitialencampmentofthe invading forces,andthat,atsomepointearlyinthebattle,theSiameseencampmentwasshiftedclosertot

⁶⁴⁸ScottandHardiman, *GUBSS, Vol.2, Part1*, Page408.

⁶⁴⁹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page753.

⁶⁵⁰Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page262.

⁶⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁶⁵²TaungGoe, *YNM*, Page81.

⁶⁵³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Pages753-4.

⁶⁵⁴Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 121.

hecity. According to the timeline of the *Jengtung State Chronicle*, this occurred upon the arrival of Krommaluang Wongsathirat's army. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, although quiet about the arrival of Wongsathirat's army, mentions his presence on the battlefield for the first time following the shift of encampment⁶⁵⁵. Damrong, however, describes the forces of the Yommarata having already been encamped in close proximity to the walls of the city upon Wongsathirat's arrival⁶⁵⁶. It thus seems likely that Wongsathirat arrived after the initial shift in position from Peng Sam, although it is possible that Chomsiri was not fortified until after his arrival. Prior to the shift of encampment, the Siamese do not seem to have made any direct assaults against the fortifications of Chiang Tung, although they clashed with a defending force which attacked from the walls⁶⁵⁷. When the encampment was finally moved, the Siamese forces surrounded the city at twelve points⁶⁵⁸, likely chosen to block the twelve gates of the city. The objective of this would have been to prevent further sorties. The Siamese forces likely massed at the Kho Pahoo of the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, and, after a point, Chomsiri. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes the main Siamese positions at this point as being located at Kho Pahoo and Chomsiri⁶⁵⁹, and it seems probably that Kho Pahoo would have been the fortification described by Scott and Hardiman on the banks of the Khoen River. Damrong relates that the shelling of the city walls occurred for some time between the abandonment of the original encampment, and the fortification of Chomsiri⁶⁶⁰. In attack

⁶⁵⁵Ibid., Page 84.

⁶⁵⁶Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 755.

⁶⁵⁷Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 81.

⁶⁵⁸Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 753.

⁶⁵⁹Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 84.

⁶⁶⁰Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 754.

ng the walls, the Siamese deployed a series of assaults against the Chiang Tung fortifications, attacking in a “closer reticulate... or spiral formation”⁶⁶¹. The attacking soldiers were equipped with firearms, and supported by elephantry and artillery, the latter consisting of mortars and field guns⁶⁶². Although hequipped with artillery, the Siamese were unable to breach the walls of the city, as the walls were located on high ground, and the Siamese artillery unable to shoot high enough⁶⁶³. It was this problem which led to the fortification of Chomsiri, as the latter location offers ground higher than, and in close proximity to, the city walls⁶⁶⁴.

4.3.7.2 *Tactics of the Chiang Tung Forces*

The strategy of the defenders of Chiang Tung involved a very aggressive defense, which capitalized quite effectively on the slow and tentative advance of the Siamese. Tactically, this took the form of a series of swift raids on the enemy fortifications, involving small numbers, and rapid retreats back to the walls of the city, where, no doubt, the defenders were prepared to deal with any Siamese forces entering within shooting distance of the walls. The first of these raids occurred very early in

⁶⁶¹Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 84.

⁶⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶⁶³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 754.

⁶⁶⁴*Ibid.*

in the battle, and was organized by a warrior, most likely Tai, due to the nature of the 1852 conflict, but with the Burmese name Tein Gyar Min Gaung, who had been appointed vanguard commander of the defenders of Chiang Tung⁶⁶⁵, and who would play a significant role in the sieges of both 1852 and 1854. The attacking forces in this first raid consisted of three columns of 500 men each, and occurred prior to the shift of encampment⁶⁶⁶. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes a “deluge of fire” being inflicted on the attacking forces, indicating either firearms or rocketry. If the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* is to be believed, this was the first blood shed before the walls of Chiang Tung in 1852. The defenders continued to haggle the Siamese as the latter struggled to find a solid position from which to attack, launching two more attacks against the original Siamese encampment⁶⁶⁷, and a fourth raid as the Siamese attempted to shift their encampment north toward the walls⁶⁶⁸. The raiding soldiers were again equipped with firearms, and, as there apparently were not enough firearms within Chiang Tung to arm all of the defenders, some of them wielded and threw spears⁶⁶⁹. The fourth raid was clearly far more damaging than the first three, and resulted in the death of two Lan Na commanders – the brother of Cao Khanan Mahawong, and the brother of the ruler of Lampang – as well as the capture of a royally decorated war elephant, likely the mount of one of the slain prince

S⁶⁷⁰.

⁶⁶⁵Ibid., Pages 75-6.

⁶⁶⁶Ibid., Page 81.

⁶⁶⁷Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 753.

⁶⁶⁸Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 81.

⁶⁶⁹Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰Ibid.

As the Siamese stepped up their assault on the defenses of Chiang Tung, the Chiang Tung defenders withdrew into the walls and ceased raiding for the duration of the assault. During this time, the invading forces found themselves on the receiving end of bombardment, as, although the Chiang Tung ammunition stores were, by all accounts, far more scarce than those of the invaders, the fortifications of Chiang Tung occupied high ground, and while the Siamese struggled to shoot high enough to cause damage to the Chiang Tung walls, the defenders had no difficulty targeting Siamese emplacements in the low grounds surrounding the city⁶⁷¹. After the Siamese had expended their energy, Tein Gyar Min Gaung launched his largest raid yet, leading a three-pronged assault against the Siamese encampment on Chomsiri, and, according to the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, breaking the Siamese forces and causing their retreat⁶⁷². It is possible that this final attack occurred concurrently with a Siamese offensive. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes that, in the chaos of the final clash, a regiment of about 1,500 Lan Na soldiers accidentally wandered into the Chiang Tung fortifications, resulting in their capture⁶⁷³.

The Chiang Tung forces are also recorded to have made extensive use of ambushes and guerilla tactics.

As Krommaluang Wongsathirat approached Chiang Tung, his army came across a group of men wearing the red handkerchiefs of Chiang Mai soldiers, speaking the Lan Na language, and pas

⁶⁷¹ Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 754.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, Page 87.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, Page 90.

sing Wongsathirat's army as they travelled south⁶⁷⁴. Assuming them to be attached to the Yomma rat's army, the Siamese thought nothing of them until they abruptly opened fire on Wongsathirat's elephant⁶⁷⁵. Although Wongsathirat was unharmed, the column was stopped and an entire day was spent rounding up the would-be assassins⁶⁷⁶. Nor was this the final assassination attempt. Wongsathirat reported further attempts by the local Siamese to disguise themselves as Lan Nas soldiers and launch guerilla attacks on the Siamese forces⁶⁷⁷. The Chiang Tung strategy can thus be said to have been a highly mobile defense, employing sorties from the walls of the city as well as ambushes against the invading forces, designed more to reduce morale and increase paranoia than to do any substantial physical harm to the invading army. This, combined with Cao Mahakhanan's attempt to deprive the invading army of all resources and manpower, proved extremely effective, and ultimately forced the Siamese to retreat.

4.3.8 The Siege of Chiang Tung

Taking into consideration the evidence regarding tactics used, significant events during the siege, and the general length of the siege, which is believed to have been about 12 days during the M

⁶⁷⁴Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 754.

⁶⁷⁵Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷Ibid., Page 755.

ay of 1852⁶⁷⁸, it is possible to reconstruct a rough timeline and sequence of events. The siege would have begun with the arrival of the army of the Ratchaburi of Chiang Mai in the Chiang Tung valley and their encampment at Pang Sam. From the arrival of the Yommarat until the retreat, about 9 days passed, with Damrong placing the former event on the 9th waning night of the month in which the battle occurred⁶⁷⁹, and the latter event four days after the 14th waning night of the same month⁶⁸⁰. Thus, following Scott and Hardiman's timeline, the Chiang Mai forces would have arrived about three days prior to the forces of the Yommarat.

4.3.8.1 *The Start of the Battle*

Following this rough timeline, the first four days of the battle would have seen relatively little offensive action on the part of the invading forces. The only indication of an offensive movement by the Siamese forces in this part of the battle is the mention of a Lan Na force "besieging" Chiang Tung the day after the arrival of the Yommarat's army⁶⁸¹, likely referring to the clash that occurred during the shift of encampment. It would have been in this time that the first raids against the invaders' fortifications would have been conducted by the defenders. Damrong mentions three separate

⁶⁷⁸Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Vol. 2, Part 1*, Page 408.

⁶⁷⁹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 753.

⁶⁸⁰*Ibid.*, Page 756.

⁶⁸¹Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

aids against the Chiang Mai fortifications, all of which were repulsed with relatively little loss of life⁶⁸². Aside from what is mentioned above, there is no indication of any major offensive or defensive action in this time period, and it seems that, with the exception of the sporadic raids, both sides were waiting for the arrival of the main Siamese force to commence the battle.

The Yommarat's army would have arrived on what our rough timeline would place as the fourth day of the battle. Their decision to move northwards was immediate, and the movement would have occurred on either the fourth or fifth day. The latter is the most likely, and it would have proved to be one of the most eventful days of the battle. As mentioned above, the Siamese northward movement was disrupted by the devastating attack, mentioned above, which succeeded in killing two of the Lan Na commanders. According to Damrong, this attack succeeded in cutting off the forces of Lamphang and Lamphun from the main army, and that the latter were relieved only when the Siamese and Chiang Mai forces sped their advance and came to their rescue⁶⁸³. Following the advance from Peng Sam, the siege itself began, with the Siamese forces surrounding all the gates of the city and shelling the walls⁶⁸⁴. As it became increasingly apparent that the Siamese artillery was insufficient to breach the walls of the city, Chaophraya Yommarat ordered his army to fortify Chomsiri and begin bombardment against the city walls from the high ground⁶⁸⁵.

4.3.8.2 *The Siege*

⁶⁸²Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 753.

⁶⁸³Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴Ibid., Pages 753-4.

⁶⁸⁵Ibid., Page 754.

The army of Krommaluang Wongsathiratsani arrived in the Chiang Tung valley on the 6th day of the battle, and the same day experienced the first ambush by the false Chiang Mai soldiers⁶⁸⁶. By this point the fortification of Chomsiri would have either been underway or would have been complete. Wongsathirat arrived before the walls of Chiang Tung two days later, on the 8th day of the battle, and camping near the Yommarat's forces to the north of the city, likely at Kho Paho⁶⁸⁷. By this point, the Siamese forces were in a position to use the full scale of their forces in an assault against the walls. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes “three or four” separate offensives during this time, from the fortifications at Kho Paho and Chomsiri, during which the Siamese charged the walls of Chiang Tung, and failed each time, with heavy losses⁶⁸⁸. Although the decision to retreat occurred only one day after Wongsathirat's arrival, the battle continued for four more days.

4.3.9 The Siamese Retreat

Wongsathirat held a meeting of the commanders on the 9th day of the battle, and made the decision to retreat, detaching about 200 soldiers of Chiang Maito immediately escort the wounded and ill

⁶⁸⁶Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷Ibid., Page 755.

⁶⁸⁸Taung Goe, YNM, Page 84.

to the safety of Muang Phayak⁶⁸⁹. The remainder of the Siamese forces followed four days later⁶⁹⁰.

With the Siamese forces exhausted, U Ponnya claims that the defenders launched their climactic counter-attack, and, “at the onset of summer, with trees clad in tender leaf buds”, the siege came to an end⁶⁹¹. He also makes the claim that the Chiang Tung forces launched a pursuit of the fleeing Siamese army, and captured a number of men and elephants⁶⁹². In contrast to this interpretation of events, however, Damrong argues that the Siamese retreat was a tactical decision by Wongsathirat, who saw inevitable Siamese failure based on the size of the attacking force, the strength of Chiang Tung's defenses, and the lack of supplies and animals⁶⁹³. The *Dynastic Chronicles* offer a third explanation, claiming that word reached the Siamese commanders of the approach of Burmese reinforcements, resulting in the decision to retreat⁶⁹⁴. Regardless of the reason, with the rainy season imminent, Wongsathirat ordered an immediate retreat, and the battle ended, just under two weeks after it had begun⁶⁹⁵.

4.3.10 The Sipsongpanna Campaign

⁶⁸⁹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 756.

⁶⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁶⁹¹Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 90.

⁶⁹²Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

⁶⁹³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 755.

⁶⁹⁴Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR4*, Page 118.

⁶⁹⁵Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 756.

The force commanded by Cao Anantawararitidet departed from Nan at roughly the same time as the main Siamese force began its campaign. This raid was discouraged by Mongkut, who wished to maintain the loyalty of the Tai Lu who had sought refuge with the Siamese⁶⁹⁶. By this point, Nan had a very large population of Tai Lu. Accompanying the Nan forces were a Muang Phong force, numbered by U Ponnya at 5,000 men⁶⁹⁷. The Muang Phong forces would have been led by Cao Mahachai, who is recorded to have began a campaign in the Sipsongpanna in the years following Cao Suchawan's return to power⁶⁹⁸.

4.3.10.1 *The Advance*

The Nan forces began their campaign by travelling north to Chiang Khong, where, as has been discussed above, the people of Muang Phong who had come with Cao Mahachai had been settled. Crossing the Mekong, they advanced northwards, likely past Luang Phukha and Chiang Khaeng, and arrived in Muang Phong on the same day that Chaophraya Yommarat arrived at Chiang Tung⁶⁹⁹. From Muang Phong, a final advance was launched into the Sipsongpanna.

⁶⁹⁶King Mongkutto Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitin CRCT, Page 104.

⁶⁹⁷Taung Goe, YNM, Page 75.

⁶⁹⁸Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 689.

⁶⁹⁹Nai Phichan Sappaket to Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanin in CRCT, Page 74.

4.3.10.2 *The Occupation of the Sipsongpanna*

The events occurring after the invading forces arrived at Muang Phong are not recounted in detail in any individual source, but it is possible to piece together what occurred. Up until the occupation of Muang Phong, the entire campaign had been relatively bloodless. The *Nan Chronicle* states that 'when the Nan army reached the Sipsong Panna, the defenders did not dare to fight with the ruler of Nan, and together they came to pledge their loyalty to the king in Bangkok'⁷⁰⁰. This is confirmed by the report of Cao Ananta himself, who wrote that Cao Suchawan had responded peacefully to the arrival of the combined Nan and Muang Phong army⁷⁰¹. At this point, Cao Ananta left affairs in the hands of Cao Mahachai and withdrew. Both the *Nan Chronicle* and the correspondence of Cao Ananta recall the deployment of the Sipsongpanna forces, with the former describing them as having been commanded by the 'Uparat', a title generally used to identify Cao Alammawut, and sent against Chiang Tung⁷⁰², while Cao Ananta's correspondence describes the Sipsongpanna force as having been commanded by Mahachai, and sent to Muang Ram⁷⁰³.

4.3.10.3 *The Clash at Chiang Khaeng*

⁷⁰⁰Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 118.

⁷⁰¹Phraya Nan to Siharatrittikai in *CRCT*, Pages 75-6.

⁷⁰²Saenuang Ratchasomphan, *The Nan Chronicle*, Page 118.

⁷⁰³Phraya Nan to Siharatrittikai in *CRCT*, Page 76.

Cao Ananta's correspondence also describes a brief battle occurring at Chiang Khaeng during the campaign into the Sipsongpanna. In one of the more anomalous events of the 1852 campaigns, Cao Ananta claimed to have encountered Burmese forces east of the Mekong at Chiang Khaeng⁷⁰⁴. Given the lack of significant Burmese presence at Chiang Tung itself in 1852, it seems remarkable that there would be Burmese at Chiang Khaeng. However, Muang Yong, immediately across the Mekong, was home to Burmese officials with the titles of *myo-ok* and *boda-ye* at the time⁷⁰⁵, and both the Sipsongpanna, west of the Mekong, and Chiang Tung, were home to Burmese officials as well. Cao Ananta describes a small force, which succeeded in looting the countryside and escaping before the forces from Nan could do any significant damage⁷⁰⁶. It thus seems most likely, given Chiang Khaeng's location, that the Burmese forces stationed at Muang Yong had conducted the raid, possibly supported by the Tai of Muang Yong. Given that this supposedly happened towards the end of the campaign, it may have been an effort to find supplies for Muang Yong following the attack that the city had suffered earlier in the campaign.

4.3.11 Analysis of the 1852 Campaign

⁷⁰⁴Phraya Nan to Siharatrittikai in CRCT, Page76.

⁷⁰⁵Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 502.

⁷⁰⁶Phraya Nan to Siharatrittikai in CRCT, Page76.

The 1852 campaign of the final Chiang Tung War was a conflict of a scale not seen in the Tai Principalities since the 18th century. A massive war effort on the part of the Siamese and their tributaries, it involved three invading hosts, and tens of thousands of soldiers, porters, and scribes. It was the first time in history that Siamese forces had advanced beyond Chiang Saen. It was fought by the Siamese as a traditional war, in the manner described by Pallegoix, but the opponent against whom it was fought, Chiang Tung, was not a traditional enemy.

4.3.11.1 Siamese Motivation for Attacking Chiang Tung

Most analyses of Siam's motivation for invading Chiang Tung focus primarily on the technical *cassus belli*, specifically, the Chiang Rung Crisis and Rama III's identification of the strategic importance of Chiang Tung. Indeed, as has been discussed above, Chiang Tung was a location of great strategic importance for Burma in the control of the Sipsongpanna, and, had Rama III and Mongkut hoped to make Chiang Rung into a lasting vassal, establishing their control over Chiang Tung would have been critical. However, there were other reasons that the Siamese had to attack Chiang Tung. Siam's rivalry with Burma continued, in the Tai regions, long after the dust had settled in the central plains, and the addition of a new regional rival, in the form of the British, had

done little to reduce that rivalry. In addition, the Siamese obligations to their tributary states, particularly Nan, had done much to pull Siam into the affairs of those regions which Rama I had earlier opted to remain aloof from.

Siam's agenda with regards to the regional powers is best summed up in the words of both Rama III and King Mongkut. Rama III's statement that he wished to block Burmese control of the Sipsongpanna by taking Chiang Tung is indicative that although he saw the main Siamese rival as being Burma. However, there are two pieces of evidence that point towards Rama III's policy also being focused on the British. The first, of course, is his famous deathbed statement that future wars would be fought against the Europeans instead of against the Burmese and Vietnamese. The second is the fact that the plan which was eventually implemented as the 1852 campaign was formulated towards the end of Rama III's reign, and was only implemented by Mongkut after the latter succeeded to the throne. Mongkut, in his correspondence, dwelled extensively on the threat of the British, and made it quite clear that he saw the Konbaung empire as being doomed, and hoped to obtain control over Chiang Tung and the Sipsongpanna before the British put an end to Burmese sovereignty. Mongkut's leadership can be seen in the timing of the attack to occur while the Burmese were engaged with the British.

In addition to Siam's rivalries with Burma and the British, the Tai principalities themselves played a large role in drawing Siam into their internal affairs. The principalities which played the largest role in doing this were not the Chao Chet Ton

principalities, who were largely aloof from the problems of the Sipsongpanna, but Nan and Luang Prabang. It is telling that, while the Chao Chet Ton principalities showed an extreme reluctance to fight for the Siamese, as will be seen in the following section, the people of Nan not only joined enthusiastically in the war effort, but led their own campaign against Chiang Rung. Both Nan and Luang Prabang had strong political ties to the Sipsongpanna, and both stood to gain much from a reduction of Burmese influence in the region. Thus, the entire war can be seen as stemming from the actions of Nan and Luang Prabang, who facilitated the escape to Bangkok of Cao Alammawut and Cao Mahachai, and who capitalized on the chaos in the Chiang Rung region by launching campaigns of their own.

The rivalries of the regional powers and the Tai principalities all met at Chiang Tung. Chiang Tung was a strategic crossroads, hard to take and easy to hold, and important enough to Burmese interests in the Sipsongpanna that, as has been shown above, Cao Mahakhanan was able to virtually dictate Burmese policy from the Salween to the Mekong for much of his reign. Previous attempts by Lan Na to cut this line of access had been foiled by the impracticality of maintaining a complete power vacuum in the Chiang Tung region. Even after the Lan Na principalities had removed the majority of the population from the region, Cao Mahakhanan had managed to return and restore the principalities of Chiang Tung and Muang Yong. With the presence of a resurgent Chiang Tung, it was thus possible for the Burmese to exert influence over the Sipsongpanna,

and maintain a presence there, at the expense of the Siamese-supported principalities of Nan and Luang Prabang. The impending fall of Burma to the British, as seen by Mongkut, would have complicated things significantly. Mongkut's fear that Chiang Tung would end up under British control, combined with the acknowledged importance of Chiang Tung in relations between Burma and the Sipsongpanna, provides an answer to the question of why the Siamese saw fit to, for the first time in their history, send forces from Bangkok to Chiang Tung. Faced with a power capable of laying low Burma, formerly the greatest military threat to the Siamese polity, in a matter of months, the ability to block access between the Irrawaddy Basin and the Sipsongpanna, the latter being a place where Siamese vassals had interests to defend, became much more critical.

4.3.11.2 Cause of Defeat

As in 1849, blame was promptly ascribed for the loss. Krommaluang Wongsathirat, writing to King Mongkut, requested the replacement of Chaophraya Yommarat⁷⁰⁷. Mongkut seem to have responded differently than Wongsathirat suspected, and, after considering the facts, ordered the recall of Wongsathirat instead of the Yommarat, with the latter to be given command of the entire

⁷⁰⁷Wuttichai Munsin, “Songkhram Khrawatti Chiang Tung (BE 2392-2398) in Seuk Chiang Tung (Bangkok: Phrachachon Publishing Company), Page 69.

war

effort⁷⁰⁸. The most likely causes of the Siamese defeat, however, rested not with the errors of the individual commanders, but with the overall circumstances of the war. The hostility of the terrain, and its unfamiliarity to the Siamese commanders, was one major factor, and, even though coordination was far better than in 1849, the Siamese simply lacked the resources to take the city. Morale seem to have remained high among the defenders, who, from all accounts, suffered minimal losses, and waged a very effective guerilla war against the clumsy, oversized army of the Siamese invaders.

One of the events which would have the most profound impact on the following campaign was the destruction of Muang Yong. In 1849, the Uparat of Chiang Mai had eased his advance by striking a deal with the ruler of that city to offer him passage. In 1852, however, the city was attacked, and its resources appropriated for the use of the invading army. The reason for this was likely the lack of available resources in those cities subject to Chiang Tung, as a result of Cao Mahakhanan's preparations. As an isolated and largely independent principality, located between the spheres of influence of Chiang Tung, Lan Na, and the Sipsongpanna, Cao Mahakhanan would not have had the power to force the people of Muang Yong to abandon their city for Chiang Tung, and the fortifications of Muang Yong would have rendered the city largely defensible in its own right. The factor of the city's defensibility, and its location off of the main rou

⁷⁰⁸Wilson, "State and Society", Page 528.

teoftheSiameseadvance,indicatethattheraidonMuangYongwasasurpriseattack.TheconsequencesofthisactionwouldbedevastatingfortheSiamesetwoyears later, in 1854.

However,logisticsandstrategyaside,itisarguablethatthewarwasdoomedfromthestart,andfor cultural,ratherthanstrategic,reasons.Ashasbeendiscussedearlier,thepeopleoftheChao Chet Ton principalities

hadneverbeencontentwiththeblockadeandtherestrictionoftradebetweenLan

NaandChiangTung,and,asaresultoftheeventsthathadstrengthenedthepowerofthe

Siamese-aligned principalities

intheearly19th century,manyofthepeopleofthosestatesoriginatedinMuangYong,ChiangTun

g,theSipsongpanna,andotherregionsoftheupperMekong.Theloyaltyofthesepeoplefortheir

stitutionsoftheirhomelandsisdemonstratedinthecaseofCaoAlammawut,whowasreverence

dbytheTaiLuofMuangNgaoandMuangSalao⁷⁰⁹,eventhoughtheytheoreticallyowedtheirloyal

tyandreverencetothevariousSiamese-

alignedrulers.Thescopeofthisproblemisillustratedbyananecdote,sharedbetweentwoBritis

hofficersmanyyears later,thattheLanNaforceshadsecretlyagreedwiththeforcesofChiangTu

ngthat

“thereshouldbenobulletsinthegunsexceptwhentheSiamesethemselveswereinthefield”⁷¹⁰.P

erhapsthestrongestillustrationofthedoomednatureofthecampaign,however, wastheattempt

⁷⁰⁹Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanitto KingMongkutinCRCT, Page124.

⁷¹⁰Vice-ConsulGouldtoSatowinBrailey, Page108.

edassassinationofWongsathiratbythefakeChiangMaisoldiers.Thiswas,indeed,indicativeof howculturallyclosethepeopleofChiangTungweretothoseofChiangMaiandtheotherTaiprincipalitysof Lan Na,thattoaSiamesearmyfromthesouth,theycoulddresslikethesoldiersofChiangMaiandappear exactlythesame.

4.4TheFinalChiangTungWar – TheCampaignof1854

AfterretreatingfromChiangTung,KrommaluangWongsathiratsanitmovedtoNanandencamp edatNaLin⁷¹¹,whileChaophrayaYommaratwithdrewhisforcestoChiangMai⁷¹²,andfromChiang MaiwithdrewtoTak.WhenKingMongkutreceivedwordoftheretreatfromChiangTung,hesent alettertoWongsathirat,requestingthathereturntoBangkoktoconsultandmakeplansastothenextSiamesecourseofaction⁷¹³.ThisletterrequestedtheremovalofWongsathiratfromcommandofthe army,andhisreplacementbyChaophrayaYommarat⁷¹⁴.WongsathiratrespondedbyrefusingtoreturntoBangkok,andstatingthatifhisbrotherwishedtoreplacehimheshouldsend someone toreplacehiminperson,andthatotherwisehewouldremaininthenorthtoprepare duringthe rainyseasonforthe following year's campaign⁷¹⁵.Inhisresponse,MongkutallowedWongsathi

⁷¹¹Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 119.

⁷¹²Chaophraya Thipakorawong, PKR4, Pages 109-10.

⁷¹³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 757.

⁷¹⁴Ibid.

⁷¹⁵Ibid.

rattostayincommandofthe army, but requested that he withdraw to Uttaradit for the rainy season⁷¹⁶. In addition to this, Mongkut ordered the promotion of Cao Khanan Mahawong, bestowing upon him the title of Chaophraya Mahotharaphrathet⁷¹⁷. It has been suggested that the motive in this promotion was the appeasement of the leaders of Lan Na, who were becoming increasingly hostile to the Siamese warfare effort⁷¹⁸. Mongkut then sent this famous advisor, Chaophraya Si Suriyawong, to consult with the leaders of the expedition at Uttaradit, south of Nan⁷¹⁹. With Si Suriyawong came Phraya Siharatrittikai, who was to replace either Wongsathirat or the Yommarat, and to join the expedition as the commander of one of the armies⁷²⁰. In addition to council and a possible replacement of command, Si Suriyawong brought a large quantity of firearms and ammunition⁷²¹. Both Krommaluang Wongsathirat and Chaophraya Yommarat were allowed, possibly due to their own stubborn insistence, to remain in command, and the decision was made to begin the advance after the harvest, and to appropriate the rice of those principalities along which the advance lay⁷²². Thus, preparations for a second Siamese attack on Chiang Tung began.

⁷¹⁶Ibid., Page 758.

⁷¹⁷Wuttichai Munsin, "Songkhram Kharawatti Chiang Tung", Page 68.

⁷¹⁸Wilson, "State and Society", Page 529.

⁷¹⁹Wuttichai Munsin, "Songkhram Kharawatti Chiang Tung", Page 68.

⁷²⁰Ibid.

⁷²¹Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, PKR4, Page 110.

⁷²²Ibid.

4.4.1 Burmese-aligned Forces

In 1853, preparations were also occurring in Amarapura. King Mindon had seized the throne from King Pagan in the previous year, bringing an end to the Second Anglo-Burmese War, and attention soon shifted at Amarapura to the impending third attack of the Siamese. To the Burmese, having just lost their entire seaboard to the British, this was an extremely important conflict, and a chance for the newly-ascendent King Mindon to prove his ability to control what land he had left and to defend his kingdom against foreign aggression. As Mindon said to Thomas Spears, a British resident of Amarapura at the time,

“They [the Siamese] think know that the English have taken nearly half my country, that I have not even power to resist *them*, but they will find themselves much mistaken. The English in taking the low er country have certainly deprived me of a large revenue, but the fighting men have always been drawn from the country still under my charge, Pegu only supplying boatmen, who could be of no use at any time in a [Siamese] war”⁷²³.

⁷²³Spear to Phayre in Hall, Correspondence, Page 195.

4.4.1.1 *Burmese Forces*

In mid-January,

1854, the harvest season, a small, 1,500 strong Burmese force was dispatched to the Tai principalities, to oppose the Siamese⁷²⁴. This event was reported by Thomas Spears, who had been appointed by Captain Arthur Phayret to monitor affairs in the Burmese capital. Spears was in contact with Mindon himself, and was informed by the king that this was not the first incursion, and nor did Mindon believe it would be the last⁷²⁵. By 18 April, word had reached Amarapura of an impending Siamese invasion of Chiang Tung, and King Mindon sent a second force, numbering 2,000, to Muan Ng Nai⁷²⁶. Rumors and intelligence continued to trickle in, of a massive Siamese force, with a number of elephants⁷²⁷, and by the end of the month, Mindon had deployed the Shwebo Prince, his uncle, as the commander of the Burmese forces in the Tai states⁷²⁸. Unlike Krommaluang Wongsathirat, the Shwebo Prince would not be present at the siege of Chiang Tung, and did not depart Amarapura until 6 June, well after the conclusion of the battle⁷²⁹.

The preparation that can be said to have saved Chiang Tung from Siamese capture, if, indeed, the Siamese defeat can be seen as anything aside from inevitable, occurred not in Amarapura, but in

⁷²⁴Ibid., Page 137.

⁷²⁵Ibid.

⁷²⁶Ibid., Page 181.

⁷²⁷Ibid., Page 173.

⁷²⁸Ibid., Page 181.

⁷²⁹Ibid., Page 201.

n Chiang Tung and Muang Nai. Aside from the defending forces of Chiang Tung itself, which will be discussed below, the main contingent contributing to the defence of the city was drawn from the west of the Salween, and organized under the command of Maha Nawratha, the *sittke* of Muang Nai. The identity and term in office of this commander, who would be hailed as one of the heroes of the Chiang Tung Wars, is unclear. His name is conspicuously absent from the list of *bo-hmu* and *sittke-gyi* from 1802 to 1882 compiled in the *Gazetteer*⁷³⁰, but his existence is confirmed by both the *Jengtung State Chronicle*⁷³¹, and the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*⁷³². It is possible that his Burmese name was U Shwe Kyu, as this official is listed in the *Gazetteer* as having served as the *sittke* of Muang Nai, beginning with his predecessor's death in 1852, and ending with his replacement in 1854, by an official bearing the rank of *bo-hmu mintha*⁷³³, likely the Shwebo Prince who, according to Spears' account, had remained in Amarapura for the duration of the 1854 campaign. The core of Maha Nawratha's force consisted of the garrison at Muang Nai, which, as of 1852, had numbered about 400⁷³⁴. These numbers, which would have either risen or fallen by the time of the campaign of 1854, would have been reinforced by the arrival of the 1,500 soldiers, discussed above, who had departed Amarapura that January. Describing the Burmese force to John

⁷³⁰Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Page 424.

⁷³¹Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

⁷³²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 102.

⁷³³Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Page 424.

⁷³⁴*Ibid.*, Page 419.

Bowring, King Mongkut would number the Burmese forces at 3,000⁷³⁵. Although not precise, this number certainly falls within the correct range.

4.4.1.2 Chiang Tung Forces

The total number of Chiang Tung forces defending the city was enumerated, by Mongkut's estimate to Bowring, as 7,000⁷³⁶. This contingent was placed under two commanders, one being the son of Cao Mahakhanan, the other his grandson⁷³⁷. The former commander is referred to in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgunas* "the future chieftain", thus identifying him as Cao Mahaphrom, who succeeded Cao Mahakhanan in 1858⁷³⁸. The latter commander is identified as the ruler of Muang Lap, a small settlement immediately south of Chiang Tung⁷³⁹. Cao Mahakhanan was, by this time, over 70 years old, having been born in about 1781⁷⁴⁰, had ruled over Muang Yang, and later Chiang Tung, for half of a century, and had been blind for thirty years of that reign⁷⁴¹. Thus, approaching the final stages of his long and eventful life, he entrusted the defense of his city to Mahaphrom, then about 46 years old, having been

⁷³⁵Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 365.

⁷³⁶*Ibid.*

⁷³⁷Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 124.

⁷³⁸Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 269.

⁷³⁹Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 375.

⁷⁴⁰Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 267.

⁷⁴¹McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 360.

born in about 1808⁷⁴². Mahaphrom, not to be mistaken for the Chiang Mai prince of the same name, had, in 1837, met with Captain McLeod, who described him as intelligent and inquisitive, expressing an interest in the English language and entitled by his father to a four-tiered umbrella⁷⁴³.

4.4.1.3 *Tai Yai Forces*

One of the reasons that evidence for the 1854 campaign is more plentiful than for the earlier campaigns is due to the sheer number of independent factions who were involved in the conflict. To supplement Maha Nawratha's Burmese forces, a huge recruitment effort was launched throughout the Tai principalities west of the Salween. The largest contingent of Tai Yai forces were commanded by a warrior named Shwe Ok Kha, the son of the ruler of Lai Kha. Shwe Ok Kha's father, Khun Lek, had risen to power in 1794, being the first ruler of Lai Kha to be appointed *sao pha* by the Burmese king⁷⁴⁴. Khun Lek's reign seem to have seen Lai Kha expand its powers significantly, and the chronicle, which leaves little room for chronological precision, lists the addition of Muang Kung, Kehsi, Muang Nong, and Muang Pi ng to Lai Kha's sphere of influence⁷⁴⁵. In 1844, Khun Lek was granted the title of bo-

⁷⁴²Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 269.

⁷⁴³McLeod in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 350.

⁷⁴⁴Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Page 3.

⁷⁴⁵*Ibid.*, Page 6.

hmu and given command of a massive Tai Ya army to put down a Karen rebellion⁷⁴⁶. Thus, by 1854, Shwe Ok Khaw was an experienced warrior, and, although it is unclear as to whether or not the 4,000 soldiers under his command⁷⁴⁷ were drawn from Lai Kha itself, he was clearly respected enough to command a force of such a large size. Two other Tai Ya commanders were appointed who would distinguish themselves in the coming battle. The first of these was a man named Parami, the *Heng Awn* of Muang Nong, a curious little states subject, at the time, to both Hsenwi and Lai Kha, and located between the latter and the Salween⁷⁴⁸. At the time, Muang Nong was administered in a dual chieftainship, by two *heng*, with *Heng Awn*, Parami's title, referring to the "lesser", or younger, *heng*, and *Heng Long* referring to the "greater", or elder, *heng*⁷⁴⁹. Accompanying Parami, and commanding a contingent of soldiers from Hsenwi, was a relatively unknown warrior by the name of Sang Hai⁷⁵⁰, the grandson of an *amat* of Hsenwi who had lately been executed by Seng Naw Pa, the ruler of Hsenwi, along with his sons, including Sang Hai's father⁷⁵¹. In addition to Muang Nai, Lai Kha, Muang Nong, and Hsenwi, forces were drawn from Muang Sit, Muang Pon, Nong Mun, Muang Kung, Muang Pan, Hai Long⁷⁵², and Chiang Kham⁷⁵³. In total, the Tai Ya forces numbered 6,000⁷⁵⁴, a number sizeable considering the scale of the war, but not as well due to the large number of principalities which lent their human resources to the conflict. The

⁷⁴⁶Ibid., Page 3.

⁷⁴⁷Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 121.

⁷⁴⁸Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Pages 432-3.

⁷⁴⁹Ibid., Page 432.

⁷⁵⁰Charles Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma* (London: E. Arnold, 1912), Page 139.

⁷⁵¹Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 184.

⁷⁵²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 110.

⁷⁵³Ibid., Page 112.

⁷⁵⁴Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

is number is supported by the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, which states that Muang Nai was capable of mobilizing 6,000 troops⁷⁵⁵.

4.4.1.4 Karenni Forces

The 1854 campaign, in addition to involving almost every Tai principality from Hsenwi to Luang Prabang, involved the Karenni principalities as well. Two principalities are recorded as having taken part in the final Chiang Tung War. The first of these was Kyebogyi, one of the most important Karenni principalities of the time, which emerged in the early 19th century under the ruler Key-pho⁷⁵⁶. Passing through Karenni territory in 1837, Dr. Richardson was treated to the rumor that the people of the fortified town of Ngwe Daung, then subject to Kyebogyi, were “the most desperate robbers” of the Karenni⁷⁵⁷. The Kyebogyi contingent was commanded by Ah Baw, the principality's reigning ruler, and advanced concurrent with the main Burmese-aligned force, along a separate route⁷⁵⁸. The second Karenni principality to participate in the 1854 campaign was Kantharawaddy, the largest of the Karenni principalities, which, in the mid-19th century, was expanding its sphere of influence to the east of the Salween⁷⁵⁹.

⁷⁵⁵Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 102.

⁷⁵⁶Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 238.

⁷⁵⁷Richardson in Grabowsky and Turton, *Gold and Silver Road*, Page 477.

⁷⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 101.

4.4.1.5 Combined Burmese-aligned Forces

The total estimate of defending troops offered by Mongkutto Bowring is 7,000 Chiang Tung defenders, 3,000 Burmese soldiers, and 6,000 Tai Yai⁷⁶⁰, thus adding up to 16,000 total forces against the invading Siamese force of over 20,000. Advantages held by the defending force were, however, numerous. The strongest of these advantages was the defensive position of Chiang Tung itself. The mountains between the Salween and the Mekong, as has been seen already, did not lend themselves well to offensive campaigning. This enhanced the capacity of those 7,000 men of Chiang Tung who would eventually be deployed in the defense of the city. In addition, the 9,000 forces under Muang Nai, both Burmese and Tai Yai, although forced to undergo a march as long, and, likely, as dangerous, as that of the Siamese-aligned forces, had the advantage of marching through friendly territory, and, it must be emphasized that even the Burmese had more experience campaigning, often successfully, in the land east of the Salween than the Siamese, having, as has been seen in the previous chapter, defeated their forces of Lan Na at Muang Yang in 1812.

4.4.2 Burmese Advance

⁷⁶⁰Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, Page 366.

The advance of the 9,000 Burmese and Tai Ya forces began, following the end of recruiting, at Muang Nai. The only date available for this event places the start of the march towards the end of 1853⁷⁶¹, although it is more likely, given the number of Burmese soldiers sent from Amarapura in January, that the advance started in early 1854. Considering the fact that news did not reach Amarapura until April 1854 of the second

Siamese advance, it is likely that Maha Nawrath either acted alone on his own intelligence or was ordered by King Mindon to preempt the Siamese and begin an early mobilization. The route from Muang Nai to Chiang Tung is considerably more difficult than that from Chiang Rai to Chiang Tung, and even after the Third Anglo-

Burmese War, when the British had theoretically come into possession of all the Burmese-aligned Tai principalities, G. J. Young's husband was forced to travel through Siamese territory, using roughly the same route as had been taken by McLeod in 1837. However, upon the Siamese arrival at Chiang Tung, the defenders would already be settled and prepared for battle. Although this can partly

be explained by the smaller forces, and a command more accustomed to the territory in question, it is also quite likely that their advance had begun earlier than that of the Siamese.

As the march began, two forces were sent out in advance. The first of these was placed under the command of Nga Kyaw Gaung, a warrior of the Mon-

⁷⁶¹Taung Goe, YNM, Page 112.

KhmerspeakingethnicgroupknownastheRiang,fromthevicinityofChiangKham⁷⁶².ThemissionofthiscontingentwastolendtheirforcestothegarrisonofChiangTung,and'keepthecontiguousregionsoftheYun,Lu,andKhunShansunder...control"⁷⁶³.Inshort,theyweretocoordinateandpreparethedefensivestrategypriortothearrivalofMahaNawrathaandthemainforce. The second advance force consisted of Ah Baw and his Karenni, who advanced, concurrent with the main force, from Muang Pai, immediately north of Kyebogyi, to a place called Hpapaung, and were instructed to prepare an ambush along the likely route of Siamese retreat to Chiang Mai⁷⁶⁴. The main force, meanwhile, forded the Salween River at a place called Huai Hin⁷⁶⁵, and advanced eastward to Muang Ping, routing 3,000 soldiers southward to Muang Sat, to "demonstrate the king's might"⁷⁶⁶.

Upon arrival at the walls of Chiang Tung, the Muang Na forces deployed at strategic points outside the city walls. Shwe Ok Kha, with his 3,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, was encamped outside the Nong Phagate⁷⁶⁷, to the northwest of the city. South of Shwe Ok Kha's location, Sang Hai and Par ami were assigned to hold the heights of Chomsiri⁷⁶⁸, thus denying the Siamese access to the position of attack they had used in the previous campaigns. Tein Gyar Min Gaung, the warrior who had distinguished himself in the 1852 siege, was deployed with a force of 500 to a pagoda hill in the north

⁷⁶²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Pages 112-3.

⁷⁶³*Ibid.*, Page 112.

⁷⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁵*Ibid.*, Page 118.

⁷⁶⁶*Ibid.*, Page 121.

⁷⁶⁷Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

⁷⁶⁸Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 121.

hofthecity⁷⁶⁹. It is likely that this location was the hill containing the royal palace as well as numerous important temples, including Wat Chom Kham, located within the walls of Chiang Tung, immediately to the east of Tung Lake. This location was in close proximity with the Nong Kham gate, outside of which the forces of Shwe Ok Kha were deployed, and was, furthermore, the heart of the city, the defense of which would have been crucial had the walls been breached. Another force of 1,000 Tai Yai under the command of a warrior called Nemyo Yan Aung, were deployed on high ground east of the city⁷⁷⁰. The Chiang Tung forces, forming the main defensive force, manned the city ramparts, under the command of Cao Mahaphrom and the ruler of Muang Lap⁷⁷¹. Maha Nawratha, presumably with the Burmese forces of Muang Nai, encamped at the market⁷⁷², in the south of the city.

4.4.3 Siamese-aligned Forces

In his correspondence with King Mongkut, Wongsathirat presented a number of requests regarding changes to the Siamese strategy for the 1854 campaign. The first of these was a request for twice as many soldiers from the central provinces⁷⁷³. As shown above, Wongsathirat had placed little faith in his Tai subordinates during the 1852 campaign, and believed the central Siamese soldiers to be braver. His trust in the Tai could not have been improved by the assassination attempts, wh

⁷⁶⁹Ibid., Page 124.

⁷⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷⁷¹Ibid.

⁷⁷²Mangrai, *The Jengtung State Chronicle*, Page 262.

⁷⁷³Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Page 757.

ich, from his perspective, could as well have been committed by the Chiang Mai soldiers themselves as by masquerading Chiang Tung soldiers. The second request was for larger artillery and larger supply of ammunition⁷⁷⁴. The logic behind this request is obvious, as the Siamese army had discovered, in 1852, that far greater artillery would be required in order to breach Chiang Tung's strong fortifications. Third, Wongsathirat requested the conscription of men to serve as porters from all of the Lao principalities, from Ubon in the south to Luang Prabang in the north⁷⁷⁵. This, like Wongsathirat's first request, most likely resulted from his cultivated mistrust of the Tai Yuan. The fourth request was to move the gathering place of the armies from Chiang Saen to Chiang Rai, and the final request was to begin a second campaign nearly in the following year, and to prepare for a longer war than that which had been fought in 1854⁷⁷⁶. In short, Wongsathirat believed that he needed more soldiers, more arms, and more time in order to take Chiang Tung. All of these requests were granted, except for the third⁷⁷⁷.

The campaign began in late January, as Krommaluang Wongsathirat's army moved his standing forces from Nantong to Chiang Rai⁷⁷⁸. Recruitment then began of a massive army for the assault on Chiang Tung. Forces were drawn up, again, from all the principalities of Lan Na, and joined by the forces of Luang Prabang. The Luang Prabang forces numbered about 3,000, were commanded by Cao Sivisa and Cao Kammao, and were

⁷⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶Ibid., Page 758.

⁷⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, Page 364.

sent on the orders of Cao Cantarat, then the ruler of Luang Prabang⁷⁷⁹. The 1854 campaign would turn out to be the largest and bloodiest campaign of the Chiang Tung Wars, and the Siamese assembled a tremendous host. Burmese estimates placed the number to assault the walls of Chiang Tung at about 20,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry⁷⁸⁰, and, according to the later report of the conflict by King Mongkut to John Bowring, the elephantry numbered at over 1,000 as well⁷⁸¹, although in Damrong's enumeration of the Siamese forces, the elephantry was fewer than that in the 1852 campaign⁷⁸², which, as shown above, had numbered 349. Although this number is smaller than the 30,000 who supposedly partook in the campaign of 1852, one must consider that of the two forces assembled by the Siamese, only one reached the walls of Chiang Tung, while the other, presumably of a similar magnitude, was defeated, not by the defenders of Chiang Tung, but by the hostile terrain and the coming of the rainy season.

The problems began before conscription was completed. Both Wongsathirat and the Yommarat quickly discovered that the Tai of Lan Na were already suffering from war fatigue, and did not wish to depart on a second expedition so soon after the end of the expedition of 1852⁷⁸³. Wongsathirat arrived at Chiang Rai 21 days after departing Nan, only to find that preparations were far from complete, and the forces of the Yommarat had not even finished mustering at Chiang Mai⁷⁸⁴.

⁷⁷⁹ML Manich Jumsai, *History of Laos*, Page 242.

⁷⁸⁰Spear to Phayrein Hall, *Correspondence*, Page 194.

⁷⁸¹Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

⁷⁸²Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 759.

⁷⁸³*Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁴*Ibid.*

4.4.4 Siamese Advance

The two armies began their advance from Chiang Rai on 2 March, 1854⁷⁸⁵. In addition, as will be discussed below, it is quite likely that a force of Chiang Mai skirmishers was active in other parts of the Chiang Tung region during 1854. As in 1852, Cao Anantawararitid was present on the battlefield, this time attached to Wongsathirat's army as the commander of the Nan forces⁷⁸⁶. Already, Wongsathirat's plan to campaign for a longer period of time was on the verge of being thwarted, and he waited a full month before the Yommarat's army arrived⁷⁸⁷. Due to Mongkut's rejection of Wongsathirat's plan to conscript additional porters from the Lao principalities, Wongsathirat's army organized to have Chiang Run provide a force of porters to carry supplies to the Siamese from the Sipsongpanna⁷⁸⁸.

4.4.4.1 Chaophraya Yommarat's Advance

As the advance began, the Siamese army split into two forces, one under the command of Krommaluang Wongsathirat, the other under the command of Chaophraya Yommarat. Of the two, the Yommarat's advance is the more difficult to trace. Mongkut, in his account to John Bowring, describ

⁷⁸⁵Wuttichai, "Songkhram Kharawatti Chiang Tung", Page 69.

⁷⁸⁶Saenluang Ratchasomphan, The Nan Chronicle, Page 119.

⁷⁸⁷Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 759.

⁷⁸⁸*Ibid.*, Page 758.

ed the Yommarat's advance as having passed through a place called "Sisapon" and another place called "Muang Rai"⁷⁸⁹. The *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* lists "Bayet" and "Mong He" as places through which the Yommarat's army advanced, and "Ho Pong" as the place of their encampment, and adds the additional detail that the advance was from the south⁷⁹⁰. Putting aside Bayet and Sisapon, both sources seem to refer to a town named Muang Hai, which is located to the north and west of Takhilek on the southern approach to Chiang Tung, in the upper basin of the Huok River⁷⁹¹. Muang Hua Pong, the Yommarat's army's eventual place of encampment, described by the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* as a "level plain"⁷⁹², was located lower on the Huok, near Hong Luk⁷⁹³, considerably closer to Siamese - controlled territory, and was only resorted to late in the campaign, after the Yommarat's decision to retreat.

4.4.4.2 Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit's Advance

While the Yommarat took the southern approach, Wongsathirat's army advanced to Muang Yong, this time approaching via the district of Paleo on the Mekong to Muang Yong's southwest, and th

⁷⁸⁹Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 365.

⁷⁹⁰Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 99.

⁷⁹¹Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2*, Pages 354-5.

⁷⁹²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 100.

⁷⁹³Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1*, Page 149.

en westwards along Chiang Tung's eastern approach⁷⁹⁴. An anomaly presents itself in the course of Wongsathirat's march, specifically, the fact that multiple sources agree that Wongsathirat's army advanced by way of Chiang Khaeng⁷⁹⁵. This is an anomalous due to the location of Chiang Khaeng, northwards and eastwards of Muang Yong, and on the opposite bank of the Mekong. The anomaly can, perhaps, be explained away by the town of Muang Yu, which, in a year estimated to be 1855, was settled by the population of Chiang Khaeng⁷⁹⁶, and which is located immediately to the northeast of Muang Yong, in the valley of the Nam Luai. The route discussed above, from Chiang Tung to Muang Yong via Muang Kai, continues, after Muang Yong, to Muang Yu⁷⁹⁷, and thus it is likely, although certainly not definite, that some portion of Wongsathirat's army could have been sent to Muang Yu to gather men and supplies for the westward march. Such a task would have likely fallen on the forces of Cao Ananta, who were accustomed to campaigning in the upper Mekong, and under whose suzerainty Chiang Khaeng theoretically lay. This option would have been made more prudent, due to the surprise that Wongsathirat's army found waiting for them upon their arrival in Muang Yong. The people of Muang Yong, having anticipated the third Siamese attack, had removed their persons and harvest to safety, and had burnt that which they could not carry with them, thus denying the Siamese army the resources and manpower of their valley⁷⁹⁸. If supplies were being

⁷⁹⁴Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, Page 364.

⁷⁹⁵Mangrai, The Jengtung State Chronicle, Page 241; Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, Page 364.

⁷⁹⁶Grabowsky and Renoo, Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng, Page 2.

⁷⁹⁷Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 510.

⁷⁹⁸Ibid., Page 502.

gcarriedfromtheSipsongpanna,MuangYuwouldalsohavebeenalogicallocationthroughwhi
chtocarrythem.

The lack of provisions, resultant from the abandonment of Muang Yong, was compounded by the sheer difficulty of the terrain between Muang Yong and Chiang Tung. That route, running high in the hills above the valley of the Luai River, was precipitous and narrow, and the carts with which Wong sathirathadintendedtotransporthisarmy'ssupplieswereunsuitedfortheroughnessoftheterrain⁷⁹⁹, requiring the use of elephants and cattle to carry the equipment, which included, in addition to provisions for the troops, artillery and ammunition⁸⁰⁰. Although the 1852 campaign had certainly encountered similar problems, the magnitude of the 1854 campaign rendered the advance more difficult, and the Siamese were forced to abandon a significant amount of supplies, including the arms and ammunition which had been brought by Si Suriyawong. The difficulty of the route was compounded by the death of a number of the elephants, horses, and livestock, and the army was forced to stop frequently and wait for the supply train to catch up with the soldiers⁸⁰¹.

4.4.5 Initial Clashes

Although the 1854 campaign occurred during a period of relative quiet in the Sipsongpanna, multiple battles occurred in the Chiang Tung region, as the larger

⁷⁹⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰⁰Ibid.

⁸⁰¹Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Thai Rop Phama, Page 759.

defending force allowed the Burmese-aligned forces a degree of mobility with which to harass the invading Siamese-aligned force. In addition to the siege of Chiang Tung itself, battles occurred in the Luai River valley, and at Muang Sat.

4.4.5.1 *The Luai River*

In 1852, the first clashes occurred long before the invaders reached Chiang Tung. Wongsathirat's army was harassed more than once between Muang Yong and Chiang Tung, although few details are available on these clashes aside from that they consistently resulted in easy Siamese victories, but successfully slowed the Siamese forces even further than before⁸⁰². The most likely identity and origin of these raiders was the Hsenwi contingent commanded by Sang Hai, of whom 500 had been sent to harass the Siamese advance, alongside another 500 under the command of Parami, who took a parallel route in the direction of the enemy⁸⁰³. The locations of these raids are listed in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* as "Mong Ke" and "Mong Won". It is likely that "Mong Ke" refers to Muang Kai, and this could very well have been the location of the clash. It is equally likely that at Parami's forces could have conducted this first raid, although the way that the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes it indicates that it was Sang Hai who advanced upon Muang Kai, while

⁸⁰²Ibid., Page 760.

⁸⁰³Taung Goe, *YNM*, Pages 126-7.

Parami advanced to “Mong Won”⁸⁰⁴. It is most likely that multiple clashes occurred along the length of the route.

4.4.5.2 *Muang Sat*

Early in the campaign, another clash occurred at Muang Sat, where a force from Chiang Mai advanced upon the 3,000 soldiers which had been sent there after crossing the Salween⁸⁰⁵. It is possible that this was Maha Nawratha's intention in deploying soldiers to Muang Sat, as the move seems to have been a blatant show of force, and would have served well to draw some of the Thai and Siamese forces away from aiding the attack on Chiang Tung. The Chiang Mai forces were reported to have been 3,000 strong⁸⁰⁶, and to have been commanded by the “governor of Zinme”⁸⁰⁷. These forces were likely commanded by Chao Mahaphrom, a letter from Chaophraya Surenratchasen later mentioned that he had taken his contingent by way of Muang Sat rather than with the main force, as he had been ordered⁸⁰⁸. The battle seems to have gone in favor of the Burmese, and the Chiang Mai forces retreated⁸⁰⁹. On their retreat, which was to the ea

⁸⁰⁴Ibid., Pages 126-7.

“...the renowned deputy commander of Hsenwi [Sang Hai] and the subcommander of Mong Nawng [Parami] were sent out with a force of nearly one thousand men to go forth to Mong Ke and Mong Won and draw out the enemy ... pushed up as far as Mong Ke and Mong Won so as to move along parallel routes.”

⁸⁰⁵Ibid., Page 126.

⁸⁰⁶Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷Ibid., Page 128.

⁸⁰⁸Surenratchasenato Si Suriyawong in Sarassawadee Oongsakul, *History of Lan Na*, Page 164.

⁸⁰⁹Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 128.

st of a range identified, in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, as Loi Leng, they were ambushed by a raiding party from the Karenni principality of Kantharawaddy, compounding their losses⁸¹⁰.

4.4.6 The Siege of Chiang Tung

Krommaluang Wongsathirat's forces arrived in the valley of Chiang Tung in the last week of April, having marched for almost two months⁸¹¹. The battle would be longer and more difficult than the 1852 siege, and thanks to the larger number of defenders, the Siamese would never be able to reach the walls of the city.

4.4.6.1 The Siamese Encampment

The locations within the valley of the Siamese encampments are problematic, and far more difficult to pin down than those employed in 1849 and 1852. The Siamese forces are described in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* as having advanced in three columns as far as the "Mong Leng stream", east of the city, and to have massed at three points, identified as "the pagoda hill, Keng Lep and Kamkaw"⁸¹². The issues begin with the stream, as Muang Leng is

⁸¹⁰Ibid.

⁸¹¹Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 365.

⁸¹²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Pages 134-5.

located out of the Chiang Tung valley, far to the west, in the watershed of the Salween⁸¹³. The two primary streams of the Chiang Tung valley are the Khon and the Lap⁸¹⁴, and the latter runs to the east of Chiang Tung, making it likely that the Muang Leng stream is its tributary⁸¹⁵. Mongkut's account to Bowring identifies the location of the Siamese encampment as Muang Lek, and identifies it as being about 4.8 kilometers from the city walls⁸¹⁶. It seems quite likely that Muang Lek is the same location as Muang Lap, which is located south and east of the capital, and was the seat of an important local official⁸¹⁷. The ruler of Muang Lek seems to have been quite important, as well, and later, in 1875, the ruler of Chiang Khaeng would attend the funeral of a ruler of Muang Lek, who was also the Uparat of Chiang Tung⁸¹⁸. This analysis will use the name Muang Lap for this location. In the vicinity of Muang Lap, southeast of Chiang Tung, the Lap River runs between ranges of hills, which would have allowed the Siamese forces to fortify high ground, and because it is located in proximity to the southern entrance to the valley, from which Wongsathirat expected the Yommarat to arrive. The usefulness of the southeastern approach would also have been compounded by the fact that, as has been discussed above, the high ground to the west, north, and east of the city had already been secured by the Burmese and Tai Ya forces.

⁸¹³Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Pages 384-5.

⁸¹⁴Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 1, Page 442.

⁸¹⁵Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2, Vol. 2, Page 617.

⁸¹⁶Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, Page 365.

⁸¹⁷Scott and Hardiman, GUBSS, Part 2 Vol. 2, Page 384.

⁸¹⁸Grabowsky and Renoo, The Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng, Page 124.

4.4.6.2 Tactics

The tactics used during the 1854 siege seem to have been quite similar to those used in 1852. Again, the Burmese conducted a number of attacks against the Siamese encampment, and the Siamese deterred these raids with mortar fire⁸¹⁹. Neither the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, nor Mongkut's account of the battle to John Bowring, which form the main sources of information regarding the 1854 siege, mention any significant Siamese offensives against the wall, and, summing up the general Siamese strategy, UPonny declares that they thought that “the city of Kengtung could be won through siege tactics”⁸²⁰. Unlike in 1849 and 1852, where the *Jengtung State Chronicle* describes the arrival of different forces at different times, it is clear that only one of the two invading forces arrived in 1854, and that the Yommarat's army did not succeed in reaching the walls of Chiang Tung at any point during the campaign. Much of UPonny's narrative is consumed with the description of a mythical intervention by Indra on behalf of the defenders of Chiang Tung, precipitating the Siamese retreat⁸²¹.

4.4.6.3 Course of the Battle

⁸¹⁹ Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

⁸²⁰ Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 150.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*, Pages 152-9

Of the three raids described in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, two of them occurred in the earliest days of the siege, before the Siamese had completed their fortifications. The first was conducted by Shwe Ok Kha, Cao Mahaphrom, and the ruler of Muang Lap, and succeeded in drawing a number of the invading forces into an ambush⁸²². As the Siamese began to entrench over the following days, a second attack was launched, this one commanded by “the general commanding the Shans”, identified as “Bo Nga Hsan Heh”, most likely Sang Hai, and supported by Shwe Ok Kha, and Parami⁸²³. The attack was first directed against a contingent of forces from ‘Keng Lun’⁸²⁴, and then directed against the high ground near Muang Lap, where Shwe Ok Kha, Parami, and the ruler of Muang Sit, who, at the time, would have been Cao Ho Pik⁸²⁵, clashed with the forces of the ruler of Phrae⁸²⁶. By this point, the Siamese had finished fortifying their encampment, and settled in for what would become a 21 day siege of Chiang Tung⁸²⁷.

During this period, between the fortification of the Siamese and their retreat, the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* describes an operation against the Siamese elephantry. As mentioned above, the Siamese force contained a number of elephants, which were tasked with carrying supplies. These elephants would have used the eastward route through Muang Yong, and likely would have collected supplies from the Sipsongpanna, as well as the Kok River valley. However, being a long, mountain

⁸²²Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 134.

⁸²³*Ibid.*, Page 139.

⁸²⁴*Ibid.*

⁸²⁵Scott and Hardiman, *GUBSS Part 2, Vol. 2*, Page 478.

⁸²⁶Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 142.

⁸²⁷Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

nous route, the elephantry would have been vulnerable to attack, and UPonny describes a raid on the supply train by Shwe Ok Kha⁸²⁸. The start of the rainy season also had a devastating effect on the operations of the Siamese army, and Mongkut, in his account to John Bowring, attributed the death of a full half of the Siamese elephantry, as well as a large number of the soldiers, to the spread of disease in the encampment⁸²⁹. As the week passed, the Siamese were forced to contend with dwindling supplies, a weakened supply train, the outbreak of dysentery in their encampment, and a total lack of progress against the enemy.

As mentioned above, there is no record of any major Siamese offensive during the siege. Indirect contradiction to the idea that the Siamese attempted to raid or shell the walls again, Damrong mentions that when the Siamese positions were raided by the enemy, the Siamese, although able to repulse the enemy attacks, were unable to respond or counter-attack⁸³⁰.

4.4.6.4 Siamese Retreat

After 21 days of besieging the enemy, Wongsathirat's army was starved, ill, and unable to fight in the wet conditions, and it became apparent that it may have become an impossibility to return to fri

⁸²⁸Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 147.

⁸²⁹Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

⁸³⁰Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Thai Rop Phama*, Page 760.

endly territory⁸³¹. On May 17th, the Siamese thus began their retreat⁸³². In later accounts, efforts would be made to play down the losses surrounding this retreat. Mongkut would tell Bowring that the Siamese casualties numbered at around 50 or 60⁸³³, numbers clearly unrealistically low given the protracted nature of the siege, as well as the sheer number of people who had died from disease over the course of the campaign. By contrast, the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun* presents a vision of the annihilation of the Siamese host, with corpses strewn about the ground 'like piles of firewood'⁸³⁴. Leaving aside the theatrics of U Ponnya's account, it is clearly closer to reality than that received by Bowring. A missionary living in Bangkok at the time wrote that

"the Siamese have just heard of the total defeat of their Northern Army, by the combined forces of the Burmese and Laos (Shans). Our neighbor Prince Kroma Luang Wongsā, the Commander in Chief, barely escaped with his life, and with the loss of nearly all his army, guns, ammunition, etc. What effect this will have upon the relations of these several countries we cannot tell. Hostilities are necessarily suspended during the rainy season"⁸³⁵.

Similar reports soon reached Amarapura. Spears reported hearing of casualties numbered about 7,000, with 100 prisoners⁸³⁶. Plunder would trickle into Amarapura over the coming months, although Spears suspected the magnitude of the Burmese victory had been exaggerated. That the Siamese lost a massive amount of weaponry is easy to confirm. The advance had been extend

⁸³¹Ibid., Page 761.

⁸³²Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Page 366.

⁸³³Ibid.

⁸³⁴Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 165.

⁸³⁵S. Mattoon to W. Lowrie in Brailey, *Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement*, Page 106.

⁸³⁶Spears to Phayre in Hall, *Correspondence*, Page 214.

ed to months due to the large amount of supplies, and, for the army to retreat in a timely manner, abandoning most of the supplies would have been necessary.

4.4.7 Analysis of the 1854 Campaign

The campaign of 1854 can be seen as an extension of the campaign of 1852, and, indeed, were two different parts of the same, continuous conflict. As such, it is not necessary to analyze the motivations of the Siamese in entering the conflict in 1854. What is more important to examine is the motivations of the Burmese in entering the conflict, as well as the motivations of the Siamese in choosing to end it.

4.4.7.1 Burmese Motivation for Defending Chiang Tung

In 1854, the stakes were higher for Burma than for Siam. In 1852, the British had removed half of Burma's territory, including the entire seaboard, in a brutal, one-sided, and virtually unprovoked war. Only the astute political maneuvering of King Mindon had brought the war to an end. Having taken the throne of Burma and successfully sued for peace, Mindon was then faced with a challenge from the Siamese. When discussing

these events with Thomas Spears, Mindon compared the Siamese to the British, and compared the Siamese attack on Chiang Tung with the British attack on Lower Burma. This made the Chiang Tung conflict significant in two different ways. First, as a vassal state, Chiang Tung was part of Mindon's political domain. Second, the Siamese military challenge offered Mindon an opportunity to demonstrate his ability to defend that political domain from any future threats.

The significance of Chiang Tung as a component of the Burmese political domain clearly reflects its significance to the Siamese as well. Like Mongkut, Mindon was viewing territory in a strategic sense. Rather than the defense of a vassal state, the Burmese campaign in the Chiang Tung region would be a defense of Burma itself. The presence of solid boundary lines still aren't clear, aside from those which were drawn by the British following the first two Anglo-Burmese Wars, but the sense that vassals, rather than being less powerful allies, form part of an extended political domain, is quite apparent. The dramatic rout of the Siamese was ultimately presented as a grand victory in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, and proved an auspicious start to Mindon's reign.

The involvement of the Burmese also had the effect of escalating the Chiang Tung Wars to its most violent point. The forces which crossed the Salween were large and extremely diverse, with warriors drawn from as far south as Kantharawaddy and as far north as Hsenwi. The success of these warriors, and their camaradery, is celebrated in the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, and many of them received awards and titles for their role

in defeating the Siamese. All of the participants on the Burmese side in the final Chiang Tung War would remain in the Burmese sphere of influence, and would eventually form part of first British Burma, and then the modern-day Burmese nation-state.

4.4.7.2 The End of the Chiang Tung Wars

Regarding the Siamese loss, much focus has been placed, in this and in previous studies, on the difficulty of the terrain, the poor logistics of the Siamese army, the inability of the various groups within the army to get along, and the astute guerrilla tactics of the Chiang Tung defenders. Another element which arises, however, is that the defenders of Chiang Tung seem to have no such difficulties. This is despite being, in all accounts, just as ethnically diverse as the attackers, and despite fighting in the same terrain and having had to advance through it as well. Indeed, one theme which arises is the tenacity and motivation of the defenders. It is recorded in Siamese sources that the invading army was harassed by enemy forces during their advance. However, it is not recorded that these were not the forces of Chiang Tung, but were drawn from the Tai Yai principalities west of the Salween. It is quite remarkable that the Tai Yai and the Burmese were able to assist so effectively in the defense of Chiang Tung.

Indeed, as has been said above, the absence of the Burmese in 1849 and 1852 was something of an anomaly. Due to the Burmese system of tributary administration, and the presence of garrisoned troops at Muang Nai

, the Burmese were very proactive in the defense of their vassals. While the Siamese left their tributaries largely to their own affairs, the Burmese, as has been seen from the frequent Burmese interventions in the Sipsongpanna, maintained a degree of experience campaigning in the most remote corners of their empire. While the Siamese system made for stronger tributaries – Chiang Tung never, after all, even attempted to invade Lan Na – the Burmese system made it considerably easier for the center to intervene in the periphery, and maintain a degree of direct control. Indeed, the pursuit of the retreating Siamese was, according to the *Yodhaya Naing Mawgun*, deliberately planned by Maha Nawratha, who determined the routes the Siamese would use to retreat, and deployed Ah Baw's Karenni to prepare ambushes⁸³⁷.

After the Siamese retreat of 1854, Mongkut decided against further involvement in Chiang Tung, citing the difficulty of the terrain, and the distance of Chiang Tung from Bangkok as the main reasons⁸³⁸. In truth, the army was fatigued, and a third year of war would likely have been even more disastrous than the first two. Relations had been strained between virtually every element of the army, with the Siamese and the Tai unable to work together, and the individual commanders equally unable to get along. Although one of the justifications for Siamese involvement had been oversight of the fractious and quarrelsome Tai, Krommaluang Wongsathirat and Chaophraya Yommarat proved to be as uncooperative toward each other as Mahaphrom and Phimpisan had been in 1849.

⁸³⁷Taung Goe, *YNM*, Page 162.

⁸³⁸Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, *PKR4*, Page 118.

Nonetheless, the final Chiang Tung War stands as a unique conflict in Siamese history, in that it was the only conflict conducted, albeit indirectly, against the British. Mongkut was well aware that, had the British chosen to end Burma's sovereignty in 1852, that those principalities which had owed allegiance to Burma would then have the option of calling upon the British for patronage. In his correspondence with his brother, Mongkut raised the specter of an Anglo-Siamese War, fought over a wayward principality, and a potential mass loss of power to the British similar to that which had occurred in Burma in 1826⁸³⁹. Thus, Mongkut was effectively fighting a "colonial" war, attempting to create an expanded political domain east of the Salween before the British were able to extend their power into the Tai principalities. Although this attempt at expansion was ultimately unsuccessful, and, indeed, may have set Siamese influence in the region back, it anticipated later territorial confrontations with the British and the French.

4.5 The End of the Chiang Rung Crisis, 1855

The end of the final Chiang Tung War was immediately followed by the final phase of the Chiang Rung Crisis, in which Cao Mahachai fought against Cao Suchawan and Cao Alammawut. This began with the return of Alammawut and Nang Suriyaphomma to the Sipsongpanna, and it ended with the victory of Suchawan over Mahachai. Dating these

⁸³⁹King Mongkut to Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit in CRCT, Page 102.

events is difficult, and although it is possible that they occurred concurrent to the final Chiang Tung War, it is most likely that they occurred afterwards. This is due to the fact that Chiang Rung is recalled to have provided assistance to the invaders of Chiang Tung in 1854, and, given that in the final phase of the Chiang Rung Crisis, Cao Suchawan became an ally of Chiang Tung, it is unlikely that he would have been willing to provide assistance.

4.5.1 The Return of Cao Alammawut

At some point during or after the final Chiang Tung War, Cao Cantharat of Luang Prabang dispatched a small force of warriors to escort Cao Alammawut back to Chiang Rung. They advanced via Muang Phong, where Cao Mahachai joined at the head of a contingent of his own men⁸⁴⁰. The tensions began to mount immediately as the combined Luang Prabang and Muang Phong force reached Muang Ram. Cao Mahachai refused to enter the city, instead keeping his forces a full day's walk distant⁸⁴¹. According to the *Lineage*, this was from fear of punishment, as Mahachai had reportedly exaggerated or miscommunicated some of the Siamese tributary claims earlier in the

⁸⁴⁰Maha Sila Viravong, History of Laos, Page 138.

⁸⁴¹Ibid.

crisis⁸⁴². Alammawut wrote to Suchawan, declaring his intention to return to Chiang Rung, and Suchawan's suspicion was piqued when he received word of the military forces which had escorted Alammawut all the way from Luang Prabang⁸⁴³. Suchawan then ordered Cao Attayanoi, the ruler of Muang Ram, to attack Mahachai's forces⁸⁴⁴. At the same time, Alammawut and his escort from Luang Prabang were summoned to Chiang Rung, and the soldiers who had escorted Alammawut received awards from Suchawan⁸⁴⁵.

4.5.2 Chiang Tung Supports Cao Suchawan

Immediately after the first attack by the ruler of Muang Ram, Cao Mahachai wrote to the ruler of Muang U, explaining that he had been betrayed by Cao Alammawut, and suggesting that it was because of his role in bringing the Siamese into the war and beginning Alammawut's exile in Bangkok⁸⁴⁶. This seems to have successfully gained the sympathy of the ruler of Muang U, who refrained from joining in the ensuing conflict⁸⁴⁷. Mahachai then began a campaign against Chiang Rung, moving his forces to Muang Yang east of the Mekong, and prompting Suchawan to flee westwards, where he would

⁸⁴²Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 690.

⁸⁴³Maha Sila Viravong, History of Laos, Pages 138-9.

⁸⁴⁴Ibid., Page 139.

⁸⁴⁵Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 690.

⁸⁴⁶Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷Ibid.

eventually leave the Sipsongpanna and arrive in Chiang Tung⁸⁴⁸. Mahachai then brought his forces across the Mekong, and burnt Suchawan's palace⁸⁴⁹. Suchawan succeeded in obtaining the support of Chiang Tung, and retaliated against Mahachai, attacking his forces at Muang Hun⁸⁵⁰. Mahachai was defeated, and fled across the Mekong to a place called Tha Kho, which he had previously made his base of operations in the Chiang Rung region⁸⁵¹. The *muang* to the west of the Mekong pressed their advantage with a large-scale attack, with the forces of Muang Luang, Chiang Coeng and Tha Lo crossing the Mekong and forcing Mahachai to flee further, to a place called Luang Hit⁸⁵².

4.5.3 The Death of Cao Alammawut

A brief period of calm followed Cao Mahachai's flight from Tha Kho, during which he moved in hiding amongst the *muang* to the east of the Mekong. The conflict resumed when he came out of hiding with a large force in the close vicinity of Muang Ram, which he attacked⁸⁵³. Cao Suchawan promptly fled Chiang Rung, moving to Muang Luang and the *muang* of the Luai River, and appealing once more to Chiang Tung for assistance⁸⁵⁴.

⁸⁴⁸Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹Ibid.

⁸⁵⁰Ibid.

⁸⁵¹Ibid.

⁸⁵²Ibid.

⁸⁵³Ibid.

⁸⁵⁴Ibid.

Shortly after Suchawan's departure, Cao Alammawut attempted to flee as well, but was captured by Muang Phong forces and executed by Mahachai at Muang Ram⁸⁵⁵.

4.5.4 The Death of Cao Mahachai

Word reached Cao Suchawan of his brother's death as he was on the way to Chiang Tung, and once more he appealed to Cao Mahakhanan for assistance⁸⁵⁶. In addition to lending forces to Suchawan, the leaders of Chiang Tung summoned the ruler of Muang Laem with a force of his own to assist Suchawan, and the combined army entered the Sipsongpanna and encamped at Muang Cae⁸⁵⁷. Suchawan then made an effort to lure Cao Mahachai to the west of the Mekong, where he could be defeated easily. He sent Cao Phrommawong of Muang Cae to lead an embassy to Mahachai, declaring that Suchawan's forces numbered from 300 to 400, and that the *muang* west of the Mekong, including Muang Cae, Chiang Coeng, Muang Rai, and Muang Wang, had chosen to support Mahachai instead of Suchawan⁸⁵⁸. Mahachai accepted the bait and brought his forces across the Mekong to attack Suchawan at Muang Cae, where he was defeated decisively, and wounded by a gunshot⁸⁵⁹. Captured by Suchawan, he was taken to

⁸⁵⁵Ibid., Pages 690-1.

⁸⁵⁶Ibid., Page 691.

⁸⁵⁷Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸Ibid.

⁸⁵⁹Ibid.

Chiang Coeng, where he was publically executed⁸⁶⁰. His death marked the end of the Chiang Rung Crisis in Cao Suchawan's reign. Although his son, Cao Nong, succeeded in regrouping most of Muang Phong's forces, he was defeated attempting a quixotic attack on Luang Prabang⁸⁶¹. Suchawan would reign in peace until his death in 1864 during the Panthay Rebellion⁸⁶².

4.5.5 Analysis of the End of the Chiang Rung Crisis

The conclusion of the Chiang Rung Crisis confirms the extreme importance of Chiang Tung in the control of the Sipsongpanna, and demonstrates the increase in Chiang Tung's power and prestige that resulted from the decisive victory over Siam in 1854. It shows that, despite their best efforts, the Siamese were unable to effect any significant change in the political alignments of the Sipsongpanna, and that even the Siamese-aligned Tai principalities bordering on the region were ultimately forced to concede their influence to the traditional suzerains of Burma and China. Finally, it demonstrates the historical importance of political unity to the continued stability of the Sipsongpanna. Although the first two decades of Cao Suchawan's reign were fraught with near constant

⁸⁶⁰Ibid.

⁸⁶¹Maha Sila Viravong, History of Laos, Page 139.

⁸⁶²Renoo Wichasin, CKCS, Page 693

warfare, once he obtained the unobstructed support of both the Burmese and the Chinese and eliminated all of his political rivals, the Sipsongpanna enjoyed an extended period of peace.

In truth, however, by 1855, it was not Burma who stood as the Sipsongpanna's second suzerain, but Chiang Tung. As has been discussed above, Suchawan had gained and lost Burmese support on multiple occasions, and had his rulership challenged every time by Cao No Kham. It was the support of Chiang Tung which had proved critical in the elevation of No Kham, and it was ultimately the support of Chiang Tung that proved critical in upholding Suchawan. Suchawan's decision to court Chiang Tung was accompanied by his decision to abandon the Siamese and their allies, and was likely a response to the events of 1854. Suchawan, having struggled against No Kham since his elevation to power as a young boy, was fully aware of the power of Chiang Tung in the Sipsongpanna, and the impotence of Burma, itself a major regional power which ostensibly held suzerainty over Chiang Tung, should Chiang Tung choose not to support Burma's decisions in the region. Seeing that the Siamese were unable to even budge Chiang Tung, Suchawan would have come to the realization that cooperation, with both Chiang Tung and the Chinese, was the only way for him to maintain a lasting, peaceful reign. Having eliminated No Kham, Suchawan was presented with an opportunity to become Chiang Tung's new candidate for power. He cut ties with the Siamese-aligned principalities abruptly, by attacking Cao Mahachai,

and appealed for Chiang Tung's support. The effect of that support was immediate, and with the assistance of Chiang Tung and the *muang* west of the Mekong, Suchawan was able to subdue Mahachai in less than a year, thus bringing the entire Sipsongpanna under his control.

This marked the end of Siamese influence in Chiang Rung and the majority of the Sipsongpanna. Peripheral regions, such as Muang Phong, Muang La, and Muang U, would remain under the influence of Nan and Luang Prabang, but ultimately, Suchawan's final victory marked the ultimate failure of the Siamese and their Tai allies to become the third regional power to wield influence in the Sipsongpanna.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Chiang Tung Wars were, like any significant conflict, multi-layered and elaborate, with each involved party pursuing its own distinct agenda, and acting from its own distinct experience. For every faction that fought in the Chiang Tung Wars, the shared experience was the violence of the 18th century, surrounding the wars between Burma, China, and Siam that occurred from the middle of the century until its end. These wars had devastated the populations of the Tai principalities, and created tensions within the Tai region that, although manageable for a time, ultimately escalated into large-scale political violence. They had also scarred the Siamese, and ultimately, with the re-ascendance of Siam, halted the imperial ambitions of the Burmese, redirecting their expansion in the direction of the expanding British Empire. It was out of these wars that the Tai principalities of the 19th century emerged, and the massive population movements which the Lan Na principalities used to restore themselves to their former strength led to the earliest Chiang Tung Wars, fought in 1802, 1804, and from 1808 to 1812. At the same time, tensions remaining in the Sipsongpanna from the Sino-Burmese border wars of the 1760s caused a split in the ruling family of Chiang Rung, and the rebellion of Cao Can against the Burmese and Chinese in 1806 marked both the first military intervention

of Lan Nain the succession crises of the Sipsongpanna, and a two-year war between the Chao Chet Ton principalities

and the Burmese which would spill over into the Chiang Tung region in 1808. The defeat of Lan Na and there-

establishment of Chiang Tung by Cao Mahakhan proved a turning point in the affairs of the Tai principalities and sparked several decades of tense peace. In 1837, tensions were high between Chiang Tung and Lan Na, but no direct violence had occurred between the two principalities since 1812. In the Sipsongpanna, sporadic conflict had occurred between the forces of Nan and Luang Prabang, who supported Cao Mahanoi, and those of Cao Mahawang.

The regional powers were, in the meantime, watching the onset of British imperialism in the region, with the First Anglo-

Burmese War resulting in the first major British territorial gain and the arrival of a new regional power. At first, the British took the character of a new regional power, existing in competition, though not necessarily conflict, with Siam and Burma. Their suzerainty or friendship was courted, on occasion, by the Tai principalities, and they conducted relations with both the Siamese and the Burmese as neighbors as well as potential trading partners. Concern over the disproportionate power wielded by the British only began to emerge in the mid-19th century, and by the final Chiang Tung War, dealing with

the expansion of British power formed a noteworthy consideration of the Siamese leadership. The Chinese, by contrast, saw their power in the Sipsongpanna decline drastically over the course of the 19th century, and their reduced ability to intervene in the various succession crises of the Sips

ongpannaled Cao Suchawan's faction to seek the assistance of the Siamese in 1847, and set in motion the chain of events which would result in the continuation and conclusion of the Chiang Tung Wars. The later Chiang Tung Wars were thus a continuation of a long-standing Tai conflict, which escalated, between 1849 and 1854, into a regional conflict involving the Siamese, the Burmese, and contingents of warriors from principalities as distant and diverse as Luang Prabang, Hsenwi, and Kantharawaddy. Whereas the initial raid of 1802 had consisted of less than 1,000 men, the campaigns of 1852 and 1854 had armies numbering in the tens of thousands, drawn from dozens of principalities, and ultimately resulted in thousands of deaths.

The Chiang Tung Wars were thus an unprecedented display of power on behalf of the Siamese over their northern frontier. Whereas previously the Tai principalities of Lan Na had received the assistance of the Siamese against the incursions of the Burmese, in 1852 and 1854 they found themselves witnesses to the true extent of Siamese military force, and subject to control rather than assistance. The authority of local princes was overruled, and peasants were conscripted to serve unfamiliar overlords. Although the Chao Chet Ton principalities had enthusiastically conducted their own campaign against Chiang Tung in 1849, they were anything but enthusiastic in 1852 and 1854, and were accused by Wongsathirat of sabotaging the campaign. At the same time, the war of 1852-1854 showed a clear Siamese interest in expanding their political power in a territorial sense. Whereas the previous Chiang Tung War had been conducted, seemingly, with the goal of obtaining manpower, as in 1802 and 1804, or allies, as in 1808-1812, or weakening a strategic rival, as in 1849, the war of 1852-

1854 was clearly intended to expand political territory at the expense of the Burmese and the British. Ultimately, however, the expedition was unsuccessful, Chiang Tung remained out of Siamese hands, and Siamese control over the Lan Na region was not strengthened.

Burmese involvement predated the Siamese involvement in the Chiang Tung Wars. The Burmese defeat at Chiang Saen had heralded the start of the 1804 Chiang Tung War, and the Burmese, not the Tai Khoen of Chiang Tung, were the primary rival of Lan Na in the 1808-

1812 Chiang Tung War. The Burmese also had a history of involvement in the affairs of Chiang Run g, sending armies on numerous occasions over the first half of the 19th century. Although this extensive involvement in the region gave the Burmese a powerful advantage in 1854, the Burmese campaign of 1854 nonetheless was one of much greater urgency than those of earlier decades. This was largely a matter of pride, with the Burmese having been defeated and humiliated by the British for a second time, but it was also a matter of territory. The Burmese had learned the hard way the absolute necessity of European concepts of territorial control, and were well acquainted with the idea of territorial loss. Thus, the battle against the Siamese amounted to a struggle to prevent a third loss of territory following the two Anglo-Burmese Wars.

The Chiang Tung Wars were thus, by 1854, an indigenous conflict, fought between ancient rivals, for control of manpower and defense of tributary arrangements and alliances, with the Siamese fighting to establish a tributary relationship with the Sipsongpanna, and the Burmese fighting to maintain their tributary relationships with the Sipsongpanna and Chiang Tung. At the same time, they were a modern conflict of the colonial era, fought in the face of British aggression, in which both

Siam and Burma demonstrated a strong understanding of the magnitude of the European threat and sought to prepare to face it through the acquisition of power. They were a wide-spread regional conflict, involving Siam, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Luang Prabang, Muang Phong, and Lomsakon on one side, and involving Burma, Chiang Tung, Muang Yong, Muang Nai, Hsenwi, Lai Kha, Kyebogyi, Kantharawaddy, and a multitude of smaller Tai principalities on the other, and involving Chiang Rung on both sides. At the same time, they were a localized Tai conflict, born out of an intricate web of personal loyalties and grudges, and fought, in many cases, between communities rather than nations.

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APPENDIX

INDEX OF IMPORTANT PEOPLE

NAME	ALLEGIAN CE	ALTERNATE NAME OR ROMANIZATIO N	NOTE
AhBaw	Kyebogy i		Karenni ruler of Kyebogyi who participated in the 1852-1854 Chiang Tung War.
Alammawut	ChiangR ung		Uparat of Chiang Rung, 1836-1855.
Anantawarariti det	Nan	Chaophraya Mongkholwa layot	Ruler of Nan, 1851-1891. Participated in the 1852-1854 Chiang Tung War.
Attawalapann o Can	Thoeng, Nan ChiangR ung		Ruler of Thoeng, 1784-1788. Ruler of Nan, 1788-1810. Son of Cao Namphung. Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1802-1806.
Kavila	Lampang ,Chiang Mai	Kawila	SonofCaoChaiKaeo.RulerofLampang,1775-1782.RulerofChiangMai,1782-1816.
KhananMaha wong KongTai	ChiangM ai ChiangT ung	SaoKawngTa i	RulerofChiangMai,1847-1855. RulerofChiangTung,1787-1804.
Mahachai	MuangPh ong		CousinofCaoSuchawan.RulerofMuangPhongduringtheChiangRungCrisis.
MahachaiNga dam	ChiangR ung		SonofCaoMahanoi.Chinese-supportedchallengerforCaoSuchawan's throne.
Mahakhanan	ChiangR ung		SonofCaoThian.
Mahakhanan	ChiangT ung		SonofCaoKongTai.RulerofMuangYang, 1804-1812,andrulerofChiangTung1813-1857.FoughttheChiangTungWars.
MahaNawrath a Mahanoi	Burma ChiangR ung	PossiblyUS hweKyu	<i>Sittke</i> ofMuangNaiwhofoughtinthe1852-1854ChiangTungWar. SonofCaoMahawong.RulerofChiangRung,1802-1834.
Mahaphrom	ChiangM ai		RatchabutofChiangMai.Participatedin1849and1852-1854ChiangTungWars.
Mahaphrom	ChiangT ung		CaoSaenmuang,orheirapparent,ofChiangTung.
Mahawang	ChiangR ung		SonofCaoSuwan.RulerofChiangRung,1834-1836.
Mahawong	ChiangR ung		SonofCaoSuwan.RulerofChiangRung,1796-1802.
Mahawong	Nan		RulerofNan,1838-1851.
McLeod,Capta	Britain		BritishofficerwhotravelledtoChiangRun

William C. Mindon	Burma		King of Burma, 1853-1878. The final Chiang Tung War occurred in his reign.
Mongkut	Siam	Rama IV	King of Siam, 1851-1868. The final Chiang Tung War occurred during his reign.
Namphung	Chiang Rung		Son of Tao Sao Wun. Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1767-1773.
No Kham	Chiang Rung		Son of Cao Mahakhanan of Chiang Rung. Burmese-supported challenger for Cao Suchawan's throne.
Parami	Muang Nong		Ruler of Muang Nong who participated in the 1852-1854 Chiang Tung War.
Phimphisan	Chiang Mai		Upate of Chiang Mai. Participated in the 1849 Chiang Tung War.
Phrommawong Rama I	Muang Nung		Ruler of Muang Nung. Brother-in-law of Mahachai.
Rama III	Siam		King of Siam, 1782-1809. Founder of the reigning Chakri Dynasty.
Sang Hai	Hsenwi		King of Siam, 1824-1851. The later Chiang Tung Wars began in his reign.
Shwe Ok Kha	Lai Kha		Warrior of Hsenwi who fought in the Chiang Tung Wars.
Spears, Thomas	Britain		Heir apparent of Lai Kha who fought in the 1852-1854 Chiang Tung War.
Suchawan	Chiang Rung		British merchant resident in Amarapura in the early reign of Mindon. Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1836-1864.
Sumanadevarata	Nan		Son of Cao Aliyawong. Ruler of Nan, 1810-1825.
Suriyaphromma Suwan	Chiang Rung	Bin Kaew	Mahathewi of Cao Mahawang. Mother of Cao Alammawut.
Tao Sao Wun	Chiang Rung		Son of Tao Sao Wun. Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1777-1796.
Thian	Chiang Rung		Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1707-1767. Father of Cao Namphung, Cao Thian, and Cao Suwan.
Wongsathiratanit, Krommaluang	Siam		Son of Tao Sao Wun. Ruler of Chiang Rung, 1796-1800.
			Brother of King Mongkut, and commander in chief of the Siamese invasion of Chiang Tung, 1852-1854.

BIOGRAPHY

John Sterling Forssen Smith was born in Port Townsend, Washington, in the United States of America, on 28 June 1984. He graduated with his Bachelor of Arts from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington in June 2008. After graduating, he worked for two years in Vietnam and Thailand, and began work on this thesis in August 2010.