

HISTORY OF LAOS

(including the history of Lannathai, Chlengmai)

by

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PREFACE

This is the first attempt to put down Lao history from the various sources which I have collected ever since the days I spent in Laos from 1957 to 1960. Since then seven more years have gone by in searching for more materials on Laos without my being able to write down even what I gathered together. There is ever so much more to be read about this interesting country in the various libraries of the world, especially at the National Library of Paris, more than I expected, and I could spend my whole life on it without being able to find out and read everything on the subject, because after all the Laos came from a very big racial group of the Thai stock which originated, as far as history can tell, in Yunnan, i.e. at least as far as 2000 years back in history. Instead of waiting any longer, I have now come to the conclusion that I should better put the results of my findings down even in a hurried way in the hope that later when I have more time to myself, and not so busy with other occupations, I could put in more details and also the results of further findings.

My first real contact with Lao history was when I have spent three happy years in Laos. Of course I have made a study of the Thais long before this. During these three years I have come across

many materials in Lao language, most of which are not yet printed, since printing in Laos in Lao language is of recent date. Many families and many private libraries in Laos still possess manuscripts among their proud possessions, which they guard as great treasure, and which they would not disclose if they suspect that the foreigners are coming to take them away. These are books written by hand or which, on rare occasions were run off in few copies in mimeographed form, to be privately circulated among friends or for occasional official uses or reports. They were not known to the outside world and they are becoming more and more scarce. Some of the manuscripts are quite old, written or copied out by hand, generation after generation on local mulberry paper made from tree barks by their ancestors quite a number of years back and still kept as family treasures. Some of these valuable manuscripts were either taken away from time to time by collectors abroad and a number destroyed during the country's unsettled situation which ravaged the country continuously, and is unluckily still despoiling in this unhappy country. Ever since the days when Laos has seemed able to reunite through the happy understanding between the two opposing political parties, that of Soupanouvong and that of Souvanna Pouma, and when I could still travel to far-off villages in the outlying provinces on the

extreme confines of Laos, covering the journeys mostly on foot over the numerous hills in order to be able to contact and talk with the villagers and priests far away from everybody, untouched by any modern civilization, and where there are no means of reaching them except by walking days and days, I could find old manuscripts in Liu, Youne, Thai Dam, or other dialects of the Lao-Thai language among the villagers or in Buddhist temples. Although Lao literature has not been encouraged in the past, there is no means of stopping these simple folks to study and write in their own alphabets. Among the Thai Dams (Black Thais)* although no schools have ever been opened for them, yet the fathers would continue to teach their children to read and write in their own language,

* These are to be found in the following places : Muong Yang, Tuan Yao (Muong Kwai), Thèng (Dien-Bien-Phu), Ban Kung Muong (Muong Mouie), Mai Soen (Muong Muo), Ban Mon, Sam-Muen, Muong Taen, Muong Loï, Muong Hung, Muong Lam, Ban Nangiu, Ian-chau (Muong Vad), Moc-chau (Muong Sang), Ban Souie Naeng, Ban Na-Lai, Ta Kwa, Ban Chan, Son-La (Muong La), now in North Vietnam, on the further side of Hanoi.

so that the language though never put down in printed form is never dead. And then there are old wise men of the villages who would record the history of their people from old memories as told to them by their great grandfathers in order to keep the history of the happenings of their group, the doings of their heroes, the events of the important families, known to their children after them. I found that there are rich untapped materials everywhere in Laos, and when I could not find written materials, old men in the villages still have vivid memories of what their ancestors have handed down to them by words of mouth, and would tell me with fires in their eyes and with great pride, the story of their past, the story of how their men, their tribe have come to settle down in such places, how the different towns were built and so on. Thus in my travels I have been able to meet members of the different royal families whose ancestors used to rule as independent sovereigns in the different parts of the country in by-gone days. Thus I have come across some of the princes of Sibsong Panna of the Lao side in Ou Neua and Ou Tay. The present members of the royal family of these ancient States were pensioned off by the French long ago, when the French appointed governors to rule in their stead. Then there are the descendants of the famous Deo-Van-Tri of Lai-Chau

(or Sibsong Chutai) who have run away from the Vietminhs in order to settle down in a village near Namtha. Again I have met the last prince of Xieng Khouang who is now Chaokhoueng (Governor) of that province. We know that his ancestors have always been ruling in Xieng Khouang as an independent City State ever since the days of Khun Borom, who founded Muon Thèng over 12 centuries ago. All these men had much to tell about the glorious past of the history of their ancestors. Some of them still have manuscripts preserved in their family archives. Unfortunately the manuscript of the principality of Xieng Khouang which was brought up to date by the present prince himself during his underground days was no longer available, it having been lent out to a French collector who promised the prince to have it printed, but was never found printed to this day. In the South I have met with the princes of Champasak in their own home. A prince told me that Pakse was built because the French wanted to rule over his country without having their family to interfere with them. It would be embarrassing therefor to set up administrative quarter of Champasak in a place where the king of Champasak resided, so they moved the administrative quarter to a new place and thus Pakse was built. Old people in various localities still remember about the history of

their part of the country. Thus a teacher in Attopeu told me a moving story of how he himself and his associates took over the town from the Vietnamese after the French had retreated and the Japanese had moved in. The Japanese had declared Laos independent, but Attopeu was still under the Vietnamese. During French occupation, they had employed Vietnamese soldiers to guard Attopeu. When the French had gone, naturally the Vietnamese took over the control. This patriot who was a simple teacher organized his men in order to return his town back to Laos, seized the arsenal, surprised the Vietnamese soldiers and drove them over the borders into Vietnam. A villager in Namtha showed me a manuscript on mulberry paper and then read out to me the history of the Thai Dam race and of a certain great hero of their history called Pu Chao Ngu Hao (or Grandfather Cobra). A villager in Thakhek told me about the legend of old Thakhek or Sikot (or Kot-Traborng). This town was moved about from place to place as capital of a glorious kingdom of the past, Kammuon, the heritage of one of the seven sons of Khun Borom; but people claimed that it has a history even before Khun Borom's time, i.e. during Buddha's days, when afterwards his relic was sent out by Emperor Asoka of India to found the temples of Nakorn Panom and probably also Inhang shrine in Savannakhet.

It is not possible to record everything in this short space various people have told me about the origin of their towns, the history of their various monuments, statues and temples. Many people in Khong still remember the days when the French were fighting the Thai in that area. In fact there are still so much materials in Laos both from the mouths of people and from manuscripts which need further extensive research before we should allow these old men to pass away without leaving their stories behind, or before these old-time manuscripts should all be gradually destroyed by the wars which are still raging in that unhappy country. Thus an old man in Khong told me that during the fight between the Thai and the French in 1893 how the French used to tell the local people that the King of Bangkok was already held captive in their hands. They have sent a beautiful woman to lure the king into their boat and then they steamed off with the real king, sending up ashore another person very like him who was sitting on the throne and would soon stop all the fights and hostilities. Although such a story is impossible yet it shows how news could circulate those days among simple folks in order to allay their fears.

It is a great pity that situations have changed and I shall no longer be able to revisit these far-off places in the distant corners of Laos to gather more

information, from the fact that the country has since then been split up into various warring factions, each fighting with each other, and many of such materials may have been damaged, old people with wonderful memories dying out and whole villages further displaced and dislocated. It is about time I should try to put something down even in a sketchy form, in any event even to save my memory from being dimmer, while waiting for further discoveries to be made, and further details to be elaborated when I have more time.

Of course there is a big literature concerning the history of Laos scattered about not only in Laos itself. There is numerous information to be obtained from English, American, French, Chinese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Dutch and even Thai sources, to be patched together, and one has to be patient in hunting for it, because information could be found in odd places, under irrelevant titles and in unexpected articles. During the days when Laos still formed part of Thailand, the Thai used to collect materials from various Lao chiefs and village elders themselves. Thus they were called upon by the Thai governors and commanders to tell the stories of their past. These were recorded and some of them published in old chronicles in Bangkok, and many have been distributed during cremation rites.

Since I can no longer visit the distant parts of Laos as I used to do during my stay in the country, I had to look for source materials elsewhere. Thus I have been able to discover the important articles such as: the famous memoir of Deo-Van-Tri, published in a journal after his death; the story of the Danish commander of Phra Chula fort and Phra Padaeng, who told a different version of the fight from what appeared in the "Journal d'un Commandant de la Comète" by Louis Dartige du Fournet. The Danish commander also reported his side of the story in a journal. It was curious to know that during this crisis when the French were coming up the river, the prince in command just had time to recruit 2000 men from places around. These men were useless to defend the fort, since they were simple peasants, untrained, knew nothing and could not be used in any war, and so they were used just to dig earth in order to thicken the wall of the fort....

History of the last century, when the French started to have interest in Indochina, is really enormous, especially among the articles written for various newspapers of the time. One could spend the whole life time in digging out these articles and yet would not be able to gather all that have been written. History of Laos by itself without its relation to its brother

peoples in the region is perhaps irrelevant and unimaginable since many of the events are related to those in neighbouring countries and certain events are really the results of those happening in countries all round. Thus I had first an ambition to write also history not only of Laos but of all the Thai race in general so as to give Laos a fuller meaning and a story of its inter-relationship with other countries of the same racial origin. That is why I have started to include Lannathai, as one of the earlier kingdoms parallel to Laos, although it was a separate kingdom, but it was really a brother kingdom in the same way as other brother kingdoms of the same Thai origin. Lannathai and Thailand are probably the nearest to Laos, among the various branches of the Thai race. Lannathai is not Lao, and Laos are perhaps also not Lao. They are all Thai, all coming from Yunnan in the days of Nanchao, and has since then broken up, each to map out its own destiny and its own history, and eventually to be called different names after the names of their separate kingdoms. And if history does not start at the origin, each one will naturally be told that they do not belong to each other as many will understand nowadays through lack of inter-communication.

I therefore present you with the history of Laos from earliest times right down to the present day as one branch of the bigger Thai race in the hope that one day I shall be able to write also about the other branches in order to complete the whole picture.

M.L. Manich.

Bangkok, 5 August 1967.

HISTORY OF LAOS

- An attempt at an international study -

INTRODUCTION

History of Laos in English exists up to the present as a chapter in the History of South-East Asia, and not complete. There exists also a French version by Mr. Boulanger, also incomplete, and long out of print. There are several other local sources in Thai and Lao languages, some only in quasi-manuscript form. For people who do not read local languages, it is difficult to have a complete picture of the history of Laos. There are also fragmentary bits of the history of Laos scattered here and there in neighbouring countries. Lately also there has been found out from Chinese chronicles and descriptive journeys of Chinese writers the earliest contacts of the Chinese with the countries of South-East Asia and also a complete history of Yunnan or Nanchao which has now been identified as the early history of the Thai and Lao people. Many local history and legends are also to be found scattered about either in local paper-mulberry manuscripts or from the memory of older tribesmen, members of defunct royal families and elders.

To listen to the history of Laos from one source alone is both incomplete and very one-sided. Some writers wrote with personal sentiments of national pride and hatred. All the depreciatory events of one's own country were left out, whereas the enemy country was painted black, with all the violence of harshness, cruelty and injustice perpetrated.

To study the history of Laos properly therefore one must also collect information from all sides concerned : from Burma, Thailand, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and from English, French and American authors, and then try to piece all the information together so as to form a complete whole.

It is therefore in this attempt that this history of Laos is again put together from the various sources above-mentioned. The results of research are hastily put down so that all the details available are not always written out.

WHO ARE THE THAI? WHO ARE THE LAO?

One just wonders why do they speak the same language, why are they both Buddhists and why do they have the same cultural activities and so on. It would be very difficult to distinguish especially between the border cases. There are times when everything is normal the Lao Government tends to forget that people from

Thailand on the opposite bank are Thai politically and they allow them to come over in big numbers to settle in Laos or to trade in Laos. It was estimated that out of the population of about 70,000 in Vientiane there must be no less than 25,000 from the Thai side of the river, and the rest again have some form of relations and interests on the Thai side. This is the same as other principal towns along the Mekhong River. In Savannakhet people said that they came from Mukdaharn on the Thai side of the river not more than eighty years ago. There was no Savannakhet town then until the French tried to set up military quarters there at a farm belonging to a couple some eighty years ago. Since then people from Mukdaharn crossed over to join their relatives even up to recent times. When they talk of people on the other side they do not talk of Thai or Lao, they talk of their brothers and sisters who are on the other side of the river. At Thakhek, people said that they came from Nakorn Panom on the Thai side. Many of their chronicles are still to be found in the various wats (Buddhist temples) of Nakorn Panom. Nakorn Panom used to be a powerful principality in bygone days, when people on both sides were subjects of this same principality. The sites for their capital changed from time to time, sometimes on the left side of the Mekhong River and sometimes on the right side. One of the famous sites was at Sikot, 12 kms to the south of Thakhek on the left side of the river.

People still told of the legend of Phya Sikot, the powerful legendary ruler of old Thakhek or Sikot. Further inland away from the bank is an important town or muong called Mahaxay. People here said they originally came from Sakol Nakorn on the Thai side and also from Uten, also on the Thai side. These settlements are of only recent origin. The Thais and the Laos had much stronger ties in a more distant past. According to history Nongkhai supplied many political leaders for Vientiane in bygone days. Places like Chiengkarn and even Sichiengmai (opposite Vientiane) were resting and even burial places of Lao kings. Nongbualampoo in Leui Province of Thailand was the birthplace of the most famous Lao poet, the author of Sin Xay, Prince Parngkam.

People on both sides cannot say among themselves who are Thai and who are Lao. With political division which was inevitable they were separated from each other. The brothers in Thailand had been forced out of political reason to be called only Thai, although sometimes they forget themselves and say they are Lao. Whereas their sisters on the left bank have been told since French occupation that they are Lao and they sometimes forget that they are Lao and said in referring to themselves Thai-Lao in a current day-to-day speech. Before French occupation they referred to their language as Thai. Some of them still retain the word Thai even to this day, viz: the Thai Dam, the Thai Deng, the Thai Khao and the

Pou Thai. The principal home of these people is in South China and Tongking, and they had once the glorious capital at Muong Theng (called Dien-Bien-Phu by the Vietnamese), built by Khun Borom in the eighth century.

When troubles began, political leaders on both sides tried to say that they were no longer brothers. The ones were Thai and the others were Lao. And the political leaders on both sides incited them by all sorts of propaganda to quarrel with each other and even to persecute each other, just because of the political power they are contending, which the common people had nothing to do with it. Thus when trouble began the traders from the left bank crossed over as usual to bring food to sell to their sisters on the left bank. They were told by the military that they were foreigners and as foreigners they must be fined because they entered the country illegally. People could not understand of course. One day they were received as compatriots and the next day as enemy. But people, especially the common people, do not understand politics. If their brothers on the other side were in trouble they just crossed over and helped in spite of their separate governments. Thus it also happened that when their brothers fought the French in order to gain independence during and after World War II the Thai Isarns, or the Laos from the right bank crossed over in thousands to fight with the French along the side of their brothers and sisters on the left bank as far in land as

Namtha and Phongsaly. There are traces where people still talked of this help quite far into the interior. It was also told by Prince Petcharat in his book published in Bangkok called "the Iron Man of Laos". Then came their defeats and they had to retire into Thailand, these political leaders and their men of the left bank were welcomed heartily by their brothers on the right bank. Thus Prince Petcharat, Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prince Soupanouvong, Phya Kammao, Thao Katay Sasorith, etc... found an exile home for eleven years in Bangkok continuing their fights and contentions with the French until the latter acceded to their demands and they could come back home to Laos at last. Full account was given by Prince Petcharat in the book mentioned above.

There is no difference whatever between the Thai and the Lao although political leaders on the Lao side tried to say that Lao is a different language by pointing out to the difference between the pronunciation of words and the difference usage of words, and even some words are different. This could only convince the uneducated and the ignorant. For people who studied languages and linguistics however, it only showed that Lao as a language has stopped developing ever since French colonial days because local language was not encouraged and their once glorious literature becomes almost extinct, had not some of the valuable manuscripts been preserved by Buddhist monasteries, by peasants, villagers, elders, and also

researchers, who took them away to various capitals of the world. By studying the literature of Laos and Thailand it was found that whereas the Thai have always been independent and could therefore develop their language, the language of the Thai on the right side of the river made big strides in its development to keep up and progress along modern lines. The Language however got stuck up with old expressions and have not been encouraged to think of new ways of expression for the modern needs of life. They have only been drilled to use French technical terms instead which they kept by putting these French terms into Lao script.

In spite of political contentions of leaders on both sides for private personal political power and to keep the country divided the people on both sides had from time to time been united by supreme rulers. Thus we found in the eighth century, the country was ruled by King Singhonwat of Chiengsen, in the eleventh century by King Promaraj, in the 12th century by Khun Chuang of Farnag, and in the thirteenth century both Laos and Thailand were ruled by King Rama Kamhaeng of Sukhotai. They had once a common writing. One of the kings of the Sukhotai dynasty called Rama Kamhaeng had in 1283 invented the Thai alphabets and introduced the Thai system of writing. This writing and script were adopted both by the Lao and the Thai down to the present day since they were under the same royal

at that time. The Sukhotai kingdom collapsed after a rule of 121 years between 1256 and 1377. As the Sukhotai dynasty was gradually declining two kingdoms sprang up and became separated: the Kingdom of Ayudhya and the Kingdom of Luang Prabang. On the Lao side Fagnum became King and expanded his territory at the expense of Sukhotai. When however Ayudhya could rise up again Kiug Taksin of Dhonburi and then King Yodfah of Bangkok also annexed Laos. Laos became part of Thailand until French expanded to the East. The invention of the Thai script by King Rama Kam-aeng of Sukhotai accounted for the reason why a Thai can read Lao and a Lao can read Thai. There is so little difference between them; and since the Lao had not published any books due to French colonial policy the Lao have no other way out after gaining independence but just to buy Thai books and read Thai books. This constitutes no language barrier for the Lao. Particularly the Buddhist priests have to use and study Thai books, since the French did not encourage local language nor buddhism and the Lao priests have to use only texts from Thailand even down to this day.

Because of this political contention and because it is so difficult to prove who are Lao and who are Thai, history on both sides claimed:

In Lao history that Lao territory extended into Thailand comprising the whole of the North Eastern

portion of Thailand right down to Saraburi and even Ratburi, leaving only Bangkok in the middle. This is true however whenever Laos was strong and Thai was weak or had other preoccupations.

In Thai history historians would say that Lao territory as far north as Sibsong Panna and Sibsong Chutai (regions to the North of Phongsaly right into the Chinese province of Yunnan and the Vietnam Tongking area) belonged to Thailand. This is however also correct ethnically, culturally and politically from time to time.

Because of this contention and also continual quarrels a third party came in and then adopted the method of divide and rule – colonial Powers of the West. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, France was beaten in Europe by the rising power of Prussia, the French began to make amends for parliamentary justifications in South-East Asia. They seized Annam and Cambodia with further intentions of seizing Laos and Thailand when they came into clash with British interests and they had to be satisfied with only Laos, at the time part of Thailand for over a century. The pretext put forth was to liberate Laos from foreign domination and give it back to its rightful owner: Vietnam. They said that Laos was taken away from Vietnam by Thailand so it must be returned to Vietnam. They took it and kept returning only the portion in Tongking up to Dien-Bien

-Phu to Vietnam. This portion had nothing to do with Vietnam however since the people are Thai (that branch called Thai Dam, Thai Deng and Thai Khao). The disintegration further took place when the French also gave the southern portion, for administrative reasons, of Laos around Stung Treng, to the South of Champasak, to Cambodia. The word Stung Treng is Cambodian but the real name is Chieng Taeng, or Xieng Teng, and the people there still speak Lao.

Ever since the French seized Laos, they changed their mind and put forward to the Lao, in order to please the Lao that they were liberating the Lao from Thai domination and aggression. Subsequent history was written to support this thesis and the Lao were made to learn this history from the French version (see Boulanger and the translation into Lao now used in schools). Therefore the Lao were taught that they were not Thai, had nothing to do with the Thai and that the Thai were their open enemy. Political contentions in the past have now been singled out to show that the Thai were aggressors, e. g. the Thai burnt down Vientiane and took away the Emerald Buddha to Bangkok. French historians however were silent about where the Emerald Buddha came from, and they would not try to show that it was taken away from Chiangmai in North Thailand by King Setthatirat; they would not say however why the fights occurred and that the houses were mostly made of

bamboo, except for temples and palaces. The brick houses however like Wat Sriaket, That Luang, and other wats, built earlier on, 500 years ago were still left standing to the present day. This burning of Vientiane happened in 1821 and the Laos were still forced to learn it even now and questions made in examinations on this point again and again otherwise they could not enter the Lycée, which was under French control. In the end the Lao really believed that they were not Thai and that the Thai were public enemy No One for Laos, in spite of the fact that the Thai had only the other day fought with them to gain independence from the French. When entering a Lycée the French continued with this French political history of Laos and even composed French poetry so that through French the Lao could still further learn to hate the Thais even more (See "La Porte d'Ivoire", written by Mr. Gilbert or Somchay).

History however showed something quite different as time passes and as the political archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs are open to researchers. A study made for Doctorat thesis in Paris by a Mrs. Duke showed many of these documents in the light that the French at the time wanted to seize the whole of Thailand including Laos, not just to put up Laos against Thailand, and French politicians came to grips with British interests in Bangkok, when Lord Salisbury came to the understanding with the French that they

may have only Laos and they must leave Thailand as a buffer state. If the French had been able to gratify their original purpose history may have been something quite different. There would be no Lao nor Thai, but just one country comprising both.

WHERE DID THE THAIS AND THE LAOS COME FROM ?

We now go back further into history. To learn the truth of history of these two people one must not stick to history written by one side alone as shown above. Unfortunately Lao history as mimeographed by Usis was just a translation of the Lao version which was taken mostly from the French version with further additions taken from Thai, by substituting every word Thai. Kingdom of South China or Yunnan becomes the Lao Kingdom of Yunnan, and so on. This is because original history is common to both. The country was at that time not yet divided into Thai and Lao as at present. The Thai Dams, the Shans, the Assamese however also claimed to the same origin when reading their side of history. Since the beginning of the twentieth century researches on history of this region had been made more extensively by the British, the French, the Thai, and the Germans. They found history of the earlier period of this common race in Chinese chronicles, and many of these have now been translated into Thai, English and French.

The word Thai or Lao were not frequently used in those days. Chinese chronicles referred to them as People of the South (Nan Chao), the Payi or the Huans. The latter two terms mean only foreigners and barbarians. The Chinese never credit other people as being civilized as themselves. At different periods they were sometimes called Lao and sometimes Thai and sometimes Ailao, another term for Lao. However the terms were hardly ever used. Thai nationalism nor Lao nationalism did not then exist. Different researchers, e. g. Dr. Embree of USA, Dr Dodge of USA, Mr Seidenfaden of Denmark, Miss Milne (author of the book: Home of the Shans), Terrien de la Couperie, and even French researchers referred to this original people as the Thai. The word Thai is more used than the word Lao. Because of this confusion the French and the British tend to call the Thai of present Thailand the Siamese out of political reasons.

It is therefore essential that in order to have a true picture of the history of this race one must study from the various sides concerned, that is from Lao and Thai books, French books, books written by the Americans and also by the Chinese. There are such sources like these:

History of Yunnan translated into French by Camille SAINSON and into Thai in the collection of Chinese history and romances ordered to be done into Thai by King Rama II (almost 100 volumes), and also

the compilation of history in the famous 74 volume edition of the National Library of Bangkok.

Thai history in the third century was again translated into French, English and Thai, by France-Asie, Société des Etudes Indochinoises, by Brewitt-Taylor (who translated the Romance of the Three Kingdoms), and into Thai, the book which is known locally as Samkok.

This part of history showed already the Thai Kingdom of Nanchao (modern Yunnan) in one of a long series of wars which lasted right down to the thirteenth century, with the Chinese. The Thai tried to resist Chinese expansion towards the South until they were quite overwhelmed by the Chinese and when they finally lost the fight against Kublai Khan, the Chinese Emperor, in 1253. The Thai emigrated southwards towards Tongking, Laos, Northern Thailand, and the Shan States, in big numbers. The Thais were finally disintegrated into smaller kingdoms, each under its own ruler. And then there were times when one ruler now and then united them into one and then after the powerful king had passed away they would fall apart again. This happened many times in the course of history. But while still in Yunnan the Thai were united and union made them strong. They fought against the Chinese and became a rival power to the Chinese. They were however beaten by the Chinese from time to time but they always

regained their independence down to their final fall in 1253. At times their power was so great and they were recognized by the Chinese as their equal that one emperor of China gave his daughter in marriage to the king of Nanchao.

One of the most famous kings of Nanchao was called by the Chinese Pilawko and by the Lao Khun Borom or Boulom. He reigned from 729 to 749. The story of Khun Borom was legendary and the French did not attempt to delegendize him so that they could say that before Khun Borom there was no Lao history and therefore no common stock with the Thai.

Khun Borom was the father of Khun Lo (Chinese Kolofeng, who ruled from 479-799). He built Luang Prabang and founded a dynasty which ruled Luang Prabang right down to the present day. This fact only proved that the Lao are more Thai than the Thai themselves, and they (the Lao) should be considered the bigger brother of the Thai race, since they have kept their original characteristics down to this day due to their unchanged and unreplaced royalty. The Thai who broke away in the South with the capital at Ayudhya however had not been able to maintain this unchanged kingship. The town of Ayudhya was sacked by the Burmese in 1767 and the whole royal house was exterminated to the last man. The Thailand of Bangkok could not find anybody of royal lineage after wresting them-

selves free from the Burmese and had to place a general and a conqueror on the throne of Bangkok. On the Thai side then, the descendants of Khun Borom died out after the Burmese occupation of 1767.

Coming back to Khun Borom. He acceded to the throne of Nanchao in 729 at the age of 31 and died in 749 at the age of 51. He left seven sons whom he sent out to rule the several parts of his empire: we know that Khun Lo went to Lan Xang or Luang Prabang and became the head of that dynasty which ruled right down to the present day; other brothers went to Yunnan, Annam, Lanna, Ayudhya, Khammuon now called Thakhek and Xieng Khouang. The brother who went to Xieng Khouang was Prince Chet Chuang. The dynasty of Chet Chuang still ruled right down to the present day, even though Xieng Khouang is now incorporated into the Lao Kingdom, yet his descendant still sits there in Xieng Khouang as Chao Khoueng or Chief of that Province right now.

The empire of Khun Borom was so vast and as the father lived the empire was held together. Both Khun Borom and Khun Lo were great kings of Nanchao. Their successors were not so competent and when a series of weak kings ruled after them, the empire broke up and each branch of the dynasty went its own way with its own king ruling over his own dominion, which was the portion taken out of the same empire.

Khun Borom did live in flesh and blood and did not exist only as a legendary figure as narrated by Louis Finot in the "Présence du Royaume Lao". This Khun Borom was a formidable king of Nanchao. He united the Kingdom of Nanchao which at his accession was divided into six principalities. His country was invaded time and again by the Chinese, but he always defeated them and followed up his victories right into the heart of their territory. It was said of Kolofeng who succeeded him and who followed up the victories that at the different campaigns Kolofeng killed no less than two million Chinese. The capital of Khun Borom was at the present site of Talifu, then called Nong-seh. He built another royal city at Na Noi Oi Nu, so that he would be far away from the Chinese. This city now became Muong Theng, called Dien-Bien-Phu by the Vietminhs.

The legends sprang from the fact that people liked to glorify Khun Borom's deeds and Khun Borom's person by elevating him to the race of gods. His actions therefore could only be willed by gods and were very miraculous.

The empire of Nanchao was very big. In due course the people of Nanchao under a series of very able king warriors overran Tongking, the whole of upper Burma, Laos and North Thailand. There were great possibilities for settlement of new areas conquered by their ancestors and that is why we found numerous Thai

streaming down South and South-East along river valleys of Mekhong, the Irrawadi and the Salween as well as the Red River and Black River in Tongking. These were their conquered territory. Local chieftains also sprang up. In time they became rulers when the king of a united country was too weak to hold sway over them. Thus we found that at the present day the Thai of North Burma were ruled by 48 princes or Saw Bwas. (Saw Bwa is a Burmese term. In Shan it is Chao Fah, or Prince of Heaven, the title of a king).

After Kublai Khan conquered Yunnan in 1253 there was no power to hold them together any more, although in Yunnan the subjugated king still ruled on as vassals of the Chinese Emperor right down towards the end of the eighteenth century when the last ruler was deposed and a Chinese was sent as governor instead.

It was owing to this fact today we still find people in Yunnan in the region now called Sibsong Panna or the country of the Twelve Thousand Rice-Fields still speaking a Lao dialect which could be understood by a Lao or a Thai. According to old administrative divisions, one thousand ricefields were portioned out to a prince to rule. Today eleven thousand of these are in Red China or in Yunnan Province. only one thousand is to be found on the Lao side in the

Province of Phongsaly; Ou Neua; Ou Tay and Boun Neua. They are called Thai Lius.

Another stream is towards Tongking, now in Vietminh territory, bordering on Samneua Province. This is a nucleus of twelve principalities around Dien Bien Phu, the Muong Theng built by Khun Borom. These twelve principalities are to be found partly in South China and partly in the delta and river valleys of the Song Koi and Song Bo, Vietnamese for Red River and Black River, hence the name of Black Thai or Thai Dam, and Red Thai or Thai Deng.

The Thai Dam (as well as Thai Deng and Thai Khao) speak a dialect of Thai or Lao easily understood by the latter. In time the Thai of Tongking mapped out their own history and fate and on many occasions they attacked both Vientiane and Luang Prabang, not knowing after the course of centuries that the Laos are their brothers, just like the Lao and the Thai of Thailand do not recognize each other any more.

The Thai wandered as far as Assam, but this is of a much later date. In the thirteenth century a Shan king by name of Khun Sua Khan Fah, which means "The Tiger scraping his clothes," passed through the high hills of Patkoi in West Burma into the Brahma-putra Valley and overran that valley from Sibnagor down to Gauhati. Another line of Thai rulers ruled there until at last the country was conquered by the British and incorporated into India, now

the Province of Assam. This account was given by Gates in his HISTORY OF ASSAM. A Thai professor of linguistics was recently sent by Asia Foundation to this area. She revelled in finding the people using Thai words which she could easily understand.

From the Country of the Twelve Principalities of Sibsong Chao Thai the Thai People wandered further East into Canton Province and became a branch called Thai Dioi (or Thai Yoi). From there they wandered into the Island of Hainan. They are still to be found in South Hainan now.

The extent of the Thai race is very big, covering the provinces of Yunnan, Szechuan, Kwang Teou and Hainan in China; Tongking in Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Assam in India, Thailand right down the Malay Peninsula into Malaya.

The Thais had many enemy in the past in order to exert their independence. First and foremost were the Chinese who drove them out of their homeland in China and finally out of Yunnan, secondly the Burmese, thirdly the Khmers, fourthly the British and the French, and fifthly the Vietnamese. After they left China they became very much weakened by internal disintegration and have lost their independence to the various parties and even to the more powerful among themselves and as luck would have it they have again succeeded in regaining their independence from time to time.

History of the Thai people is therefore not to be studied from one side or one country alone. In order to have a complete picture and understanding of this big race one must piece together history from all the sides concerned.

History of the Thai people may thus be divided into different periods as follows:

1. Period when they were still to be found in China up to the time when they were driven out of China by Chinese conquests.

2. Period of settlements to the South of China and founding of new kingdoms.

3. The annexation of the Nanchao Kingdom in China which held these brother kingdoms together, broke them up into separate kingdoms, and led to periodical internal wars among them to gain supremacy control over the once united race.

4. One branch settled down in Tongking and pursued its own course of destiny. Very little was heard of this branch.

5. One branch established the kingdoms of Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Vientiane and then also Champasak. These are now united as Laos.

6. One branch founded the kingdom of Chiengsen, which was merged into Lanna, with the capital first at Chiengrai, then at Chiengmai. This branch was again split up into three branches when the Kingdom of Lanna

was attacked by a Thai Mao King from the Shan States: the Sukhothai branch and the Ayudhya branch as separated from the Lanna or Chiengsen-Chiengmai branch. A Shan attendant at the court of Sukhotai (Magato or Wareru) also broke away and founded another Kingdom of Martaban in Lower Burma.

7. The Shan branch of Upper Burma and then the Ahom or modern Assamese branch.

During the period of emigration towards the South, the Thai people came to settle in the lands of other people. At first as new settlers they had to bear allegiance to the new lands, but as they became more numerous and stronger they shook off their yoke and conquered the lands of their new lords so that they could penetrate more towards the South. The whole of the Indochinese Peninsula belonged to the Khmers and the Mons on one side, and the Burmese on the other side. They came to grips with the latter and after a series of wars they gained supremacy over their new lords and pushed them back, thus acquiring the new lands which are now called Laos and Thailand. The other branch was less fortunate. At first they gained victory over the rising power of the Burmese and were able to control all Burma; but fortune reversed and then first the Mons and then the Burmese gained supremacy over them and at last they were and are now incorporated into the Burmese country. The lot of the branch seeking adventure and control of

the Brahmaputra valley of Assam found the same fate and that branch was finally incorporated into the British Empire of India and had ever since formed part of India.

I shall however not go into greater details with other branches as long as they do not come into direct contact with Laos as this is supposed to be more on the Laos side of history and its relation with the rest of the Thai family. This is evident that the various separate Thai kingdoms also started about the same date, i.e. about the eighth century, when Khun Borom or Piloko of Nanchao divided his empire among his sons.

History from Lao sources did not say much about what happened between Khun Lo, the first King of Luang Prabang, and King Fa Ngum who ascended the throne in 1353, a period of about 600 years. We know however from history recorded by the Thai of neighbouring branches that the country was annexed many times and occupied by Thai from other branches.

CHINESE PERIOD OF THAI HISTORY

It was thought that the first home of the Thai people were in the Altai Mountains. They were not called by this name at the time. They gradually moved southward towards the river basin of Huang-Ho or the Yellow River and then the Yangze Kiang River. This must have taken place 5000 years before the birth of Christ. When the Chinese swept over the Gobi Desert into the Huang-

Ho, they found these foreigners already there and pushed them gradually towards the South. The original Thais were not Chinese as they formed a separate group and according to Chinese history they were called the Southern barbarians.

History of the Thai before they finally came to the province of Yunnan in South China is very hazy and they are supposed to have formed two kingdoms to the North of the Province of Szechuan called Kingdom of Lung and Kingdom of Pa. The Chinese came down to attack them again and the next place they went to was Ngio. Ngio was taken in B.E. 215. The next settlement was Pegnai (now called Puerhfu). In B.E. 290 the Emperor of China called Wuti sent a mission to India to study Buddhism. The mission passed through the territory of King Khun Meng of Pegnai. The latter would not let them pass and so the Chinese sent an army and annexed his territory. In A.D. 9 there was trouble and uprisings in China, and Pegnai under King Khun Wang seized this opportunity to assert his country's independence. When peace came to China again the Chinese sent an army in A.D. 50 and the country of Pegnai was again subjugated. Buddhism came to the Thai country of Pegnai when Emperor Mengti sent a mission to India and brought back Buddhism. And the Thai King Khun Luang Limou who reigned at Ngailao adopted it in the form of the greater vehicle like the Chinese. This started in the year

A.D. 71. Khun Luang Limou died in A.D. 78 and his son Khun Lailao succeeded him. The Chinese considered Ngailao as its dependency and sent a resident to Ngailao. The King of Ngailao would not accept this and so the Chinese sent an army to fight him and he was forced to submit. The Chinese exacted taxes from the country in the form of two shirts and one basket of salt for every male adult.

Already the Thai have come to settle down in big numbers in Yunnan which henceforth was going to be their land until their subjugation in 1253 by Kublai Khan. Yunnan was mentioned in Chinese history as far back as 2205 B.C. The capital of Yunnan is Talifu. Emperor Asoka of India came to Talifu and married a Talifu princess called Ch'ien-meng-kui. He had three sons with her. He did not stay in the country but went back to India leaving his descendants to rule after him in Yunnan. The Eastern part of Yunnan was ruled by another King. In 280-220 B.C. General Chuan-Chao was sent by the Chinese emperor to conquer the South and find the way to India to bring back Buddhism. He arrived on the shores of Yunnan Lake and could not come back because of wars being waged by two neighbouring countries and so he established himself as King and called his country Tien Kuo. In 187-140 B.C. the Emperor of China again sent messengers to the South to seek the way to India. They were insulted by the King of Tien. In

consequence the Chinese sent an army to annex his country. The Western part of Yunnan was ruled by King Jen Kuo; a direct descendant of Emperor Asoka. In B.C. 122-117 there arose a quarrel between King Jen Kuo and King Chang Chieng, the descendant of General Chuan-Chao. The Emperor of China sided with Jen Kuo in this fight and so the latter defeated Chang-Chieng after which Jen Kuo ruled over both parts of Yunnan and founded a kingdom which he now called Pai-Tsu-Kuo. We do not hear any more of this kingdom until 69 A.D. when the country was submitted to the Emperor of China, but all along it was the descendants of Asoka who ruled the country right down to A.D. 902. In A.D. 50 we heard of a fight with its own line of hereditary kings. In A.D. 225 it was found that a direct descendant of Asoka, by name of Lu-Yu-Na, ruled at Pegnai. He was the eighteenth king after Jen Kuo.

HISTORY OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

The Chinese recorded in the History of the Three Kingdoms that the Emperor Wuti sent a famous general known as Khong Beng or Chu-Ko-Liang to subjugate the six Thai Kingdoms of Yunnan, or Nanchao—meaning the country of the South. One of kings of the six kingdoms was Mengkuo, known in Thai history as Benghek, a descendant of Asoka. He along with his brother Benghiu organized a very stubborn fight and would not be submitted

to Chu-Ko-Liang. He was defeated seven times. Each time Chu-Ko-Liang would let him free to organize another army to fight the Chinese general, until after seven wars he acknowledged defeat and finally submitted himself to the authority of the Chinese. The Chinese however left him on the throne as a vassal king. Benghek ruled at Petzu, a territory to the South of Tali. During one of the fights when his camp was surrounded by the Chinese and he did not know what to do, he heard a laugh. It was his wife, Chu-Yong. His wife led the army out and captured two Chinese captains. It was through a trick that the Chinese was at last able to capture Benghek's Queen. The queen was given back in exchange for the two Chinese captains. Already even in olden days Thai women had played a heroic part in times of emergency. It was however hopeless to fight against overwhelming odds of 500,000 Chinese troops. It was only through difficult mountainous country and determination that Benghek had been able to hold out for seven big battles. The details of these famous fights were described in the HISTORY OF THE THREE KINGDOMS, now available through the translation of C.H. Brewitt-Taylor (Charles E. Tuttle).

NANCHAO UNITED UNDER ONE KING

We hear again of Yunnan or Nanchao in the seventh century A.D. The direct descendant of the famous tough king Benghek was Chang-Le-Chin who ruled over one of the six kingdoms. His kingdom was most to the South.

In 649 Chang-Le-Chin abdicated in favour of Sinulo. He was again succeeded by Piloko, the Khun Borom of Lao chronicles. Piloko came to the throne in 729 at 31 years of age. He invited the other six kings with all their children to a feast in his country and murdered them. Thus he annexed all the rest of Nanchao under his rule. Again a woman played a heroic part to resist his annexation. Tsi-Shan, wife of King U-Tsen of Ten-Cwan-Chew, who ruled over one of the other five kingdoms, fortified her capital and resisted the attacks of Piloko. When her capital was taken, rather than giving herself up she took poison and died.

Three successive kings had pursued the conquests and extended the Nanchao territory far and wide. First under Piloko (729-749) he united and pacified Nanchao and organized a very strong government and the country was prosperous. Then his son Kolofeng, Khun Lo in Lao chronicles, (749-779), being infuriated against the Chinese marched against them. The Emperor of China sent immense troops to punish him, but his troops were badly beaten and butchered by the efforts of Kolofeng and his very brave son, Fung-Cia-Ih. It was said that during his reign no less than 2,000,000 Chinese were killed. Kolofeng not only beat back the Chinese and took thirty-two towns and villages, he also overran Upper Burma along the valley of the Irrawady. His son was dead before he died, and so his grandson Imohsun succeeded him in 779 at the age

of 24. Imohsun was again another great warrior and made several conquests. Whereas his grandfather allied himself with the Tibetans to fight against the Chinese, he now broke off relations with the Tibetans and allied himself with the Chinese, by reconciling himself to the Chinese Emperor. He massacred all the Tibetans in his country. The Tibetans marched an army against him. He beat them back and carried war into their territory. King Imohsun died in 809. His successors carried further the conquests made by earlier Nanchao kings. The capital of Burma was taken in 832 and Tongking and Annam taken from the Chinese in 858 and again in 863. The Nanchao Kingdom was very powerful during these days, even the Emperor of China had to have respect for Thai kings and in 884 gave Princess Ngarnng Fah in marriage to the son of King Leng-Shwen, Prince Shwen-Hwa. The Chinese called Leng-Shwen, Fa, apparently only the title Phra.

The capital of Nanchao, Talifu, was built by Piloko in 746. Talifu is on the Yunnan lake, called by the Thai Nongseh not Talifu. Another big city, Yunnanfu, was built by Kolofeng's son, Fung-cia-Ih, in 769. Yunnanfu is now Kunming. A long line of kings ruled Nanchao right down to 1252 when King Hsin-Ci came to the throne. In China Kublai Khan overthrew the Sung dynasty and he sent his brother Hu-pi-li and two generals Wu and Ho to subdue Nanchao. Prince Hu-Pi-Li arrived at Talifu. King Hsin-Ci of Nanchao fled to Yunnanfu leaving the

capital defended by his general Kao-Fai-Chang. The latter with a small force defended the city with great bravery. He and all his men were butchered under the great tower. Numerous Thai and Chinese died on that day, Prince Hu-Pi-Li had great respect for General Kao-Fai-Chang. He ordered the widow and his two sons to be spared and that they should be properly brought up so that they could be given good positions in government posts. Prince Hu-Pi-Li then sent generals Hu and Ho to capture Yunnanfu. King Hsin-Ci was captured and deposed, but given hereditary governorship with no power to rule. Thus ended the powerful kingdom of Nanchao in 1253 as an independant country. Henceforth it exists only as a province of China and the rulers of Nanchao became only hereditary governors.

THE SPLITTING UP OF THE COUNTRY

The disintegration of Nanchao started long before the Chinese conquests of Kublai Khan. The extent of Thai territory as we see under Piloko and Kolofeng was very great. There were no easy communications during those days and the way to reach each point of the country was on foot by very slow marches. In order to govern the country effectively it is customary for the king to send out his sons with a strong garrison and a settlement of men and women to rule at different points of the country. It is also customary to build up towns at strategic points.

Thus we learnt from Lao chronicles that King Piloko built the town of Muang Theng which the Vietnamese changed it to Dien Bien Phu. This they had to do by first conquering the local tribes. King Piloko sent his son to take Luang Prabang from the Khas and founded Luang Prabang. He sent another son to Chiengsen and took the country from the Lawas and Khoms, the ancestors of the Khmers or modern Cambodians. This son of Piloko, Thao Kamphong or Saiphong according to Lao chronicles, but called Singhonawat according to Lanna chronicles, founded the city of Chiengsen in 773. Luang Prabang, then called Swa, was therefore founded in the eighth century. And if Khun Lo was the same as Kolofeng, then it was very likely that after the death of his father he was called away to succeed his father at Talifu as King of Nanchao. The Lao chronicles did not mention anything for a period of almost 600 years until the reign of Fangum. Piloko had seven sons according to Lao chronicles, but according to Chinese chronicles he had many more sons and daughters, thirty each. He sent out his sons to rule different parts of the country. Thus Prince Chet Chuang was sent to rule over Xieng Khouang. Prince Chusong was sent to rule over the territory of Sibsong Chutai or Tongking. Prince Krom was sent to rule at Kammuon. Prince In was sent to rule over Ayudhya. On the Burmese side it was not until after the conquests of Kolofeng that Muong Pong (now Mogaung) and Hsenwi were built and sprang

up as other Thai principalities under the separate name of Shans. The Shans in due course became master of Burma at the zenith of their power when in 1299 three Shan chiefs seized Pagan, the then capital of Burma, seized the king of Pagan and sacked the whole town thus ending the Pagan rule of Burma.

Before the fall of Nanchao it was seen that Thai princes had already occupied Burma, Tongking, Northern Thailand. The Lao branch and the Chiengsen branch began to fight back the Khas and the Khmers who occupied the whole of the Indochinese peninsular before the arrival of the Thai. In this peninsular we have two very important princes (not to count the small Prince of Xieng Khouang), the Prince of Luang Prabang and the Prince of Chiengsen, the one was the ancestor of modern Laos, the other of modern Thailand. They were both sons of King Piloko of Nanchao. Among the two important princes we have now more complete record of Prince Singhonawat or the Prince of Chiengsen. And we shall deal with him before going on to the Prince of Luang Prabang. It was the Prince of Chiengsen and his descendants who conquered a new land from the Mons and the Khmers and pushed the Khmers back from the most northern tip of the peninsular right down to the South East corner, which is modern Cambodia. Vientiane, in fact, during those days was a Khmer outpost called Saifong. Chiengsen was also face to face with a Khmer outpost

at Muong Farng, then called Umongasela. The territory of the Mons also reached his territory in the South at Lamphoon, then called Haripunchai. It was seen therefore that most of Laos and Thailand were at the start of Thai settlement and emigration during the eighth century only territories of the savage Lawas and Khas in the Khmer and Mon empires. The Mons occupied the western part of Thailand and most of South Burma at the time. They were known also as Peguans and their country Thavarawaddi. The Khmers owned most of Laos up to Luang Prabang and the Eastern side of Thailand. It was against these overlords that the new arrivers, the Thai, had to fight their way.

THE CHIENGENS BRANCH OF NANCHAO KINGDOM.

Prince Singhonawat was given 100,000 men and women to go with him to find a suitable location for the most southern outpost of the Kingdom. He arrived at a place at the river now called Mehsei, a tributary of the Mekhong at the most northern limit of Thailand. The country around was inhabited by the wild Lawa people belonging to the Khmer Empire. The site chosen was among three hills to the South of Chiengtung. Chiengtung at the time was a part of the Khmer empire. There was a small village belonging to a Lawa couple called Grandfather and Grandmother Laochok. He bought

the land off Grandfather Laochok and began fortifications and the building of the new town. According to a legend a naga (serpent) helped him to dig the moat around the town, hence he called the town Nagapan-Singhonawat, old name for Chiengsen. After building the city he began the submission of the local people around and three years afterwards he marched against the Khmers at Umongasela and took the town. This is now identified as Farnng in Northern Thailand. The extent of his country was far and wide. In the north his country touched Tongking, and the boundary of Talifu; in the West the Salween and in the South Lavo or Lopburi. Does that mean that he also ruled Luang Prabang? History of Laos was silent about the period after Khun Lo has gone over to take the throne of Talifu. It gave only a list of 22 kings before the coming of Fagnum in 1353.

Prince Singhonawat had a long reign of 102 years and at his death his country was already firmly established. He ascended the throne of Chiengsen at the age of 18 and died at the age of 120. His country is sometimes referred to as Yonok and his people as Thai Yuon. The word Youn is a corrupted form of Yonok. Today we find Thai Youns along both banks of the Mekhong River, especially from Chiengsen down to Ban Houie Sai. The Yuons have always been Buddhists from the start. During the reign of the fourth king, King Mangrainarat, there arrived a group of Buddhist priests

led by the Lord Abbot Mahavajirapotithera and presented the king with the relics of Buddha. The king ordered a pagoda to be built at Doi Tung to the North of the town and had the relics put inside. Again during the reign of King Kerng, or the ninth reign, priests from Bihar came in the city and gave the king more relics of the Buddha. The king had the relics distributed to his father Phya Som who reigned at Chai Narai Town to the North of Chiengrai and he had some more put at the pagoda of Doi Tung. Buddhism had therefore come into the country during its earlier part from India.

The 42nd king of Chiengsen was Pankarat. By this time Chiengsen had become weak and the Khmers of Umongasela caused more and more trouble. At last they attacked and took the town of Chiengsen in 1080 deposing the king, and exiling him to live as a headman in a small village nearby called Viengseetuang. A fine was imposed upon him. Each year he must pay a tribute in gold as big as four bael fruits to the Khmers. During this exile his queen bore two sons. The first one in 1081 called Prince Tukitarat the second in 1082 called Promarat. Prince Pormarat was of a warlike disposition from the very start. His pastime was fighting and swordsmanship. Seeing that his father sought out the best teachers for him. At the age of sixteen Prince Promarat organized the villagers into a fighting unit and had a secret meeting place at Vieng Pangkam on the

River Sai. He then refused tributes to the Khmers three years in succession. The Khmers raised an army to arrest him at Viengseetuang. He went out to fight them at Tung Sansai village and beat them back to Chiengsen. He then surrounded the town and took the town. He pursued up his victory in places around killing Khmers wherever he came across them and beat them back right down to the South to a place now called Kampaengpet. Seeing that they no longer opposed him he came back. He then invited his father to mount the throne of Chiengsen once more. The country of Chiengsen was under the Khmers nineteen years when it once more became free. The town after this grand victory was renamed Yonok Chaiyaburi - **Chaiya** meaning victory and **huri** meaning town.

At the time there were four important towns in the dominion of Chiengsen. There was first of all the capital Chiengsen or Yonok Chaiyaburi, then Vieng Chainarai in Laos (Swa) given to Phya Ruankaeo to govern. Promarat had Chaiprakarn (Umongasela or now Farnag) rebuilt and strongly fortified to where his father sent him to rule, then there was also the Fort of Vieng Parnkam where he first organized his troops.

The king asked the daughter of Phya Ruankaeo, his cousin, in marriage with Prince Promarat and he had a son called Prince Chaisiri. King Pankarat ruled

at Chiengsen 54 years. He died at the age of 76. His first son Prince Tukitarat ruled after him at Chiengsen. The Principality of Chaiprakarn was given to Promarat. Prince Promarat died at the age of 77 and his son Prince Chaisiri succeeded him to the principality of Chaiprakarn. Under Prince Chaisiri there was an invasion from a Thai prince of the Shan branch in Burma, Khan Fah, from the West. He withstood the enemy for seven months. In the end seeing that the town could not withstand any longer, he ordered the town to be burnt down and evacuated the inhabitants towards the South-East at a place called Bangyang. They broke up into two groups at this time: one going to Sukhotai and later founded the Sukhotai Empire, the other group under Prince Chaisiri himself went down to Kampaengpet and settled down in Kampaengpet. He stayed here not very long when he moved still further South to Nakorn Pathom. A prince of this house became the son-in-law of the Prince of Uthong, and after the death of King Uthong he became king instead. Finding that Uthong or Suparuburi was faced with an epidemic the son-in-law moved the town to a new site and founded a new capital at Ayudhya in 1350. Ayudhya became the capital of this new country until 1767 when it was burnt down by the Burmese and a new capital was built first opposite Bangkok and then finally moved across the river to Bangkok. Hence after the Shan invasion in the

thirteenth century the Chiengsen kingdom gave rise to first Sukhotai and then Ayudhya from the Promarat branch of the ancient Thai kingdom of Nanchao.

King Khun Sua Khan Fah withdrew after seeing Chaiprakarn burnt down and left the rest of Chiengsen intact.

KINGDOM OF LANNATHAI

The Kingdom of Chiengsen gradually underwent a change. It moved its capital to Chiengrai and then to Chiengmai. Then the country became known as Lannathai which flourished side by side with the southern country of Ayudhya until it was finally annexed by Ayudhya and Bangkok.

Prince Mahawan succeeded King Tukitarat, and after Mahawan followed Prince Mahachai, Mahawan's son. During the reign of King Mahachai a great earthquake occurred in town. Prince Mahachai and many people died and the town itself became a great lake. There was a period of interregnum and the people elected a town chief to look after themselves. After the first chief died, other chiefs were selected to succeed one after the other. The Chiengsen branch of Promarat's ancestors was extirpated by the earthquake.

There was a legend about the destruction of the town Chiengsen that a villager went to the river Mek-

hong and got a giant white eel and brought it to the King. The king then had it distributed to everybody in town. There was an old woman living at the outskirts of the town. In the evening a stranger came to her house and asked her what the people were doing that she scented a good smell everywhere. The old woman said the people got a big giant eel and were preparing food with it. On being asked whether she also got a share, she said nobody would give it to her as she was already too old and therefore unimportant. The stranger said that was fine. She should not talk about meeting him to anybody and whatever happened she must never come out of the house that night. There was thunder and lightning and big storms, and the earth shook. The whole town tumbled down and became a great lake. The old woman however was not touched. Her house was not touched. Her house was left standing at the border of that great lake.

After the destruction of the town there was a man coming down from the North, from Doi Tung. His name was Lao Chakra Tevarat and the people invited him to become king. He built the new town of Chiengsen near the old site but called it Hiran Ngernyang. After his death his third son Lao Kao Keomamuong succeeded him. Nine more kings came after him. Lao Ngern came to the throne. He had two sons Khun Chin and Khun Chomtarn. So that the younger brother will also be

provided the king sent out Khun Chomtarn to build a new town at River Ing called Payao (at the time called Pugarmyao). Both brothers therefore had a portion of the territory to rule. The second brother Khun Chomtarn had two sons: the first one Khun Chuang and the second one Khun Chornng.

Khun Chuang succeeded to the throne of his father at Payao when the Annamites attacked Chiengsen. His uncle Khun Chin sent for help. Khun Chuang marched against the Annamites and beat them off. His uncle gave his daughter Nang Ua Kamkornmuong in marriage to Khun Chuang. But Khun Chuang had already two wives, the daughters of the Prince of Prae and the Prince of Narn. After the Annamites were driven off Khun Chuang was filled with the spirit of adventure, he did not go back home. He put his son on the throne of Payao: Lao Ngern Ruang. He himself marched on with his army and conquered Lanxang or the Kingdom of Luang Prabang. He then passed on to Tongking. Everywhere the enemy fell and could not stand against him. He then married the Annamese princess: Nang Ukeo and had three sons with her. According to Lao history he went to Xieng Khouang and conquered this town which was then under the Annamese. In celebrating his victory he had jars of liquor brought to his soldiers. These jars are now to be seen on the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang today. The first son, Ai Pharuang, was

given Annam to rule, the second second son, Yeekamhao, was given Lanxang, and the third son, Samchumsaeng, was given Muong Narn in North Thailand. He himself was crowned Emperor of Annam and stayed there. But his thirst for war could not be stopped. He went in search of more conquests and at the age of 77 on elephant's back fighting his way forward never to retreat even against overwhelming odds he came face to face with the army of Keomaentatorb Khobfatayuen and was cut down from his seat on the elephant. His men brought back his body to Chiengsen. Thus ended one of the most miraculous warriors of Thai history, we do not know what is this country of Keomaentatorb. Some think that it was Cambodia. The word only means the Country of black ghosts at the edge of the sky: that is very far away.

Khun Chuang of Payao became the head of two very distinguished families which ruled over the Kingdom of Payao and the Kingdom of Chiengsen which later became known as Lannathai. His son Lao Ngern Ruang succeeded his uncle Khun Chin to the throne of Chiengsen, whereas his other son succeeded to his throne of Payao when he went away to conquer Laos and Annam.

THE CHIENGENS BRANCH OF KHUN CHUANG'S SUCCESSORS.

Four kings came after Lao Ngern Ruang on the throne of Chiengsen when Lao Muong became king. He

had a son Lao Meng who was married to the Princess of Chiengrung in Sibsong Panna: Princess Nang Ua Ming Chommuong. Out of this marriage was born Prince Mengrai, the founder of the Kingdom of Lannathai with its capital first at Chiengrai, then Chiengmai. Prince Mengrai built several important cities during his time. First Chiengtung (Kengtung in Burma) in 1262, Chiengrai in 1268 and Chiengmai in 1296. He also added Lampoon to his realm by beating the Mons off and then 1281 also Lampang. King Mengrai ruled from 1259 to 1317. During this time the country which covered the areas of modern Thailand was split up between three kingdoms: Kingdom of Payao under his cousin Ngam Muong, descendant of Chom Pha Ruang. Both Mengrai and Ngam Muong descended from the great Khun Chuang, conqueror of Laos and Annam. The other kingdom is Sukhotai, whose king Rama Kamhaeng belonged to the royal family of Prince Chaisiri of Chaiprakarn.

All the three kings swore everlasting friendship with each other and would never fight each other. They were all pupils of the same teacher at Lavo called Suktanta. This is why Payao, the smallest of all the kingdoms, was left untouched and it was not incorporated into the Lannathai Kingdom of Mengrai until 10 years after the latter's death.

STORY OF KING MENGRAI THE GREAT OF LANNATHAI

Starting only at the extreme north of Thailand the Kingdom of Chiengsen pushed southward through Mon territory. King Mengrai of Lannathai and then his friend King Ruang Rama Kamhaeng cleared the whole territory of modern Thailand of both the Mons and the Khmers from their lands.

The country of Mengrai was very rich and prosperous. Art and crafts flourished. It was the period when he built a lot of temples and towns. He also brought craftsmen from Burma so that his people could be taught goldsmithy, blacksmithy, ironsmithy, foundry, etc.... Art thrived. Gold, bronze and stone Buddha images were cast and made during his time. Buddhism also thrived. The word Lannathai means the land of one million rice fields of the Thai. In fact the administration of his country is organized according to the number of ricefields. Each person must work to produce five Muen in weight of rice, this is about 60 kilos and therefore allowed to have so many ricefields to produce as much. Higher dignitaries own more ricefields since they can afford to grow more by the number of people under their supervision, and a prince can have one thousand ricefields. One thousand ricefields is therefore a principality according to this conception of administration. Land

does not count much if there are no people in it. The boundaries therefore are not definitely fixed according to modern preciseness. The lords conquered the land and they would take all the people away to their own cities leaving the land waste. They wanted more people to work and more people to become soldiers. They could therefore leave the land alone as long as they got the people to come with them either to increase the size of their own cities or to settle new lands. Thus each time King Mengrai built a town he already had people to live in them. First the people marched with him to build the towns at any place he wished. Once built he left the people to colonize the town. The towns were therefore not built in vain. And he would not have to stay alone in the new town. This was the same idea when kings had several children and they wanted to provide their children with land to rule, so they just sent the sons with a number of men and women forth to a new place to colonize and then rule over it. Thus King Khun Borom gave Prince Singhonawat 100,000 men and women to march forth and build the new town of Chiengsen. This was the way how kings divided the empire among the sons. This was a good system in many ways because the sons need not dispute for the father's throne, once each was provided with land. The sons also helped to expand the territory in all directions and protect the father's or the king's territory as advanced guards against the enemy on the outposts. Thus

king Mengrai built Chiengrai as the most southern point against the Mon territory of Phya Yeeba. He then built Muong Farnng as an advanced post from where he could find an appropriate moment to attack Yeeba's capital of Haripun-chai (Lampoon). After Farnng he built a town more to the South, first at Kumkarm then Chiengmai. Chiengmai became the front line for his descendants to poise on the town of Chalieng or Sawankaloke. But the site chosen is so good that it becomes the cultural centre of the North and very much envied by all countries around. South of Chiengmai are Lampoon and Lamparng. These two cities at the time were Mons. The territory of the Thai ended only as far as Chiengmai, but Mengrai would not stop there. He pushed even more southwards. At the same time his friend Rama Kamhaeng who fled away from old Farnng settled down in a village outside Sukhothai. The land around belonged to the Khmers. The Khmers sent an army to get rid of Rama but the latter beat them off and then took their stronghold of Sukhotai making it into his capital. Rama Kamhaeng soon rid the whole land of the Khmers until the Khmers had to abandon Angkor Wat & Angkor Thom to build a new capital more to the South, in order to be out of reach of the Thai.

King Mengrai started his reign by finding that the land of his ancestors had too many petty rulers in it. He sent messengers around first to all the city-states of the North asking them to submit to him and acknowledge him

as supreme ruler. These were Muong Mob, Muong Rai, Muong Chiengkam and Muong Chiengcharng. Some of them complied. Those who refused Mengrai attacked them and replaced the governors by his own officers. The North was thus put under his sway. He then moved southwards.

There was a story told that he arrived at a place in a certain forest, his elephant had gone lost. He followed the elephant until he came to the River Kok. There he found the place which pleased him so much that he ordered a town to be built and called it Chiengrai after his name. Some said that because he found a footprint of his elephant there, that was why people called it after the word "Charng-roi" (footprint of an elephant) which later became Chiengrai. After that he went out hunting and met two Lawa men called Mangkum and Mangkian. There the two men brought him presents. He was very pleased with them and asked them to join his service so that they could help him to take a Lawa country to the North which at the time was still independent. The two men said they would go and see whether their countrymen would not join him voluntarily before using force. Mangkum and Mangkian went to the town of Khoen and Lawa and told them that they were expelled by Mengrai. The people believed them since they were of the same nationality. During their stay they could gain a lot of friends to their cause. After some time they sent message to Mengrai to come and take the town. He then asked a proper town to be built in its place in 1262 and called it Chiengtung (Kengtung in Burmese).

In that neighbourhood the king went out hunting wild cocks and he came across a house whose owner was a Lawa hillman called Aifah. The owner invited him in. In conversation with Aifah he found the latter to be full of wits. He liked Aifah and asked him and his family to come to Chiengrai and served under him. Aifah was a clever man and in time he rose to a position of trust collecting taxes and deciding cases for the king. One day the king drew Aifah into his confidence and asked for the latter's opinion how he could take Lampoon, the capital of the Mons. He had heard that Lampoon was a big town and the people were prosperous. Its king was also powerful. Aifah advised the king to find a reason of punishing him, seizing all his property so that he could fly to Lampoon and spy on them until such time he considered it suitable for Mengrai to go and take the town. The king followed his advice. Aifah fled to Lampoon and asked Phya Yeeba, the Mon King of Lampoon for protection. He could easily gain the trust of Phya Yeeba because he was a Lawa and not a Thai. Phya Yeeba confirmed him in the same position he used to have when he was with Mengrai. He did it with great conscientiousness and justice so that all the people liked him, and the king trusted him. Then he changed his tactics. He told Phya Yeeba how was it that his country being more powerful and much bigger could get very little tax not enough to undertake various useful enterprises. The people

were rich they ought to pay more. Yeeba agreed with him and Aifah asked the king to assemble the people together to make a proclamation of new taxes. After that Aifah could go in the name of the king to collect heavier taxes without mercy from everybody. And when they complained he said he knew nothing, it was the king's order. The people started to hate the king and Aifah took precautions that nobody could come near the king with complaints. He said to Yeeba you were a great king you must not do everything yourself. It was not meet and proper to come into direct contact with the people. You must have servants to do everything for you. The king agreed and henceforth nobody could approach the king without being stopped by one of Aifah's men. The king knew nothing and Aifah did everything to incite the sentiments of the people against the king. Then he said: "O, Great King, the King of Chiengrai was only a small king and he had a big palace. Why you a big and powerful king of a prosperous and big country should have only just a small palace unworthy of you and your dignity? The king agreed and Aifah built a big palace for him getting many people to toil for it, cutting wood from the forest, dragging it across ricefields and destroying the people's crops. Then he found another means of inciting the people even more against the king. He told the king that he found vast lands unirrigated and the crops failed. A big irrigation canal should be cut to open up this land for more crops. The king again agreed as he would agree

to everything Aifah suggested. He had great confidence in the wisdom of Aifah. The latter then waited until the height of summer when the land was as hard as stone, and ordered the people in the name of the king to come and dig a canal from the River Ping to the point where River Taeng joined it. From that spot the people had to cut right across to River Kuang quite far away. People groaned under the task and many ran away. Aifah would say he knew nothing. He was also forced to obey the king's order himself. People hated the king more and more. However although Aifah did this in order to incite the people against the king but he did something very good for the country because it had become a very useful irrigation canal down to this day. Seeing that the people would now not fight for the king he sent the message to Mengrai, and Mengrai approached with a big army. Yeeba was frightened and asked Aifah for advice as usual.

Aifah then said he would defend the town against the enemy but he would ask the king to leave and join his son Phya Berg who was governor of Lamparng, so that if matters came to the worst and the town could not be defended the king could raise another army with Phya Berg's help to come and take back Lampoon. King Yeeba agreed and Aifah accompanied the king to the limit of the town then he came back and opened the city's gates to the army of King Mengrai. Lampoon at last fell to Mengrai in 1281. Yeeba saw the flames rising in his city

from the top of the hill. He cried. He Knew that his beloved town had fallen to the enemy. That hill is called Bahai up to this day, meaning Yeeba cries. The Mon kingdom of Lampon had lasted 627 years. It was built in 654. It had as its first ruler Princess Chamadevi, daughter of the King of Lavo, Phya Chakr. Her husband was the viceroy ruling at Ramnakawn and had become a Buddhist monk. She had two sons, twins, seven days after her arrival in Lampon, Prince Mahantayot and Prince Anantayot. At the beginning she had some difficulties with local chieftains, recorded in chronicle as local uncivilized aborigines, whose king or chief offered resistance and even wanted to take her as wife. The capital of the Mons was at Lavo. The Mons were akin to the Khmers. As a race they are to be found now on both sides of Thailand on the Eastern side and in Lower Burma. The Mons had been rulers of Burma with the capital at Pegu. Big colonies of them are still to be found at Paklat on the outskirts of Bangkok. Aifah was made governor of Lampon by King Mengrai. Spies were then sent over to Lampon to observe the movements of Phya Berg and King Yeeba and to warn King Mengrai in good time, if the enemy approached.

THE BUILDING OF CHIENGMAI

King Mengrai was at Farnag seven years while waiting for Aifah to give him signs to attack Lampon. After the fall of the Mon capital, he moved his quarters

southward and built a town at Kumkam on the Ping River. This was found to be unsuitable. The bank was flooded part of the year. He stayed here three years and went in search of a new place. Five miles away he saw a big meadow with plenty of games, well watered and near to a high hill and full of waterfalls. There in the middle of a meadow he saw two stags. The hounds wanted to get at them. The stags went behind high grass and the hounds did not dare to follow them. The stags came out to nab at the dogs from time to time, and at last the hounds fled. Then he saw a big mouse followed by four small mice. They ran towards a big tree, a Bodhi tree, and ran down the hole of the tree. This was considered a very good omen for the site of the town. He invited his two friends, King Ngarm Muang of Payao, and King Rama Kambaeng of Sukhothai to inspect the place. They all agreed with him and together they made big ceremonies to build the town and helped each other in its construction. The town was built in 1296 and named Nopburi Sri Nakawn Ping Chiengmai. In due course it was shortened down to only Chiengmai, meaning New Town. People sometimes in poetical style referred to it as Pinkanakawn which means the town on the River Ping. Mengrai did not stay there. He liked his town Chiengrai better. He gave the town to one of his sons to rule. It had now become the most southern limit of his kingdom against the Mons and was used as a base to perch against the

South. Chiengmai did not become the residence of the king and a real capital of Lannathai until 1345 when Mengrai's great grandson King Phayu made it his capital. Since Payu's time Chiengmai had remained the capital of Lannathai.

SECOND WAR WITH THE MONS AND FURTHER CONQUESTS

Phya Berg did not waste time to take his revenge against Mengrai. During all this time he had been continually training his army for war. Fourteen years he waited for a chance to attack Chiengmai and retake Lam-poon. Eight months after Chiengmai was built the spies of Mengrai came to inform him that Phya Berg was coming to attack the town with a very huge army. King Mengrai at once sent for his son ruling at Chiengrai. Phya Berg approached and surrounded Vieng Kumkam and Khun Kram, Mengrai's son, was close behind him. Khun Kram asked the governor of Farnng to despatch another army and to descend upon Phya Berg from the North. Khun Kram divided up his army into three divisions. He sent two divisions around the left and right of his main army whereas Khun Kram himself with his own division advanced straight forward in the middle. Thus Phya Berg found himself in the middle. There ensued a very fierce fight and Phya Berg fought on elephant's back with Khun Kram himself. This happened at a small village called Khua

Mung Khun Charng. Phya Berg's elephant turned and Phya Berg was stabbed in the leg. Phya Berg's men came up and helped Phya Berg to fly off. Khun Kram followed up in hot pursuit. The two armies joined again at Mae Tarn near Lampang. There was another hand-to-hand fight between the two armies. The army of Lampang was utterly routed and Phya Berg caught. Khun Kram had him executed on the spot. When Phya Yeeba heard that his son was killed he left the town in a hurry running away to Pitsanuloke. Lampang was captured and the portion of the Mon Kingdom in Thailand fell and its power once and for all broken.

For his valour Khun Kram was made the "Lord of Victory" or "Chao Chai Songram" by his father and was also awarded with the Domain of Chiengdao in addition to Chiengrai.

King Mengrai had three sons: Khun Kruang, Khun Kram and Khun Krua. The eldest one, Khun Kruang, was ordered to be killed by King Mengrai when he was thirteen at the time he was sent to be governor of Farnng. There was a plot instigated by the nobles around Khun Kruang to take the throne. The father heard of it and had him killed. There were now only just Khun Kram and Khun Krua left. Khun Kram after the capture of Lampang went very often to Chiengdao where he put up a palace for one of his wives. Khun Krua came to see his brother's wife at Chiengdao very often until his brother heard of it. Then Khun Krua, afraid

of persecution, fled to his own town. The king heard of it and as he was already getting very old he was afraid that when he died the two brothers would fight, so he banished Khun Krua to a very distant town in the Shan States called Muong Nai or Moné.

King Mengrai also sent an army to Pegu in Burma, the capital of the Mon State in Burma. The King Suthachome who had been through a dissention in his country and had just lost Martaban to the rebels, did not want to fight Mengrai. He sent tributes and his daughter Nang Paiko to Mengrai asking for peace and friendship which Mengrai accepted.

King Mengrai then sent another army to Ava, the capital of Burma. This king also did not want to fight. He sent tributes to King Mengrai and all the craftsmen Mengrai had asked for, goldsmiths, foundrymen and others. King Mengrai sent Burmese craftsmen to various parts of his kingdom. Arts and crafts flourished to quite a high point during his reign.

DEATH OF MENGRAI AND ACCESSION OF KHUN KRAM

King Mengrai one day at the age of eighty went to the market in town. There was a thunderstorm, lightning struck him and killed him when he was in Chiengmai. Khun Kram succeeded him but he went back to Chiengrai after putting his eldest son Sanbhu as ruler in

Chiengmai. This gave the opportunity for Khun Kram who was in Muong Nai to come back for the throne of Chiengmai. Stopping outside the town with his army he made a semblance of coming to pay respects to the remains of his father. But Sanbhu knew the intention of his uncle. He did not want to be blamed for fighting against his uncle so he escaped out of town. Khun Krua at once seized the throne and proclaimed himself king.

On hearing this King Khun Kram sent his second son, Thao Nam Tuam, to take Chiengmai. Thao Nam Tuam sent his men in disguise to the various town gates and when he arrived these men opened the gates for his army to enter the town. Khun Krua was drunk and fast asleep. When his men came to wake him up he ran towards the gong and beat it. But nobody turned up since his soldiers had all been seized. So he was arrested and put to prison. King Khun Kram arrived and consecrated his second son as ruler of Chiengmai in 1322. Khun Krua died in prison four years afterwards. In 1324 there was a rumour that Nam Tuam was going to seize the throne. The king therefore sent the third son, Thao Ngua, to arrest and banish him to Chiengtung. Sanbhu was again reinstated as ruler of Chiengmai.

REIGN OF SANBHU

King Khun Kram died at Chiengmai at the age of 72 in 1327. His son Sanbhu succeeded him. He made his son Kamphoo ruler of Chiengmai. Sanbhu moved his

capital to Chiengsen and built a new town in the vicinity of the once old town of Yonok Nagaburi. He died in 1334 at the age of 60 after a reign of seven years.

KAMPHOO (1334 - 1345)

Kamphoo succeeded his father to the throne of Chiengsen. He did nothing good and even betrayed his best friend. He had a very intimate friend, a millionaire called Vuahong living at Vieng Chiengkam. He went to see his friend the millionaire very often. One day he met Vuahong's beautiful wife. He fell in love with her and slept with her when the husband was away. As god would punish him he went to take a bath in the river nearby, a crocodile bit him to death. His body was only found seven days after.

PHAYOO (1345 - 1367)

Phayoo succeeded to the throne. The power of Lannathai after Mengrai was steadily waning. The power of Laos or Luang Prabang was now coming up after a sleep of about six hundred years. King Fangum had marched from his place of exile in Cambodia and seized the throne from his grandfather in 1353. Already in 1354 he was coming by boat up the River Mekhong towards Chiengsen and annexed all the towns along the Mekhong including Chieng Khong, the town of Phayoo's father-in-law, Prince Vua Thalerng. Phayoo sent out an army under General

Phya Senmuong, but the latter was killed and his army routed. King Phayoo submitted, paid heavy indemnities and agreed to a loss of a part of his territory. Fangum took away all territory from Phadai straight downward and added it to Lanxang. However this incident was not mentioned in Lannathai history. Phayoo moved his capital to Chiengmai. Henceforth Chiengmai became the capital of Lannathai.

KING KUENA (1367 - 1385)

King Phayoo died at the age of 57 after a reign of 28 years in 1367. His son Kuena now succeeded him. During his reign there was the first mention of Ho invasion coming to attack Chiengsen, but they were repulsed back by a young sharpshooter of arrows, Khun Maina. The king honoured him, gave him the title of Phya Srisittimahachai Songram Lumpha, and appointed him governor of Chiengsen. During his reign the kings of Sukhotai had troubles with a rising Thai Kingdom of Ayudhya in the South. King Kuena helped his friend Kingsaiyalutai of Sukhotai to fight against the Thai general, Prince Khun Luang Pangua, brother-in-law of King Uthong. But the Kingdom of Sukhotai after being founded by its very eminent predecessor Khun Bang Klang Thao in 1238, was already fast declining. Finally Sukhotai was utterly defeated in 1378 and henceforth Sukhotai became part of the Kingdom of Ayudhya.

Chiengmai from now on will have to deal only with the Kingdom of Ayudhya which was fast expanding in the South and the boundaries of Ayudhya came up to the boundaries of Lannathai. Already Ayudhya under Ramesuen had beaten the Khmers and occupied Angkor Thom in 1393.

King Kuena was a learned man and a patron of arts. He encouraged art and himself studied the various sciences of the time such as religion, astrology, vedanta, folklore, elephant hunting and training. Buddhism also flourished during his reign. While Sukhotai during its decay did not take interest in Buddhism it had many learned monks who had gone over to study with a famous Mon monk in Martaban. The latter had been to study the right and true faith in Ceylon. King Kuena invited the Sukhotai learned monks to come to his country. One famous monk Phra Mahasuon had found a relic of Buddha at the ruins of Muong Bang Chao. This the abbot brought and presented it to King Kuena in 1486, and the latter put the relic at the top of Doi Sutep, a hill just outside Chiengmai. Doi Sutep has since become a very sacred shrine for pilgrims. Everyone going up to Chiengmai must climb to the top of this mountain passing by very beautiful sceneries and waterfalls to pay respect to this relic of Buddha enshrined in a pagoda beautifully built up there.

King Kuena had a youngerbrother, Prince Mahaprom, whom he sent to rule in Chiengsen.

KING SAENMUONGMA(1385 - 1411)

Saenmuongma was only fourteen when he ascended the throne after the death of his father. King Kuena's much trusted minister, Saenphanong, was acting as regent for the young king. Seeing that the king was a mere boy Prince Mahaprom thought it a good opportunity to seize the throne for himself. He therefore came with an army camping outside Chiengmai and sent a message to the young king that he would like to come in and pay respect to the dead king. Saenphanong however understood his reasons. He therefore fortified the town and sent out an army to meet Prince Mahaprom. The latter retreated to Vieng Kumkam and took the people of the town away with him toward River Khan. The men of Kumkam fled away before him and Mahaprom could take only women and children away with him. Saenphanong followed him up and beat Prince Mahaprom's army. The prince himself fled for protection with the Governor of Sawankaloke and asked the help of Ayudhya to help him. In the meantime Saenphanong had a suspicion that Prince Mahaprom would renew the attacks with the help of Ayudhya. He therefore sent one of his famous generals, Muen Loke Nakorn, to go and fortify Lampang. In fact Prince Mahaprom did come back with the army of Ayudhya to take Lampang. Muen Loke Nakorn at once went out to fight them. During the fight his wife Nang Srimuong, already well advanced in pregnancy,

went out to fight with him. The army of Ayudhya was beaten back. Soon after the fight Nang Srimuong gave birth to a son and he was called Chao Harn Tae Tong, meaning brave from the womb. Prince Mahaprom took refuge with the Governor of Kampaengpet. At Kampaengpet there was one very famous statue of Buddha called Phra Buddha Sihing. The statue was made in Ceylon by three Buddhist priests in A.D. 157. During King Rama Kamhaeng of Sukhotai's tour of Sritammarat, he expressed a wish to have a good beautiful statue of Buddha for his capital. The Governor of Nakorn Sritammarat therefore went to Ceylon and asked for this statue of Buddha for Rama Kamhaeng. When Sukhotai fell to Ayudhya, the statue was brought to Bangkok, and put at Wat Phra Srisanpet. The mother of Phya Yarnadit, Governor of Kampaengpet, was one of the king's wives. She asked for a statue of Buddha from the king to be sent to his son to which request the king granted because she was very much beloved by the king. She however took the opportunity of selecting this famous statue to be sent to her son without the knowledge of the king. And when the king knew it she said she did not know it was that famous and promised to return it after her son made a replica of the statue. From here the statue was abducted by Prince Mahaprom who presented it to the King of Chiengmai, Saenmuongma, so that he could get back to favour with the King of Chiengmai again. The latter

pardoned him and sent him back to rule at Chiengsen as before. Phra Buddha Sihing was put at Wat Sing in Chiengmai.

Saenmuongma still had further trouble with Ayudhya. The Governor of Sukhotai wanted to gain back his kingdom and asked for Saenmuongma's help to attack Ayudhya. Saenmuongma agreed and went with an army to Sukhotai. In the meantime the Governor of Sukhotai changed his mind. He came out in the midst of the night and attacked Saenmuongma unaware. His army was routed and King Saenmuongma escaped with his life being carried away on the shoulders by two very faithful servants, Ai Orb and Ai Yeerakha. When he arrived at Chiengmai he rewarded the two servants by giving them the titles of Khun Charng Sai and Khun Charng Kwa, meaning the Left Elephant and the Right Elephant and gave them houses, at Chieng Chome village. He also built a statue of two elephants in remembrance of his servants at the eastern gate of the town called the White Elephant Gate which could be seen down to this day.

Somehow or other a few merchants who arrived back from Burma stopped at a big tree outside the town. At night they saw the tormented ghost of King Kuena asking the merchants to go and tell the king to build a shrine for him so that he could be allowed to

go to heaven. King Saenmuongma on hearing this had a pagoda called the Royal Pagoda Temple (Chedi Luang) built. In it he placed two statues of Buddha, one made of gold and the other of silver. He did not live to finish the pagoda as he died in 1411. The shrine however was finished by his queen during the next reign.

KING SAM FANG KAEN (1411 - 1441)

After the death of Saenmuongma the people invited his younger son Sam Fang Kaen, age 12, to ascend the throne. His mother Queen Raja ruled for him while he was still young, and handed the government to him as soon as he was able to rule himself. His elder brother Yeekumkam, Governor of Chiengsen, was not satisfied. He considered that the throne was his by right. He raised an army and moved down towards Chiengmai. Chiengmai also sent out an army to meet him. He could not take Chiengmai and had to retreat towards Chiengsen but the Chiengmai forces were already lying in ambush and his army was routed. So he retreated towards Sukhotai where he went to ask the aid of Ayudhya. This was accorded. The Governor of Sukhotai was given in charge of an army to assist him. The Ayudhya army moved to take Payao. They built a high tower to bombard into the town. Thereupon the townspeople took the

brass tiles from a temple, made a cannon with them and fired at the tower breaking it up. The Sukhotai army therefore left Payao, went to Chiengrai and came down through Farng to take Chiengmai. Arriving near the town they wrote a letter telling the Chiengmai king to give up the throne to Yeekumkarm. The Chiengmai nobles answered that although Yeekumkarm was an elder brother but he was not fit for the throne and asked the Sukhotai general to appoint a man to fight a Chiengmai swordsman in a hand-to-hand fight just to show whether Sam Fang Kaen or Yeekumkarm would be the fitter for the throne. This the Ayudhya general agreed as he saw a good way out of the business because if he lost, it would not hurt his pride as it only meant that Yeekumkarm was not fit for the throne.

A champion was appointed on each side. Harn Yodchaipet was the swordsman representing the Chiengmai side. Both fought for a long time. Just by coincidence Yodchaipet's sword struck the toe of his opponent. The latter was therefore considered defeated and accordingly the Sukhotai army drew off. The general commanding the retreating army stopped for a rest at Viengchet-rin for seven days. This is near to Doi Sutep and later it has become a pleasure resort for King Sam Fang Kaen where he built a palace outside the town. On his return to Sukhotai the Ayudhya general evacuated the people of Chiengrai with him and sent Yeekumkarm to be governor of Muong Sarg on the Yom River.

HO INVASION OF 1412

Prince Holumphā of Nongseh or Yunnan sent an ambassador to the court of Chiengmai asking the king to continue sending tributes to Nongseh. The King asked Phya Saen Luang whether this has been done before as claimed by the King of Nongseh. The latter explained that Chiengsen used to send tributes to Nongseh in the olden days but that was different. Nongseh had since 1253 been annexed by China and Chiengsen had from then on nothing to do with Nongseh any more. A letter was therefore written to Prince Holumphā refusing to pay tributes demanded for reasons specified above. At the same time King Sam Fang Kaen despatched an army under Chao Saenkamruong to help the governor of Chiengsen in case of an invasion. Prince Holumphā did in fact send Chao Faifah with an army to take Chiengsen but the forces of Chiengsen were ready for the enemy. In a battle the Ho forces were lured into a place where the Chiengsen men had dug holes for them everywhere and covered the holes up at the top with leaves. When the enemy was well in the middle, the surrounding forces of Chiengsen came out from every side and utterly defeated them. The Hos made another preparation and came back after three years with bigger forces but they were again beaten back. This time they retreated to Chiengrung and Muong Yaung where they stayed three years harassing the people all around. People could not live under them and had to run into hiding

places in the jungle. Another army under Chao Khun Saen was sent to drive them off. Since then the Hos never attempted to come back again.

BUDDHISM.

Buddhism during this reign was not much encouraged since the King was more interested in animistic practices of a mystical kind, but strange enough even without any encouragement Buddhism flourished even more. Twenty-five Buddhist priests quite discouraged left the country by way of Cambodia. There eight more priests joined them and they raised money, hired a ship which took them to Ceylon in order to seek the purer faith over there. After six years they found a ship from Ayudhya and they asked to be taken back. They brought also two Ceylonese priests with them. They travelled by way of Sukhotai back to Lannathai. People were very enthusiastic and they could easily spread the purer form of Buddhism to every corner of the country. The learned priests also wrote many important treatises which still exist to the present day.

THE EMERALD BUDDHA

French historians were silent as to where the Emerald Buddha came from because they wanted to be able to tell to the Lao and kept on reminding them that unfriendly Thailand took it away from Laos. However if the Emerald Buddha was supposed to be two thousand years old it must

have a history long before it came to Vientiane, since Buddhism came to Laos only about six hundred years ago during the reign of Fagnum.

Strange enough the Emerald Buddha was last found in Chiengmai, in North Thailand now, before it was taken to Vientiane, and this, during the reign of Sam Fang Kaen.

The Emerald Buddha was made in India by the Lord Abbot Nagasena in 43 B.C. in the City of Patalibut, now Patna. It remained there about three hundred years when there was a civil war and trouble inside the country with the heathens. The people who were strict Buddhists were afraid that the heathens would destroy it so they took it to Ceylon where it stayed until A.D. about 457. King Anuruth of Pagan (Burma) was a fervent supporter of Buddhism. He sent a mission to Ceylon and asked for the Bible and the Emerald Buddha. The ship which brought the mission and the Emerald Buddha back was driven by storm, lost its way and landed in Cambodia instead. The Emerald Buddha stayed in Cambodia until King Senarat came to the throne. This king was unjust and the country was in great difficulty. The Buddhist priests therefore took away the Emerald Buddha to Intapat. From there the Emerald Buddha was taken through many towns in the course of history—Ayudhya, Kampaengpet, Lavo, back to Kampaengpet and then to Chiengrai. Fearing that it would be taken away the ruler of Chiengrai put a coat of lacquer and lime over the outside and then had

it regilded so as to disguise it. The image was hidden away like this until 1434 when the pagoda was hit by lightning and tumbled down. The people found the image and thinking that it was just an ordinary image they put it away inside the temple until one day a crust covering the image broke off showing the precious stone inside. The people then had it polished and found it wholly of what they thought to be emerald. People flocked from everywhere to workship it and they talked and talked until the news came to the ears of King Sam Fang Kaen. He organized a big party to come to take the Emerald Buddha on elephant's back to his capital. When the party arrived at the crossroad near Lampang the elephant turned towards Lampang and would not go to Chiengmai. Seeing that, the King interpreted it to mean that the Emerald Buddha wished to stay in Lampang. He therefore had it installed in a pagoda, called Emerald Buddha Temple down to this day. It was only during the next reign, King Tilokarat, that the Emerald Buddha was transported to Chiengmai, where it stayed until 1548. In 1545 King Phra Muong Ketklao of Chiengmai died without a male heir. The nobles began to look for a king to rule over them. King Ketklao had a daughter, Princess Yodkamtip who was married to King Potisarat of Luang Prabang. Out of this union was born Prince Setthatirat. The latter could therefore be considered as the next possible heir to the throne of Lannathai if the King of Luang Prabang would part with the prince for

the course of Lannathai. They put that question to King Potisarath and he agreed. So Prince Setthatirat was crowned king of Chiengmai, in 1546, after Princess Chiraprabha had in the meantime been Queen of Chiengmai for two years after Phra Muong Ketkiao's death. Prince Setthatirat did not stay long in Chiengmai. His father met an accident during the ceremony of elephant roping and was trampled to death by an elephant in 1550. King Setthatirat hastened back to Laos to take the throne. In going he took away the Emerald Buddha with him saying to the people that it was only for a short while and then he would soon return it. He never returned it, so the Emerald Buddha came to Luang Prabang and then to Vientiane. In 1778 Phya Chakri, the Thai general from Dhonburi conquered Laos and took the Emerald Buddha and the image of Prabang to Dhonburi, and then to Bangkok, when the capital moved from Dhonburi to Bangkok. In the third reign of the Bangkok dynasty the King of Thailand gave back the Prabang to the king of Luang Prabang, keeping the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok, where it stayed down to the present day.

KING TILOKARAT (1441-1485)

King Sam Fang Kaen had several wives and several children. He did not love them all like. The sixth son Thao Lok who displeased the king by committing a wrong which history did not put on record was banished by his

father to Yuamtai. A friend of Thao Lok, Phya Samdekyoi, a high officer with numerous followers then plotted to bring Thao Lok back to the throne. King Sam Fang Kaen was at his pleasure palace Viengchetrin just outside the town, when Phya Samdekyoi had Thao Lok brought back to Chiengmai and seized the palace. He also sent a party of men to put to fire the Viengchetrin Palace. Thinking that the enemy had come to attack the town, King Sam Fang Kaen rode back to town in a hurry. On the way he was arrested by Phya Samdekyoi's men and brought back to confront Thao Lok, his son, in the palace. In front of all the high priests and nobles he was forced to abdicate in favour of Thao Lok, after which the new king banished his father to Muong Sad in the Shan States quite far away. Thao Lok was crowned as King Tilokarat of Lannathai.

The man who helped Tilokarat to win the throne was heaped with great favour and was created Prince Senkhan, but he became treacherous to the king. If he could help others to win the throne why could he not procure the throne for himself, so he thought, and began to plot against the king. The news leaked out. The king then turned towards his uncle, a younger brother of the last king, Muen Loknakorn by name, who was a governor at Lampang. Muen Loknakorn came and had Prince Senkhan arrested, but the king, still grateful for what the latter had done for him, would not execute

him but banished him, and after banishment gave him the governorship of Chiengsen. The king then asked his uncle to stay with him and helped in his affairs of state in Chiengmai.

A younger brother of the king by a different mother called Prince Soi was at the time Governor of Farnng. When the latter heard of the exile of the king, his father, to Muong Sad, he was very angry against the present king. He went to fetch his father from the place of exile and lodged him in Farnng. He would not pay any homage to the new king. When the latter saw this he despatched Muen Loknakorn to arrest Prince Soi. There ensued a fierce battle and Farnng was easily taken being greatly outnumbered by the superior forces of the royal army. The ex-king was arrested and sent to the new king, whereas Prince Soi fled towards Muong Terng. The royal army followed in hot pursuit. Prince Soi out of gratefulness and affection for his father would not give in. He fought until he died in the midst of the battle. His army was broken and the town of Muong Terng was taken.

Although starting the reign very young and inexperienced the king had learnt the art of law and administration in such a way that at a later stage he led the army to fight against the enemy himself. His rising power came into clashes with a brother country in the South which was also waxing strong, the Kingdom of

Ayudhya. It started with the Governor of Muong Terng, a faithful follower of the late Prince Soi. The Governor of Muong Terng secretly wrote a letter to King Boromaraaja of Ayudhya to come and attack Chiengmai. This was the first of a series of wars with Ayudhya which ended in no substantial gains to any of the two sides concerned. The King of Chiengmai was fortunate enough to have many strong warriors, of whom Muen Loknakorn was most prominent. Muen Terng was found out and put to death. Meanwhile Muen Loknakorn marched against the approaching Ayudhyan army and camped just face to face with them. By a cunning strategy Muen Loknakorn sent out three men from Chiengkong who disguised themselves and went into the Ayudhya camp. These three men walked about at night when everybody was asleep, found the elephants tied up in the camp, cut them loose and cut their tails. By doing so the elephants made a lot of noise through pain and ran about in the camp. The Ayudhya soldiers woke up thinking that the enemy had broken in they all fled in great disorder, and it was only Muen Loknakorn's chance to follow up and beat them back into their own territory.

King Tilokarat then sent two expeditions to take Prae and Nan. For Prae he sent his mother Princess Mahadevi. The Princess besieged Prae and the people of Prae offered a stubborn resistance. The Princess could

not take Prae. The governor of Prae was also a woman called Thao Mehkun. Princess Mahadevi then had a big cannon drawn up and fire into the city. The damage it caused put the people to fright and Thao Mehkun came out and surrendered.

King Tilokarat went to take Nan himself and after a siege of seven days the town of Muong Nan was taken. The Governor, Phya Kenthao, fled to Ayudhya. The king then appointed Thao Phasen, Kenthao's brother, as governor instead. However when the king drew back from Nan the town was again attacked by an army from Luang Prabang. The king sent an army to repulse the invader but without success. He therefore went there himself and drove back the army of Luang Prabang. We do not know who sent this army. Nan was taken by King Tilokarat in 1450. Three years earlier his father, the ex-king Sam Fang Kaen, died in captivity in Chieng-mai. King Tilokarat must have felt deeply the wrong he had done to his father, for he built the Padeng Pagoda to enshrine the ashes of his father. He himself became a priest at Padeng monastery for a short time giving over the government of his country to his mother during the time of priesthood.

Not soon after he retired from priesthood, his mother also died and he also had her ashes entombed at the same place as his father.

Then in 1451 occurred again another campaign against Ayudhya. This time Ayudhya's northern outpost town of Sawankaloke broke away from its own lord, the King of Ayudhya, and joined the camp of Tilokarat, asking the latter to invade Ayudhya. His advanced guard under Muen Harn Nakorn went as far as Chalieng and encamped there. At night the people of Chalieng took them by surprise and repulsed them back to the main army. King Tilokarat was about to attack the advancing Ayudhya army when he received news that Luang Prabang sent an army to take his northern capital of Chiengsen. He therefore retreated. He now marched north, seized back all the towns on the way to Luang Prabang and laid siege to Luang Prabang itself. The people of Luang Prabang fought very bravely and Tilokarat was forced to raise the siege and come back to Chiengmai bringing back a lot of booty and war prisoners. At this time many priests who had been on a pilgrimage to Ceylon came back with the seeds of the most sacred religious tree of Buddha. The king then built Chetyod Monastery and had these seeds grown in the newly built pagoda.

After a rest the king then marched north towards Chiengrung. He went there twice in succession during which he captured several towns on the way. After the victorious campaigns in the North he now turned towards Ayudhya again. Both sides did not trust each other and King Tilokarat appointed his brave uncle to rule over

the Town of Chiengjuen being the southern outpost of his kingdom. The King of Ayudhya also made Pitsanuloke his northern capital so as to be better on the guard against possible invasions from the north. The king of Ayudhya sent a spy to Chiengmai so as to be kept informed of what was going on there. The spy was caught. He was put to shame by having his hair shaved off. But the King of Chiengmai also used the same method by sending a spy to the southern kingdom.

In 1457 war preparations were ready and the King of Ayudhya marched against Chiengmai sending his son, Prince Intaraja, in command of the advanced guard. King Tilokarat's army was also ready, and his advanced forces waited for the enemy at Doi Ba hills. Prince Intaraja attacked the Chiengmai forces and very fierce hand-to-hand fights ensued. Many died on both sides. Prince Intaraja was hit by a bullet on the forehead. He therefore retreated and died very soon after that. The King of Ayudhya was forced to retreat. The Chiengmai army did not follow up the victory.

Two years later King Tilokarat sent another army to take Sawankaloke belonging to Ayudhya. The town was besieged but the two commanders of the town Khun Pet and Khun Ram effected an escape from the town in the middle of the night. In 1460 King Tilokarat marched against the Shan States towards Muong Pong in Sidsong Panna, leaving Muen Dongnakorn to guard

Chiengmai. The King of Ayudhya came to Prae. Muen Dongnakorn sent a message to King Tilokarat who withdrew from Pong towards the South to assist Muen Dongnakorn in warding off the Ayudhya army. The latter however retreated back and King Tilokarat tried to take Sawangkaburi. He failed to take the town after a siege of three days and had to raise the siege.

After this the King of Ayudhya went into priesthood and asked King Tilokarat to send some priests to help in the ceremony. This was accorded and it was for the first time after so much fighting with no gains on both sides that the two kings paved the way for friendship.

When King Tilokarat was growing old he made many mistakes. One of the most serious mistakes was to have his only son from the chief Queen put to death. His second queen Princess Homuk was very jealous of the son by the first Queen, Prince Sibunruang, Governor of Chiengrai. She told the king that the latter was plotting against him and the king believed her because he loved this new queen so much. He therefore ordered that his son be banished to a very desolate remote town of Chavatnoi in the Shan States. This did not satisfy the new queen entirely, she again took an opportunity to tell him that, at the new place the prince was still plotting. The king was very angry and sent an order to the Governor of Chavatnoi to put his son to death. After this it was

proved that he was guiltless, but it was too late and the king was very much aggrieved.

This brought perhaps his grandson, Prince Yotchiengrai, closer to him. In 1462 he commissioned the latter with an army to take Muong Nai which was easily taken and the Prince of Muong Nai fled. King Tilokarat who followed up with a reinforcement behind his grandson pursued the Prince of Muong Nai to Nongbon where the latter at last surrendered. During this expedition King Tilokarat had been able to add eleven more towns to his realm as well as many Shans who were taken by him as captives to people the villages in Chiengmai.

There was still another war to be fought with Ayudhya. The latter had sent a force to take Chiengjuen and killed Muen Kwaen, the governor of the town. King Tilokarat went with an army and took it back and this was the last of the wars with Ayudhya during his reign. The Annamites tried to take Nan in the East. His army drove the Annamites back. Another war happened in the North. This time the savage tribe of the Was attacked the town of Yaung. He sent another army up there and his army also occupied Chiengrung at the same time.

King Tilokarat was not only a warrior, he was also a strong supporter of Buddhism and art. He built many temples, had several statues of Buddha made, repaired several temples and encouraged the study of

Buddhism. Many books and treatises were written during his reign and a council of priests was held. One very important image of Buddha made of red sandal wood was found during his reign at Muong Payai, which he had ordered to be brought to Chiengmai. Among his proud possessions were to be found the Emerald Buddha, the white crystal Buddha found by Phya Mengrai in Lampon and the Buddha Sihing image. He had also a gold image of Buddha made, known as Phra Kaengkom now to be found at Seekert Temple.

The last days of his long reign were darkened by the memory of a rebellion in Lampang, where three of his nobles who were dissatisfied with him, Muen Chiengrai, Muen Muong Prao and Muen Chiengruak were the chief instigators. The plot was discovered in time and the three were put to death. The king died at the age of 79 after a troublous reign of forty-four years in 1485.

KING YOTCHIENGRAI (1485 - 1514)

Tilokarat was succeeded by his only grandson Yotchiengrai. King Tilokarat had only one son by his Queen, whom he suspected of rebellion and ordered to be executed. He had however two more sons by minor wives, Prince Tongwa, the Governor of Chiengsen, and Prince Uayhorkwang. Prince Uayhorkwang had a priest friend called Suriyawong at Wat Kutaohavieng. The priest would like to have the famous White Crystal

Buddha and asked Prince Uayhorkwang for assistance. The latter pretended to be very ill and unless he could get the White Crystal Buddha for a ceremony to heal him, he could not be cured. The curator of the Royal Museum was persuaded to lend the Buddha to the Prince, but the Prince never gave the statue of the Buddha back. The curator was bribed by large sums into silence. However the king built the Tapotaram Temple and when it was finished he wanted the White Crystal Buddha to be placed there. The secret was therefore found out, but the bonze who abducted the image had absconded to Ayudhya. The King wrote a letter to the King of Ayudhya asking for the return of the image, but the latter said it could not be found. King Yotchiengrai then raised an army to attack Ayudhya and somehow or other the image was given back to him. King Yotchiengrai was satisfied and withdrew the army. The king had a queen called Nang Prongnoi. He had one son with the Queen called Prince Muongkeo. The nobles were very dissatisfied with the king because he did nothing for the good of his country. They therefore deposed him and placed his son, Prince Muongkeo, on the throne.

KING MUONGKEO (1514 - 1525)

King Muongkeo was only 14 when he came to the throne. His mother Queen Prongnoi was acting for him during his minority. When he was twenty-five he

raised an army to attack Sukhotai. This started the war with Ayudhya again. He could not take Sukhotai. Phra Boromraja II of Ayudhya at once sent Phya Kralahome to occupy Prae twice in 1508 and 1510.

In 1515 King Muongkeo sent another army to take Sukhotai and Kampaengpet. The expedition was unsuccessful but instead the King of Ayudhya took a reprisal and sent an army to occupy Lampang, which was at last fallen to the King of Ayudhya and the famous Buddha of black stone, brought over by Princess Chamdevi from Lavo, was carried away to Ayudhya. After this there was no more fighting. King Boromraja II of Ayudhya died and his son, King Atityawong, sent a goodwill mission to Chiengmai, which was very well received.

The king died at the age of 44 when he was taken ill after eating a dish of raw horsemeat. He had no sons to succeed him. The nobles then invited Prince Ketklao from Chavatnoi in the Shan States to the throne. He was a brother by a different mother.

KING KETKLAO (1525 - 1535 & 1543 - 1545)

King Ketklao was King Yotchiengrai's son. He stayed on in Chavatnoi to rule there in place of his father. Prince Ketklao came to the throne at the age of

twenty-eight. His reign was uneventful and even fated. His palace was burnt and there was a big fire in town causing a lot of damage and poverty to the people. Then there were two rebellions. The first rebellion instigated by the nobles was found out and the culprits put to death, but the second rebellion made by his own son, Prince Chaikam, succeeded and he was banished to his old place of Chavatnoi in the Shan States. Prince Chaikam ruled for five years but his rule was not appreciated by the nobles and the latter put him to death and invited his father to come back to the throne in 1543. He only ruled two more years up to 1545. He became insane owing to the extreme sadness at the memory of his son. The nobles led by Saendow arrested him and put him to death.

QUEEN CHIRAPRABHA (1545-1547 & 1563-1578)

King Ketkiao had a daughter, Princess Chiraprabha. At his death the nobles divided. One group headed by Saendow wanted to have the Prince of Muong Nai to succeed King Ketkiao. The other headed by Muen Aisamlan who had a secret meeting in Chiengrai wanted to have Prince Sai Setthatirat of Lanchang as their king. Prince Sai Setthatirat was related to the throne of Chiengmai on the mother's side. His mother was Princess Yolkamtip, daughter to King Ketkiao, but his father was the King of Lanchang, Potisararat. They sent a delegation to Lanchang and Prince

Sai Setthatirat accepted to come. In the meantime the nobles of Chiengsen swooped down upon Chiengmai, arrested Saendow and put him to death. While waiting for the new king they invited Princess Chiraprabha to rule over Chiengmai. Princess Chiraprabha had a policy of reconciliation with Ayudhya, and thus avoided the latter's attack.

In 1548 Prince Sai Setthatirat arrived from Luang Prabang and he was made King of Chiengmai. King Setthatirat took the two daughters of Ketkiao to wives and made them the Right Queen and the Left Queen. These were Princess Tontip and Princess Tonkam.

Prince Sai Setthatirat did not stay long in Chiengmai. After staying two years his father, King Potisararat of Lanchang met an accident during the roping of wild elephants and he was trampled to death by an elephant. The nobles of Lanchang were undecided as to the right of succession and they put Prince Tarua to rule over the northern territory from Luang Prabang to Chiengkan, and Prince Worawong of Lanchang from Vientiane to Khong in the South. Both princes were younger brothers of Sai Setthatirat. However both princes determined to rule over the whole country and they made preparations to fight it out. Again Prince Sai Setthatirat also wanted to exert his right as the eldest brother. He therefore left the throne of Chiengmai to occupy his own throne of Lanchang. In going away in 1550 he took away all the famous images of Buddha from Chiengmai, among which the famous Emerald

Buddha, the White Crystal Buddha, the Buddha Sihing and the Saekkam. When he arrived back in Luang Prabang he was successful in suppressing the two brothers and mounted the now undisputed throne of Lanchang. He never came back to Chiengmai but sent a message asking Princess Chiraprabha to rule for him. Princess Chiraprabha declined the offer and the nobles asked Prince Mekuti of Muong Nai who also descended from King Mengrai, the founder of Chiengmai dynasty.

KING MEKUTI (1551-1564)

King Mekuti ascended the throne in 1551. He was the last king of independent Lannathai. Soon after his accession he sent a delagation to King Sai Setthatirat of Lanchang asking for the return of the Emerald Buddha, the White Crystal Buddha, the Buddha Sihing and the Saekkam. King Setthatirat refused to give them back but agreed to the return of only one, that is the Buddha Sihing.

The Prince of Muong Nai sent an army to attack Chiengmai once but the King of Lanchang sent an army to help the King of Chiengmai and drove the army of Muong Nai back.

Not long after Chiengmai was to fall under the rising power of Burma. The King of Burma Bayinnaung had been successful in reuniting the whole of Burma. He then started to conquer the neighbouring states. As he approached Muong Nai, the latter sent ambssadors to

Chiengmai asking for help. The King of Chiengmai was quite willing to help Muong Nai, being himself of Shan blood. But King Bayinnaung already thought of stopping his help beforehand and sent messengers with his letter to the King of Chiengmai asking him not to send help. This put Mekuti in a very embarassing situation and while he was still hesitating Muong Nai fell and the enemy was at the threshold of Chiengmai. King Bayinnaung asked Mekuti to come out and meet him. King Mekuti was afraid and sent only nobles and priests. On being asked again to come out himself Mekuti hesitated. Thereupon the King of Burma became angry and laid siege to the town at once. The people of Chiengmai fought for three days and nights and the city was taken in 1556. King Mekuti was captured and brought into the presence of Bayinnaung. He was however reinstited as a vassal king. In 1564 King Mekuti tried to exert independence and would not pay homage to Burma. King Bayinnaung took Chiengmai again the second time. This time Mekuti was deposed. He took Princess Chiraprabha as wife and then left her to rule over Chiengmai with a strong Burmese garrison. After the death of Princess Chiraprabha in 1578, the King of Burma appointed Prince Saravadi, his second son, to rule over Chiengmai. King Bayinnaung died in 1581 and was succeeded by Nantabureng, who was a weak king, and the vassal States including Chiengmai broke off allegiance with Burma. In Ayudhya King Naresuen also

declared independence. King Naresuen even waged war into the heart of Burma. With the threat of an attack from Lanchang the Burmese King of Chiengmai thought it better to submit himself to Naresuen of Ayudhya in 1599. He was already badly beaten by Naresuen once in a war trying to help Burma to attack Ayudhya. After this Chiengmai became part of Ayudhya to form the present country of Thailand except for short periods at intervals. Henceforward the history of Chiengmai became history of Thailand.

We have seen how one of the sons of Khun Borom or Piloko of Yunnan founded the Kingdom of Chiengsen which later became the Kingdom of Lannathai under Mengrai. With the invasion of the Shans on the towns of Chaiprakarn in the Kingdom of Chiengsen the Chiengsen dynasty was broken up into three branches with the flight of Prince Chaisiri of Chaiprakarn towards the South. This flight in a way helped to push the Thai further inland at the expense of the Khmers who were still overlords of the region at the time.

Prince Chaisiri himself went to Kampaengpet, but finding this to be unsuitable he went further south to Nakorn Pathom. It was a prince of this line who married the daughter of King Uthong and founded the Kingdom of Ayudhya.

Another relative of Prince Chaisiri did not go so far towards the South but stopped in Chalieng Country at Muong Bangyang. This is a place near to Sukhothai, which

after the fall of Umongasela or Chaiprakarn or Farnag became the strong Khmer outpost for the northern limit of their territory.

THE SUKHOTHAI BRANCH OF THE CHIENGSEN DYNASTY

As above mentioned a prince of Chaiprakarn came to settle down with his men at Bangyang in 1187. The town of Sukhotai was under another Thai leader, Khun Srinaonamthom, but he held the town under the supervision of a Khmer resident, Samart Khlom Lamphong. Khun Srinaonamthom was the father of Khun Pha Muong, a friend of Prince Bangklangtao of Bangyang.

The Chaiprakarn prince in Bangyang had a son, Prince Mahachaichana, who was asked by the people to be their leader in Bangyang. Prince Mahachaichana had a grandson called Khun Bangklangtao.

By 1238 the position of Khun Bangklangtao was very strong. He was also joined by the Thai people who fled away from Yunnan in big numbers after the fall of Nanchao. Khun Bangklangtao with the help of Khun Pha Muong of Muong Rad attacked Sukhotai and drove the Khmers away in 1238. After the capture of Sukhotai Prince Bangklangtao was crowned King of Sukhotai as King Sri Intaratit. His wife, Nang Suong, became Queen Sikbara Mahavedi.

King Sri Intaratit had three sons and two daughters. The first son was not known because he died young. The second one was Banmuong and the third one, the famous Ramakamhaeng.

Ramakamhaeng already distinguished himself as a lad of nineteen when his father went in 1258 on an expedition against Muong Chod (now Mehsod). His father was already flying from Khun Samchon of Muong Chod when Ramakamhaeng intercepted and defeated the enemy.

After the death of King Sri Intaratit, Banmuong succeeded him for a short time and died in 1275. Ramakamhaeng then succeeded his brother on the throne of Sukhotai.

King Ramakamhaeng ruled from 1275 to 1317. Under his rule the country was prosperous and his power extended from Annam and Laos in the North right down the peninsular and even to Sumatra.

Much of this reign was known to us through his stone inscriptions and chronicles recorded by Burma and China.

A strange incident happened during his reign which made him also master of the Kingdom of Pegu. A Peguan trader from Martaban called Magado came under his service. He was first employed as a servant looking after the king's elephants in the royal stable. Being wise and energetic he rose to a position of great confidence with the king and was at last made the Lord Chamberlain of the palace. During the king's expedition in the north, Magado fell in

love with Princess Suvarnadevi, the king's daughter. Fearing the king's wrath on his return Magado eloped with her back to Martaban. He gained the favour of the Governor of Martaban, but in a quarrel with the latter he killed the Governor and made himself governor. Magado soon overran the whole country and made himself King of Pegu. He soon thought of his father-in-law and made submission to King Ramakamhaeng who made him King Fahrua or Wareru in 1286.

King Ramakamhaeng fought against the Khmers, drove them out of the land and after a fight of nine years took Angkor Thom, where he set up one of his relatives as governor. With the aid of Khmer conscripts he now attacked the Machapahits in the South and fought them at Sokokana in South Sumatra, where he left two cannons there.

The Emperor of China Kublai Khan was his friend. He sent four embassies to China in 1281, 1291, 1295 and 1297. Ramakamhaeng went to China himself twice in 1294 and in 1300, from where he brought artisans to establish kilns for the production of the famous Sangkaloke procelain. He did not meet Emperor Kublai Khan during his second visit because the Emperor had already died in 1295. The Chinese also sent an embassy to his court under Haw Chue Chi in 1282. Eleven years after the Chinese sent yet another embassy to Sukhotai.

King Ramakambaeng was not only an undaunted warrior, he was also an excellent administrator and a very enlightened monarch. He loved the people and was very friendly with them. He passed a number of codes of law and he established an appeal system whereby the people could appeal direct to the king. This he did by hanging up a bell in front of the palace. Any person having any grievance could come and strike the bell. The king would then come out and investigated the matter and decided the case for him. He had also a famous piece of stone placed between two palm trees which he planted himself. On this stone the king would sit and judge the cases. He was also a fervent supporter of Buddhism. He invited priests to sit on the same stone and preach to the people on ceremonious occasions.

His city was very prosperous and populous. Nobody was hungry. Fish and rice were abundant. Around the city were plenty of fruit gardens of all sorts. The city itself was very strong, surrounded by three walls. The king also encouraged the arts. He instituted the Thai system of writing in 1283 which became the model for Thai and Lao system of writing down to the present day. He built a number of Buddhist monasteries and had images of Buddha cast. During his reign a number of Buddhist priests from Nakawn Sitammarat went to study in Ceylon and brought back the famous image of Buddha Sihing. He invited the image and

the priests to come to Sukhotai. He also encouraged industries and trade among his people. He abolished all import taxes so that Sukhotai became a big centre of trade in the whole peninsular. There were no slaves in his country. Everybody was free.

He might have annexed Lannathai and Payao under his rule, but he did not do so, because King Mengrai of Chiengrai and Khun Ngam Muong of Payao were his best friends. They were all educated by the same teacher at Lopburi, the hermit Suktanta. King Mengrai sought Ramakambaeng's advice when he was choosing a site to build Chiengmai. Mengrai also helped Ramakambaeng when the latter got into difficulty with Ngam Muong of Payao.

Ramakambaeng one day went to visit his friend Ngam Muong at Payao. There Princess Ua Chiengsen, wife of Ngam Muong as hostess, also came out to welcome him. The princess was very beautiful and Ramakambaeng could not resist being in love with her. She also responded to his love. Ngam Muong had Ramakambaeng arrested. He was going to put him to death when on second thoughts he called for their common friend. Phya Mengrai of Chiengmai, to come and decide the case. The latter arrived and tried to reconcile them in order to avoid the catastrophe of wars between the two countries by making Ramakambaeng apologize to Ngam Muong and to pay the fine of 999,000 cowrie shells which terms both

sides gladly accepted. Thereafter the three rulers went to the border of River Ing and ceremoniously swore perpetual friendship with each other before the gods and drank a cup of water mixed with the blood from the fingers of the three mixed together. Thus ended amicably the dreadful incident which might have caused enmity and bloodshed between two Thai tribes.

King Ramakamhaeng died in 1317. Three more kings succeeded to the throne of Sukhotai, but the country never again attained the height of glory as it reached during the time of Ramakamhaeng.

When Loetai came to the throne in 1317 Pegu broke away and even attacked and took away Tavoy and Tenasserim from Sukhotai. Loetai was unable to get them back. Then in 1319 the southern provinces of Lavo, Uthong and Nakon Sitammarat declared independence. During his reign slavery had started. At his death in 1347 there was trouble in Sukhotai and his successor had to suppress the rebellion.

Lutai succeeded Loetai in 1347. He was then governor of Sacchanalai when he came down to suppress the rebellion in the capital before ascending the throne. The trouble also gave excuse to King Uthong to come up with an army and seize big portions of his country. Although Lutai was weak as an administrator and warrior, he had however several merits. He was very religious and a man of great learning. He composed

the famous work Trai Pumi Katha or the Inferno of Sukhotai which exists up to this day. He was an astronomer and an architect. He built roads which connected the town of Sacchanalai with Sukhotai and Kampaengpet. He died in 1347. It was noted that Laoe still formed part of his territory, which must have broken away with the accession of Fagnum only.

The last king of Sukhotai was Sai Lutai (1370-1406). King Uthong had by this time established a new capital at Ayudhya. His brother-in-law Khun Luang Pangua was a great warrior. Only eight years after coming to the throne Sukhotai was annexed by Ayudhya and ceased to exist as an independent country although its princes were still allowed to rule as governors of Sukhotai, and even one of them was allowed to become king of the united country at Ayudhya.

There are two other big branches of the Thai people apart from the Chiengsen branch. This is the Lao branch of modern Laos and the Mau branch in the Shan States in Upper Burma. The Mau branch includes also the Ahom and Khamti branches.

THE LAO BRANCH OF THE THAI PEOPLE.

The Lao branch has also broken up into several branches just like the branch proceeding from Chiengsen into Thailand.

It was mentioned in history that whereas one of Khun Borom's sons, Prince Kamphong or Singhonawat according to history of Lannathai became head of the southern branch, four other sons were sent to different parts of the region concerned with the history of modern Laos: Khun Lo for Luang Prabang, Prince Chet Chuang for Xieng Khouang, Thao Kom for Kammuon and Prince Chusong for Tongking then called Chulanee with the capital at Hanoi. Xieng Khouang has still its line of rulers descended from Chet Chuang, although from time to time Xieng Khouang has been annexed by Annam, Thailand and Laos at different periods, and finally incorporated into Laos, but Prince Saikam, the Chaokhoueng of Xieng Khouang now, descended from Chet Chuang's line of royalty, still ruled the country as governor of Xieng Khouang even down to this day. King Sisawang Wattana descended from the side of Khun Lo, another branch of the same dynasty of Khun Borom. We know much less about the line descending from Prince Chusong. Out of all the territory belonging to Chusong, now called Sibsong Chutai, only one province has come into the Lao union, the rest and quite a big portion is to be found in North Vietnam and South-East China. Of Thao Kom we hear nothing more after he was sent to Kammuon.

Laos itself in the course of history has not always been whole. It was divided into the kingdoms of Luang Prabang and Vientiane, and since the eighteenth century into also one more additional kingdom of Champasak.

Although Lao kingdoms have been mentioned in connection with Khun Borom's sons during the eighth century, but towns like Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu), Luang Prabang, Champasak, Vientiane have already been mentioned earlier. There have been Thai penetration into the area before Khun Borom's time and as early as the starting of the Buddhist era or 500 years before Christ. The country however must have been very wild, very sparsely populated but already under the ancient Chams and Khmers. Khun Lo himself took the country away from the Kha people. The Khas have ruled in Luang Prabang before him. Vientiane itself already existed before the arrival of the Thai or Lao and it was the site of an old Khmer town called Saifong. The name Champasak itself signifies the country of the Chams. It was the slow infiltration of the Thai into this region that the Khmers and the Chams were pushed gradually towards the South. Those who did not flee towards the South went into the mountains and became gradually isolated mountain tribes. The Khas are the remnants of the old Khmers and they belong to the Polynesian race coming by sea over from Indonesia. The Meos however came from the extreme North of China before the Thai. They were also, like the Thai, gradually beaten out of China, towards the South of China, Laos, Thailand and as far south as South Vietnam and Cambodia. With the arrival of the Thai they were also driven gradually into the mountains like the Khas.

leaving the Lao-Thai victors everywhere in the plains. These are the two other tribes apart from the Lao in the country now occupied by Laos. The Thai Dams are Thais from Tongking. The Lius and Thai Neuas are also Lao or Thai who came from Yunnan. The Lius are to be found now principally in Yunnan, in Upper Burma, and Northern Laos. The Khas and the Meos are animists. The Lius are Buddhists but the Thai Dams are still animists and also ancestor-worshippers. In time the Khas who had taken into the mountains were broken up among themselves into small tribes each developing characteristics of their own with linguistic peculiarities but always maintaining the same general animistic worship with variations according to localities, history and legends which they have developed with time.

There are several towns mentioned even before Khun Borom's time. The Kingdom of Kotrabun for example had already existed since the fifth century before Christ. It was then located at Pakhinboon. It was these people of Kotrabun who had built the famous Tat Panom about 322 B.C. Kotrabun then belonged to Chinla, later to Funan and then to the Khmers. It was again revived towards the middle or end of fourteenth century by the King of Vientiane for one of his sons at a new site just to the South of Thakhek called Sikotabun, now in ruins.

With the expansion northwards of the Chinla over

the Leephee rapids they built the town of Champasak in circa 157. Vientiane itself was built about 342 B.C.

The Thai people gradually penetrated southwards from Yunnan along the big rivers: the Mau River into the Irrawaddy, the Kong or Salween, the Ou River into the Mekhong and down the Mekhong itself; in Tongking through the Red River and the Black River called Song Koi and Song Bo by the Vietnamese. By the eighth century Khun Borom had found big possessions among these big river valleys and it was necessary for him to found a new seat of administration in the South in order to look after the Southern territories. This he found it at Muong Theng or Dien Bien Phu. First he came down to a village not far away from Muong Theng called Sammun in A.D. 731 and built Muong Theng. The land must have been very difficult at the time and not enough men to till the land, that is why it was called at the time "Very few ricefields and very small sugar canes" (Na Noi Oi Nu), but Khun Borom was said to be untiring in teaching the people to work hard for their own comfort and prosperity. He taught them how to weave and cultivate. Khun Borom had two wives Nang Ekkaeng and Nang Yompala. From Nang Ekkaeng Khun Borom had three sons, from Nang Yompala four sons. Out of a poor desolate country, he made it into a prosperous and big town. He was also a builder and he was always rebuilding his town. He sent out his seven sons

to the different parts of his territory, to gain new land and even to build new towns. The eldest, Khun Lo, was sent to Luang Prabang; the second, Khun Phalarn, to Taho (Nongseh); the third one, Chusong, to Tongking or Chulanee; the fourth one, Kamphong, to Chiengsen; the fifth one, Thao In, to Louvo; the sixth one, Thao Kom to Kammuon and the seventh one, Chet chuang, to Xieng Khouang. Khun Borom told them to love each other and never to encroach upon each other. He did not reign very long in Muong Theng because there was trouble back at Muong Se, his old capital, and it was necessary for him to go back and quell the rebellion. Then he made Taho his home where he died in 748. During Khun Borom's time Tongking was under him. They revolted and attacked Laos and Chiengsen. The king of Chiengsen called on his nephew, Khun Chuang, at Muong Payao to come and help. Khun Chuang beat the Vietnamese off, overran the whole of Laos and then conquered back the whole of Tongking from the Vietnamese. He stopped for a long time at Xieng Khouang and celebrated the victory by having liquor transported to Xieng Khouang in stone jars to feast his soldiers. The stone jars are to be found to this day on the plain of Xieng Khouang. Khun Chomtham, Khun Chuang's father ruled at Payao about 1096 A.D. It was not exactly known when Khun Chuang conquered Tongking. He did not come back to Payao, but stayed on in Tongking where he ruled among

the Vietnamese and married a Vietnamese princess called Nang Oukeo. Out of this union he had three sons, Aipharuang, Yeekamhao and Sarmchoomsaeng. Aipharuang succeeded him in Tongking, whereas he made Yeekamhao to rule over Lanchang (French: Lanxang) and Sarmchoomsaeng over the Kingdom of Nan. After Aipharuang it was known that Kaenphongsa, Aipharuang's son, ruled after the death of the latter. It was not known ever since what had become of the descendants of Kaenphongsa or who they were, Khun Chuang himself was killed in a battle with the Chams in the South.

But let us now return to Khun Lo who had been asked by his father Khun Borom to go down South and take Luang Prabang at the time called Sawa belonging to the Khas. The King who ruled Luang Prabang at the time was Khun Kanhang. The latter was already very old and his town was taken by Khun Lo in 737. The town was then recalled Chieng Dong Chieng Thong. The name Luang Prabang was not used until much later when Fangum brought the statue of Prabang over from Cambodia, a present from his father-in-law, the Cambodian king. Lanchang or Lanxang also has different interpretations. The modern interpretation is Million Elephants (if the word is accented), the valley of elephants (if not accented), but there was a region of Upper Mekhong River which the Chinese called Laanchhaang, which was also applied to the country. It was also mentioned in Fournereau's "Le Siam Ancien" as Yovana about A.D. 631.

Luang Prabang was first built by two hermit brothers. There is an old monastery in Luang Prabang called Wat Chieng Thong. At the bank of this monastery a rich merchant once landed. He was Chantapanich, trading by boat between Vientiane and Luang Prabang. Before he came to Luang Prabang, he had a strange dream and he went to a Buddhist priest asking him what it could have meant. The priest told him to go dack, to take a bath, have his meal first and then to come back to him. He did as he was told. The priest then told him that the dream was very auspicious. In going to Luang Prabang this time his oar will strike against gold and catch it up, do not take it, but proceed to Luang Prabang. He found as the priest told him and he went on until he reached Wat Chieng Thong. He found a lot of gold which he gave generously to the people. There was no king at the time and the people made him king. He found fabulous treasure underneath Wat Chieng Thong. He used it for meritorious and religious purposes, rebuilding and beautifying Wat Chieng Thong and built the sacred mount Wat Pousi where he buried part of the treasure underneath the pagoda. We do not know of the kings who followed him, but we know that at the time before Khun Lo came to the town, the country had a king called Khun Sawa or Chawa. After this king there were four other kings before Khun Kanhang. Khun Kanhang was very old when he fought Khun Lo and he

had a son called Khun Kolling and a grandson called Rawang, a great grandson called Yeepong. Khun Kanhang fled with his family to Muong Phanamtha. Khun Lo then reigned in his place. Khun Lo also fought a nearby town of Chieng Gnuat belonging to Khun Ket and Khun Karm. Khun Lo could not have stayed here very long because his father Khun Borom died in 748 and Khun Lo was called upon to become King of Nanchao.

It was mentioned that while he was at Luang Prabang, Khun Chet Chuang, his brother came to visit him from Xieng Khouang. In order that there will be no disputes over the territory according to the behests of their father the two brothers appointed a delegation of eight nobles to delimit very clearly the boundary line between both countries, to the satisfaction of both rulers.

Khun Lo left the country to his son named Khun Sawa to rule the country after him. We do not know what happened ever since until the time of King Suvanna Kamphong, the twenty-second king counting from Khun Sawa.

Khun Lo was known in Chinese records as Kolo-fong, one of the most redoutable kings of Nanchao. He ascended the throne after his father Khun Borom or Piloko in Chinese records in 749 when he was 36 years old. During his reign of thirty years it was estimated that he killed no less than 2,000,000 Chinese in the various battles. He had a son called Fong-Iah who was also a brave warrior.

His capital was at Nongseh now Talifu, but in 765 his son Fong-lah built another important town of Yunnanfu.

The first attack against the Chinese was when he took his wife on a visit to General Limi and he found that two Chinese officers badly treated the people. He complained to the Chinese Emperor who was silent about it. He therefore attacked General Chang and his army defeated the latter. The Chinese Emperor sent an army to punish him. He was willing to submit but the Chinese general would hear of nothing. The Chinese army entered Yunnan. Still King Kolofeng sent officials to negotiate but the Chinese general had them arrested and sent to the Emperor. The Chinese army then attacked Tali and at the battle of Hsia-Kwan the Chinese were beaten by Prince Fong-lah and General Twan of the Nanchao forces. More than 60,000 Chinese troops were killed that day. In 755 the Emperor Tien Pao sent another army to punish Kolofeng. Prince Fong-lah and General Twan again beat them back with very heavy losses. King Kolofeng died in 799 and since his son Fong-lah had already died before him, his grandson Imohsun succeeded him.

Five more kings succeeded to the throne of Nanchao when Shileng came to the throne in 860 and in 860 he attacked Tongking and took Hanoi in 863.

At the beginning of Lao History we could see four very flourishing countries. Apart from Luang Prabang, there was Xieng Khouang of Chet Chuang. Then to the

south around Thakhek we hear also of the Kingdom of Kotrabun, which moved its capital several times. One of the sites was That Panom on the right side of the river opposite Thakhek. As early as the third century before Christ this kingdom already existed and Vientiane belonged to this kingdom. We do not know whether this is the Kingdom assigned to Prince Thao Kom, one of Borom's sons or not. Evidence of history is lacking but there is no lack in old ruins. That Inhang at Savannakhet is one and Sikot South, of Thakhek, is another, but That Panom is supposed to be the oldest and most sacred in the reigon.

There was a legend about Sikot that a man by this name, just an ordinary man, or even a menial, was employed by the villagers to cook rice for them. He took some dirty stick to stir the rice with and so made the rice quite dark. When the villagers came back they would not eat and made him eat it. Now that stick happened to be a magic stick giving enormous strength to the person who tasted of it. Sikot became miraculously strong and performed Herculean tasks. The villagers made him their chief. He raised an army and fought the country around extending his sway far and wide. He also subjugated the Kingdom of Vientiane and married the daughter of the King of Vientiane. His father-in-law however still wanted to get rid of him but there was no means of putting him to death. His daughter therefore tried to help her father

by getting the secret out of Sikot. He could only be killed through the anus. So the father-in-law put an arrow at the bottom of the latrine pit and when Sikot went to ease himself at the pit of his water-closet the arrow flew through his body into the anus and killed him. Whether this story is true or not the villagers still told of him and the ruins of Sikot are still to be found to the South of Thakhek today, big temple and brick ruins overgrown with forests.

Another kingdom was Chinla to the South with the land capital at Vat Phu, for Chinla was divided into two parts—the Land Chinla and the Sea Chinla.

Muong Puan or Xieng Khouang was founded by Prince Chet Chuang, some said in 698, i.e. even before Khun Lo went to conquer Luang Prabang.

Here there was also a legend that he with his army came to this region and his two elephants, however spurred on, would not go any further but stopped across the way. He therefore found it as an omen to establish his town here and that is why the town is called Charng Kwang originally meaning the elephants barring the way. The people put up a statue to the memory of this incident just outside the town (at a much later date). The statue represents the two elephants. One can see that the town is really historical. All the mountain sides around the town are full of ruins. On the top of the hill overlooking the town are the ruins of Wat That Fun. There is a story

told about this That Fun—meaning dust pagoda—that a king sent a delegation to India to have a share in the relics of the Buddha. They came too late and all was gone except some dust left at the burning place. They took this dust to build this pagoda with, which they called That Fun. The site of the town was really well chosen because the climate is delightful and the land really very fertile so that all kinds of good vegetables grow there. But the country is small and in the midst of enemy around. The country is open to attacks throughout and has gone through many hard times. However the people were very brave and persistent, and their kings very patriotic so that somehow or other Chet Chuang's descendants kept on ruling down to the present day when the kingdom was at last given by the French to Luang Prabang and then incorporated into Laos after independence.

We hear now and then from the Kingdom of Prince Thao Kom of Kamkeut Kammuon. From a chronicle of Muong Puan (French : Pou-eune) it was recorded that in 1583 the ruler of Kamkeut Kammuon did grave offence to Muong Puan (Chieng Khuoang) and incurred an enormous fine which he could not pay and had to give up his town to the ruler of Puan. The names of rivers and mountain ridges were marked out as new boundary of Puan.

THE STORY OF MUONG PUAN OR CHIENG

KHOUANG (Puan was written Pou-Eune in French, and the CH of Chieng Khouang was written with X in Lao language).

During the early period of Muong Puan nothing was recorded and just like the early history of Luang Prabang there was an absolute void since its first king founded the country. A list of the names of kings was given and that was all we had of the country.

We know however from the history of neighbouring countries that during the first period the whole of this region Luang Prabang plus Vientiane plus Chieng Khouang and even Huapan were first under the suzerainty of Chiengsen, that one of the kings of this Chiengsen dynasty had fought his way and conquered the whole of this territory right down to the Gulf of Tongking. This is the famous Khun Chuang. After Chiengsen Kingdom was merged into the Kingdom of Lannathai there arose another powerful kingdom, the Kingdom of Sukhotai under Ramakamhaeng who ruled from 1275-1317. According to the inscription stone of Ramakamhaeng the whole of this region also belonged to him. It was only at the break-up of the Sukhotai Empire and the latter's annexation by Ayudhya that the kings of this region began to re-exert their independence. Thus Fagnum conquered both Laos and Chieng Khouang's realm and extended his sway towards the South which then belonged to Cambodia, but since Fagnum was the Cambodian king's son-in-law the latter was silent about it, and in fact allowed it as a dowry.

Thus the independence of Chieng Khouang passed from Chiengsen to Sukhotai and then to Fagnum.

The names of the various rulers of Chieng Khouang who came after Chet Chuang were: Chetchuan, Chetchod, Chetchue, Chetchan, Chetyod Yohkam, Chao Pra Yeehin, Chao Pra Kue, Chao Kamlun, Chao Kampeng, Chao Kamkhod, Chao Kamrong, Chao Kamchaek, Chao Kamphan, Chao Ruea, Chao Rueang (only as regent), Chao Kampin (Kamphan's son), Chao Kamton, Chao Kamtodeak, Chao Kamkuon, Chao Kamluon, Chao Kamnah, Chao Kamtao, Chao Kamkao, Chao Kamphong.

Kamphong was pro-Annamite. He married an Annamese of the Le family and therewith brought the Annamite attention and interest into Chieng Khouang's politics. He came to the throne in 1289. There were twenty-four kings before the time of Kamphong (Ph accented). King Kamphong had a son by the Annamese wife called Prince Khio Kamyor. The prince committed adultery with one of the minor wives of the King, his father. When the latter knew of it, the prince was banished to Borikane at Paksane until Prince Fagnum came and met him in 1349. Thereupon Prince Khio Kamyor prevailed upon Prince Fagnum to help him to take the throne of Chieng Khouang away from his father. Fagnum already wanted to have allies and more reinforcements for his attack on Luang Prabang agreed to help Prince Khio Kamyor.

**THE STORY OF FAGNUM (1353-1371),
BORN 1316, DEAD 1373.**

According to historical records there were twenty-one kings before Fagnum. We do not quite know what happened during this long period of almost six hundred years but the names of kings were given successively as: Khun Sawa, Khun Suay, Khun Soong, Khun Ket, Khun Kum, Khun Keem, Khun Kua, Khun Karng, Khun Kem, Khun Maeng, Khun Merng, Khun Mee, Khun Kam, Khun Rung, Thao Taen, Thao Yerk, Thao Pin, Thao Part, Thao Warng, Praya Lang, Praya Kamphong.

Thao Warng, according to some record Thao Luang, died in 1271. Praya Lang succeeded him and died in 1316 at the age of forty-five.

The nobles then invited Praya Kamphong to the throne as King Suvarna Kamphong. Suvarna Kamphong had a son called Khun Yakfah and Khun Yakfah had a son called Fagnum. Fagnum was born with thirty-three teeth and this was considered by court astrologers as ominous, but again his father Prince Yakfah who was never liked by his father and was even called Pheefah, meaning a devil, committed a severe crime against the king, by having sexual course with Nang Kamnan, a Khmer wife of the King. He was therefore banished from the kingdom and Prince Fagnum went along with him. With them also went several

escorts who later helped Fagnum to win the throne. They went on a raft as far as Lee Phee rapids where a Khmer monk living on the confines of the Khmer Kingdom, the Reverend Buddhist monk Pasma met them. He brought up and taught the young Prince for seven years, then he presented the two princes to the Khmer King then residing at Nakorn Thom or Intapat. The Khmer king brought Fagnum up as though he were his own son. Fagnum learnt a lot of things in the court of Cambodia and when he was sixteen, the Cambodian King gave his daughter, Princess Keo Kaengkanya, to be his wife, thinking thus to bind him up and to have in him an ally against the Thai who were then worsting him. The Kingdom of Sukhotai already took most of his territory in the West, while the rising Kingdom of Ayudhya had taken Lopburi, Nakorn Nayok and Korat. In 1352 the king of Ayudhya, two years after the foundation of Ayudhya, sent an army under Prince Ramesuen to take Angkor Thom. This expedition failed and another expedition was sent under Prince Pangua, who after a siege of one year took Angkor Thom in 1357. The King of Cambodia died during the fight. This left the whole of the North-East of Thailand, then still under the Cambodian Empire open to annexation by Fagnum. Fagnum already left Nakorn Thom in 1353 with an army given by his father-in-law to win back the throne of Luang Prabang from his grandfather

Other conditions in surrounding countries favoured the expansion of Fagnum. The Kingdom of Lannathai no longer had a strong ruler like Mengrai. King Phayoo of Lannathai, then having his court at Chiengsen, was weak. Further to the South, the Sukhotai kingdom was already declining under a weak and pious king Luetai (1347-1370). His kingdom was being gradually annexed by the new Kingdom of Ayudhya of the South. Prince Uthong was a great warrior. Before the founding of Ayudhya he already took away the whole of the South from the decadent Sukhotai kingdom down to Malaya. He also took Tavoy and Tenasserim from Pegu. He was succeeded by his son-in-law also known as Uthong who shifted the capital from Suparnburi, after a plague outburst, to Ayudhya and declared independence as well as made himself king of the new kingdom in 1350. The King was assisted by his brother-in-law, a son of the former king by a minor wife, also a very brave warrior, Prince Pangua. When King Loetai of Sukhotai died in 1347 there was an uprising in Sukhotai. Prince Uthong at once seized this opportunity to annex Chainat. The new king of Sukhotai, Luetai, after successful quelling of the rebellion sent a goodwill mission to Prince Uthong asking the return of Chainat, to which the latter acceded. King Uthong of Ayudhya died in 1369. He was succeeded by still another warrior king, Pangua. Under

him fresh attacks were made on Sukhotai. Kampaengpet was attacked in 1372 and 1376 but could not be taken. In 1375 King Pangua annexed Pitsanuloke and in 1378 he again attacked Kampaengpet. This time King Luetai came to conduct the defence in person. He was beaten and since then Sukhotai became a vassal Kingdom of Ayudhya. It was during these troubled times in Sukhotai that Fagnum annexed the northern portion of Sukhotai and conquered all the territory along both sides of the Mekhong up to the very frontier of Chiengsen city itself. The campaigns of Fagnum fell between 1351 and 1370 after which his excesses and abuses after the death of his queen caused the nobles to rise against him and banish him to Muong Nan out of the Kingdom, where he died two years later. Fagnum was considered to be one of their greatest kings by the Laos. He united the country into a powerful state and the extent of his country was probably the biggest ever known in Lao history. He put the territory of at least what would correspond to the heritages of three sons of Khun Borom under one sway and even more. In fact it must be said that indirectly the King of Ayudhya helped him. The Kingdom of Sukhotai was constantly attacked from the South so that Fagnum could expand in the north of these two territories. Cambodia was also placed by the Ayudhyans into such a position that Fagnum could also share in the spoil. Thus started a long career of Fagnum's

reunification of Laos, which meant also the annexation at the expense of decadent Sukhotai and Lannathai. For Sukhotai the term partition might also be used because the lower half was taken over by Ayudhya. When Fagnum started from Cambodia he was already thirty-three years of age. His father-in-law according to Thai history, was king Sirichundarat, gave him an army to go with, and Fagnum left Nakorn Thom in 1329. His first battle was at Pakkob which must be somewhere on the Chi River in modern Thailand, a tributary of the Mekhong. Phya Prommatat, the governor of the town, was cut down from the elephant's back and killed. He then proceeded to Kammuon territory. At Muong Kabong (Kotrabun) the governor Phya Nantasen fought with him but Phya Nantasen was defeated and fled towards Paktok where he was overtaken and killed. He made Kabong his headquarters in order to take all the towns around. From here he took Muong Champa, Muong Chim, Muong Cham, Muong Don Chakkae, Muong Chanang, Muong Chung, Muong Soke; from Soke he crossed the Hinboon River and took Muong Vieng. Then he went on to Namkading. The Governor of Muong Namrung, Phya Samkom, brought an army out to fight Fagnum and the latter sent out Bacheekhae to fight him. Phya Samkom was caught. He was attached with weights and

thrown into River Houei Bangbat. Fagnum then went into the town.

We have already seen that Chet Chuang's line of Khun Borom had ruled over Poueune or Chieng Khouang since the same time as Khun Lo of Luang Prabang. Then we found that Prince Kamphong was ruling in Chieng Khouang at that time, his son by a Vietnamese mother, Khio Kamyor, committed the crime of adultery with one of his father's minor wives. Fearing his father's wrath he fled to Paksane. He was now leading Fagnum's army against his father. Prince Kamphong could not withstand the army of Fagnum and submitted to him. Fagnum then put his ally, Prince Khio Kamyor on the throne instead in 1352. He followed Prince Kamphong who fled away, caught him and put him to death. Later Prince Khio Kamyor did not help Fagnum to fight for him, Fagnum then came back when he became King and took away two lady hostages.

After taking Chieng Khouang Prince Fagnum went on to the other side of Chieng Khouang and captured three Vietnamese towns. The Vietnamese capitulated and agreed to a treaty delimiting the boundary line between the two countries. Henceforth houses built on stilts will be Lao, the boundary line to be from Hin Samsao down to Tao Samkhwat River, and that the mountain ridges will be considered as the exact boundary line by looking at the flow of the water from the top of the ridges. If water

flows towards Lao side then the land will be considered to belong to Laos. Then he proceeded to take the towns of Northern Laos: Muong Thaen, Muong Sai, Muong Lai, Muong Kwang, Muong Home, Muong Kang Larn, Muong Singtao, Muong Hum and Muong Wat. He then took Bun Neua and Bun Tai, now in Phongsaly Province. Chieng-rung having heard of his advance was afraid and sent tributes to Fagnum. He organized the towns in the North of Laos and placed Bachim in charge.

He then with the help of his father and the Prince of Chieng Khouang, his new ally, marched towards Luang Prabang. He despatched his father, Yakfah around the back of Luang Prabang, by way of Nam Sueng and Nam Saeng. He himself marched towards Nam Khan in front of the town. His father arrived at Pak Houeisan in Nam Sueng, was taken ill and died there. Fagnum arrived in front of Luang Prabang. His grandfather, King Suvarna Kamphong, sent out an army to fight him several times but was each time defeated. Seeing that there was no way out and filled with shame of not being able to fight against his grandson he hanged himself. King Suvarna Kamphong had no other sons but only two daughters. The nobles and the people then went out and invited Prince Fagnum to the throne in 1353, at the age of 37. He made big rewards to the people who accompanied him on his exile and who helped him in his campaigns and gave them big titles. He had already united the whole of Laos,

with the exception of Vientiane and Viengkam. These two cities would not help him when he set out from Nakorn Thom saying that it was an ungrateful act to fight against the king who was his own grandfather and that king was good. The two governors had therefore kept out from the beginning.

King Fagnum left them for the time being. His next move was towards Chiengsen, a descendant of Kamphong's line of Khun Borom. He moved along the Mekhong River and took towns on both sides. At Muong Luak Prince Ulong came out and told him that he was Princess Keo Mahari's son and the Princess was King Suvarna Kamphong's daughter. He was therefore related to Fagnum. King Fagnum therefore told him, in that case he would do him no harm and that the prince should continue to govern at Muong Luak. King Fagnum then proceeded to Pakbeng and took it. He then went to Paktha and took Chieng Khong, Muong Kokram, Muong Chiengthong and Chiengtuen. From here he went on to take Muong Pua, Muong Pookoon and Muong Haen. After the census of all these places were made, he went on to take Muong Hin and Muong Gnao. He was now approaching Chiengsen when King Phayoo, residing then at Chiengsen, sent out an army under General Phya Senmuong to fight him. The latter was killed by Bakim and his army routed. Fagnum took Muong Paeo,

Muong Lem, Muong Rai, Ban Yoo, Muong Youang, Hua Puang right up to Chieng Khaeng. King Phayoo and King Fagnum then came to terms whereby the territory from Phadai downwards was to be ceded to Fagnum. The latter then went back to Luang Prabang. He evacuated a lot of Khas from Namtha and its neighbourhood to live in Luang Prabang. On arrival at his own capital his wife gave birth to a son called Prince Ounhuan.

THE CONQUEST OF VIENTIANE

In 1356 King Fagnum now marched to take Vientiane. He cut down towards Darn Sai, then in the tottering Sukhotai kingdom. Thao Kai was governor at Darn Sai and offered resistance. Babo and Bachikhae were then in the advanced guard of Fagnum's army. Babo fought with Thao Kai, caught him and put him to death at Chiengsom. Babo was then appointed Governor of Darn Sai. King Fagnum then crossed his army over to Tha Naneua, near to modern Sikai.

Ruling at Vientiane and Viengkam at the time were a father and a son, called Chiengmung, the father who ruled at Vientiane, and his son, Phya Pao at Viengkam. Phya Pao was an inhabitant of Nongkhai. Vientiane fell quite easily and Bachikhae cut down Chiengmung in a hand-to-hand fight on elephant's back. Phya Pao fled back to Viengkam.

Viengkam was more difficult to take and Phya Pao was a brave warrior. The town of Viengkam was surrounded by thick overgrowths of bamboo trees. King Fagnum then ordered his three generals' Bachim, Basiem and Bachikhae to make arrows of gold and silver and to shoot for three days into the bamboo groves surrounding the town after which he ordered them to retreat. In the meantime he crossed the Mekhong and took some more of Sukhotai territory: Muong Kenethao and Muong Nakornthai, making Bachikhae administrator of the new area acquired.

When the people of Viengkam saw that the army of Luang Prabang had already gone back they came out of the town, found gold and silver arrows in the thickets, they cut the bamboo trees down in order to get the gold and silver so much coveted. The town was therefore deprived of the natural rampart. King Fagnum waited until all bamboo trees were cut down, he then marched back and could easily take Viengkam. He then asked Phya Pao to fight with him on elephant's back. The two warriors fought for long hours with no advantage on either side. King Fagnum was very pleased with the valour of Phya Pao and reinstated him as Governor of Viengkam. After the taking of the twin towns of Vientiane and Viengkam, King Fagnum appointed

Bakoom as Governor of Vientiane and Basiem as administrator of all the Southern towns from Namrung Chiengsa down to Cham territory.

He also moved the inhabitants from Muong Khwa to people the village of Kadaefataeb just outside Vientiane, and then another batch to people the regions of Nongharn Noi, Nongharn Luang and Muong Sai, now somewhere in North-East Thailand.

Fagnum's next move was to conquer the region of Roi-Et and places around Roi-Et. History of Laos mentioned that he took this territory from Ayudhya, but in reality he was taking the region from his own father-in-law, the Cambodian King, who was by now become quite weak after Sukhotai had taken away the North-Western portion of his empire, and then with the rise of Ayudhya, the latter again took Lopburi, Nakorn Nayok and attacked Nakorn Thom. Nakorn Thom was taken by the Ayudhyans in 1357 and they stayed in Nakorn Thom six years during which they set up a pro-Ayudhya Cambodian governor. Sukhotai finally fell to the Ayudhyans only in 1379 when the town of Kampaengpet capitulated. According to Sukhotai inscriptions Sukhotai territory did not extend to Roi-Et. When Fagnum took Roi-Et it was either in 1356 or 1357 when his father-in-law could no longer object. In fact his father-in-law died in the midst of the fight against Ayudhya before the fall of Nakorn Thom.

The army of Fagnum composed at the time of 48,000 men and 500 elephants. He proceeded from Vientiane with Muen Kae and Muen Kabong as commanders of the advanced guard. The Governor of Muong Khwa commanded the right wing, Phya Muong Sai commanded the left wing, Muen Chan commanded the rear guards. Fagnum took Bueng Pragnarm and then went to Roi-Et. From Roi-Et he sent out armies to take Muong Prasard, Muong Prasakhien, Muong Praling, Muong Pranarai, Muong Pranatien, Muong Sekamard, Muong Sapang Seechae and Muong Pone Fingdad. All the governors were arrested and put to prison at Roi-Et and about to be executed when the Lord Abbot Pasman asked to spare their lives. They were therefore pardoned and reinstated as vassals of Luang Prabang.

After the conquest of this region King Fagnum stopped his army in Vientiane before going back to Luang Prabang. Here in Vientiane he celebrated his victories seven days and seven nights at the mouth of Pasak on the western side, now the technical college of Vientiane. For the celebrations he had caused 10 elephants, 1000 cows and 2000 buffaloes to be killed in order to give feast to his soldiers. He reorganized the pattern of national administration and defence, rewarded his men and then returned to Luang Prabang in 1357.

REVIVAL OF BUDDHISM

The people of Laos at the time must have already been Buddhists but the religion must have degenerated into animism. Sacrifices of animals of all kinds were made to appease the spirits. Queen Keokaengya (Queen Kamyard according to Thai history) was a Cambodian and a devout Buddhist. In Cambodia the Buddhist religion belonged to the purer form of the smaller vehicle coming from Ceylon. It pained the Queen to see the people divulging in animal sacrifices, so she asked permission of the King to bring Buddhism from Cambodia for the people of Laos. In 1357 which must have been just before the fall of Nakorn Thom a delegation with tributes and presents was sent to his father-in-law asking for the latter's help to send learned priests and relics. The King of Cambodia complied with Fagnum's requests and sent two high priests : Phra Maha Pasman, Phra Maha Devalanka with 20 other priests and three men learned in the Tripitaka called Norasing, Noradet and Norasart. He also presented Fagnum with the famous statue of Buddha called Prabang* ; the Tripi-

* Prabang was made in 874 in Ceylon by a Buddhist priest called Chulanagathera. King Srichularaj of Intapat sent an embassy to Ceylon in 1056 to ask the statue from King Subinraj of Ceylon. Prabang was supposed to contain five relics of Buddha : one in the forehead, one at the chin, one in the chest, one in the left arm and one inside the right arm. When it was being made people had contributed gold, copper, and brass to the monk Chulanagathera. The posture was that of peace, raising both hands to stop the fight between two armies.

taka and a sacred young Bodhi tree. Accompanying them were also selected craftsmen and five thousand retinue. They came up to a place called Muong Kae when the governess of Queen Keokaengya was taken ill and had to stop at Phainam two months, before she got well again. The news of the arrival of these people reached the ears of Fagnum and the latter sent a delegation of nobles to meet them at Muong Kae and to escort them to Vientiane, where the people flocked down to Had Donchan to see Phra Maha Pasman and worshipped him. They celebrated him three days and three nights before the company moved on to Viengkam, where the governor and the people came to celebrate them again. It was said that by some ostentatious omens the Prabang would not move away from Viengkam, the Prabang was therefore left in Viengkam and the company of priests and retinue went on to Luang Prabang. The king was very pleased and built a monastery for the Reverend Pasman to the north of Pak Houei Hope and called it Pasman monastery down to this day. The sacred Bodhi tree was also planted at this monastery. The Reverend Pasman had helped the Queen to preach the people and propagated the true faith far and wide in the Kingdom much to the happiness of the Queen, its high patroness. The Queen died in 1363. She had three children, two sons and one daughter : Thao

Ounmuong (sometimes called Ounhuan), Thao Kamkong and Princess Keoketkesi. When Ounmuong was born the astrologers prophesied that he was unlucky for the kingdom and had to be floated away on a raft. Phra Maha Pasma then picked him up and adopted him.

END OF FAGNUM.

After the death of the Queen, Fagnum led a very shattered and dissipated life. He no longer took interest in the affairs of the state and left them in the hands of the nobles. One Kwan Meesa collected taxation for the King but he went so far as to extract and squeeze a lot more out of the people in the name of the king and this made the king hated by the people. His old friends also seized opportunity of earning and getting better pay than everybody else. When the servants of his father were accused even slightly, they were severely punished. On the other hand when his own friends who went into exile with him to Cambodia were accused they were often pardoned or only slightly rebuked. This again caused great dissatisfaction. Moreover he went into excess of pleasure forcing wives of nobles and people to come and sleep with him. This was more than they could bear. The nobles at last rose against him and forced him to abdicate in favour of his son Ounmuong. He went into exile at Nan in 1371 where Phya Kamtan

was ruler and he died two years later. Phay Kamtan entombed the remains of Fagnum in the pagoda at Wat Chieng-Gnam in Nan.

KING SAMSAENTHAI (1373-1417)

Phya Ounmuong was born in 1356 and was hardly eighteen when he mounted the throne. Three years after his accession he made a general census of the country and found that there were about 300,000 families. This was why he was called Samsaenthai meaning king over 300,000 Thai. Samsaenthai was a peaceful king. He did not like wars as his father. Under his reign the country was prosperous and the people happy. He also encouraged Buddhism and built Wat Pakeo in Luang Prabang. However he did not forget about the defence of his country and reorganized the army into footmen, cavalry and elephantry. He reorganized the people into three classes, the nobles who must serve in the administration, the common people consisting of rice growers, merchants and craftsmen. These must help the country when and where necessary. And, lastly the servants who must serve the nobles.

King Samsaenthai was first married to Princess Taenfah, daughter of Prince Kamreo who was Fagnum's brother. He also had other wives, one Queen Noi-Onsor, daughter of the King of Ayudhya, and Queen

Keosida, daughter of the Prince of Chiengrung. Out of these unions he had ten children : five sons and five daughters -

Prince Larn Kamdaeng (from Queen Noi-Onsor),

Prince Luesai, sent to rule over Kabornng (Kotrabun),

Prince Wangburi (with Queen Keosida), who was sent to rule over Vientiane,

Prince Kamtersa (with Queen Keoyotfah), sent to govern Pakhoueiluang,

Prince Konkam (with Queen Noi-Onsor) sent to rule at Chiengsa,

Princess Keokumari,

Princess Anocha,

Princess Manora,

Princess Supattat,

Princess Mahakai (with Queen Keoyotfah). This princess died at the age of 5 and her ashes were entombed at Wat Sihom, Vientiane.

He also had the ashes of King Fagnum brought back from Nan and put it in the Kutai Pagoda.

During his reign he had to make two expeditions in spite of his peaceful inclination. Once he sent the Pou-Eune army to take Chiengsa and Muong Sien. The second time he sent two generals, Muen Hork and Saen Oon, to take Chiengsen, where the

king of Chiengsen submitted, sent tributes with Princess Noi-Onsor to become his queen.

King Samsaenthai died peacefully at the age of 60. His ashes were entombed in a pagoda at Wat Suanthaen built by his son, Lan Kamdaeng, who succeeded him.

KING LAN KAMDAENG (1417-1428)

Lan Kamdaeng came to the throne at the age of 30. He reigned only 11 years. During his reign he built the Monastery Wat Suan Thaen and put the ashes of his father Samsaenthai there. He had two sons : Prince Pommatat and Prince Yukon. He died in 1428 and the nobles built Wat Manorum to entomb his ashes.

PERIOD OF CONFUSION (1428-1438)

The power behind the throne during the next ten years was in the hand of Princess Pimpa or Keokumari, daughter of Samsaenthai. She was in love with a commoner and really wanted to have her lover raised to the throne. During this period she made kings as it pleased her, and if it did not please her she just got rid of him or had him assassinated. She also made her husband Saen Luang Chienglaw or Prime Minister. Thus seven kings met an unlucky fate at her hands :

1. Prince Pommatat, Lan Kamdaeng's son, was raised to the throne for 10 months when

- she got him assassinated at Phaparn.
2. Prince Yukon was next made king for eight months. Knowing that Princess Pimpa was taking his life he fled. However he was overtaken at Phadao and put to death.
 3. Prince Konkam, Samsaenthai's son, Governor of Chiengsa, was invited to the throne. After a reign of one year and six months the Princess again had him assassinated at Kokrua.
 4. Prince Kantamsa, Governor of Pakhouei-Luang, was then made king. He became King only five months when he felt that the Princess was trying to take his life. He therefore fled back to Pakhouei-Luang and there died one year after.
 5. Prince Luesai, Governor of Kaborng, was then invited to become king. He became king only six months when he knew that the Princess was going to kill him so he committed suicide in the royal garden.
 6. Prince Kaibuabarn, Governor of Chiengkai, was next invited to the throne. After a reign of three years the Princess had him assassinated at Sobkarn.

7. Prince Wangburi was next invited but knowing what he was up to he declined.

There was a man called Kamkert, King Samsaenthai's son born of a palace slave. He claimed that he was King Samsaenthai reborn, and everybody believed him because he remembered everything belonging to King Samsaenthai. Prince Pimpa then made him King. He died two years later after a fit in 1438.

Nobody would dare to become king after that and the nobles saw that all this happened because of the wicked princess. They therefore arrested her and her husband and put both to death after a painful torture at Phadio. She was 95 at her death.

INTERREGNUM (1438-1441)

During the time of this confusion the two venerable monks Phra Maha Pasman and Phra Maha Tepalanka died. The three learned men who came with them from Cambodia also died during the same period, but they left behind four children who became very brave officers of the Lao army. Norasing had two sons : Norasing and Noranarai. Noradet and Norarat left each a son. During this kingless period the affairs of state were left in the hand of two monks and the four children of the three learned men to look after. The two monks were Phra Maha Satthatoko of Wat Pakeo and Phra Maha Samuttakote.

The two monks together with the four learned men and the nobles went to invite Prince Wangburi of Vientiane to ascend the throne. Prince Wangburi was one of Samsaenthai's sons born of an Ayudhyan princess. He was given the name of King Chaiyachakkapat-Phaenphaeo.

**KING CHAIYACHAKKAPAT-PHAENPHAE0
(1441-1478)**

King Chaiyachakkapat had ten sons and seven daughters. He made his eldest son who ruled at Vientiane Viceroy or Prince of Chienglaw. Prince Muy was appointed Governor of Vientiane. The latter was instigated by the nobles to set up a separate independant country of Vientiane with the boundary line south of Luang Prabang at Kengchan rapids. When the king heard of this he sent his trusty men in disguise who lured Prince Muy to Donchan and then killed him. An officer, Phya Chan-Gnok by name, was appointed governor instead. The King's second son, Prince Taenkam, was made governor of Darnsai. The king had the Prabang statue of Buddha transported by boat to Luang Prabang but when it arrived at Kengchan rapids the boat capsized. The men escaped and recovered The Prabang statue which was put back in Vientiane again. In 1478 the Governor of Kenethao, Phya Patalibut, caught a white elephant and presented it to the king. The Emperor of Vietnam having heard of

this sent a delagation to ask for some hairs of the elephant. Prince of Chienglaw had always hated the Vietnamese for some reason or other. Instead of sending some hairs he put the excrement of the elephant in a case and sent it to the Emperor. The latter was offended beyond measure and at once sent an army under two generals, Bua Kwangchun and Nerg-Ong. It was said that the Vietnamese army was huge comprising of 550,000 men with 4000 officers. They marched in five columns against Luang Prabang. The king entrusted Prince of Chienglaw with the protection of the town. The Prince was ready with 200,000 men and 2000 elephants to face the Vietnamese, at Na Khaochao fields (now at Wat Visunarat). Prince of Chienglaw had six very brave commanders : Muen Luang, Phya Kwatepa and the four learned men - Norasing, Noranarai, Noradet and Norarat. The four learned men went to wait the Vietnamese at the foot of Poomung hills. They fought with the Vietnamese for three days killing a lot of the enemy until their arms were quite tired out and could not raise them any more. They then retreated towards the main body of the army at Na Khaochao Fields. The Vietnamese followed them up the next day. The Lao army went out to fight them at Na Mounkon and Na Haidio from midday until dusk. The two generals and the four learned men killed the

Vietnamese right and left until the whole earth was quite red and covered with corpses, yet the Vietnamese were so numerous, as more died more came on without end. At that time Phya Kwatepa was surrounded by four Vietnamese commanders. His friend Muen Luang together with Muen Bun came on to help Muen Kwatepa and Muen Neua. The six Vietnamese generals were killed but the two Lao generals were by now quite tired out and fell from the backs of their elephants. They were at once killed by the Vietnamese. Prince Chienglaw together with Muen Luang, Muen Bun and the four learned men fought bravely. The two generals, Muen Bun and Muen Luang, were killed in the midst of the fight. The four learned men were caught and impaled at Na Khaochao Fields. The prince himself was severely wounded and fled on an elephant's back towards the stable near the river. There he took a boat to cross the river. The boat capsized and the prince was drowned. King Chaiyachakkapat with all the royal family went on a boat and fled to Chiengkarn. The Vietnamese entered the city.

Prince Taenkam who was governor at Darnsai, having heard of the Vietnamese invasion, raised an army from Darnsai and Chiengkarn and went to the relief of the capital. The Vietnamese were taken by surprise when they were already very tired. They were routed and chased across the country through Muong Pou-Eune

into Vietnam. The Vietnamese suffered heavy losses and out of 4000 officers only 600 crossed the border alive. Bua Kwangchun was killed during the fight and Nerg-Ong was struck by lightning.

Prince Taenkam then went back to Luang Prabang. After he rallied all the men and inhabitants around him he sent a delegation of 20 priests to invite his father to come back. The king however declined, and abdicated in favour of his son Taentong. The king died the next year in 1479, at Chiengkarn, where he was cremated and his ashes enshrined in a pagoda at Wat Sob Chiengkarn.

KING SUVARNA BANLANG (1478-1485)

Thus Prince Taentong came to the throne as King Suvarna Banlang (which means the same thing as Taentong in a Pali form : the Golden Throne) after the abdication of his father in 1478. He was a brave warrior who saved the country from a foreign domination. He rebuilt the town which had been destroyed by the Vietnamese. He appointed Thao Khong, one of his brothers, to rule in his place at Darnsai. King Suvarna Banlang died in 1485 at the age of 41.

KING LAHSAINTAI PUVANART (1485-1495)

King Suvarna Banlang had no children. The nobles then invited Prince Lahsaintai, King Chaiyachakkapat's third son, Governor of Nongkae, to the

throne in 1485. At this time the relations with Ayudhya were very friendly. At his accession King Boroma Trailokanart of Ayudhya sent presents and a mission to represent him at the coronation. He continued the rebuilding of the city started by King Suvarna Banlang. He also conferred upon his brother Prince Visunarat the Governor of Viengkam the title of Phya Saenmuang or viceroy. He had a peaceful reign of ten years and died in 1495, leaving the throne to his son Prince Sompou who was still a minor of nine years of age.

KING SOMPOU (1497-1500)

Being a minor his uncle Prince Visunarat governed the country for him as regent for two years (1495-1497). The young prince then came to the throne and died three years after.

KING VISUNARAT (1500-1520)

Visunarat was invited to the throne. He was the son of Chaiyachakkapat. During his reign the country was peaceful. He had the Prabang statue at last transported in 1502 over from Vientiane by a land route this time, and put it first in Wat Manorom and when he had built a temple in Wat Visun, he placed it in this temple for public workship in 1504.

King Visunarat gave one sister, Princess Muennah, in marriage to Chao Sai and another sister, Princess Paen, to Kornkam, son of the Governor of Pakhouie-luang, and sent the latter to be Governor of Kabornng

in the South. He sent his own governess to be Governor of Kwa. It so happened that Kornkam, the Governor of Kabornng, had forgotten himself and would not recognize the king's suzerainty. An army was sent under Chao Sai to suppress him. Chao Sai was driven back. The King then sent the Governor of Muong Kwa who fought with Kornkam at Keng-Rangoke and put the latter to flight. The Governor of Kwa however overtook him and brought him back to King Visunarat. Kornkam confessed his crime and asked the king for pardon. It was given but he was put in the monastery as a priest at Wat Pakeo under the Sepreme Patriarch's surveillance.

Visunarat fostered literature and religion. Under his reign there were quite a number of learned priests well versed in the Tripitaka. Blank verse also became widespread. The Lord High Abbot Visunmahavihar-atibodi translated the original Sanscrit version of Panchatantra into Lao. The legend of Khun Borom was also written during this reign by Phra Mahatep-luang with the collaboration of Pra Maha Munkunsitthi, the King and other nobles.

Visunarat died in 1520 after a reign of 20 years at the age of 55 and was succeeded by his son Potisararat.

POTISARARAT (1520-1550)

Potisararat came to the throne at the age of

19. He was a good Buddhist and he went into priesthood at Wat Visun under two great teachers : the Reverend Sichanto, the Supreme Patriarch, who had studied a long time from Pitsanuloke, and the Reverend Maha Samutakote who had studied in Chiengmai.

Potisararat was married to a Chiengmai princess, Queen Yotkamtip. This is rather important because her father King Ketklao of Chiengmai died without a male heir, which gave Luang Prabang the right to the throne of Chiengmai through one of her sons. Out of this union, for the king always had many wives in the past, was born the famous Prince Sethathirat in 1534. The King of Luang Prabang had altogether five wives, and six children : Prince Sethathirat, Prince Lancharng, Prince Tarua, Princess Keokumari, Princess Kamlao or Taenkam, and Princess Kamkhai.

Being a good Buddhist and seeing that the people still believed in spirits he ordered its abolition asking the people to do away with house and altars built for the spirits, and everywhere he replaced them with Buddhist monasteries. He also paid a visit to the famous shrine of That Panom, a pagoda reputed to have been built over two thousand years ago by Emperor Asoka of India, according to Urangath chronicles of the kingdom of Kotrabun. There he

placed his two governesses with three thousand men in charge in 1539 in order to renovate and beautify it. It was said that during his reign he sent out three campaigns against Ayudhya. The first one to Pitsanuloke in 1535, the second one to Vieng Prangarm in 1539 and came back. On the occasion of accompanying his son to Chiengmai he sent out another army in 1548 to Vieng Prabung (now Sawangaburi) where his army commanders caught the governor and brought 1000 elephants together with 20,000 families back to people his country. During this period the King of Burma, Tabinshweti, was contemplating the attack of Ayudhya and wrote to Potisararat to attack Ayudhya from the North. Tabinshweti did attack and lay siege to Ayudhya the next year, 1549, where King Maha Chakrapat came out to fight. The king of Ayudhya was assisted bravely by his queen, his sons and daughters in this very tough fight to maintain independence, and, during one of the fights Queen Suriyotai with one of her daughters were killed by the Burmese when the two women were trying to save the life of their king from the invaders. King Tabinshweti in a vain attempt to take Ayudhya raised the siege and went back after four months. This was only the first of a series of attacks on Ayudhya, Chiengmai and Vientiane. The quarrels of the three brother states and the treachery of their own people

gave opportunity to the Burmese to gain mastery of all the three one by one.

CLAIM TO THE THRONE OF CHIENGMAI OR LANNATHAI 1548-1550

There was a revolution in Chiengmai and the rebel nobles led by Saendow put King Ketklao to death in 1545. King Ketklao had no male heir. While Saendow was looking for a suitable successor to the throne among the Shan princes, another group of nobles led by Munsamlan met secretly in Chiengrai and chose Prince Sethathirat of Luang Prabang, whose mother was King Ketklao's own daughter. Professor Hall in the History of South-East Asia however stated that this was a plot of King Potisararat to annex Chiengmai by instigating certain nobles to offer his son the crown. Munsamlan moved very quickly by a countermove and seized Saendow and all his confederates and executed them. Thus the claim of Potisararat for his son had no rivals, and of course he readily accepted. He accompanied his son with a large force so as to give no way for other possibilities or chances. It was said in Lao history that nine generals, 2000 elephants and 300,000 men went with him at the time by way of Chiengsen and Chiengrai. The people of Chiengmai came out to meet their future king with big ceremonies. Prince Setthathirat took two daughters of the late king, Princess Tontip

and Princess Tonkam, as his left and right queens. Seeing his son fully established King Potisararat went back to Luang Prabang by way of Darnsai. Here he stopped making stockades in order to hunt wild elephants into the stockades, on which occasion he had been able to catch 2000 elephants.

The king then decided to hold a demonstration of the taming of elephants in his capital in order to show his skill and power in public in front of all the ambassadors. Ambassadors from 15 different countries and principalities were invited to see the king roping wild elephants in Luang Prabang. During this demonstration the king participated riding on a female elephant. A wild elephant appeared and the king threw a lasso around it, but the wild elephant escaped towards the Mekhong River dragging the female elephant on which was the king with it. The female elephant fell down on its side with the king beneath severely hurt. The king still had consciousness enough to dismiss the ambassadors. He died only seven days afterwards in 1550.

The throne of Laos was again vacant. In the disputes for the throne the nobles were divided. The supporters of Prince Tarua invited this Prince to become king. Other group of nobles led by Phya Vieng, Saen Marong, and Kwan Darmpa supported Prince Lancharng who was born of an Ayudhyan

princess. Prince Tarua declared that the territory from Chiengkarn upwards belonged to him, whereas Prince Lancharng claimed the land south of Chiengkarn, and set up his quarters at Pakhoueiluang.

As the eldest brother, Prince Setthathirat saw the opportunity of occupying the throne of Lancharng. He therefore hastened back asking the nobles and priests of Chiengmai under Princess Chiraprabha's leadership to look after the affairs of the State for him in the meantime. In going away he took the Emerald Buddha, the Saekkam, and the Buddha Sihing images away with him. The Chiengmai people appealed and he said that he wanted them for temporary worship and would soon return them. He had no difficulty in putting down Prince Tarua in Luang Prabang. As for Prince Lancharng at Pakhoueiluang, he sent Phya Sisatthammatailoke down to catch him. The two armies fought at Kengsah and Prince Lancharng fled with his men to Muong Kaborng (now Thakhek). Phya Nakorn of Thakhek had them all arrested and handed over to Phya Sisatthammatailoke, who at once put to death Phya Vieng, Kwan Darmpa and Saen Marong, and took the Prince and his mother away. On the way Phya Sisatthammatailoke had the Ayudhan princess, mother of the Prince put to death, and took only the prince to see the King. King Seta-

pardoned his brother and put him in charge of Saenmuong. He also appointed Sisatthamma as governor of Vientiane; henceforth he was known under the new title of Phya Chantaburi. Phya Chantaburi had two temples built : Wat Chan and Pia Wat, to be found even to this day.

There was a story about the Saekkam image of Buddha that the king of Chiengmai sent ten men to look for it. They came to Luang Prabang and found it in Wat Visun near the Prabang image. When the guards were asleep the ten men cut through the window and tried to take away the Saekkam, the guards awoke and arrested them. The king pardoned them and let them go back to their king.

The story of Prince Lancharng did not end there. A Cambodian, Seromma by name was reputed to possess magic powers and he thereby gained influential adherents, among whom Phya Suratep and the brother of the prince's own mother. They plotted to kidnap the prince and take him to Ayudhya. The plot was discovered and they were all put to death by Saenmuong.

King Setahirat having heard of the heroic queen of Ayudhya who fought with the Burmese and was killed by the Burmese, he was quite moved with admiration. He wanted to marry the queen's daughter, Princess Tepkasatri. He therefore sent a delegation

in 1550 to the King of Ayudhya asking her hand in marriage. King Maha-Chakkrapat was quite willing to form an alliance with Lancharng to fight against the Burmese and agreed to the request. King Seta then sent an escort down to Ayudhya to bring back the princess, but the ambassadors arrived at a time when Princess Tepkasatri was very sick. The king therefore sent another daughter by another wife to King Seta-tirat. When the latter found out that this was not the Princess he intended to marry, he sent her back saying that he was unwilling to marry any other except Princess Tepkasatri. By this time the latter was well and she was sent with the escort. The Burmese however knew of this, went to kidnap her away from the escort just outside Petchabun. King Seta-tirat was very angry and it was because of this incident that he wanted to help the King of Ayudhya even more in the common fight against the Burmese.

While he was back in Luang Prabang to settle the question of his throne, the Chiengmai nobles put Mekuti on the throne. King Seta was very angry and in 1555 at once set about to attack Chiengmai. He advanced towards Chiengsen. Mekuti sent an army led by Phya Chaiyasen and Saen Noi to encounter him at Phadai. In the fight which followed Phya Chaiyasen was killed and Saen Noi fled to Chiengsen. Seta then proceeded to Muong Thin and asked Phya

Chantaburi to take the town of Chiengsen. Now Phya Chantaburi had a personal enemy Phya Takkhin. Phya Takkhin went to the king and told him that Phya Chantaburi hesitated to take Chiengsen because he was friendly towards the enemy. He then came back to Phya Chantaburi and made as though he was deeply concerned with the fight. He suggested to Phya Chantaburi that the enemy was strong and it would be difficult for him to take the town, it was therefore better to retreat and wait for a better opportunity. Phya Chantaburi agreed and came to advise the King. The latter was very angry and had him executed. He then sent out Phya Muong Kang to storm the town and take it by force. Saen Noi escaped to Pegu where he brought back the Burmese army. King Seta stayed in Chiengsen since he found it better to rule both Chiengmai and Luang Prabang from a central point like Chiengsen.

At the time the power of Burma was rising, Bayinnaung who succeeded Tabinshweti in Burma had been able to quell the risings and proclaimed himself king of a unified country in 1555. He next conquered all the Shan principalities of the North and took Chiengmai in 1556. Mekuti was king at the time. He wanted to make Chiengmai his base for the attack on Ayudhya. After the occupation of Chiengmai by Bayinnaung Seta-tirat retreated back

to Luang Prabang, but when the Burmese went away he came back to Chiangmai to reassert his claim over the country. The Chiangmai army was defeated in 1558 when Bayinnaung again appeared and drove out the army of Sethatirat. Mekuti was taken to Pegu where he died in captivity and the Burmese left Princess Chiraprabha as regent.

Luang Prabang now lay open to easy attacks from the Burmese who were only nextdoor. King Seta* in 1560 therefore moved his capital to Vientiane. There he built palaces, several monasteries and the famous temple of the Emerald Buddha, to which place he took both the emerald Buddha and the Saekkam statues from Luang Prabang, leaving only the Prabang image at the old capital. In 1566 he started the rebuilding of the famous That Luang Pagoda. This famous shrine was supposed to have been built by Emperor Asoka over two thousand years ago. He built also Wat That Foon, at the time called Wat Pah Rüshi Sanghorn. He had many famous statues of Buddha also made, i.e. Phra Ongtue, Phra Suk, Phra Serm and Phra Sai. Another famous pagoda he made was the one on the old site of Sikotrabun below Thakhek.

His reign was an important one from the fact that he alone among all kings of the great Thai stock had been able to resist the attacks of one of the greatest conquerors of the peninsular. All other

* Shortened form of sethatirat.

kingdoms and principalities had fallen. The biggest of all Thai States, the Kingdom of Ayudhya, fell to Bayinnaung on the 30th August 1569. The fortifications were pulled down, the king taken away to Pegu in captivity, and most of the people were taken away to Burma so that the country could no longer offer any more resistance. But Sethatirat withstood all attacks of the great Bayinnaung. The latter could not take Laos even after two big invasions. It was not until Sethatirat's death that Vientiane fell after the third Burmese attempt in 1574. Had he only lived longer and not been ignominiously lured away to be murdered out of personal grudge by a Phya Nakorn down in the South, perhaps Vientiane would never have fallen and the country might have been led to more glorious stability.

In 1563 he went down in big procession to Nongharn and waited there to receive his future queen, the famous daughter of Queen Suriyotai of Ayudhya who gave her life for the country. Back at home in Vientiane he put Prince Phakhao of Chiang Khouang, Phya Poomtai and other nobles to protect the town. During the same period two dissident Chiangmai nobles—Phya Samlan and Saen Noi—ran away from the Burmese in Chiangmai and came for protection in Vientiane. Bayinnaung's son Immale pursued them to Vientiane, took Vientiane during Seta's absence and

took away Setha's two princesses : Nang Kamkhai and Nang Taenkam. Princess Taenkam's mother, Phya Nakorn and the Viceroy. On Setha's return he was very angry and had Prince Phakhao, Phya Poontai and many nobles executed for letting the Burmese enter the town.

After the first siege of Ayudhya in 1563-64 whereby the King of Burma extracted war indemnities and some generals as hostages out of the King of Ayudhya, the country was now divided in two. Prince Tammaraja of Pitsanuloke who helped the Burmese to take Ayudhya was pro-Burmese and therefore hated by King Mahindara, although Tammaraja was his son-in-law. In league with King Sethatirat he prepared to attack Pitsanuloke and to arrest Prince Tammaraja in 1567. He went up the river whereas King Sethatirat came down from the North by way of Nakornthai. Prince Tammaraja did not know that Sethatirat came at the request of Mahindara, he therefore sent messages to the latter for help. The latter sent Phya Siharat Dejo and Phya Tainam in advance of him and asking them to have Prince Tammaraja arrested as soon as the army of Lancharng could enter Pitsanuloke. Phya Siharat Dejo betrayed the secret to Prince Tammaraja, who on hearing of the arrival of King Mahindara asked him to stay outside the town while he sent down rafts with burning

fire to destroy the war canoes of Mahindara and put his fleet to rout. Tammaraja sent for help from the Burmese. Setha's army was digging ditches underneath the town walls and was about to get into the town when two Burmese generals sent by Bayinnaung, Phya Sua Harn and Phya Pugam, appeared to relieve the town. The army of Setha was repulsed. In his retreat Setha feared that the enemy would follow him up so he placed his soldiers hidden on both sides of the Varee narrow pass sending out another regiment to lure the enemy into this pass where the Burmese were heavily butchered and put to rout. King Sethatirat then went back to Vientiane safely.

The second expedition to help Ayudhya was in 1569. Again Ayudhya was besieged by overwhelming odds of the Burmese army under Bayinnaung. King Maha-Chakkrapat who had been allowed to come back to Ayudhya died during the siege. King Mahindara who succeeded him did nothing but gave the matters entirely to a very brave general Phya Ram who was assisted by a dauntless boy prince Sri Sawaraj. The town could not be taken by any means because of the stout resistance of these two selfless men. Phra Mahindara had sent Khun Rajsena and Khun Mahavichai to ask Sethatirat for help. The latter at once moved down with an army by way of Muong Pragnarm. The people of Pitsanuloke told Prince

Tammaraja who at once sent message to the King of Burma.

By a very low trick the King of Burma had written to the wife of Phya Ram saying that all this misluck happened because of one man, Phya Ram, if only Phya Ram could be surrendered Ayudhya could easily be saved because the King of Burma would be happy to withdraw from the country. The matter was reported to King Mahindara who handed over the bravest of all generals to Bayinnaung. Bayinnaung would not keep any promise but demanded unconditional surrender. The fight continued. Now that Bayinnaung had Phya Ram under his power he therefore forced Phya Ram to write to King Sethatirat saying that the Burmese were getting very weak through lack of provisions and to ask him to attack by way of Saraburi at once. King Sethatirat readily believed the message but the Burmese army was lying in ambush for him at Saraburi. Sethatirat sent Phya Chankongnang in advance where they met the army of the Prince of Taungoo. The latter was killed and the Burmese army defeated. After this defeat Phya Nakorn advised the king to follow up the victory but Phya Saensurin advised against it asking the king to wait until the Burmese army retreated and then to follow them. Phya Nakorn however would not agree and the king followed Phya Nakorn's advice. Phya Nakorn and

Phya Pet, his son, went out in advance crossing over the Pasak River into the plains of Ayudhya where they came face to face with the army of the Burmese viceroy. Phya Nakorn and his son were beaten back and retreated to the main army of King Sethatirat. Phya Saensurin and his friends tried to ward off the the enemy so that the king and the main army could cross the Pasak River over to the other side. Sethatirat received a heavy blow and he lost quite a number of soldiers.

Ayudhya was taken by treachery. Even though their best general was given away they still resisted. Bayinnaung then sent Phya Chakri who had been his captor back to town in chains in the semblance that he had escaped from the Burmese. King Mahindara believed him, put him in charge of the army, when secretly he opened the gates to the Burmese and Bayinnaung entered the city. Thus Ayudhya had at last fallen. King Mahindara was taken away as a captive where he died on the way. The Burmese put the Pro-Burmese Tammaraja on the throne with a Burmese garrison.

His ally had fallen, it was now Sethatirat's turn single-handed. Bayinnaung recruited soldiers from his vassals, the Ayudhyans, the Chiengmais, the Shans in addition to his Burmese and now marched on Vientiane in 1570.

King Setha therefore took counsel with his prime minister Saensurin. The latter said that it would be impossible to fight Bayinnaung face to face so he advised evacuating the whole town into the forests beyond Nam Gnüm and then sending out armies to harass the enemy preventing them from getting provisions. The king agreed and the whole town was evacuated. King Bayinnaung approached, took all the towns on the opposite bank of the Mekhong and crossed the river. He followed the Laos to Nam Gnüm and encamped there, but finding nobody coming out to fight him and as it was rainy season he retreated back into Vientiane. When his soldiers went out to find food they were always attacked by the Lao patrols around. The Burmese soldiers were starved. Many also died from illness. Bayinnaung had to order a retreat. Saensurin then followed up the retreating army killing a lot of the enemy and capturing many elephants and prisoners. After this victory King Sethatirat came back to settle down in Vientiane with all his soldiers and inhabitants again. The enemy was not ready to come back until four years later and after Sethatirat's death.

SETHATIRAT'S LAST DAYS

At that time a certain Phya Nakorn and the ex-patriarch of Wat Machimavat living at Muong

Nakorn had personal grudge against the king for having put them in disgrace. They sent false message to the king saying that the Prince of Ongkarn is now dead leaving behind two beautiful daughters, Nang Tapkaya and Nang Utumporn, who would like to come and live with the king. Ten men and two priests who brought the message were intercepted on the way by the Governor of Muong Sai and would not allow them to go on to the capital. but the two priests escaped and delivered the message. The king then sent four nobles to Ongkarn. When they reached Ongkarn which was supposed to be Attopeu now, the nobles could not gain admittance to see the ruling prince who was greatly offended when he heard of the message and drove the king's ambassadors away. Phya Somepamit, the leader of the party, came back by way of Muong Nakorn and told Phya Nakorn about it. Phya Nakorn pretended as though he was very angry and advised Phya Somepamit to tell the king to come and take Ongkarn, he himself would help the king in every way.

In 1572 King Sethatirat brought out an army to take Ongkarn. Phya Nakorn then led the king and his army into ambush where he placed his own men hidden in the forests. The king's army was attacked unaware and routed. Phya Nakorn led the king across the river and then disappeared into the forest. It was

believed that he must have murdered the king in the wilderness. Phya Saensurin and Phya Chankongnang brought the rest of the army which suffered heavy losses back to Vientiane. Thus ended in the meanest and basest manner one of the greatest monarchs of Laos who had saved the country from foreign domination. For the Khas of Attopeu however the king did not die, for they believed him to possess magical powers. From the bottom of the Mekhong where he was thrown in he broke up the water and came up, lurched among the trees in the forest and appeared to them from time to time. King Saiya Sethatirat lived on in the memory of the Khas. Many wonderful stories were still told about him in the South, where he came back and led the Khas on to various enterprises. King Seta was born in 1534, and died at the age of 38 after having reigned 24 years. He left a son of 5 behind, Phra Nohmuong, whose mother was Saensurin's daughter.

SAENSURIN (1572-1574 and 1580-1582)

Seta's son being very small, the power was supreme between the two commanders-in-chief who had fought many wars together under Sethatirat: Saensurin and Chankongnang. Saensurin was grandfather to Nohmuong on the maternal side and he claimed the right of protection over the royal child. He would

either become regent or even king himself. Chankongnang wanted to make sure that Nohmuong became king at once, so that he would not have to acknowledge any other illegal power over him. In the fight which ensued between the two parties Chankongnang was killed. Having now got rid of his rival, Saensurin (in French Sene Soulinta) proclaimed himself king but the people called him Sumangala-Aiyako or the Royal Grandfather and not by his own name.

Saensurin had a wonderful career. Born a common man in 1511 and a native of Nongkhai named Mr. Chan, he went to study at Luang Prabang under the learned patriarch Sichanto, who was also King Potisararat's teacher. After that he joined the service of King Potisararat and constantly rose in rank since he was a clever man and very much liked by Potisararat. He was appointed Governor of Pakhouei-luang, now near Ponepisai, near his home town of Nongkhai. He helped the king to take Chiengsen and was made Phya Saensurin by Potisararat. During the reign of Sethatirat he was tireless in helping the latter to build up Vientiane into a capital and to build the That Luang. He was also a great warrior and helped the king in the various campaigns. He gave his daughter as wife to King Seta, out of which union Nokeo or also called Nohmuong was born. Saensurin as grandfather of the royal child had

all the right to become regent and to protect him, but much less as a king. The people did not respect him and they ran away to other lands in big numbers. He was 65 when he proclaimed himself king. His accession at once gave a pretext to the Burmese to invade Vientiane and place their protégé, the Oupahat, brother of Sethatirat, whom they had taken away to Burma in 1565, and whom they had burmified, on the throne. First they sent envoys who were killed and then an army with Phya Dala, a Mon commander-in-chief, to open negotiations. Saensurin delayed by all sorts of evasive answers in order to cut off their supplies and force them to go home, which was what indeed really happened. Phya Dala was forced to retreat and Saensurin's army followed up in hot pursuit killing a lot of the enemy and putting them to rout. On return to Burma Phya Dala was put to death by Bayinnaung. In 1574 Bayinnaung came himself with an army. The Lao people were already tired out by so many wars and they had no mind to fight for a man who did not come from a royal family. Bayinnaung had no difficulty in taking Vientiane and put the Oupahat Vorawongse, his protégé, on the throne in 1575 as a vassal ruler. Bayinnaung took Saensurin and Nohmuong with him to Burma.

As already related above the people did not believe that King Sethatirat had died. And so appeared

a man in Attopeu who claimed himself to be Sethatirat. He gained a lot of adherents especially among the Khas of Attopeu and could organize an army marching up towards Vientiane. An army was sent out by King Vorawongse to fight them but was beaten back. The new Setha then took Viengkook. Vorawongse escaped in a boat with his two daughters but his boat capsized at a rapid and all were drowned. The fake Sethatirat then entered Vientiane in 1579.

This necessitated another move from Bayinnaung. He sent another army under Insaenanku, the viceroy, to suppress the rebels. The rebellion was put down and Bayinnaung had to put back Saensurin on the throne again in 1580. The latter was already too old. He died two years after. The nobles then put Phya Nakorn Noi, Saensurin's son, on the throne, but the people hated him as a wicked man and a commoner like themselves. The people therefore rose against him, had him arrested and sent to Pegu. Since then there was nobody to rule over Vientiane for a period of nine years. Meanwhile Prince Nohmuong became twenty years of age, old enough to rule, but he was still kept in captivity in Pegu. The nobles and the priests therefore sent a delegation to Pegu to ask back Prince Nohmuong which was granted by Nanda Bayin, the King of Burma then.

So Prince Nohmuong came back to his country in 1591 and was crowned king.

KING NOHMUONG (1591-1598)

Nohmuong declared independence from the Burmese in 1593 after the country remained under Burmese yoke 18 years. However the Burmese never ceased to harass the country again from time to time, and meddled into Lao politics.

Two years after independence Nohmuong helped the Prince of Nan also to rebel against Burmese control. The latter failed and had to flee with his whole family to Vientiane for refuge.

Nohmuong died in 1598 at the age of 27 leaving no child to succeed him.

VORAWONGSA

Princess Damkhai, youngest sister of King Sethatirat, was married to a man called Phra "Vorapita". They had a son called Vorawongsa. At the time of Nohmuong's death, Vorawongsa was very young to be king. The nobles had elected him as their king and so Vorapita acted as regent for his son.

As a result of the campaigns of King Naresuen of Thailand into Burma, the Laos who had been captured and taken away to Burma had a chance to run away home. They came through Chiengmai and the King of Chiengmai tried to stop them and send them back to Burma, but Vorapita sent an army to help them and bring them home. During this expedition he had been able to take Muong Payao, Muong Serng, Muong Lo, Muong

Chiengsen, Muong Hang, Muong Chiengrai and laid siege to Chiengmai but could not take it.

When the army came back the Regent would not allow them to enter the city gates. He was angry that they had failed to take Chiengmai. He even wanted to execute the army commanders as a result they kidnapped King Vorawongsa with them and took him to the Royal Plaza outside the town. They then marched to take Vientiane. The two sides fought fiercely for four months with a lot of casualties on both sides. The priests therefore assembled together and tried to reconcile father and son. They assembled at Don Chan beach in front of the town and brought Phra Vorawongsa to his father to apologize. Vorapita then proclaimed Vorawongsa king and transferred all powers to his son. He then retired with his whole family to a quiet life at Nakorn Panom in 1603.

King Vorawongsa had two sons, the crown prince (name not known) and Mom Kaeo. In 1621 the King took his wife and sons to Luang Prabang to pay homage to the Prabang Image. Somebody accused the crown prince of an attempt to seize the throne. The King therefore ordered that his son be executed. The crown prince knew of it before hand and so he fled away with his men. The king sent Mom Chai in pursuit to Wat Nammong and then to Viengkook. His father followed after. During the fight between

father and son most of the nobles went over to the side of the crown prince. The king was heart-broken. In a ceremony of pouring water of libation he gave the kingdom to his son and then fled with his family and intimate friends towards Ban Chiengdeng. The crown prince sent one of the nobles who overtook him at Ban Chiengdeng and had the king and all the family executed on the spot.

The crown prince however survived his father by only nine months. He died in 1622 at the age of 25.

The nobles then invited Phya Mahanam who ruled at Sikotabong to the throne. He was already 71 years old. He ruled only four years and died in 1627.

The nobles and the elders then invited Mom Kaeo, King Vorawongsa's second son to the throne. He had two sons, Chao Tom and Chao Vichai. He appointed the former as crown prince. His reign was an unfortunate one. The country was not yet at peace and nobody could trust anybody. The throne was not so secure. The princes and the nobles collected men for themselves and often quarrelled or fought with each other. His son succeeded him after his death known as King Tonkam. This king had three sons, Prince Sompoo (the eldest), Prince Bunsoo (the second) and Prince Suriyawongsa (the youngest). Now the king's brother, Prince Vichai, had also two sons: Prince Pu and Prince Soi.

KING SURIYAWONGSA (1633-1690)

Of the three brothers the nobles supported the youngest, Suriyawongsa, and raised him to the throne after Tonkam's death. This opened a way for the elder brothers and their successors to have a claim to the throne as soon as opportunity offered itself. Suriyawongsa however was a strong king. Under his administration the country was peaceful again and thriving. Conditions and natural resources in the country lured merchants from afar to come for trade prospects. His first act when ascending the throne was to get rid of all the possible claimants. This he did by expelling his two elder brothers and the children of his uncle, Prince Vichai.

His eldest brother, Prince Sompoo escaped with his wife to Hué along with his friend Saentip who lived at Nabua. A son was born to him there and was called Sai-Ong-Hué because he was born at Hué. Prince Sompoo died in Hué and his wife married Saentip and bore another son Ong-Nong.

The second brother, Prince Bunsoo, went into priesthood at Poo Ho Poo Hong and died there.

Of his two cousins, Prince Pu went to Nakorn Panom, where he died leaving a son Prince Nantararat. Prince Pu's brother, Prince Soi, went to live at Sapduang.

King Suriyawongsa had only one son, the crown prince (name not known). He had also two daughters, Princess Kumari and Princess Sumangala. The latter had two sons, Prince Ong-Lo and Prince Noh-Kasat.

King Suriyawongsa was always very strict even with his own son and when the latter committed adultery with Thao Ko's wife, one of the king's pages, Thao Ko complained to the king. The king had the matter investigated and when the crime was found out he had his only son put to death. This very much complicated the question of succession even more, and it was the cause of dissension and quarrels between the various members of the royal family, since the direct heirs available were not able to rule at the king's death. These quarrels had very disastrous results because it led to the division of the country into three parts, and the internal quarrels brought in foreign neighbouring powers which ended up with the loss of independence for all three alike.

Whatever all this may have led to, it must be said that Suriyawongsa was a good, benevolent, just and enlightened monarch. He was a great patron of religion and arts. Many famous literary masterpieces were the products of his reign, like Sinxay, Poo Son Larn, Larn Son Poo, etc.. He also fostered good relationships with Ayudhya at the time under King Narai, the friend of Louis XIV of France. Instead of

disputing each other's territories the two monarchs sent delegations to fix the boundary between the two countries and swore by religious and solemn vows that they would respect the boundary so marked. They built the Pagoda of Songrak (the two loving each other) at Dansai in memory of the occasion. From this pagoda measurements were made so that the distance from this pagoda to Nam Nan on the Thai side and Mekhong on the Lao side was equal. This boundary stone was now to be seen at Ho Pakeo in Vientiane.

There were however expeditions against the inland State of Chieng Khouang, whose ruling prince, Prince Kamsan, refused to give the hand of his daughter, Princess Kenchan, in marriage to Suriyawongsa, and this very much enraged the monarch of Vientiane. The first expedition was beaten back. Suriyawongsa sent another army which took Chieng Khouang, forced Prince Kamsan in 1651 to give up his daughter to him.

Foreigners from distant countries came to visit his country for the first time in Lao history. First the Dutch Van Wuysthof who arrived in 1641 for trade prospects with Laos. Because of the difficulty of voyage and also the rapids in the river it took the foreigner several months to arrive in Vientiane at the time. Then came an Italian missionary Giovanni-Maria Leria in 1642 to start missionary work but because

of the objections of the Buddhist clergy he stayed five years and could not achieve much.

Another important visit was the prince of Chiengrung, Intakumarn, and his sister Princess Chantakumari, who fled away from Ho invasions of his country. Princess Chantakumari was then married to the crown prince and had two children, King-Kitsarat and Intasom, both boys. The crown prince was afterwards put to death by the king, his father, as related above.

Prince Intakumarn of Chiengrung took a Lao wife, Nang Kam, and had a son called Prince Ong-Nok.

King-Kitsarat, Intasom and Ong Nok were brought up together and were very much attached to Prince Intakumarn.

King Suriyawongsa died in 1690 at the age of 82 after a reign of 57 years.

FIGHTS FOR THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION

After the death of Suriyawongsa, the direct male heirs were his two grandsons, King-Kitsarat and Intasom. Of course they were much too young to rule and this gave rise to successive quarrels for the throne. There were at least six claimants to the throne besides a usurper, Phya Chan, the Prime Minister. Thrones had to be created for the various claimants

and the country was split up into three portions. Luang Prabang in the North was cut off from Vientiane. Then in the extreme South the country of Champasak, which up to now was inhabited mostly by Khmers, had streams of settlers from the North Eastern provinces of Thailand and gradually changed the region into a Lao country. This became a separate kingdom as a result of the disputes during this period, called the Kingdom of Champasak or Bassac in French. In all three kingdoms, not to count the quasi-independent principality of Chieng Khouang, which would be four in all.

Luang Prabang was separated from Vientiane in 1707 and Champasak broke away in 1713. In order that each may not be harassed by the other, Vientiane sought the support of the Burmese, Luang Prabang sought the support of the Thai, Champasak sided with the Thai whereas Vietnam recognized Chieng Khouang and expected the rest to pay tributes, with the result that Chieng Khouang paid tributes to both Vientiane and Vietnam considering that her position was in the middle of both. Because of all this arrangement it was very easy at the arrival of the French in Indochina for the latter to put forth a claim that all these countries belonged to Vietnam and must go to France since France had now become the overlord of Vietnam. At first all went well with Vientiane when Ayudhya

was hardpressed by the Burmese with the subsequent fall of Ayudhya as a result. The Burmese even helped Vientiane to take Luang Prabang. But, as soon as King Taksin had liberated Thailand at last, then Vientiane fell, and after it also Luang Prabang to Dhonburi and Bangkok.

When King Suriyawongsa died Phya Muong Chan at once seized the throne in 1690. He murdered the husband of Princess Sumangala and wanted to marry her, and as the latter did not agree, he now wanted to get rid of her and her son, Prince Ong-Lo. Some of the nobles took Ong-Lo secretly to hide at Muong Panpoochon (now in a rural area outside Udorn). The Princess fled for protection with the Lord Abbot of Wat Ponesamet. This priest was very much respected by the people and had a lot of adherents. The king was very angry and wanted to get rid of the priest also. The priest therefore fled with the Princess and their attendants down the Mekhong to a place called Ban Ngiupanlamsomsanuk where they stopped and the princess went to hide in the hills of Poosangor Horkam and there she gave birth to a son, Prince Noh Kasat.

The partisans of Ong-Lo now collected together and marched on Vientiane, seized the usurper and put him to death. They then proclaimed Ong-Lo king.

Now Prince Pu who lived in exile at Nakorn Panom since Suriyawongsa's accession to the throne had died leaving a son, Prince Nantarat. The latter saw the chance out of this confusion to secure the throne for himself, he therefore collected together enough men from Nakorn Panom and various towns in the South and then marched on Vientiane. Ong-Lo's army was defeated and Ong-Lo executed.

Nantarat became king in 1695. He ruled only three years when Prince Sompoo's son, Sai-Ong-Hué, who also lived in exile since Suriyawongsa's time asked for the assistance of the Vietnamese and came to Vientiane. He caught Nantarat and had him put to death.

Sai-Ong-Hué proclaimed himself king of Vientiane in 1698, and was known under the title of Sethatirat II. He then sent his half-brother, Prince Nong, to take Luang Prabang in his name and rule there.

The two small princes, Suriyawongsa's grandsons, Prince King-Kitsarat and Prince Intasom, fled with their half-brother, Prince Ong-Nok, and with their men from Luang Prabang. Prince King-Kitsarat and Prince Ong-Nok fled to Muong La Muong Pong in Sibsong Panna, and Prince Intasom to Prae (now in Thailand). Intakumarn, Ong-Nok's father, also went back with his family to Chiengrung (Keng Hung).

Chiengrung is the capital of the Shan States in China or Sibsong Panna. Pong is a little bit to the North of Chiengrung. Muong La is also another town in Chinese Sibsong Panna now.

In 1706 Prince King-Kitsarat and Prince Ong-Nok raised an army and came down to take Luang Prabang. Prince Nong was defeated and he took the Prabang and Pra Saekkam images with him in his flight to Vientiane, where the Prabang was put at Wat Pasak Luang. King-Kitsarat appointed Prince Ong-Nok viceroy. He then marched against Vientiane. The army sent out by King Sai-Ong-Hué under his half-brother, Prince Nong, was defeated time after time. In the end King Sai-Ong-Hué appealed to King Petraja of Ayudhya for help. King Petraja was related to him because Sai-Ong-Hué sent one of his daughters in marriage with Petraja. The latter therefore sent an army up and asked both sides to stop hostility to which they now both agreed. Both sides agreed in 1707 (date of secession of the North from the South) that they would both recognize each other and that the Nam Heuong above Chiengkarn and the Nam Mei above Vientiane will form the boundary line between their countries. Thus Laos was now formally divided into two brother States: the Kingdom of Luang Prabang Lanchang Homkhao and the Kingdom of Vientiane. This was not all. The Lord Abbot of

Pone Samet who fled with Princess Sumangala and the new born Prince Noh Kasat now headed for the South, first to Phnom Penh, then to Stung Treng (Chieng Taeng), then to Khong and finally settled down in Champasak. Having found there a big colony of Thai-Lao people he saw that there was a necessity of having a stable government and a ruler. The Reverend Abbot and the people then invited Noh Kasat to become king under the name of King Soi Seesamut in 1713. Thus the Kingdom of Champasak was formed and Laos found three kings ruling at the same time apart from Chieng Khouang.

In fact there were many other smaller rulers, e.g. the Prince of Chiengkheng and Muong Sing at Namtha Province and the Prince of Ou Neua and Ou Tay in Phongsaly Province.

There was still another trouble starting during the reign of Sai-Ong-Hué: the Province of Nakorn Panom. Although we could not prove any more the line of lineage derived from Khun Borom's sixth son Prince Kom, the region around Nakorn Panom to the South of Vientiane was known as Kammuon and had been the heritage of Khun Borom's sixth son and his descendants. This region was also very old and historical and its capital was moved about from place to place, from South of Thakhek to Pakhinbun. Nakorn Panom was also once a very old capital, then it moved

to the place opposite, where ruins are still to be found south of Thakhek. This kingdom was known by various names: Kotaboon (Kotrabun), Sikot, Kaborng or Taborng and Marukha Nakorn. The pagoda of That Panom was supposed to be built by Emperor Asoka of India and there was still another pagoda, That Inhang, near Savannakhet supposed to be built also during the height of glory of the Panom past. All this only proved that Buddhism existed in Laos long time before Fagnum.

The Governor of Nakorn Panom, with such historical background, was quite a big lord in the South, and he considered himself as such.

In 1709 Prince Boromraja, the Governor of Nakorn Panom, disregarded the overlordship of Vientiane and even sent an army to take Vientiane but was beaten back. In 1715 Nakorn Panom was at last taken, Prince Borom Raja died. His son Thao Kukeo fled to Champasak. The king then appointed Thao Kamsing, Boromraja's son-in-law, as governor. Kukeo however wanted the "throne" of his father back. He collected men from the country all round and came up towards Nakorn Panom. Thao Kamsing then sent a delegation of nobles to ask for help from Annam. The Annamites* came but not knowing who was who, instead they were received by Kukeo at Kamkeut and helped Kukeo to drive Kamsing away from Nakorn

* These are now Vietnamese.

Panom. Meanwhile Vientiane was under a new king, Siribunyasarn. Kamsing appealed to Siribunyasarn. The latter sent Phya Chiengsa down to fight the Annamites. While the Annamites were making a suspension bridge and were crossing the river, the army of Chiengsa cut the bridge, the Annamites were hemmed in on the beach and Phya Chiengsa's army butchered them down almost to the last man. The rest fled away across the country. Phya Chiengsa put Kukeo, the rightful heir, as governor of Nakorn Panom, and brought Kamsing with his family back to Vientiane in 1764, and the matter was closed.

During Sai-Ong-Hué's reign the Prince of Chieng Khouang also rebelled. The prince at the time was Ong-Lo. An army was sent out to suppress Ong-Lo and the latter fled leaving his brother, Ong-Bun, to rule in the meantime. Ong-Lo came back. Ong-Bun put up a sham fight with his brother and then invited his brother to come back and rule. In order to calm King Sai-Ong-Hué of Vientiane, this time Ong-Bun sent the necessary semblance of tributes and Vientiane was silent about it, having too much other worries to think about. Sai-Ong-Hué died probably in 1735 and was succeeded by his son Ong-Rong who ruled until 1760. Sethatirat II had therefore nothing like the qualities possessed by the great Sethatirat, his namesake, at all. His reign was

so full of confusions and he gradually led his country to ruin.

Sai-Ong-Hué was succeeded by his son, Ong-Rong (1735-1760). During his reign Chieng Khouang* again refused to recognize the suzerainty of Vientiane. Ong-Rong tried to enforce it by sending an army. Prince Sompoo was at the time ruler of Chiang Khouang. He appealed for help to Vietnam. Chieng Khouang had from time to time paid tributes to both sides. Vietnam stepped in and asked them to stop fighting. Ong-Rong invited Sompoo to come down to Vientiane to negotiate. Sompoo hesitated but when he at last came three years afterwards he was trapped and kept in Vientiane as prisoner. Vietnam had to step in again in 1760 and Sompoo was let go and agreed to pay tribute to Vientiane every three years.

Ong-Rong was succeeded by his son Ong-Bun, known as Siribunyasarn (1760-1778). Ong-Bun was the last independent king of Vientiane.

But before going on let us turn to King-Kitsarat with his kingdom of Luang Prabang.

Although they came from the same family they distrusted each other, took opposite sides in political camps and took opportunity to destroy each other by calling aids from outside. Luang Prabang was pro-Thai whereas Vientiane was pro-Burmese. The two powers were then at war with each other but the fortunes of

* Ch is spelt X sometimes (Xieng Khouang)

war changed hands. At first Burma overran the whole of Thailand, burnt Ayudhya, carried off men and property, and posted officers to wait for those who still evaded from being sent to Burma and to dig out hidden riches. Out of this destruction a Thai general appeared, reunified the whole country and chucked out the Burmese. Vientiane had chosen the wrong side to support her in order to take her vengeance on the brother State of Luang Prabang.

THE KINGDOM OF LUANG PRABANG AFTER SECESSION

KING-KITSARAT (1706-1713)

King-Kitsarat ruled until 1713. When he died he was succeeded by his half-brother, Ong-Nok, sometimes called Ong-Kam, under the title of Borom-Khattiyawongsa. King-Kitsarat left a son, Prince Akkarat, and two daughters, Princess Taensao and Princess Taenkam.

BOROM-KHATTIYAWONGSA (1713-1727)

During the reign of Ong-Nok, Prince Intasom, brother of King-Kitsarat, who fled away to Prae, had heard of his brother's death. He now collected men and moved forward to Luang Prabang and stopped at Muong Gnoi on the Nam U. When Ong-Nok had heard of this he took council with the nobles and said if he sent out an army to oppose him it would

destroy the love and friendship they had with each other and the people would suffer. He therefore invited Intasom to come in and swore never to do harm to each other and always to help each other.

One day Ong-Nok went out hunting doves with his men. A noble called Phya Muong Sai incited Prince Intasom to take the throne. They closed the town's gate and crowned Intasom. When Ong-Nok came back and found the gate closed, he took seven of his children and the men to Muong Lueak. There he became a priest and went to live in Chiengmai.

At the time Chiengmai was at war with the Burmese. The king had just died leaving two sons. The townspeople and the nobles were looking for a strong man to fight off the Burmese. They had heard of a Luang Prabang ruler coming to live in their town. They took council and consulted the divine powers as to whom they should choose to rule over them : the two royal sons or the Prince of Luang Prabang. At last they decided upon Ong-Nok and they came to invite him to the throne. Ong-Nok had helped them to beat off the Burmese.

KING INTASOM (1723-1749)

Three sons of Oag-Nok who were left behind in Luang Prabang in league with a noble called Phya

Chiengtai were plotting to overthrow Intasom when a slave belonging to Chiengtai betrayed the secrets to a minister who informed the king. The conspirators were rounded up. There was serious fighting between the two parties but Phya Chiengtai and the three princes were caught and executed.

Intasom had 15 children : 9 sons and 6 daughters.

Princes : Chotika, Anurut, Mak, Narata, Chetthawong, Ek, Suriyawong, Surawong and Intapom.

Princesses : Keoratna-Pimpa, Sikamkong, Sujata Sutamma, Mard, and Waenkeo.

CHOTIKA (1749-1771)

During the year of Intasom's death the Vietnamese under generals Ong Chio Tiem Ta and Tiemchot invaded Luang Prabang. The nobles elected Prince Intapom, the king's ninth son, to go out and fight against the Vietnamese. Intapom beat them and drove them off. Because of this the nobles made him king, in spite of nine elder brothers before him. He ruled only eight months and feeling very uncomfortable he abdicated and asked Chotika to become king instead.

After the fall of Ayudhya in 1767 the Burmese still occupied Thailand and suppressed independence

movements all over the country. They were not driven out altogether until 1775. Siribunyasarn of Vientiane never forgot the hatred he had against Luang Prabang and took opportunity of the occasion to write secretly to the King of Burma to come and take Luang Prabang. The King of Burma at once responded by sending an army under General Ponanor to besiege the town. There was fighting several days. At last the Burmese succeeded in scaling the walls and in entering the town. The king escaped and the Burmese took Suriyawong with some 4-500 men off to Burma as captives.

In 1768 Suriyawong was sent by the Burmese on an expedition to take Muang La and Muong Maen. He escaped with his compatriots and came to Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu). He stayed there three years then he wrote a letter to his brother, King Chotika of Luang Prabang, asking for permission to come back. The king refused. Thereupon Suriyawong marched towards Luang Prabang gathering strength while passing through the various towns on the way. He arrived at Luang Prabang and stormed the town by night. The king, the nobles and many people fled from the city to Nam Rung. Early the next day one of his sisters, Princess Sikamkong, asked Prince Suriyawong whether he had come to murder all his brothers and sisters. The Prince denied saying that

he was only coming back to see them and since the King would not permit him so he came back by force. The Princess said if that was so it was for a very good cause and asked him to swear before all the priests. He did so and sent the priests to invite the King back. Chotika then handed over the crown to his brother Suriyawong.

SURIYAWONG (1771-1791)

King Suriyawong was very angry that he was caught and taken to Burma because King Siribunyasarn of Vientiane had written to the King of Burma to come and invade Luang Prabang, so one year after his accession he besieged Vientiane, but he could not take it after two months. In the meantime Siribunyasarn had written to the Burmese again asking for help. The Burmese under Posupala and Süksüingpo advanced to take Luang Prabang and King Suriyawong had to come back. After a fight of 15 days Luang Prabang was taken and Suriyawong submitted sending the necessary tributes of vassalage. The Burmese were satisfied and withdrew.

In Thailand the army of Phya Taksin was victorious everywhere and threw out the Burmese over the frontiers. Cambodia was also captured. King Suriyawong then made friendly alliance with Phya Taksin of Dhonburi and when the latter invaded

Vientiane in 1778 he at once sent an army to help the Thai army to take Vientiane. Vientiane fell in 1779 but the Thai army also forced Lunag Prabang to accept Thai suzerainty at the same time. Luang Prabang ceased to exist as an independent country from the same date as Vientiane.

KINGDOM OF CHAMPASAK

Before proceeding to the immediate cause of the Thai attack on Vientiane and its final annexation by the Thai of Dhonburi we had better know something about Champasak, because the latter had by now also been set up as a separate State in the South of Laos and it became also involved in the same affair.

The Kingdom of Champasak as a Lao country only started in 1713, but the town itself was almost 2000 years old. The oldest site being at Vat Phu, ruins of a stone castle to the South of the present site. The town was first heard of or perhaps built in the second century about A.D. 157. It first belonged to the Champa and Chenla then to the Khmers.

It was not known who ruled at Champasak before the time of King Kakanam. The country was Champa and there were kings before his time. After Kakanam there were no record of kings. During the decline of the country the Khmers had come in and ruled

over the country instead. The name of the King who ruled during the Khmer period was Phya Kamatha, whose bust statue was still to be seen at Vat Phu now. After the death of Kamatha the country was without a king for a long time. Then a king whose name was unknown came over from Cambodia and rebuilt the city. This country had friendly relationships with the Khmer Empire. The king had a son and when he died the nobles made his son king known under the name of Sutasraja. Under Sutasraja the country still had good relationships with the Khmer Empire, and when the latter country was invaded by enemy troops, the Khmer king asked Sutasraja to come and help. Sutasraja raised an army and came down to the Khmer capital where he drove off the enemy and defeated them. The Khmer king was very pleased and invited him into the city, gave big feast to the king and big rewards to his soldiers and officers. After some time King Sutasraja took leave and came back to his country. King Sutasraja died in 1627. King Sutasraja had no children and the country was again without a ruler. However it was known that about eleven years later there was a very just man whom the people very much respected and so they invited him to be their ruler. This just man whose name was unknown had a beautiful daughter called Nang Pao. When she grew up her father died and she had

to look after the people after him. At the time there was a man from Nong Bua Lampoo called Prince Pangkam. He was the famous author of *Sinxay*, a romantic novel in verse. Prince Pangkam lived in the reign of King Suriyawong. He came down to Champasak for the purpose of catching elephants. He found Miss Pao and made courtship to her and won her love, as a result of which Nang Pao had a daughter called Nang Paeng. Prince Pangkam after this amoristic escapade left her for home. After her mother's death Nang Paeng looked after the affairs of the State after her. It was however not very convenient for a woman to rule the country, so when a famous priest, Pone Samet, came down from Vientiane with numerous followers and very much respected by everybody, she asked the Lord Abbot of Pone Samet to take over the affairs of the State instead.

Who was this Lord Abbot of Pone Samet? Let us go back a little about him who brought a prince of the Vientiane royal family down to rule over this new country of Champasak in 1713, the date of the modern period of the Lao Kingdom of Champasak.

In 1643 at Wat Pone Samet in Vientiane there was a priest very much respected by the people. He was just called the Lord Abbot Yodkaeo of Pone Samet. It was said that the night before he met his famous successor, he had a very strange dream that

there was a big elephant coming into the temple destroying everything on its way until it came up to his room, then it pulled down his library and ate up all the books in his library. When he woke up he saw a small novice about 13 years of age. He asked the novice where did he come from and why did he come here. The novice said he came from Kalum at Muong Parn. He was a student of the Reverend Lümbong and he came in search of knowledge. The Lord Abbot Yodkaeo then took him up in his monastery and taught him out of the holy books in his library. The novice had such a wonderful memory and diligence that he learnt and remembered everything taught or given to him, from the Patimokha, the Sutras, the Tripitaka, the Dhamapadas and the various contents of the Buddhist Bible. The Abbot then took out the whole library and the novice learnt up everything. The news reached the king of Vientiane and he gave the novice clothes and created him the "Royal Novice". People talked about the Royal Novice everywhere. When he was 21 years of age, when he could be made a priest, the King wanted the Royal Novice to be ordained under royal patronage. The Royal Novice said that for his ordination he requested 500 priests to be present and that the ceremony of his ordination must take place on the waters. The king granted this request. A raft was made on the water

and the five hundred priests went on it. Because of the weight all the priests went into the water. It was said that everybody got wet except the Royal Novice. This made him much more respected by the people as though he was endowed with divine power over the elements. The King himself was filled with great admiration for the new priest. He made great offerings to him and after one year created him the new Lord Abbot of Pone Samet.

In 1690 his patron, King Suriyawong of Vientiane, died. His Prime Minister, Phya Muong Chan then seized the throne for himself. At that time a certain Princess called Sumangala who was said to be King Suriyawong's daughter, but some said his own wife, another said the wife of Prince Sompoo, who fled to Hué. However that may be Princess Sumangala had a son called Ong-Lo, at the time probably only 13 years of age, or even much younger, and she was also expecting another child. Phya Muong Chan wanted to take Princess Sumangala as wife against her will, so she fled for protection with the Lord Abbot of Pone Samet. The latter however sent her to live at Posingor Horkam where she gave birth to a son called Noh-Kasat. The position of the Lord Abbot Pone Samet as protector of the fleeing princess, added to his big popularity among the people around, endangered him vis-à-vis the king, who was

by now intriguing to have him put out of the way. The news reached the Reverend Pone Samet, so he fled with 3333 of his adherents towards the south. He also took Princess Sumangala and Prince Noh-Kasat away with him, but left them at Ban Ngiupanlam-somsanuk at Nakorn Panom, further away towards the South. He himself however went on with his attendants along River Chee gaining more and more adherents who accompanied him on the way. He went right into Cambodia and arrived at a place called Charoy Changva. He found it to be a propitious place and decided to found a settlement there. An old woman called Mrs. Pehn had found a relic of Buddha while taking her bath and brought it to the Reverend Pone Samet. The latter built a pagoda on top of a small hill where he put in the relic of Buddha. He then called it Hill-Pehn or Phnom-Pehn in Cambodian, in memory of Mrs Pehn who gave the relic for this pagoda. He was in the process of building a statue of Buddha, the left arm was not yet made, when the king of Cambodia heard of his settlement and sent an official to take census of the new arrivers. The official wanted to raise a tax of eight ticals on each family. The Reverend Pone Samet thought that this was going to cause great financial difficulty to all concerned, he therefore left the place with all his men moving along the Mekhong towards the North

to a place called Muong Somboon. Here he built another temple but the King of Cambodia again sent his army to drive the reverend and his people out of this place, so they had to move on to a place at the mouth of Se Khong. There they stopped and completed the unfinished left arm of the statue of Buddha and had the statue brought over from Phnom-Penh so that the unfinished arm could now be joined on at this new place called Harn-Ko, later to be called Chieng-Taeng, and the Cambodians called it Strung-Treng, a corrupted form of Chieng-Taeng. The Reverend Pone Samet left a man in charge of the place and this man later had a son called Chieng Taeng, who was appointed first governor of the town which was called after his name, during the Reign of King Rama I of Bangkok.

The Reverend Abbot travelled about from place to place with his men among the many islands of the Mekhong River and built many temples where he left men and a person to take charge at each place. Thus he came up the Leephi waterfalls to the Island of Khong, built a temple and a big gong over there and left one of his disciples, Acharn Huat, who later became its first governor, in charge. The gong is still to be seen at Muong Khong to this day. From Khong he proceeded to the Island of Daeng, where Nang Paeng, the Governor of Champasak, went to

invite him to come to Champasak and look after the people for her.

The Reverend Abbot of Pone Samet accepted, but at later stages the people took to robbing, plunders and murders. This very much inconvenienced the Reverend as a priest, for he could not very well interfere with such matters using worldly power to punish them. He thought of Prince Noh-Kasat who by now had already grown up and who was residing with his mother at Ban Ngiupanlamsomsanuk. He therefore sent Charn Keo and Charn Sieng to invite Prince Noh-Kasat to come to Champasak and with the consent of the people proclaimed him king of the independent Kingdom of Champasak in 1713. Noh-Kasat became its first King under the name of King Soiseesamut Puttarnkun. The extent of Champasak at the time was known to comprise Suvarnapum (Roi-Et), Sinakorntou (Srisaket), Saravane, Attoupeu, Khong and Chieng Taeng (Xieng Tèng).

After re-organizing the administration of the country and sending his men to rule over different parts of the country the King thought of the incident when Pone Samet and his men were driven off by the army of the King of Cambodia. He therefore sent a goodwill delegation with tributes to the King of Cambodia, asking for the hand of the Cambodian king's daughter in marriage. This was consented and

a princess was sent to him. Soiseesamut had already three sons, Chaiyakumarn, Tammatevo and Suriyo. Out of the union with the Cambodian princess he had another son called Prince Potisarn, who was born blind in one eye. When he grew up his father sent him to rule over the southern provinces, with the seat at Srilambong on the Lampoo, which were recognized as Lao territory by the King of Cambodia, as the governor was his own grandson. Thus King Soiseesamut ensured the southern boundary of his country in a very diplomatic way. He encouraged Buddhism by helping the Abbot Pone Samet to build temples and cast statues of Buddha. He also sent another delegation to his father-in-law to ask for a set of the Tripitaka, from which he had copies made so that priests in his country could continue to study the religion from authentic copies. He built a pagoda in town for the Lord Abbot Pone Samet which was called the new Royal Pagoda (Wat Luang Mai), in opposition to the old royal pagoda (or Wat Luang Kao) where the Lord Abbot lived before coming to this new place. A most important discovery during his reign was in 1736. A Kha hunter living in a jungle called Tung had gone to hunt in the forest and found a statue of the Buddha of white crystal in a grotto. He thought of it as a statue of a spirit, so he brought it back to his house. He broke one ear when he carried it. Every time he

went into the forest he prayed to the statue so that he might have a good find, and when he could get back some game he made a sacrificial rite, killing the animal and besmearing some blood of the game on the mouth of the statue as a sign of thanksgiving. The hunter was thriving as long as he had the image with him. When he went away he would put the statue to guard all the things he spread out in the sun, and funny enough nothing would get lost or stolen. A merchant who traded with him found him to be always lucky in finding game and therefore asked for his secrets. The Kha friend showed him the image in his house. The merchant thought that such a precious image should not stay with a heathen and so he went and informed the King of Champasak. The king now sent a group of nobles to Ban Sompoi Nayorn, the hunter's village, to fetch the statue. The Kha villagers accompanied the nobles and the statue as far as the mouth of Bang Lieng canal then they all went back. When the nobles crossed the river to Champasak the boat capsized and the statue went to the bottom of the river. The men dived after and tried hard to cover the image but all in vain. The king was very much aggrieved but at night he had a dream that he must use the Khas of Ban Sompoi Nayorn to recover the image. When he woke up he sent for the Khas of that village again. The image

was found and there were big celebrations for three days and three nights after which the image was placed on an altar in the king's own palace.

During his reign Attopeu and Saravane were founded out of small villages. Saravane was then Muong Man founded on the site of Ban Pone village. Attopeu was really called Itkapü, meaning the excrement of the buffaloes. It was said that on discovering the town the Khas used a beach to raise buffaloes and the buffaloes left a lot of excrement on the sand beach. The Lao asked the Khas what was the name of the town pointing to the beach where the Khas were looking after the buffaloes. The Khas however did not understand Lao, they thought what the excrements were, so they said "Itkapü", meaning the buffaloes' excrements and the town was called Itkapü corrupted to Attapü to this day. Attopeu was a French spelling which was not correct like many other geographical names of Laos.

Acharn Some was made the first governor of Itkapü (Attopeu). He sent Nai Man to Saravane and gave him a title of Luang Ekaraksa. Muong Khong was also made a town with Acharn Huat as its first governor. Muong Khong was called Sitandorn by the Thai, a word corrupted from Seepandorn, meaning a region of four thousand isles. Nai Sut was sent to govern Chieng Taeng. Acharn is a title given to a

learned man who was educated in a monastery during his priesthood.

Nang Paeng died of old age during his reign and then the Lord Abbot Pone Samet followed in 1720, at the age of 90. The King built a pagoda at the site of the cremation and yet another pagoda to enshrine his ashes. Both these pagodas are still to be seen today. His bones however, according to the abbot's wishes, were sent to Nakorn Panom and enshrined there.

King Soiseesamut died in 1738 and the nobles invited his eldest son Chaiyakumarn to the throne.

KING CHAIYAKUMARN (1738-1791)

King Chaiyakumarn did not have a peaceful reign like his father. The first trouble was from his own brother, Viceroy Tammatevo. In 1758 the two brothers had a quarrel and Tammatevo plotted with Sritat, Charn Huat's son, governor of Khong. Tammatevo could get quite numerous support from Khong and marched on Champasak. His brother the King would not fight and fled to Don Moddaeng, now near Ubol. Viceroy Tammatevo was about to follow and drive his brother away from the kingdom when his mother intervened and talked him into reconciliation. Tammatevo then confessed his guilt to his mother and sent nobles to invite the King, his brother, back to rule as usual.

THE STORY OF PHRA VOR AND PHRA TA.

Champasak was soon involved in two ways which led to the annexation of the country by the Thai of Dhonburi. In 1760 the throne of Vientiane was vacant owing to the death of Ong-Rong. Two elder statesmen Phra Vor and Phra Ta, who were reputed to have helped Ong Bun in the earlier days during the confusion of the country, now supported Ong Bun and helped him in his claim for succession to the throne. Ong Bun eventually became king under the name of Siribunyasarn, King of Vientiane. Phra Vor and Phra Ta naturally wanted some rewards for all their pains and support, at least a position not less than the king's own viceroy. The king however could not give high distinctions to men who were not connected to the royal family and bestowed the honour on his brother instead. Phra Vor (full name Vorarat) and Phra Ta were very angry with the king, and as they had big followers and therefore also very powerful, they left with all their followers to Nong Bua Lampoo (now in Udorn, Thailand) and set themselves up with powers tantamount to those of an independent kingdom, calling their town, now strongly fortified with walls and ramparts, Nakorn Khuankhan Karbkeo Buabarn, a very honorific name indeed. The king sent nobles to forbid him to do so, but they would not obey. Consequently King Siribunyasarn sent

an army to fight Phra Vor and Phra Ta. The royal army fought for three years. As Phra Ta saw that he would not be able to withstand any longer he sent for help from the Burmese. The latter sent an army under Maung Langae. King Siribunyasarn, having heard of this, sent a delegation to intercept the Burmese army half way and pleaded with them to come over to his side. This he succeeded since he was already on good terms with the Burmese before. The army of Phra Ta and Phra Vor now had to fight desperately against the combined forces. Phra Ta was killed in the midst of the fight. The town was taken but Phra Vor and his son Tit Kam, along with three sons of Phra Ta : Thao Fainah or Nah, Thao Kamphong and Thao Titporm escaped with their men towards Champasak where they asked King Chaiyakumarn for protection. The latter sent them to settle down at Vieng Don-Kong (now called Ban Doo Ban Kae). Prince Tammatevo had just died, leaving four sons and one daughter : Prince O, Prince In, Prince Tammakitika, Prince Kamsook and Princess Toui. Princess Toui was later married to Thao Kamphong, Phra Ta's son, thus bringing the refugees into the ruling family of Champasak.

In 1771 King Siribunyasarn, having heard that Phra Vor had come to stay at Vieng Don Kong in

Champasak, sent an army under Akkahard to arrest him. King Chaiyakumarn sent an army under Phya Polchiengsa to help his protégé. He also wrote a letter to King Siribunyasarn to pardon Phra Vor. Seeing no other way out King Siribunyasarn gave in and withdrew his army.

When the king of Champasak was moving his capital to a new place at Sisumang village, Phra Vor assisted the king in building the town wall. Two other ministers, Phra Manoarat and Phra Akkahard of Khong helped to build the king's audience hall. When all was completed the king came out one day in the hall of Raj Singham, surrounded by the ministers and Phra Vor. Phra Vor, very proud of what he had done, asked the king what he preferred – the city wall or the audience hall. The king replied that although the wall was very useful because it protected the town, yet he found the audience hall more useful because it was where he could spend his leisure hours' happy mood. This made Phra Vor very angry, and so departed from Vieng Don-Kong to Don Motdaeng (near Ubol now) and wrote to the Governor of Nakhorn Rajsima (Korat) to submit his petition that he would from now on become the subjects of King Taksin of Dhonburi.

In the meantime after the fall of Ayudhya in 1767, during the siege Phya Taksin escaped from Ayudhya and went to Ranong and Chandaburi where he raised an army to fight the Burmese and wipe them out of Thailand. He then established his capital at Dhonburi, opposite to Bangkok. With lightning quickness he reunited the country and captured Cambodia.

The immediate cause of the war with Champasak and Vientiane was the incident concerning Phra Vor, and the revolt of Muong Nangrong, supported by the people and nobles of Champasak. As King Taksin sent an army to suppress the revolt of Nangrong he also took Champasak at the same time, as the people of Champasak were involved in the revolt. So Champasak fell, to the army of Phya Taksin in 1778. King Chaiyakumarn was taken to Bangkok, but was let back home in 1780 to rule as a vassal king.

The war with Vientiane happened in the same year. After the army of King Taksin under General Phya Chakri and his brother Phya Surasi had taken Champasak they went on to Vientiane.

The cause of the war was the incident about Phra Vor. King Siribunyasarn having seen that Phra Vor had now quarrelled with the King of Champasak, saw a good chance of punishing him and he sent an

army under Phya Supoh to attack Phra Vor at Don Motdaeng. Phra Vor appealed for help from King Chaiyakumarn but the latter would not help him this time. Phra Vor was killed in the fight, but Thao Kam, Phra Vor's son, Thao Fainah, Thao Kamphong and Thao Titprom escaped from the siege and appealed to Dhonburi. They were now supposed to be the King of Dhonburi's subjects. King Siribunyasarn's audacity to attack and kill Phra Vor who considered to be his subject was therefore taken by King Taksin as a great insult. He therefore ordered two armies to be sent out, one by land under Phya Chakri, later known as King Yodfah Chulaloke or Rama I of Bangkok, and another army under Phya Surasi. Phya Surasi was to go through Cambodia, raise recruits from Cambodia and built up a fleet there going up the Mekhong to converge on Champasak with Phya Chakri's army. Nai Chieng Taeng, at Ban Chieng Taeng, took his men to cut a canal rounding off the Leephi waterfalls so that the fleet of Phya Surasi could come up the Mekhong River. On the approach of the two armies, Phya Supoh retreated to Vientiane. The two armies of Dhonburi took Mouk Daharn, Nakorn Panom and Nongkhai on the way where the armies of King Siribunyasarn were sent out to fortify. The Thai armies then went on to Pako and Viengkook. Both sides fought very bravely and the Thai army could

not take the towns. Lao history said that the Thai had recourse to a ruse, cut off the heads of several men and sent them in a boat with a merchant to sell at Pako and Viengkook. The people of Pako and Viengkook lost heart and the Thai army took the towns. They then went on to Panprao. Again the town could not be taken. When however King Suriyawong of Luang Prabang heard of the fight at Vientiane, because of his old hatred against the royal family of Vientiane, he wrote to the Thai generals offering help. He came with an army of 3000 men and attacked Vientiane from the North. King Siribunyasarn withdrew his army from Pan Prao so as to protect Vientiane itself. Pan Prao then fell to the Thai army. The latter then crossed the Mekhong. King Siribunyasarn sent out his son Prince Nantasen to attack the Thai army. For two months the siege went on, then King Siribunyasarn saw he could not fight anymore, he escaped at night with his two other sons, Prince In and Prince Pom, to Kamkeut. Seeing that his father had fled Prince Nantasen opened the city gates and submitted to the Thai army on Monday the third day of the waning moon of the tenth month 1778. In drawing off the Thai generals took away the members of the royal family, the Emerald Buddha, the Prabang Buddha, the people, and left the town in charge of Phya Supoh. The Thai generals also de-

manded of King Suriyawong of Luang Prabang conditions which amounted to annexation at the same time.

King Siribunyasarn came back to Vientiane in 1780 and died one year after. Prince Nantasen, Prince Anuwong and Princess Yotkeofah were taken to Bangkok. On the death of Siribunyasarn Bangkok appointed Nantasen as king and sent him back to Vientiane to succeed his father as a vassal king of Bangkok. The Thai chronicles mentioned that Siribunyasarn fled from Kamkeut to Vietnam and died in Vietnam. He did not come back to Vientiane which was looked after in the meantime by Phya Supoh. The Thai version also did not mention about the selling of heads at Pako and Viengkook to frighten off the townspeople.

King Chaiyakumarn was taken to Bangkok at the same time, but the King of Dhonburi allowed him to come back in 1780 as King of Champasak and to pay tributes to Dhonburi. The King of Dhonburi raised the village of Attapü to the status of a town and appointed Prince O as governor of Attapü and Prince In as viceroy.

Phra Vor's family continued to be faithful subjects of Thailand and settled down in Ubol. Phra Ta's son, Thao Fainah, was even made King of Champasak after Chaiyakumarn. Many of Phra Vor's

descendants were governors of Ubol.

In the meantime King Taksin of Dhonburi became insane. The nobles therefore seized him and put him to death in 1782. They then invited General Phya Chakri to the throne known as King Yodfah Chulaloke, the founder of the present dynasty of Bangkok. He moved his capital to the opposite bank at Bangkok.

Chao O who ruled with Chao In at Attapü oppressed the people and they complained to King Chaiyakumarn, who sent Prince Chet and Prince Noo to arrest them. Prince In fled away but Prince O went into a monastery and embraced the image of Buddha for protection. Prince Chet took him off by force and executed him. Prince O had two sons : Prince Nak and Prince Houi. His sons had built a pagoda for him called "That Chao O" still to be found there today.

A very famous statue of Buddha was found during Chaiyakumarn's reign. A statue of the inclining Buddha was lying at the bed of a river in town showing only one arm just above water-level. The people did not know what it was and used the appearing arm for sharpening knives. One day a woman found it to be the arm of a Buddha. She had a hallucination that every time she sharpened her knife the image would shriek. She came up and called a lot of men together to take the image out of the bed

of the river. It was then put into a temple and still to be found in Champasak. The people flocked on feast days to celebrate and workship because it is very sacred.

In 1791 a certain man called Ai Chiengkeo, living at Ban Khao Ong, on the opposite bank of Khong, showed off to the people that he possessed occult powers. Many people believed him and became his disciples. Ai Chiengkeo then marched on Champasak with his men. King Chaiyakumarn was already very sick. He got a shock and died at the news in 1791. He was 81 years old and had ruled 53 years. Ai Chiengkeo could therefore easily enter the town. King Chaiyakumarn had one son, Prince Nor-Muang and two daughters : Princess Pomhuakwa and Princess Tenkeo.

When the King of Bangkok heard of this he instructed Phya Nakorn Rajsimma to come and suppress the rebellion, but in the meantime Kamphong, Chief of Vieng Donkong together with Thao Fainah, Phra Ta's son, at Ban Singta (Yasotorn) raised an army to fight Ai Chiengkeo at Tana Rapids (now near Pimul-mangsaharn). Thao Fainah seized Ai Chiengkeo and put him to death. Because of this the King of Thailand made Fainah King of Champasak, known under the title of Vichaiyarat Khattiyawongsa.

VICHAIYARAT KHATTIYAWONGSA (1791-1811)

The village of Harngko founded by the Lord Abbot Pone Samet during his trip from Phnom-Penh was created into a town, called Chieng Taeng, in 1784 by order of Rama I of Bangkok. He also made Mr. Chieng Taeng, who led the villagers to cut a canal around Leephi rapids, the first governor of the town and ennobled him to the rank of Phra Dej-Udom. The town with the frontier right down to the south of Siembok formed part and parcel of the Kingdom of Champasak, until the cession of this territory to France by Thailand in 1893 when it formed part of French Indo-China, and after the independence of the countries of French-Indochina, France had erroneously made arrangements that this town be attached to Cambodia instead. France had made the same mistake with regard to Sibsong-Chutai or Tongking which belonged to Luang Prabang during the Thai period of over a century from 1778 to 1888. It was taken away from Luang Prabang in 1888 and given to Vietnam. Laos had therefore lost two big pieces of land forever owing to French administration of this region.

King Vichaiyarat was related to the Governor of Ubol. First it was his brother Kamphong who was governor from 1784 to 1795, then his other brother Titprom from 1795 to 1841. Thao Kam, Phra Vor's

son, was made deputy-governor of Ubol, also in 1795. The latter was promoted to be governor of Khemmarat in 1814. Another brother, Thao Muang was made governor of Yasotorn. Phra Ta was the head of the family now called Suvarnkut. Both Phra Vor and Phra Ta were mentioned as arch-traitors in the history of Laos in the Lao version.

The King of Thailand sent Prince Chet and Prince Noo to help King Vichaiyarat in the administration. Both were grandsons of King Chaiyakumarn. Prince Chet and Prince Noo were ordered to go to Bangkok and kept there after they went to Attopeu and killed Prince O. It was considered by Bangkok as having committed a riot in the country. Prince Manoi went with them to Bangkok at the same time.

His reign of 20 years was a very peaceful one. First he did not like the old site of the capital at Ban Champa, so he had it moved to a new place at Ban Kantakerng. He then built a temple for the crystal Buddha found by the Kha hunter Tung. When this was ready he had a big procession escorting the famous image from the old place to the building, where he placed guardians and guards for the safety of the image. He had also big ceremonies in worship of the image. He considered it to be the protector of the country. The image remained in Champasak until the death of King Vichaiyarat when King Rama II

of Bangkok sent a delegation with tributes for the dead to assist in the cremation of King Vichaiyarat. The ambassadors of King Rama II went into the temple to pay homage to the statue and found it to be of great value. They reported to King Rama II and the latter was very happy with the news. He instructed that the image be moved to Bangkok. Big ceremonies were prepared all along the way. A royal barge was sent to transport the image from Saraburi. The king himself went in big processions on the river to meet the image in midstream and anoint it. He had it again celebrated at the royal Chapel and put it in his palace, after having changed its clothing and touched up the broken ear.

Towards the end of Vichaiyarat's reign in 1810 there was an immigration of Cambodians coming to live at Khong. This was caused by a quarrel between the King of Cambodia and Phya Dejo, Governor of Kampong Svay, and Nak Prang, Phya Dejo's brother. The two then emigrated with their families for refuge to the Kingdom of Champasak. This brought a lot of men with them to Khong and since then Khong had Cambodians among them.

King Vichaiyarat died in 1811 and so also his assistant, Prince Noo.

King Vichaiyarat had one son and three daughters : Prince But, Princess Daeng, Princess Tai and

Princess Konkeo. His son did not succeed him since nominations of vassal kings must be made by the King of Thailand. The succession however passed back to Soiseesamut's descendants, the rightful heirs, but again not for long, because King Anu of Vientiane was plotting to regain the independence of his country and was using his influence and popularity at the court in Bangkok to nominate his son to the throne of Champasak instead, so that he would have control of the whole territory right down to the Cambodian border, and enlist more men to strengthen his position and cause.

KING MANOI (1813-1821)

First of all King Rama II of Bangkok in 1811 appointed Prince Noo King of Champasak but the latter died three days after the nomination. Bangkok did not appoint Manoi king until 1813, and then Prince Dhammakitika as viceroy. Now Prince Manoi was Prince Suriyo's son, second brother of King Chaiyakumarn. Dhammakitika was the eldest living son of Prince Tammatevo, elder brother to Suriyo. He had better claims to be king first. This was the cause of the subsequent quarrels of this prince with his own King, his younger cousin. King Rama II therefore ordered the viceroy to be moved and kept in Bangkok so as to separate them. Unfortunately King Manoi had other troubles coming up which led to his

losing the throne. In 1817 there was a pagan priest called Ai Sa, living at Ludlaotaopoon in Saravane. Ai Sa came over to Kiat Ngong Hill where he started to show the people how he could call up fire by focussing a lens in the sun. He said that he could conjure up the fire to burn towns and villages by his magic powers. The people in those days were mostly Khas and they were very ignorant. They believed in what he said and flocked to see him and worship him. Thus gaining a lot of attendants he marched on to Champasak. The king was unprepared and fled into the forests. Ai Sa entered the town, looted everything he could lay hands on and then set fire to the town. At that time the Governor of Korat was on census tour of Khong. He therefore went in pursuit of Ai Sa, but the latter disappeared into Yapu Hills of Attopeu. The Governor of Korat therefore brought King Manoi to Bangkok where he died leaving six sons : Princes Oon, Nut Saeng, Boon, Choon and Choo.

In the meantime King Anu of Vientiane sent his son Prince Yo to search for Ai Sa and found the latter whom he sent to Bangkok. Then King Anu started to push his son Yo forward as candidate to the throne of Champasak. He asked the help of Prince Chesdabodin, the second king of Bangkok, to propose to the King of Bangkok. Another brother of the king, Prince Pitaksamontri disagreed, but the king agreed

with his second king and appointed Prince Yo King of Champasak in 1821. Prince Chesdabodin was later Rama III when he found out that his decision was wrong because both King Anu and Prince Yo were fighting against him when he became king.

KING YO (1821-1826)

The descendants of Soiseesamut, founder of Champasak, having lost the throne, their lawful heritage to Vientiane, now made another strenuous effort to regain the throne. The revolt of Prince Yo and his brother against the rule of Bangkok had made it possible for two Champasak princes to help the Thai army and to regain the throne. These were Prince Houi and Prince Nak. Both were the sons of Prince O, the governor of Attopeu, who was killed by Prince Chet and Prince Noo during Chaiyakumarn's reign.

King Anu was awaiting favorable moments for his independence movement. He had secretly allied himself with Vietnam for assistance in case of need. King Yo of Champasak who was appointed along with Prince Kampong as viceroy, also from Vientiane, proceeded hurriedly forthwith the fortifications of Champasak.

King Anu was the son of the last independent king of Vientiane, King Siribunyasarn. When the city fell King Siribunyasarn escaped with two sons, Prince

Intawong and Prince Pomwong, to Kamkeut and then to Vietnam, from where he came back with Vietnamese soldiers to take Vientiane, killed Phya Supo, the governor and wrote to Bangkok to accept tutelage. He was allowed to reign but he died in 1781 only one year after his coming back.

The other three children of Siribunyasarn : Prince Nantasen, Prince Anu and Princess Keoyotfah were taken by the Thai general to Bangkok, where they were brought up at the Thai court and remained there fourteen years up to 1793. Prince Anu especially became friends with Thai princes. When King Siribunyasarn died in 1781, the King of Thailand appointed Prince Nantasen as King of Vientiane to succeed his father.

In Luang Prabang King Suriyawong continued to reign until 1791 when he died and Bangkok appointed Anurutha, second son of King Intasom, to succeed Suriyawong. One year after his coming to the throne the old feud between Luang Prabang and Vientiane broke out again. This time King Nantasen accused Anurutha of having secretly allied with the Burmese against the rule of Bangkok, and got the authorization from the king of Bangkok to attack Luang Prabang. Nantasen besieged the town of Luang Prabang 14 days and could not capture it. Many of his men were killed and so also his viceroy. So King

Nantasen secretly wrote a letter to Ex-Queen Taenkam in the city, Suriyawongsa's queen to help, in return for which he would leave her in possession of all the property in town. Very much illuded by the gains, she took into confidence a certain army commander Huapan Muongwa, placed him and his men to guard the Southeastern gate and sent a letter to King Nantasen to attack the town on an appointed date at this point. King Nantasen attacked the town as agreed. Huapan Muongwa opened the gate and the army of Nantasen entered the town. A lot of people were killed and the members of the royal family were arrested and sent to Bangkok. Luang Prabang remained without a king for four years. Anurutha was imprisoned in Bangkok, when after four years he could clear himself and was allowed to come back and rule in Luang Prabang as usual. King Anurutha was allowed to come back at the intercession of the Chinese Emperor. The governor of Muong Sai, who was very faithful to the king of Luang Prabang went to the Prince of Chiengrung asking for help. The latter went to intercede the Emperor of China to intervene. The Emperor sent a delegation of Ho ambassadors, Phya Seepongwong and Phya Seenapom, to Bangkok with presents and a letter requesting Rama I to pardon Anurutha. This was granted and Anurutha came back to Luang Prabang with his family to rule as usual. As a revenge against Nantasen, in 1793 Anurutha

accused Nantasen of having plotted with Phra Borom-rajaj of Nakorn Panom to rebel against the King of Thailand. The latter ordered both to go down to Bangkok for investigation. The fault was found Nantasen was deposed and died two years later in Bangkok. His brother, Intawong, was sent from Bangkok invested by the King of Thailand to succeed Nantasen in 1795. At the same time his younger brother, Prince Anu, was also appointed viceroy.

Intawong has a daughter, Princess Tongsuk, who was married to Rama I of Thailand. Out of this union was born H.R.H. Princess Kuntun Tipayavadi, protector of Lao interests and a friend of the Laos.

Intawong only reigned seven years (1795-1803). His reign was occupied with two wars : one a campaign to take Dien Bien Phu in 1796, and the other to assist Thailand in fighting against the Burmese in the North of Thailand. During this latter campaign Prince Anu had shown great bravery and repulsed the Burmese away from Chiengsen thereby making himself very popular at Thai court and greatly favoured by the King and the members of the Thai royal family. Complete confidence entrusted to him had never make anybody suspect of his infidelity. He was even strongly supported by Prince Chesda who proposed him as King of Vientiane after the death of his brother, King Intawong, in 1803.

Anu was shortened for the word Anurutha. He was a brave man who fought the biggest of all wars between Bangkok and Vientiane. His ambitions were very high. He intended to take the whole of Thailand, but at the opposition of the Viceroy Tissa that it was difficult to swallow up a bigger nation with bigger resources, because the people will soon rise up again, then Anu said he would take all the Lao left there together with its riches and left the country. He may have been a great warrior but perhaps not so good as a politician, because in fighting a big country like Thailand, he did not first end the secular enmity between Vientiane and Luang Prabang first. Moreover by pushing his son Yo on to the throne of Champasak, he was estranging the feeling of the princes of Champasak and forcing them to join the opposite camp against him. His allies the Vietnamese could not be relied upon. His actions by gaining control over the Province of Xieng Khouang were against the interests of the Vietnamese who had for centuries claimed suzerainty over this province, not to say that he was making the Prince of Chieng Khouang his secret enemy. Anu was therefore fighting alone against so many odds around.

In 1799 resting from wars Prince Chao Sompou of Xieng Khouang was rebuilding up the town and reorganizing the army. This aroused the suspicion of

King Intawong of Vientiane, so he sent his brother Prince Anu in 1800 to take Sompou and his wife down to Vientiane, where they were kept as prisoners. During Sompou's captivity a son was born to him called Nor Muong. Prince Sompou died in Vientiane in 1803. Meanwhile Sompou's brother, Prince Chieng, succeeded him to the throne of Chieng Khouang. Prince Chieng had a son, Prince Noi, who succeeded him in 1804. In 1804 Prince Anu also became king in Vientiane and he sent officials to take the census of Chieng Khouang since he regarded the Province as part of his territory. Prince Noi has one trouble to deal with, the suppression of the Kha rebellion in 1814-1815. In 1823 Khun Viengkam, his governor of Muong Kam, rebelled against Prince Noi, went down to Vientiane and told King Anu that the Prince of Chieng Khouang was hastily rebuilding the town and fortifying the army because he had the intention of attacking Vientiane. King Anu therefore sent an army with Nak Poumin to take Prince Noi down to Vientiane where he was kept prisoner for three years. In Vientiane Prince Noi had a son called Prince Po. One day Prince Noi helped King Anu to tame a wild horse. This very much pleased King Anu and the latter let him at last go back to Chieng Khouang. It was after King Anu's defeat and flight from the Thai army in 1828 that Prince Noi of Chieng Khouang

helped the Thai army to arrest King Anu and handed the latter over to the Thai. Viceroy Tissa also never agreed with Anu's policy. He said Bangkok was much too strong for Laos and so Tissa went over secretly to the Thai. Such was the background of conditions at the time when King Anu of Vientiane was launching an independence war. Bangkok however called it the suppression of a rebellion.

Anu tried to make his country strong, put up palaces and a series of buildings in Vientiane, made bridges across the Mekhong at two points: one at That Panom, the other one across over from Vientiane to Seechiengmai. He built Wat Srisaket in 1824 which today was used as a place for taking allegiance and swearing-in. He also built the temple of Sribunruang at Nongkhai in 1808.

The opportunity he waited for had at last come, so he thought, when Rama II of Bangkok died in 1824 and the British were encroaching upon the country in the South. The British also sent an ambassador to Bangkok to talk with the new king Rama III. Anu thought that the British were making preparations to attack Thailand. He therefore seized this opportunity to attack the North-East of Thailand. King Anu went to the ceremonies of cremation of King Rama II and at this time he asked King Rama III to permit him to take the 10,000 Lao in Saraburi

back to Vientiane with him. The Lao families were evacuated from Vientiane by Phya Chakri in 1779. They have already been in Saraburi 45 years. The old generation was almost finished and the new generation had nothing to do with Vientiane, the King therefore refused. This was considered by Anu as a slight and enough cause to start war, but Professor Hall said in his book on History of South-East Asia that it was a foregone conclusion.

Anu came back and organized the attack. He wrote to Mantaturat to help for the common Lao cause and to forget old quarrels. King Mantaturat of Luang Prabang instead sent his son, Sukhaserm, quietly to Bangkok to warn the King of Bangkok. No mention of this was made in Thai history. They were even not prepared when Anu swooped down as far south as Saraburi.

The attack was made from three directions. Yo, the King of Champasak, was to attack from Khemmarat and Ubol point then through Yasothorn, Sisaket, Det-Udom and join the main army at Korat. The second army under Viceroy Tissa was to attack from the Kalasin point, through Roi-Et, Suvarnapum, Khonkaen, Chonabot meeting the main army also at Korat. The main army under King Anu himself and Prince Ngao, his son, moved straight on to Korat.

The governors of the Northeastern provinces were asked to join. Anybody who refused was put to death, such was the case of the Governor of Kalasin. Then the inhabitants of the various provinces were taken away to Vientiane. Thus the army of Viceroy Tissa swept the people of Kalasin, Roi-Et, Suvarnapum, Chonabot and Khonkaen to Vientiane; the army of King Yo of Champasak, on the other hand and at the behest of King Anu, took the people from Khemmarat, Ubol, Sisaket, Det-Udom and Yasothorn to Vientiane.

Prince Ngao took the advance guard to Korat and down to Saraburi. He told the people of Saraburi that the English were threatening Bangkok, it would therefore be unsafe for them to stay on in Saraburi. He therefore emigrated the 10,000 Lao inhabitants with him back towards Vientiane. In the meantime King Anu's army came down to Korat. The Governor of Korat was away to Khukhan with the main body of the army in order to appease the quarrels of the two nobles over there. Korat was left in charge of minor officials and therefore very weak. Anu told them that he was going down to help the King of Thailand to fight against the English. Nobody suspected of his disloyalty since he was always very intimate with the Thai court. They even gave him all the rice and food he demanded. Next King Anu said it was

not safe for the people of Korat to stay on in Korat. They must all be moved to Vientiane. He sent his soldiers to take away all the weapons and any tool made of iron and pork choppers, so that the people could offer no resistance, and told them to be ready on the move to Vientiane.

The Viceroy Tissa never agreed with Anu's actions. While he was at Yasotorn he met Phra Suriyabhakti, a Thai nobleman and his friend, who was up there on the mission of censusing the people. He had a secret meeting with the latter and asked him to report to the King of Bangkok that he disagreed with all this and that he was still faithful to the King of Bangkok. He then gave the latter a letter giving him free passage home. Phra Suriyabhakti then hurried back to Bangkok. On his way he stopped to see King Anu and gave him the letter from Viceroy Tissa. The letter said that the bearer was on the side of Tissa and he was to go down on a secret mission to Bangkok in order to try to move all the Laos of Bangkok back. King Anu let him go but held his friend Phra Anuchit, whom he had killed before he withdrew from Vientiane after its fall. Phra Suriyabhakti passed by the army of Prince Ngao who was on his way back towards Korat with the Laos of Saraburi. He was going to have Phra Suriyabhakti arrested when the nobles opposed saying that it would

he against the will of King Anu, his father. Besides they did not know what was in the King's mind in letting him go. Phra Suriabhakti was therefore allowed to go on to Bangkok.

It was Phra Suriabhakti who informed the king of Bangkok of the advancing forces of Anu, whose advanced guard was at Saraburi, not very far from Bangkok. The king was taken by surprise and proceeded forthwith to defend the capital. When he saw that the enemy was not going to attack his capital, only then that he decided to send the army to suppress the Lao uprising but he withheld part of the army behind because he was not so sure of the British whose ships were reported to be found along the Western coast. Anu's delay in marching straight on to Bangkok had given the latter enough time to get ready for a counter-attack. A misunderstanding also arose which led to Anu's retreat. The Deputy-Governor of Korat who was with the Governor at Khukhan hastened back when he heard of the news that his wife had been captured and was going to be taken away with the rest of the inhabitants to Vientiane. Before retreating Anu ordered the burning of Korat. The Deputy-Governor, Phya Palat, went to see Anu and submitted himself. He asked for a few knives and rifles because he said his people were getting starved and they needed some tools to get food

and to hunt. This was granted. At Tung Samrit Fields Phya Palat's wife, Suranaree or Mo, collected together all the women available and took the Lao guards by surprise when they were half drunk and half asleep. Their weapons were seized and the guards were killed. Anu sent down some fifty men to see what was happening. The fifty men were ambushed and almost every one of them was cut down. Anu then sent Prince Suthisarn, Prince Kampra and Prince Parn with 3000 men to suppress the rioters. Paya Palat and his wife were ready for them and most of the Lao army were killed and the rest routed. Prince Suthisarn was under the impression that the small group of rioters had now big reinforcements from the Governor of Korat himself. This led to Anu's retreat to find a better place to hold out. The army of Bangkok was very slow in moving up because they had to wait for soldiers from several towns, some rather far away before an army could at last be put together. The king of Bangkok's own viceroy was made commander-in-chief of the army. At Korat the Thai viceroy sent another army under General Ratsupavadi to take Champasak under Prince Yo. His main army itself moved up towards Anu, who had now established himself strongly at Nong Bua Lampoo and other places around. Anu sent Prince Suthisarn to take Lomsak and Poukhio. Lomsak

easily joined Suthisarn but the Governor of Phoukhio refused. Phoukhio was captured and the governor put to death. The people of Phoukhio were evacuated from the town, but many of them fled into the jungle. The town was burnt so as to give no quarters for people to come back and put up any resistance. Next Prince Suthisarn made his stronghold at Lomsak.

Apart from Prince Yo's army of Champasak, and the viceroy Tissa's army in the Northeast, King Anu had established by now three strongholds, the one at Lomsak under Prince Suthisarn, another one at Nong Bua Lampoo under Phya Narin and himself at Khaosarn. The commander-in-chief of the Thai army despatched an army under General Abhai Pootorn to take Lomsak and another advanced guard to attack Nong Bua Lampoo. General Abhai Pootorn defeated the army of Prince Suthisarn who fled away to join the main Lao army at Khaosarn. Nong Bua Lampoo was besieged and after three days it was taken. Its brave defender, Phya Narin, was captured and since he would not submit, he was tusked by an elephant to death. The Thai advanced guard then moved on towards Khaosarn and camped down at Sompoi. Having heard that Nong Bua Lampoo had fallen King Anu lost heart, left Khaosarn camp in charge of Phya Supoh and went back to Vientiane, where he gathered all his belongings and family and then fled towards

Mahaxay on to Nge-Ahn in Vietnam.

Phya Supoh wrote a letter to Phya Chien to move an army up to attack the Thai camp at Sompoi around the rear. In consequence the Thai camp at Sompoi was besieged. For seven days they could not break the siege and was about to surrender when a Thai reconnaissance group of 100 men under Prince Naret came by this way. When he noticed a Thai army besieged he ordered for a charge. Prince Naret's small company was also surrounded by superior numbers when fortunately a reinforcement under Prince Seni Borirak came up and helped. The Thai army inside the town also broke out and all three combined put up a very stout resistance. At last the Lao army was broken up. The Thai followed up the victory and took Khaosarn stronghold at the same time. They then advanced up to Parnprao opposite Vientiane. The detachments of Prince Naret and Prince Seni Borirak then crossed the Mekhong to Vientiane and occupied the town five days after King Anu's flight. The main army under the Thai Viceroy then came up to Parnprao. The army of Lomsak also came up to Parnprao. Prince Tissa, Anu's viceroy then came up to Parnprao and made submission to the Thai army commander-in-chief. But Chiengsa's army was not quite broken up. He fled towards Ponepisai and established himself down there at a village called

Ponechiengwang. The first army sent to fight Chiengsa under Phya Kraikosa was beaten back. The Thai viceroy was very angry, had him degraded and put to prison. A second army was sent under Phya Petpisai, Phya Kaset and Phya Asda. Chiengsa's friend, Kongsa, brought up another army to help. There were very tough fights and the Thai suffered severe losses when Kongsa was shot down. The Lao army was then put into confusion and Phya Chiengsa fled towards Nakhorn Panom where he met General Ratsupavadi's army back from the campaign against Yo of Champasak. Phya Chiengsa went to meet Ratsupavadi and submitted himself.

The Thai viceroy then proceeded to dismantle the town of Vientiane, destroyed all fortifications pulled down houses, burned provisions and cut down trees and depopulated the town by evacuating most of them, so as to make it impossible for any future resistance or any more occasion for future military quarters. The town was not altogether destroyed at the time and all the monasteries were left untouched, but all important images of Buddha capable of being transported at all were brought down to Bangkok. This measure displeased the King of Bangkok. He had trusted King Anu so much, he could never believe in his treachery against him, so he sent up later General Ratsupavadi once more to destroy the whole town and leave nothing except the monasteries.

RATSUPAVADI'S ARMY.

Ratsupavadi departed from the main army at Korat and went in the direction of the Northeast to take back the Kingdom of Champasak from Yo. At Pimai was stationed one of the armies of Anu under Prince Thong, his nephew. This army was easily defeated and Ratsupavadi moved on to Khonkaen. From there he wrote to the Viceroy Tissa at Yasotorn telling him to move on towards Vientiane and help in taking Vientiane. Prince Tissa was then with his son-in-law, one of Anu's sons. Tissa was afraid that the secret might be made known so he forwarded the letter on to Anu to show that in reality the enemy was using a trick to embroil himself with his own king. He moved away to Nongharn. Ratsupavadi moved his army towards Yasotorn, where the Deputy-Governor fought against him, having already sided with Anu. The punishment waiting for him was therefore very harsh. His camp of Viengkook was stormed and taken by Ratsupavadi. He and his whole family numbering about one hundred were arrested and put to death, punishment that was prescribed legally for rebels during those days.

Prince Yo, Anu's son, King of Champasak at the time was with his army at Sisaket. When he heard that Yasotorn was taken, he retreated to Ubol, and detached an army under his two brothers, Prince Parn

and Prince Suvan, to fight the army of Ratsupavadi just off Yasotorn. Ratsupavadi at once led his army to surprise the enemy forthwith. Prince Parn and Prince Suvan's army was routed and Ratsupavadi followed up the victory in hot pursuit up to Ubol. In town the people rebelled against the authority of Yo, and Yo had to flee with his men towards Champasak. Here again the people led by the true claimant to the throne, Prince Houi, rose up against him. Yo fled with about 30-40 men across the Mekhong to the left bank opposite Champasak. Prince Houi opened the town gates to the Thai army and led them to track down King Yo and his two brothers, Prince Parn and Prince Suvan. All three were taken prisoners. Ratsupavadi then moved on to Nakorn Panom in order to meet the main army at Parnprao, opposite Vientiane.

There at Nakorn Panom the Vietnamese had sent an army to a place called Tarndong and sent a letter to Ratsupavadi, saying that Laos belonged to Vietnam. It was not right therefore for the Thai army to come and destroy Vientiane. They should therefore go back and return all its inhabitants which were Vietnamese subjects. Ratsupavadi would not bother to answer as he was hastening on to meet the commander-in-chief at Parnprao. When Chiengsa was flying from Ponepisai towards him he took

Chiengsa away with him in the army. Chiengsa was given by the commander-in-chief to Ratsupavadi to serve in the latter's army, whereas King Yo, Prince Parn and Prince Suvan were sent down to Bangkok. Before going back to Bangkok the commander-in-chief had a monument erected at Parnprao in memory of the suppression of Vientiane rebellion. He put the image Phra Serm from Vientiane inside the monument. This monument was pulled down when Anu came back.

The King of Bangkok was very dissatisfied that Ratsupavadi still left Vientiane standing when it had caused him so much trouble. Besides this would give the opportunity for Anu to come back and use it as a base against him once more. He therefore ordered Ratsupavadi to go back and destroy it. Ratsupavadi moved back and sent his advanced guard before him to Parnprao. From there 300 men under three generals crossed over. They were Phya Pichai, Phya Tukharat and Luang Surendaravichit. Just then Anu returned from Vietnam accompanied by 1000 Lao and 80 Vietnamese. The Vietnamese said that as Anu was wrong they therefore brought him back to apologize to the Thai. The three Thai generals fully believed that Anu really submitted and admitted of his fault. They took no more precautions but left their men going about all over the town. Anu however still

had a grudge against the Thai. It was said that when he heard that a monument has been made to commemorate the Vientiane suppression he was quite angry. Secretly he and his men took away all the boats from the river bank and hid them so that the Thai would not be able to cross back. The next day at 4.00 P.M. Anu led his men to surround the three generals and killed them. Most of the Thai army were barbarously butchered being unaware of the plot made against them. Only forty escaped by swimming across the river, because they could find no boat to get to the opposite bank.. When the Vietnamese knew that Anu was acting contrary to their wishes, they left him and returned home.

Ratsupavadi was at Parnprao on the opposite bank when he heard of this disaster. He was not ready to give battle since he had few men with him. He therefore retreated to Yasotorn where he could recruit more men ready for the fight. Anu sent his son Prince Ngao in pursuit of Ratsupavadi. They met at Bokvarn where a fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued. Prince Ngao approached quite near to Ratsupavadi but the latter did not know him. He was pierced by Ngao. Ratsupavadi fell down from the horse and was about to be dealt a mortal blow when Luang Pipit, his brother, came forward in order to save Ratsupavadi from being cut down. Luang Pipit

was instantly killed by Prince Ngao. The latter was about to strike at Ratsupavadi again when an officer shot Ngao in the knee causing him to fall down from his horse. His soldiers carried him away thinking that he was already dead. Ratsupavadi got up, dressed his wound and followed up the fight on a stretcher. By this time the Lao army had already fallen into confusion and fled across the river. Prince Ngao reported the defeat to King Anu and advised instant flight. Ratsupavadi crossed over but Anu had already gone one day before him. There were only some relatives left behind, who were rounded up at Ban Phai. There was no more mercy and hesitation about Vientiane. Whatever was left over from last time was pulled down and put to flame. Only temples were spared. Ratsupavadi sent up men to Xieng Khouang to follow up the flight of King Anu. Prince Noi who was ruling at Xieng Khouang at the time did not want to see a Thai army up there, besides he must do something to please the Thai, so he sent a message that he would help to find out Anu. Noi's men found King Anu at Hai stream at the foot of Khao Kai hill and sent message to Ratsupavadi. The latter then sent up men and arrested Anu with four wives, two daughters, two sons and one niece. Prince Ngao disappeared and could not be found anywhere. The captives were sent down to Bangkok and as rebels the hardest fate was meted out

to Anu and all his family. They were put in iron cages and taken around the town exposed to public shame every day. People who lost husbands, their sons or their relatives poured out their grievances at them in the form of the grossest insults and spat at them. After seven days Anu died of torture and his corpse was impaled and exposed. After his death nobody thought any more about his relatives and they were thus let off. Anu died in 1829 at the age of 62.

The Emperor of Vietnam was very angry with Prince Noi of Xieng Khouang, for he considered Vientiane as his vassal country, therefore the delivering of King Anu by Prince Noi to the Thai greatly displeased him. He ordered Noi to go to Vietnam for an explanation and then later had him executed.

The Kingdom of Vientiane ended after the death of Anu. The city was destroyed and the territory was made part of Nongkhai.

The suppression of Vientiane had been one of the bitterest episodes of Thai history. Anu's incident was considered in Thai history as the suppression of one of the most daring and ruthless rebellions of Thai history. In Lao history however it was considered as a war of independence. Anu became a war hero who staked everything for his country and was considered as one of the bravest of Lao history. It is beyond doubt that he was a brave warrior. He had proved

himself a daring soldier when he served under the King of Bangkok to drive out the Burmese and to take back Chiengsen from the enemy! Even among the Thai he was honoured as such. The consequence of this war was far reaching, because it gave the Vietnamese claims over Laos. Anu had gone to ask the help of the Emperor of Vietnam in terms of submission and promised the secession of the Eastern provinces and the usual tribute of silver and gold trees every three years. As a result Xieng Khouang was occupied by a Vietnamese garrison and the Vietnamese moved in at several points in Kammuon and Huapan. This also gave the French a pretext to gain control over the whole of Laos later when Vietnam became French.

THAI ADMINISTRATION OF LAOS (1778-1893)

Laos was henceforth administered as part of the North-Eastern region of Thailand. After the campaigns King Rama the Third promoted Ratsupavadi and gave him a new title of Chao Phya Bodindeja, being the title of a noble of the highest rank. In history he was known simply as General Bodin (his real name was Bodin Singhaseni).

The kings of Champasak and Luang Prabang were allowed to rule in their respective kingdoms but they had to pay periodical tributes to the King of Bangkok in the form of silver and golden trees, other-

wise they ruled over their own subjects as before. Their appointments to the throne were made by Bangkok. Their successors as well as other high positions were appointed by the command of the King of Bangkok, who at the same time could punish them or dethrone them in case of treachery. It was usual during those days that royal princes or would-be heirs were sent to live quite a long time at the Thai court of Bangkok and get their education along with other princes. Education in those days had to be specially organized in the palace and was the right of the privileged or ruling classes. It was only during the reign of Rama IV that a royal class was set up in the grand palace for the royal princes and children, who now started to learn modern art and sciences, and an English widow in Singapore was then engaged by the king to teach the class now set up in the royal palace. Before this time there was no school and children even of the royal family had to be sent to a learned priest in a temple in order to get taught. The contents of education consisted of religious learning, reading and writing. Thus King Rama IV himself started to get his education in the Temple of Wat Mahatat, near the Grand Palace. But by eagerness he tried to learn foreign languages also from foreign missionaries.

Because of his loyalty in helping to fight against Yo, Prince Houi was appointed King of Champasak

in 1829. Prince Nag, Huoi's brother, was appointed viceroy or second king.

In Luang Prabang Mantaturat ruled as vassal of the King of Bangkok. The Prince of Xieng Khouang was also allowed to rule in his place undisturbed paying tributes to Bangkok.

Loas was administered by three commissioners from Bangkok, one took up positions at Champasak for the Eastern provinces, one at Nongkhai for the North-Eastern provinces, and one at Luang Prabang.

The North-Eastern provinces with a commissioner stationed at Nongkhai comprised of Nongkhai itself, Xieng Khouang, Borikane, Pone Pisai, Nakorn Panom, Utene, Chaiyaburi, Sakol Nakorn, Kamutasai, Buriram, Nongharn, Kamkeut, Kammuon, Mouk-Daharn, Khonkaen and Lomsak.

The commissioner at Luang Prabang had supervision of: Luang Prabang, Sibsong Panna, Sibsong Chutai and Huapan (now called Samneua).

For the Champasak sector, the commissioner had control of: Champasak, Xieng Taeng, Saen Parng, Seetan (now called Khong), Saravane, Attopeu, Kam Tong Yai, Surin, Sangkha, Khukhan, Det-Udom, Sisaket, Ubol, Yasotorn, Khemmarat, Kamalasai, Kalasin, Pulaencharng, Suvannapum, Roi-Et, and Mahasarakam. Among the commissioners stationing at Champasak, the most well-known was Phya Maha Ammat

(Roon) 1882-1890. He was succeeded by Prince Pichit Priyakorn.

Later in 1890 another sector was created with the commissioner's headquarters at Ubol. This new sector had supervision over Ubol, Kalasin, Suvannapum, Mahasarakam, Roi-Et, Pulaencharng, Kamalasai, Yasotorn, Khemmarat, Songkone, Nong and Sisaket.

There was no army posted at these places. They were more of the nature of administratively supervisory posts. Soldiers in the past were recruited from local serfs supplied by landnobles and rulers when their services were required. The army in the modern sense was not organized into a standing one until much later when in 1888 Major Luang Pitak Narin was sent to Champasak in order to recruit soldiers and train them at the various posts along the frontier towns, viz: at Champasak, Ubol, Songkone, Muong Nong, Muong Pong, Puong Plan, Tchépone and Lamnao Nongprue. France however had a firmhold of Vietnam and wanted the Mekhong River as main waterway to get into South China. It was therefore about this same period Pavie was sent to make a survey of the whole region East of the Mekhong in order to find out a reason to annex Laos.*

Modern administration in Thailand was only organized by King Chulalongkorn after his visits to

* See report of his survey in 11 volumes; *Mission Pavie Indochine 1879-1895*, Leroux, Paris 1898.

India and Java. Various ministries were created instead of the old nobles working with their men at their houses. The Ministry of War was created in 1887 along with eleven other ministries created at the time.

Previous to this the army was so organized that each village must provide an appropriate number of adults for service in times of need, and tributary States must also provide soldiers and provisions in order to help the supreme king in Bangkok to fight against wars or crush rebellions. A general was invested with full powers to recruit soldiers. There was no standing army and no military service at the time. The list of would-be soldiers was drawn up in advance in each village as to who would be called to service when the time arrived. These would-be soldiers were called "Lekh". Administration was also not properly organized into hierarchical units. Tributary kings and princes continued to rule, being held in everything responsible to the King of Bangkok, and in cases there were problems and questions, they reported to Bangkok for decision and help. This had to be done this way because there were no means of communications as in the present day. Even in Bangkok itself at the beginning of the fourth reign, or during King Mongkut's time, there were no roads. People lived along the rivers and canals, mostly on

floating houses, and went about in boats. The first road (now called New Road, or Charoen Krung) was only cut in 1861 through Bangkok. The occasion for it was that the ambassadors had nowhere to go out for airing and complained to the King of Bangkok. The latter then had the road cut so that the ambassadors could take a ride in their horse-carts. There were of course foot tracks and narrow lanes between rows of houses before that, but they were not roads. The first railway was built only in 1890 joining Bangkok with Korat. Movement of troops was therefore very slow. The system of taxes was in kind and not in money according to what each family could produce. Thus we found that a family had to pay an annual tax in the form of one reed mat and one ball of cotton yarn, by way of example. It could however take any form of the people's yields according to localities. The government had monopoly of trade so that it could easily barter these against money or any form of produce from abroad. In order to facilitate the system of tax collecting the king chartered a person who offered him the biggest sums of money in advance to collect tax on certain products or commodities. This gave rise to abuses. The tax collectors, who were just anybody, exacted money from the people, tried to make the biggest profits for themselves and monopolized all the income from trade. The number of such tax col-

lectors increased, and all sorts of imaginable products or trade became subjected to newer ideas of tax-collectors. At the same time the king could not get anything much because the tax-collectors never paid up according to promise. At last the practice was abandoned in 1873. Two years later the Revenue Department was created (1875).

There was no system of money. The ordinary people bartered goods against goods. The upper classes had bars of silver which was cut into smaller bits and weighed against payments. Later, in order to show that the small bits were real silver, they were stamped with different marks. Paper currency was only of very recent origin. A system of administration like this made it necessary for the king of Bangkok to depend on local princes and chiefs appointed by him, and the latter were vested with enormous powers since they could not report everything to the King of Bangkok. He was too far away. It would take several months before any news or reports could reach him, and even much longer before help could reach the local chiefs. The local chiefs governed in the name of the King of Bangkok, collected taxes, levied forced labours, passed sentences, and recruited men around themselves. In times of war the local chiefs had to depend first on themselves to ward off the enemy through their own men, before they could get the royal army from Bangkok des-

patched to their help. Local chiefs had powers of life and death over the people they governed. Thus all French explorers at the latter period of French expansion found all the local chiefs to be kings and described them as kings everywhere. Even a governor like that of Ubol was described by Francis Garnier as king of Ubol. This was all the more so that local governors were more or less hereditary. The sons were usually taught by the fathers to govern after them, and the king of Bangkok would not be able to find anybody else who would know more about that region, about the affairs of that or that town, or who would be better respected by the local men than the sons or relatives of the governors themselves. There was of course jealousy between the various local chiefs and they intrigued to seize power by foul means. One chief would accuse against another chief before the court of Bangkok so that his competitor would be overthrown and that he could be appointed in his rival's place.

Postal system and tele-communications did not exist. Postal system started only in 1890 and the first telegraph cable was laid and opened between Bangkok and Champasak on the 15th March 1890. The government of Bangkok also opened the first batch of post offices in the Lao Provinces at Khemmarat, Ubol, Pibul Mangsaharn, Pak Mool, Old Pasak, Champasak, Det-Udom, Khunharn, Sisaket, Sangkha, Surin, and Suvannapum.

Education for the people was not state organized until 1887 when the Department of Education was instituted, but schools were opened only in Bangkok. It was not until 1902 that the Government sent out two inspectors to organize education in the provinces. There was no wonder when Crawford came to Bangkok in 1826 and found even the Prime Minister to be illiterate!

No maps of the country were made until 1875 when the Survey Department was created and an Englishman had to be engaged in order to do the first mapping and train local men. Mapping was Western science and therefore was not of local making. At the same time a Frenchman by name of Pavie was also employed by the Thai government. He was to make a survey map of route between Battambang and Bangkok for the connecting of a telegraphic line. Pavie's real aim however was to make use of the Thai government survey to gain knowledge of local geography for use in connection with French claims for territorial expansion in this region. Pavie knew that the Thai had no knowledge of maps, made no maps, so that the boundary demarcation as marked by place-names on records could not be precise and exact as lines drawn on a map. He secretly made a map of the area and later officially when it was declared that the whole area must be examined in order to settle the

claims of France and Thailand he made three French survey missions in the country in order to map the whole area. And the maps were made in order to claim more territory to France. In order to supervise the disputed area more easily he got himself appointed by the French government in 1886 as French Consul in Luang Prabang, although at the time there was not a single French soul, nor French subject nor French interests up in that area. Through intrigues he drew the hatred of local chiefs against the Thai government and led them in open revolt promising them independence under French protection. But this independence meant only enslavement and incorporation into the French empire as will be seen later. First of all he took advantage of Phya Surisak taking away the two brothers of Deo-Van-Tri, or Kham Houm, the Prince of Muong Lai, to Bangkok for Thai education, and sought Kham Houm out, Pavie promised the sad brother that France would help him to liberate his brothers and return the brothers to him if he would collaborate with the French in fighting the Thai. This occasion led to the annexation of the area of Sibsong Chutai or Huapan in spite of the fact that questions regarding frontier boundaries were still not settled, but Pavie wanted to pursue the policy of seize first and then talk afterwards. After Sibsong Chutai, it was Laos, and then even the whole of Thailand was contemplated, when

French interests came into clash with those of the British, who were also approaching from the Burmese and the Shan side. This led to the French proposal at one time to use the Menam as the boundary line between the two empires, partitioning up Thailand into two halves. This latter project failed through the strategy of King Chulalongkorn who played Great Britain against France using Thailand as a buffer State between the two imperialist designs. He was thus able to save at least half of Thailand from the French. Meanwhile the Englishman employed by the Thai government to make a map of the country went ahead speedily in order to make a survey of the disputed area. His name was MacCarthy. He went with the army of Vaivoranat, who commanded an expedition to suppress the Ho invasions in Laos. MacCarthy travelled widely along the Mekhong, in Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Huapan and Sibsong Chutai, Muong Sai in the North, Muong Theng (or Dien Bien Phu) and up to Laichau. At Samteu or Samtai he met with French expeditionary force led over by Pavie to drive off Thai posts. They were afraid that MacCarthy's survey might damage their territorial claims and forced MacCarthy to go back to Bangkok. However the result of this survey was the first map of Thailand which was sent to London to be printed there in 1887. In 1889 MacCarthy went up to the North of Thailand.

and made a survey of all the country to the North of Bangkok up to the Burmese frontier of the Shan States. Thus the map of the Northern part of Thailand was also made. MacCarthy retired from the Thai government service and published two books in London called "Report of Survey in Siam (1895)" and "Surveying and Exploring in Siam (1895)". Pillars which were set by MacCarthy for making a map of the region were still to be found at different places in Laos. Chiefs of districts and towns and officials at the time might be made nobles and given titles. Each time they were promoted their names would be changed, because title names were not the same as common names. Moreover there was no use of family names at the time. Family names were introduced only very late in the twentieth century during the reign of Rama VI. A plain Mr. thus could become a Pia something, and then promoted to a Khun something else, after which he became a Luang, a Phra, or Chamün by another name and then a Phya by a different name and finally the highest distinction of all a Chao Phya under a completely different name. Titles were bestowed by the king as a result of personal merits and distinctions. They were therefore not hereditary.

For tributary princes of vassal States another set of titles were given them. They were ranked according to the degree of responsibility in each State or town

first the ruling prince, then a second prince in command, called Uparaj or Viceroy, then the third in command, called Chao Rajawong, and the fourth called Chao Rajabutra.

On the commoner's side after a governor of a a muong (town) was "upahat" (second in command), "Rajabutra" (third in rank) and "Rajawong" (fourth in rank). Governorship was usually hereditary from father to son or among members of the same family, but there were exceptions in case the direct descendants or near relatives of the governor were considered too weak, or too young to govern, or otherwise disqualified through misconduct. The investiture of governorship consisted, apart from the nomination decree, also various insignia showing different grades or ranks and accompanied by gifts. Thus the king gave a silver betel tray, a silver water jar, a sick umbrella, a coat embroidered with designs and other garments or cloth. Higher nobles were differentiated according to the kind of gifts they received from the king. Thus they may be distinguished as to whether they were nobles of the golden tray rank or of the silver tray rank, and whether their nominations were written on golden plates or silver plates. All these insignias were usually displayed in glass cupboards in their drawing-rooms or in their inner chambers where nobody would steal them. The commissioners were also given a seal of

rank which they could use to stamp on all their correspondences and decrees.

The people of the Northeast had been much disturbed during the wars of Anou against Bangkok. People which were scattered about gradually came back and settled down in the villages. Many villages grew up and out of these villages towns were created and governors appointed to rule over the new towns. As towns they were given other names. During this period the following towns were created out of growing villages:

	out of the old village of
1861 Suvannakiri	- Ban Soeng Yai,
1872 Utumporn	- Ban Ta Kah,
1877 Pnom Prai	- Ban Poeng Khwaeng,
1789 Sapang Pupha	- Ban Houi Hin Kong in Champasak,
1879 Payakapumpisai	- Ban Muong Suo,
1879 Selapumnikorn	- Ban Búngdone, in Kamalasai,
„ Chanumarn Monton-	Ban Tayak-khu, Ubol.
„ Pananikom	- Ban Phela, in Ubol.
„ Varinchamrab	- Ban Nakornchor, in Champasak.
„ Tavachaburi	- Ban Sao-tong, in Roi-Et.
„ Mulapamoke	- Ban Charn, in Sitandorn.
„ Dome-Pradit	- Ban Chanlanadome, in Champasak.

	out of the old village of
1879 Sutavaree	- Ban Nam Kamkaengset, in Champasak.
„ Rasee-Salai	- Ban None Hinkong, in Sisaket.
1882 Chumpolburi	- Ban Tapkai,
„ Chaturapak Piman	- Ban Muong Hong, in Suvannapum.
1882 Vapee Patum	- Banna Lao, in Maha-Sarakam.
„ Kosumpisai	- Ban Wangta Horkhwang, in Maha-Sarakam.
1884 Taraborivat	- Muong Selampao, in Champasak.

Laos remained in Thailand up to 1893 when it was ceded to France. This was a period of relative calm, except for the Ho invasions which disturbed the Northern part of Laos through Huapan, Xieng Khouang, down to Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Nongkhai.

King Rama III of Thailand died in 1851 and was succeeded by his brother Mongkut, known as Rama IV, an enlightened despot who started to modernize the country along Western lines. He went into priesthood twentyseven years before he became king, during which time he had a lot of opportunity to study the various arts and to learn English with

American missionaries. Unlike the neighbouring countries he opened up his country to foreigners and could contact them in their own language. During his reign treaties of friendship and commerce with foreign countries started. He also had his numerous children taught by an English teacher. It was the first time the court was undergoing a change to Western ideas. It was also during his reign that the French started to build an empire next to Thailand. The French missionaries had come to Vietnam to convert Vietnamese to Christianity. Minh Mang, the Vietnamese emperor, eyed this with suspicion, because the missionaries were paving the way for French imperialism and had drawn the affection of his people away from him. The missionaries were therefore persecuted. This led to French intervention and they landed in Tourane, to the South of Hué, the royal capital, in 1858. After this success the French seized Saigon in 1861 and by the Treaty of June 1862 the French kept the whole of Cochin-China. They became then a neighbour to Cambodia, then under Thai suzerainty. Their next step was to force the king of Cambodia to accept French protectorateship in 1864 and forced king Mongkut to acknowledge the French claim in 1864. Thus Cambodia was lost to France during Mongkut's reign, Mongkut died in 1868 and was succeeded by King Chulalongkorn who ruled right down to 1910. In 1888

the French who had by this time seized the whole of Vietnam, quietly occupied Sibsong Chutai and by 1893 they forced Thailand to give up the whole of Laos to them. They then went on to occupy Chantaburi, which they claimed as a guarantee for the Thai government to carry out the treaty of 1893. However once held they would not give up Chantaburi except for a further cession of territories to the French, first Battambang, Siem Reap and Sisophon, then Champasak and the western strip of Luang Prabang on the right side of the Mekhong River. The French would not stop there and wanted more and more territories, until British pressure, as a rival power, forced them to stop there, and guarantee for Thai independence as a buffer State between two rival powers. Thus from 1893 onwards Laos steered its own course of history under the French, separated from Thailand, until after World War II when she asserted independence and became an independent associated State in the French Union, and then as a completely united and independent country.

THE PACIFICATION OF LAOS

During the campaigns of King Anu of Vientiane, the latter had sought the help of the Vietnamese, who sent an army to occupy Xieng Khouang, and then they marched through southern Laos, East of Nakorn Panom. When Anu was defeated and arrested,

the King of Bangkok sent up Chao Phya Dharma to pacify the country. Chao Phya Dharma came up to Luang Prabang whereas his assistant, Phra Rajvarin, marched up to Nongkhai. From there Phra Rajvarin went up to Xieng Khouang and drove out the Vietnamese, who encamped at Muong Sui and Muong Chim, back into Vietnam. Xieng Khouang then came under Thai rule, and the Thai gave Xieng Khouang to Luang Prabang as a prize for helping the Thai in the fight against King Anu. The Thai army followed up the Vietnamese into their territory at Nge-Ahn (Vihn) but could not take it and had to retreat into Thai territory.

Chao Phya Dharma went up to Hua-pan, was taken ill and was forced to go back to Bangkok. When he was well he went up to Luang Prabang again in 1836 and then again to Huapan, where the various nobles came and submitted themselves. They were brought to Bangkok to pay respects to the King of Bangkok, after which they were confirmed in their old posts and sent back to Huapan as vassals of Luang Prabang.

As for the southern provinces of Laos which had become estranged during the wars with Anu, the King of Bangkok in 1846 thought it also expedient to send an army to make sure that these parts of his realm were still faithful to him and to establish outposts all along the frontiers to prevent further encroachments

by the Vietnamese. Prince Tissa of Vientiane, who came down to see the King of Bangkok at the time and General Phra Maha Songgram were entrusted with this expedition. The army of Maha Songgram was joined by reinforcements from the Eastern, Northeastern and Ubol forces. They marched through Laos in four columns, after which the towns of Tchepone, Muong Wang, Muon Pin, Muong Nong, Muong Xienghom and Muong Phabang swore loyalty to Thailand. In order to stop further Vietnamese inroads, army units were posted at Ban Búng (in Muong Saek), at Ban Poh (in Muong Wang), at Mahaxay, at Lamnao Nongprue (near Quang Bihn), at Muong Xienghom, at Ban Nahin (in Kamkeut Kammuon), and at Ban Nakai (in Muong Wang). Simply because King Anu had lost the war and had gone to the Vietnamese for help by promising that as a prize King Anu would acknowledge Vietnamese suzerainty (according to Vietnamese version), this however the Vietnamese could not claim because Anu had no more country to give to anybody, nor did the Vietnamese take any active part in Anu's campaign. They only watched and tried to seize some of the outer strips during the confusion, which once the Thai were free, they had at once driven them out. The Vietnamese had never stationed any administrative nor military posts in Lao territory, except for the small contingent at Xieng Khouang which was driven out as stated above.

KINGDOM OF LUANG PRABANG

Reign of King Sukaseum (1838-1850)

During this time who ruled in Luang Prabang? King Mantaturat ruled from 1817 to 1836. The King of Bangkok then appointed Sukaseum, Mantaturat's son, as king of Luang Prabang, and Prince Ounkeo as viceroy or second king. Ounkeo was Mantaturat's brother and King Anurut's son. He was therefore Sukaseum's uncle.

The king of Bangkok did not appoint Sukaseum as King of Luang Prabang at once, because Sukaseum and Prince Abhay, the viceroy, quarrelled with each other. Both were called away to Bangkok for investigations and in the meantime Prince Ounkeo was appointed regent. Sukaseum came back as king, but Prince Abhay was degraded and Prince Ounkeo was made viceroy instead.

Prince Ounkeo was a brave warrior. During the reign of Mantaturat he was sent in 1820 along with Viceroy Prince Suttarat to Hsenwi Fah in Sibsong Panna, to help Prince Mahanoi who was there ousted by Prince Mahawang. Prince Mahanoi fled to Luang Prabang and asked for help. Prince Suttarat and Prince Ounkeo marched up to Boun Neua and sent a detachment commanded by Phya Xiengtai and Phya Xieng Neua to take the towns of Muong La, Muong Pong, Muong Ban, Muong Khon, Muong Noon and Muong

Xiengfah. Prince Mahawang retaliated and captured Xiengtai together with the strip from Xieng Neua to Xieng Hung. The army of Suttisarn and Ounkeo had to come back to Luang Prabang after this unsuccessful campaign. Prince Mahanoi himself went away to China. During the fall of Vientiane Prince Suttisarn was accused of having sided with Vientiane and tried to hide away some of the Vientiane people from the Thai army. He was arrested and sent to Bangkok where he was imprisoned until his death. Prince Abhay was appointed viceroy in his place.

In 1829 Prince Mahawang came back again and attacked the outer posts of Luang Prabang. Prince Ounkeo and Prince Abhay were sent out to fight against Prince Mahawang. The latter was defeated and retreated to Xieng Hung. The Lao captured many Lius from Sibsong Panna and settled them around Luang Prabang. The Lius in their new home looked upon Prince Ounkeo as their overlord and attended the celebration during the month of October every year at the viceroy's palace.

When Chao Phya Dharma (old name: Somboun) went up to Luang Prabang in 1834 he despatched viceroy Abhay to help in driving off the Vietnamese from Xieng Khouang. General Dharma also sent Prince Ounkeo along with Prince Chanachai, Prince Kaenkam,

and Prince Kampan to take Muong Thèng (Dien Bien Phu). Many Thai Dams of this area were taken to Luang Prabang at this time, where they settled down as subjects of the viceroy. In 1836 Prince Ounkeo was sent down to Bangkok by Viceroy Abhay with the usual tributes of silver and golden trees, and because Prince Sukaseum and Prince Abhay disputed over the throne, the King of Bangkok did not appoint Sukaseum as King until two years later. Meanwhile Ounkeo was made regent, and after Sukaseum's accession to the throne, as viceroy. Prince Abhay then fled to Paklay and then to Xieng Karn where he settled down. King Sukaseum had Prince Abhay arrested and sent down to Bangkok where he ended his life.

In 1848 Xieng Hung was attacked by Prince Nohkam and Prince Mahachai-Ngadam. King Sukaseum was away at Bangkok. When he came back to Paklay he instructed Prince Ounkeo with an army to go and guard the confines of Luang Prabang territory at Muong Sai. Xieng Hung was taken and the Viceroy of Xieng Hung fled to Muong Sai, from where he was taken to Luang Prabang.

In 1849 King Sukaseum sent Prince Ounkeo along with other princes and a general with the usual tributes of gold and silver trees to Bangkok. Prince Ounkeo died in Bangkok in 1850. King Sukaseum also died the same year. King Sukaseum had six sons

and eight daughters: Prince Kam Ngao, Prince Bunpet, Prince Pommachak, Prince Kamsaeng, Prince Pomma, and Prince Intachak. The royal daughters were Princess Kalya, Princess Kam-One, Princess Bouddi, Princess Babpa, Princess Kamsorn, Princess Kamsee, Princess Ounkam and Princess Somesee.

Viceroy Ounkeo had four sons and three daughters: Prince Siwisa, Prince Souvanna Pomma, Prince Tongkam, Prince Kamma, Princess Soupan, Princess Pinkam, and Princess Kamsao.

In 1851 Prince Chantararat, Sukaseum's brother, was appointed king by Bangkok. Prince Ounkam was made viceroy.

REIGN OF CHANTARAT, OR TIANTHA-KOUMANE (1851-1871)

King Chantararat's reign was much disturbed by Prince Mahachai of Xieng Hung and his son Prince Yong, who were antagonistic to the Viceroy of Xieng Hung, a protégé of the King of Luang Prabang and the king of Bangkok. The latter wanted to put the viceroy as ruler of Xieng Hung and entrusted King Chantararat to send the viceroy of Xieng Hung back to his home town with an escort in 1857. Prince Mahachai who had taken refuge in Muong Sai went back to Xieng Hung and put the viceroy to death. Mahachai then marched to Muong Je where he was killed in a

battle. Prince Yong, Mahachai's son, fled to Muong Sai, where he defeated the army of Luang Prabang stationing there, and took away the inhabitants of the town to Muong Pong. An army was sent up by Luang Prabang under Prince Kambua, Prince Kaenkam and Prince Pomma in pursuit of Prince Yong in order to bring the inhabitants of Muong Sai back, but they failed to overtake Prince Yong and had to come back to Luang Prabang.

Another incident during Chantararat's reign was the campaign against Xieng Tung. In the reign of King Mongkut in 1852, Prince Wongsatirat was sent from Bangkok with an army to take Xieng Tung. King Chantararat gave 3000 men under the command of Prince Sivisa and Prince Kammao to help in this expedition. The Burmese came to the help of Xieng Tung and Prince Wongsatirat had to retreat. Prince Sivisa was killed in the fight while Prince Kammao disappeared. Prince Wongsatirat went to take Xieng Tung again two years later but was again unsuccessful.

King Chantararat died in 1871, during the reign of Rama V of Bangkok. The fourth son of Mantaturat, Ounkam was faced with the hardest of destiny. His capital was attacked and sacked by the Hos of the Black Flag, led by the Prince of Muong Lai (Laichau), Deo-Van-Tri, or Kam Houm, Ounkam fled to Xiengkarn, in the company of Pavie, who took the opportunity

of his close contact and misfortunes to turn Ounkam's head against Bangkok and bring him gradually under French influence. Pavie convinced Ounkam that in the moment of utmost misery he was deserted by Bangkok.

Ounkam died in 1889 and was succeeded by his eldest son Zakkarine, who ruled until 1904. It was during Zakkarine's rule that Laos passed over to France. King Zakkarine (Prince Kamsouk) before he came to the throne, used to help the Thai army, under Chamün Vaivoranat, to fight against the Hos in 1885. In 1904 his son Sisawangwong succeeded him. His grandson, Sawang Wattana, the present king, came to the throne in 1959 after the death of Sisawangwong.

But we will turn to yet two more great events in the history of Laos: the Ho invasions and French annexation of Laos, before we pass on to the modern time, when after the Japanese hostilities in Southeast Asia and the Pacific that Laos became independent again.

THE HO INVASIONS

The Hos were broken-up armed Chinese rebels of the Taiping rebellion, who at the summit of their resurrection, took Nanking in 1851. They were finally defeated and driven into the mountains along the frontier between China, Tongking and Northern Laos. They then lived by plundering the people, and taking opportunity of the unsettled state of Tongking, and

the weak, unarmed outposts of the Thai kingdom, they attacked everywhere as bandits, and harassed the fringes of the two countries. At the death of their leader they were broken up into Black Flags under Luu-Vin-Phuoc, and Yellow Flags under Hoang-tson-in. Luu-Vin-Phuoc seized Lao-kai in 1868 and settled down there. The Yellow Flags settled down in Hoyang. At the time the French were overrunning Tongking, and the Vietnamese, under Prince Hoang-Ke-Vian, called in their help. Luu-Vin-Phuoc allied himself with the Vietnamese and hunted the French right down to the gates of Hanoi. The Hos were brave, fearless and fought in the teeth of death, and killed two of the French most undaunted warriors in 1883: Francis Garnier and Rivière. They had the help of the Prince of Sibsong Chutai, Kam Houm, known in Vietnamese as Deo-Van-Tri. The ancestors of Kam Houm came down from Canton. At the fall of the Ming dynasty, one ancestor served as a Chinese general and came with his partisans to Tongking, where he established first at Bac-Ninh, and then later at Lai-Chau where the Deos had settled down for thirteen generations, before Kam Houm's father, Deo Van Seng, became Prince of the twelve Thai principalities, with the seat at Lai-Chau. Deo-Van-Tri helped the Black Flags to fight the French, and he was known by the French as a valiant and formidable enemy. But the Vietnamese

front does not concern us here. While the French sent columns to seize control of the mountains of Tongking and Sibsong Chutai, other bands of Hos were attacking different parts of Laos, threatening Luang Prabang and the whole of Northern Laos right down to Nong-khai. Puang Nansi was killed by Luu-Vinh-Phuoc during the fight which ensued. Henceforth the Hos were broken up again into four groups:

The first group had Yipmantai as their leader. This group used a yellow flag as their ensign and seized the town of Sonla as their stronghold. They were called after their ensign the Yellow Flag Hos. The French called them *les Pavillons Jaunes*.

The second group had Luu-Vinh-Phuoc (or Liu Tayan) as their leader, and used a black flag. They were called the Black Flag Hos (French: *les Pavillons Noirs*) and had Laokay as their seat. It was this group which was called upon by Emperor Tu Duc to fight with the Vietnamese army in Tongking under Prince Hoang-Ke-Vian, against the French who were attacking Hanoi and overrunning the whole of Tongking.

The third group under Achüang used a red flag and lurked about in the province of Xieng Khouang.

The fourth group under Kwaising used a striped flag and was based at Tung Chiengkam.

At first the Black Flags and the Yellow Flags collaborated with each other along the two river valleys of the Red and the Black Rivers setting up check points to collect taxes for boats sending up merchandise along these rivers. They quarrelled over the amounts collected and broke apart. The Black Flags had since then allied themselves with the Vietnamese and also the Chinese who still claimed suzerainty over Tongking.

The Hos started to harass the fringes of Laos in 1872. In 1873 about 2000 Hos attacked Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu of the Vietnamese), Utaiburi (Paklay), Sob-Et and Tung Chiengkam. In 1874 the Thai commander at Xieng Khouang, Phra Panomsarn Narin and the Upahat went to fight the Hos at Tung Chiengkam. The Upahat was killed and Phra Panomsarn had to retreat back to Xieng Khouang. The Governor of Xieng Khouang then asked for help both from the Vietnamese and the Thai governments. The Vietnamese emperor sent Ong Dedek with an army of 2000 men. (The Governor of Xieng Khouang had no other intentions than to get help wherever he could, but by asking help from the Vietnamese, it did give the French later on a pretext that Xieng Khouang belonged to Vietnam and therefore must be taken over by the French as the new master of Vietnam) With the new help the Governor of Xieng Khouang again

went to fight the Hos at Tung Chiengkam. The Governor was killed in the fight. Phra Panom fled to Ponepisai and the Vietnamese were badly routed. The people of Xieng Khouang under Thao Piaphong submitted to the Hos, but it did not save the town from its destiny. Xieng Khouang was plundered, burnt and looted. Thao Piaphong escaped to Bangkok in order to ask for immediate help from Bangkok. After this the Hos prepared to attack Luang Prabang, Vientiane and Nongkhai.

King Chulalongkorn of Thailand then despatched an army led by the Governors of Pichai and Sukhotai; since they were the nearest to the scene, to go and protect Luang Prabang. Another army was also organized from the North-East, led by Phya Maha Ammat (Chuen). The men of the second army were recruited from Ubol, Roi-Et, Maha-Sarakam and Kalasin, with reinforcements from those of Korat under the Governor of the latter province. This second army was to move up and protect the Nongkhai front.

In 1875 the King of Luang Prabang also reported to Bangkok that the Red Flag Hos had taken twelve outlying towns at the border of Luang Prabang and that immediate help was urgently requested. King Chulalongkorn then sent another army under Phya Mahindrasak also to go up. In the meantime Phya Maha Ammat, reinforced by the men from Nongkhai

under Phya Patum Devabhibal crossed the Mekhong River. The Hos under its commander Liu Sikoh and Lisipoh, his lieutenant, had taken Vientiane. The Hos had three camps, one at Vat Chan, the second at Vat Sithan and the third at Ponetanalao. Sinsue Yiasapkoh and Sinsue Yialengkoh commanded the Sithan camp while the third camp at Ponetanalao was commanded by Moksikoh. The three camps were attacked by the Thai army over from Nongkhai. Their commanders Liusikoh and Lisipoh were killed in the fight at Vat Chan and Liusikoh's brother, Kwansai, was caught alive. At Ponetanalao its camp commander, Moksikoh, was shot dead. The Hos then retreated towards Tung Chiengkam. In the meantime the other Thai army from the Luang Prabang front beat the Ho invaders off, and the two armies of Luang Prabang and Nongkhai followed up the Hos to Tung Chiengkam, their original base, from whence they were beaten back into Vietnam territory. The other army under Chao Phya Mahindrasak which was waiting to come up from Saraburi was therefore no longer needed.

THE SECOND HO INVASION OF 1885

But the Hos were not annihilated. They went into Vietnamese territory and plundered the people on the other side until they became quite strong again. The Yellow Flag Hos gathered together under Puang Nansi's henchman, called Yipmantai and seized Sonla.

Another Black Flag group under Ong Ba was pacified and had gone to live as peaceful citizens at Takhoua, but part of his men, under a new commander, Kwan Koryee, still lurked on and took quarters at Sob-Et's neighbourhood, Ban Dai and Ban Na. These Black Flag Hos continued to plunder the people. The local Lao government had been fighting with them for ten years and could not suppress them. In 1885 Luang Prabang reported to Bangkok that the Hos had taken several towns under the suzerainty of Luang Prabang. The King of Luang Prabang had sent two army contingents, one to the River Ou front and the other at River Suang. The army of Phya Sukhotai, the Thai commissioner of Luang Prabang, was also unable to suppress them. The country was very mountainous, full of thick jungles and malaria-infested. Food was also extremely scarce. The Thai army was quickly decimated from malaria, and one of its commanders, Phya Raj Varanukul, was badly wounded in the leg by a shot from the Hos. The army had to retreat from Tung Chiengkam to Nongkhai to wait for further orders and reinforcements from Bangkok. The Hos then took Xieng Khouang, Sob-Et, Sonla and Tung Chiengkam, where they now took quarters.

King Chulalongkorn then raised two more armies and sent them to the assistance of the Thai army at Luang Prabang. The northern army was

commanded by Chamuen Vaivoranat (later : Chao Phya Surasak) and the Southern army by the king's own brother, H.R.H. Prince Prachak. Vaivoranat's army moved up to Luang Prabang and was reinforced by Luang Prabang's army under Prince Bounkong and Prince Khamsouk. Prince Bounkong was the father of Prince Souvanna Pouma, the present Prime Minister of Laos. Prince Khamsouk was later King Zakkarine of Laos. The combined army of Laos and Thais moved forward to Muang Ngoi, where news was given by a villager that Kwan Koryee's father-in-law, a Ho called Pon, had come to hide. Prince Khamsouk brought him to the army commander, Vaivoranat, and from him it was known that Kwan Koryee, stationing at Sob-Et, was sending his men to take Muong Soei, Muong Waen and Muong Pouné.

On knowing this, Vaivoranat sent out two detachments, one under Captain Luang Daskorn and Prince Bounkong to take Kwan Koryee's camp at Sob-Et, and another detachment under Luang Chamnong Yuttakich and Prince Khamsouk in the direction of Muong Soei, Muong Pouné and Muong Waen. Phya Sukhotai and Major Phra Bahol were to convoy provision from Muong Ngoi to serve the advancing detachments, whereas Vaivoranat himself with the main army moved on to Sonla, from where he was to co ordinate the operations.

Captain Luang Daskorn's detachment arrived at Sob-Et and attacked Kwan Koryee's camp. Kwan Koryee escaped but some fifty Hos including his wife were captured. Captain Luang Daskorn then encamped at Ban Dai. A village informer came to tell him that Kwan Koryee with the rest of his men was fleeing by way of Nuong Houng via Laek stream. Luang Daskorn at once sent a company of men under Captain Xuto, Sub-Lieutenant Ploy and Phra Charern in pursuit. This company overtook Kwan Koryee at Laek stream. Many of the Hos were shot down but could pursue no longer as it was already dark by then, and Kwan Koryee could effect his escape.

The other detachment under Captain Luang Chamnong and Prince Khamsouk arrived at Muong Soei, drove the Hos from there towards Muong Pouné. The Hos at Muong Pouné were taken by surprise, did not put up any fight, burnt their camps and fled. Luang Chamnong then camped down at Muong Pouné. But the Thai army met with harder fate than from the Hos themselves. The rainy season had set in and with it came malaria. Most of Vaivoranat's men were taken ill, many died. He sent for more medicine from Muong Pichai, but no organized transport could be made. The elephants, the only means of transport, when requisitioned were never given up by the owners. Short of medicine the whole army

was taken by malaria and men died off as leaves. Only two officers, the army commander himself and his adjutant, Cha Yuat, with a handful of men still remained on their feet. The Hos heard of this plight and collected together again a force in order to come and seize back their camps. They took Muong Houng quite near to Sob-Et, and the people there fled to Ban Dai and reported to Prince Bounkong. Prince Bounkong and Lieutenant Duang Xuto then surrounded his camp with hidden dynamite. A few men who were not sick watched the dynamite waiting for the Hos to attack. At last on 23 July 1886 the Hos gave the attack. Prince Bounkong's men then lit the fuse, and the dynamite burst all around the camp killing the Hos and frightened them off. Prince Bounkong just kept on guard at his own camp and could not follow them up. The Hos laid siege to his camp at a distance further away.

Another group of Hos attacked Phra Charern's camp at Ban Dai. Being quite outnumbered by the Hos, Phra Charern had to retreat towards the plain of Huay Kuang. There he met Lieutenant Uan Xuto with six men who came to his help. Another fight ensued. Phra Charern was shot dead, and Lieutenant Xuto was fleeing to get more help from the main army when he was shot at the thigh and could not proceed. Although crippled and much in pain,

Lieutenant Xuto took shelter in a bush near a stream, taking out his pistol watching for four Hos who were pursuing him. He shot at them. Three fell dead, only the fourth yet to be overcome, when pain got the better of him and he missed his aim. The last Ho then came up to him, cut his head off and took it to the commander.

Phra Sawamipak, the Governor of Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu) was sent to the relief of Prince Bounkong at Ban Dai with thirty men.

Phra Sawamipak fought with Kwan Koryee's men and joined Prince Bounkong at his camp. Phra Sawamipak knew Ong Ba, the retired Black Flag Ho chief and asked for his help. Ong Ba withdrew his men from Kwan Koryee's company and asked the latter to submit to the Thai authorities. To this Kwan Koryee agreed with the condition that his wife and relatives be returned to him.

On the 30th July 1886 Kwan Koryee and his men came up holding a white flag showing submission. Prince Bounkong and Phra Sawamipak then reported the submission to Vaivoranat sending over two Ho chiefs as hostages, sent by Kwan Koryee.

In the meantime a villager reported a resurrection of Kha tribesmen to Phya Sisoumang, Governor of Sonla, and then to Vaivoranat. The resurrection was led by two Khas called Pia Pra and Pia Warn.

They had about 150 men. Vaivoranat then sent eleven men who were all that were not sick with Prince Kham of Luang Prabang and Lieutenant Chéh provided with a cannon to Huay Hom, where they were passing. About 60 Kha men were shot dead and sixty were arrested along with their chiefs. Vaivoranat had them beheaded and their heads impaled so that nobody would cause any trouble again.

On the 2nd August 1886 the supply of Quinine and a doctor arrived at last. The men were saved, but two thirds of them had already died before the much needed medicine arrived. After this Phra Bahol was sent out to meet Kwan Koryee's men and when the latter had sworn allegiance to Thailand, the men were dispersed to live as private citizens in different places. As for Kwan Koryee himself, he was taken to Bangkok so that he could cause no more trouble. When all was settled another trouble arose. A group of Black Flag Hos, who had allied themselves with the Governor of Laichau, Deo-van-Seng, would not recognize the authority of Luang Prabang over them, and organized an expedition to fight the Thai army. Deo-van-Seng had five sons : Kham Houm, Kham Heum, Kham Sam, Kham La and Kham Houi (the latter was called Bang Bien by the French, and we shall hear more of him).

Kham Sam, Kham La and Bang Bien were sent with 150 men to fight the Thai at Muong Theng. They were easily defeated on 1st December 1886 and the three chiefs were captured. Vaivoranat now received the order to return to Bangkok, and he took the three chiefs with him. Laichau is in Sibsong Chutai, and the chief of Laichau was really a prince over the White Thais of Sibsong Chutai. Here the Thai version of history and the Laichau version disagreed. The memoire as left over by Deo-van-Tri gave a different story. Deo-van Tri was at the time in league with the Black Flag Hos and was fighting the French, since it was in his interest to save his country from French annexation, as the French were then masters of Tongking and tried to push forward towards Sibsong Chutai. When he knew that the Thai army was approaching, he wanted to get Thai help to fight against the French as the common enemy to him and the Thais. He also said that the Thais were his brothers and they spoke the same language, and the Thais would not refuse him the help. He therefore sent his brothers Kham Sam, Kham Doi and two notables called Quang Thi and Quang-long to meet the Thai commander. The two brothers were joined by Kham La and Kham Hui at Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu). Deo-van-Tri sent his own brothers to show his honesty, but

Vaivoranat had them seized and sent them down to Bangkok. Vaivoranat then sent back Quang-ling to tell Kham Sing and Deo-van-Tri to come down and meet him at Luang Prabang and make formal submission. This angered Deo-van-Tri. He was all the more angry when he heard the false news that Kham Hui, his brother, was dead, another brother, Kham La, was beheaded by the Thai, and the third brother, Kham Doi, died of indigestion on his way to Bangkok. All this proved to be untrue because all his brothers returned home and met him afterwards.

INVASION FROM LAICHAU

Kham Houm (Deo-van-Tri, in Vietnamese) and Kham Heum now determined on revenge for his brothers. They also put the blames on the Laos for having assisted the Thais to seize his brothers. They now organized an expedition against Luang Prabang. They were also being assisted by the Chinese commander of the Tongking area. The Chinese, like Deo-van-Tri himself, were disputing over the suzerainty of the Tongking region and were fighting the French. The Chinese therefore considered Deo-van-Tri as their ally. The territory of Kham Houm, or Deo-van-Tri, as Prince of the White Thai of Sibsong Chutai, was considered by the Thai as part of their kingdom and annexed to Luang Prabang, but the

communications were difficult, the Laos were weak, and therefore Kham Houm was left free to do whatever he wished without any hindrance or control. At first he was the bitterest enemy of the French. The French saw an opportunity of winning him over to their side, and seized the issue of his quarrel with the Thai over his brothers. They promised him that they would bring his brothers back to him and forced the Thais to give up his brothers. Deo-van-Tri then sided and fought for the French in the ensuing quarrel between France and Thailand over the possession of Laos. Here again the memoirs as left over by Deo-van-Tri were different from those written by Pavie, who stated that he made a conquest of the hearts of all Laos through his genuine kindness to save them from Thai domination. Deo-van-Tri said that the French tried to assuage him and meet him. However he always avoided the meeting again and again. At last when his wife died and his daughter was taken seriously ill, he came back to his village, from his hiding, to see his daughter. There he met his brother Kham La, who had returned from Bangkok. He heard from the latter that the French in Bangkok tried to persuade his brothers to rise against the Thais and in return the French promised them freedom under French protection. The following year when his father fell sick he visited his father. The French

again tried to seek him out and even brought a doctor, Dr. Sadoue, to cure his father. He was alone at that house and could not escape meeting the French, whom he hated and had sworn that he could never be their friend. By constantly meeting them on such rare occasions, he got more used to their presence and allowed things to be done. What else could he do? His country was occupied by the French, and himself in hiding. At last in 1889 the French persuaded him to go to Hanoi where they asked him to sign a document of submission. The French really got hold of him by surprise and he was submitted to their will. Immediately afterwards the French started to educate his children and sent them to France. His children came back to serve as interpreters under French rule in Tongking. When Vietnam became independent, the Ho Chi Minh regime destroyed the last vestige of Deo-van-Tri's authority and his descendants now fled away from their home to settle down in Laos. The last time I met them they were in Outay. But let us now return to Deo-van-Tri himself. He hated Luang Prabang for having assisted the Thai to capture his brothers. He knew Luang Prabang so well. He had lived there and was educated there when he was young in one of the temples. His army reached Luang Prabang and took it by surprise on 8 June 1887. Prince Bounkong died in the fight. The town

was sacked and put to flames. Everything of any value was collected together, plundered and taken away in order to enable him to put up further resistance against the French. The Thai resident commissioner in Luang Prabang, Phya Nontaburi, and his adjutant, Captain Luang Daskorn, had to flee since they had no more soldiers with them. The Thai army had already gone back to Bangkok with Vainorant. The King of Luang Prabang himself fled for his life to Xieng Karn, where Pavie followed closely without leaving him and nursed him. It was here in this despair and old age that Pavie knew how to turn the king's anger against Thailand and promised French protection. Of course the King was angry in his misery that the Thais had forsaken him. But when the Thai heard of this trouble the King of Thailand sent up Vainorant again with an army to suppress the rising. Vainorant after his return from the last campaign against the Hos was promoted in rank and ennobled. He was now Phya Surasak. Thus in 1887 Surasak reduced the army of Kham Houn to submission. This was not difficult as Kham Houn was also fighting against the French on the other side. Kham Houn was assisting the Hos to fight against the French in Tongking. The French followed up the Hos after taking Hanoi, and moved up towards Laichau, Deo-van-Tri's capital in the Sibsong Chutai.

In fact the French were getting uneasy to see that the Thai army was operating in Sibsong Chutai, a territory they wanted to annex after Tongking. They were again quite frightened to see Mr James McCarthy, whom the Thai had engaged to make a map of that region, went right up to Laichao. This caused Pavie to move fast and to get Deo-van-Tri's submission so as to put him on the French side. First the French army moved rapidly and seized Laichau, Sonla and the whole of Tongking area. Laichau was burnt down by the French and Deo-van-Tri fled with his men to Muong Te in South China. Seeing no other means of resistance Deo-van-Tri was gradually persuaded by the French to submit as already mentioned above, and this should be the right version, since Deo-van-Tri said so himself in his memoir, and not as stated by Pavie in the 'Conquest of Hearts' that he was won over by love of the French goodness.

When Surasak moved up to Muong Theng (Dien Bien Phu) Pavie was getting quite restless and must counteract in all possible ways. He was then French Consul in Luang Prabang. At once he went by overland route across to Hanoi and asked for a French detachment commanded by Lt.-Col. Pennequin to come forward. Pennequin took Laichau and established a military post there. Then with the

support of Meo tribesmen, whom he had subdued Pennequin sent his men to Muong Theng, found a company of Thai soldiers, just asked them to go back so that they could take over the town. The Thai army protested but did not wish to incur any trouble with the French and proposed referring the matter for decision in Bangkok between the two governments. Pavie and Pennequin would not listen nor wait for anything. They just forced the Thai to go back and occupied it forthwith. Thus by December 1888 the French added the territory of Sibsong Chutai to their Tongking Province. Deo-van-Tri was left in peace to rule over the Sibsong Chutai territory and was even humoured with the award of the Cross of the Legion of Honour for going over to the French. During his many travels across the country through and through in these regions from Laos to Tongking and along the Mekhong valley, Pavie flattered upon the vanity of the local chiefs, calling them kings, when they were just officials appointed by the Thais, and worked upon their vanity and sentiments of freedom, to be gained over, not as independent chieftains, but as subjects of France under the name of independence. Thus Sibsong Chutai was taken away from Luang Prabang for ever and incorporated into North Vietnam, although the people of Sibsong Chutai are Black Thais and White Thais, who speak another Lao

dialect, and therefore have nothing to do with the Vietnamese whatsoever.

FRENCH COLONIAL EXPANSION IN THE FAR EAST

We may now go back a little bit in history to see how the French came to annex Tongking, Sibsong Chutai and the whole of Laos. At first the French were not interested in territories out here. They were competing with England to build their Empire in India, but when they were beaten by the English and thrown out of India they had to compensate themselves with territories somewhere else at the expense of less powerful countries than themselves. French missionaries were already at work in Annam and Cochin-China and were eager to seize favour at court in order to expand their propaganda work among the local people. Pigneau de Behaine, Bishop of Adran, found the opportunity of assisting a Vietnamese prince, Nguyen-Anh, who had lost his throne, to fight against the usurpers and to regain the throne of his ancestors. With French help and Pigneau taking active part in military operations Nguyen-anh was able to suppress the Tayson rebellion and mounted the throne as Emperor Gia-Long of Vietnam. The French missionaries gained royal favour and much freedom in the country in order to preach, but when Gia-long died in 1802, his successors looked at the

French missionaries and the Christians with an eye of suspicion. Persecution started with the result that the missionaries were the occasion for France to send the army to protect their own nationals and asked for freedom of religion and commerce. This led to the seizure of Saigon in 1858.

While France had developed modern firearms and modern techniques of warfare, the countries in Southeast Asia were still in the Middle Ages compared with a modern power like France. They still resorted to arms like swords, lances, bows and arrows with some small portion of modern weapons sold to them by traders of neutral countries who always seized opportunity of wars in order to make profits. The method of local administration was behind hand in every way. There was no sense of nationalism. The people fought untrained when called upon as slaves to nobles and feudal lords, whom they must obey for their lives. France therefore found it easy to settle the business by force. The pretext was a good one. Nobody could contend it. So one piece of territory ceded led to another until the whole of Vietnam was seized and brought under the French Empire by 1884 when France proclaimed protectorship over Vietnam and then in 1888 they just changed it into a French colony. Even in adjoining countries where no French missionaries were oppressed they still maintained the

right of extending protectorship. Thus Cambodia fell victim to French expansion next, and in 1864 Cambodia was proclaimed French protectorate. As Cambodia was a tributary State, dependent on Thailand at the time, France forced Thailand to sign a treaty renouncing all claims over Cambodia.

Thus danger came nearer to Thailand and Laos, then under Thailand. Earlier however French explorers were busy in discovering countries in this region and even expressed that France should be in control of all the countries from the basin of the Irrawaddy right down to the coast of Vietnam in the East and Yunnan in the North. As soon as France became nextdoor neighbour to Thailand and Laos she looked for a pretext whereby she could annex both countries next. She could not say that their missionaries were oppressed. There were none of any importance in Laos, and in Thailand French missionaries had been allowed freedom since the days of King Narai, contemporary of Louis XIV. King Narai even assisted the missionaries to build their church and sent three embassies to France to promote friendly relationship. King Mongkut of Thailand opened his country to all foreigners who would like to come to trade or settle down in his country. He was the first king of Thailand and even in these parts to study the Western ways of life, understood their ways and spoke in their

own language. He started a school in his royal palace and engage an English governess to teach his own children and those of his courtiers in Western knowledge. But France was still busy fighting to gain her feet in Vietnam. The Tongkinese, the Chinese rebels turned bandits and even the Chinese themselves, who had an old claim over Vietnam, were giving problems to French soldiers to settle first.

In the meantime France sent her sons to explore the Mekhong River and all the territories bordering on its bank up to its source in China. France was eyeing at the Mekhong as the main waterway for her access to Yunnan and to the mineral resources of the interior of China. But she was not the only power of the West wishing to gain influence and access into Southern China. England was also expanding from India towards Burma and the Shan States, and only Thailand and Laos separated them. King Chulalongkorn who succeeded his father, King Mongkut in 1868, saw the contention between England and France as an opportunity for him to play them off against each other and thus to save his country eventually. England was also having a plan for a railway connecting Burma with Yunnan through Chiengmai. The presence of France in the same vicinity and soon with a claim over the same territory was viewed by England as a rival in her ambitions.

Various French explorers during this period had a search for knowledge as a secondary aim. The primary aim was to gain more intimate knowledge of the region for use in connection with claims for annexation, to make a topographical survey of the areas for troop movements and settlement of claims, to find a pretext for French expansion and to incite local chieftains to disown their loyalty to their overlords by promises of freedom and independence through French intervention and assistance. Moreover they acquired knowledge in order to fabricate false publicity whereby they could rouse the interest of their own countrymen at home and the National Assembly to support them so that their colonial desires could be responded and assisted. Such were the men at work, prior to annexation, in these regions, the principal among whom were Pavie, Garnier, Mouhot, Doudart de Lagrée, Duc d'Orléans, Lemire, Delaporte, etc. to mention just a few of them.

Laos was already known to the Dutch since the days of Geraerd van Wusthof. He was commissioned by the Dutch East India Company to go up the Mekhong to explore the possibility of trade with people further inland. He arrived in Vientiane on 3 November 1641 in the reign of Potisararat. The first Frenchman to explore Laos was Alexandre-Henri Mouhot who went through Thailand, Cambodia and

Laos right up to Luang Prabang where he died of fever in October 1861 after three years of travel in the region. The first most important exploration of the Mekhong right up to Ta-Li (Nong-Seh) was made by Doudart de Lagrée assisted by Francis Garnier from 5 June 1866 to 29 June 1868, starting from Saigon. The mission made full discoveries of all the lands on both sides of the river. At the time they entered the Thai territory at Stung Treng (in Thai: Chieng Taeng; in Lao: Xieng Taeng), they then visited Ubol, Champasak, Attopeu, Nakorn Panom (or Lakhone), Vientiane and Luang Prabang. Doudart de Lagrée died on this mission and Francis came back through the Red River. He gathered a lot of information and interested the French, especially Chasseloup-Laubat, in the importance of French keeping a firm grip of the region. In fact the French started to put up an idea that the region belonged to them by right, since it was they who discovered it, in disregard of whoever should have held the place before them. It is like Columbus discovering a new land. However as a result of this mission Francis Garnier was aware of the unnavigability of the Mekhong as the line of access to Yunnan, and the French planned for a railway to gain access to the South of China from Hanoi and through the Red River instead.

The next important and also the most extensive

of all missions was the one led by Pavie from 1888-1889. It was through this mission that the information concerning the whole of Laos and the Mekhong right up to Sibsong Chutai, Laichau, Tongking areas, Xieng Khouang, Dien-Bien-Phu (Thèng), the Black River areas, Sonla, and even right down to Nam Mun, Oubone (Ubol), Champasak, and Attopeu in the South were made known to the French, and for the first time a complete map of the area was made. Pavie led three missions in his time, the last one in 1894-5 accompanied by 110 people. The missions were political, in order to pave the way for France to annex Laos and also Thailand. It was Pavie who counteracted the military expedition of Phya Surasak and Luang Datsakorn. We saw how the Ho invasions harassed the country and how the Thai army suffered adverse fortunes in order to suppress the Hos. For the first time he put up a new theory, as pretext for French interest in this region, that the Ho Invasions were fake pretensions of the Thai to expand towards the North and occupy the Laos country, whereas in reality Laos was dependent on Thailand since 1778, that is more than a century before French claims. Pavie was the first French Vice-Consul in Luang Prabang, and he persuaded his country to force Thailand to open up the country for scientific (a false word of course) explorations and even forced the Thai government to

accord facilities such as supplying men, transport, food, and lodging so that the mission could explore the country with ease. And the Thai government was generous enough to give them whatever they asked for even when they knew that he was acting as a spy for France. It was Pavie who led the military expedition of Colonel Pernod to seize Dien-Bien-Phu and Son-La and drove Thai occupation forces out, and it was he who intrigued with local chieftains like Deovan-Tri and Ong Ba to turn against the Thai government. It was he who intrigued with King Ounkham of Laos to revolt against Thai authorities and that he would help him to be free. The intrigues were combined with French explorations everywhere. As a result of these missions the French armies knew the exact location of towns and routes, where Thai forces were stationed, ready at last to fling her three military columns into Laos from three different directions, all at the same time: One from Cambodia, the second one towards Khemmarat and the third one towards Khammuon. But what were the claims put forward by the French? There was no repression of missionaries as in Vietnam. French historians then tried hard to look for causes. The first suggestion was made by Francis Garnier who claimed that Laos did not really belong to Thailand. Laos paid tributes to China, but as there was trouble and rebellion in China and a

serious Mohammedan uprising in Yunnan to suppress, Laos was therefore left free to the Thai alone to claim. This hypothesis could not give France a legal basis to a claim of heritage from China. The second theory found by Pavie that these countries were independent countries and never belonged to Thailand were again discarded by French colonialists, but a third idea seemed good and sound. Vietnam used to claim Laos as their dependency from time to time. The Kings of Laos, fearing of aggressions used to appease the Vietnamese by sending occasionally tributes. Xieng Khouang used to be occupied from time to time by Vietnamese garrisons (although eventually they were driven out by Thai forces), and King Anu, in his last despair, had paid tribute to the Court of Vietnam, when he asked for their help to fight the Thais. This is enough, the Vietnamese claim must be supported, and France, as the master of Vietnam, was therefore the rightful heir of Vietnam's heritage. This claim was therefore put up. What was more, Thailand's occupation of Laos must be described as Thailand's designs on Vietnamese territory when Vietnam was unable to protect her own territory while she had to fight France. Thailand seized of this opportunity to trample on the territory of Laos when France's hands were not free to protect it, being very busy to fight with the Vietnamese. Moreover the trouble which arose everywhere in North-

ern Laos, when the Hos invaded and pirated the people ransacking towns, which caused the Thai government to send help to suppress the Hos. These expeditions against the Hos, which caused heavy losses to the Thai armies, were considered by the French as Thai pretext to tighten control over Laos, and fortified Laos against France, which was coming to annex Laos as part of Vietnam next. It must be recalled however that even the French lost two of their most daring commanders in the fight against the same danger, the Ho incursions: the famous explorer, Francis Garnier, and the naval commander Henri Rivière, both killed by the Hos in the fights around Hanoi. On the Lao front, King Zakkarine himself (then still a prince) and the Upparat Bounkong fought side by side with Thai army commanders against the Hos. Phya Surasak lost two thirds of his army, and even he himself almost succumbed to Malaria which infested the region.

France started to seize Saigon, as her first foothold for further expansion towards the whole of the country in 1858, but Thailand had already annexed Laos as far back as 1778. The province of Hua Pan Tang Ha-Tang Hoc (Sibsong Chutai) was already part of Luang Prabang in 1695 as a result of the war between Luang Prabang and Vientiane. When the Thai occupied Laos this province was given to Luang

Prabang. It did not belong to Tongking then. It therefore formed part of Thailand through the conquests of King Taksin and King Rama I.

In 1749 the Vietnamese attacked Luang Prabang but they were driven off by Intarawong of Luang Prabang. In 1828 it was reported that the Vietnamese came into Xieng Khouang and quartered at Muong Soui. At the time Chao Phya Dharma kept an army at Luang Prabang, and sent Phra Rajvarin to drive the Vietnamese away from Muong Soui. The Vietnamese were finally defeated at Muong Soui, Muong Chim and Nam Gnüme. They were driven out of Laos.

In 1836 Chao Phya Dharma went to Hua Pan. The chiefs of Hua Pan came to see him, and he brought them to Bangkok, where they paid submissive respects to the King of Bangkok.

Owing to the uprising and troubles caused by Prince Anu, the Vietnamese also took liberty to overcome the southern part of Laos, from Tchépone downwards. Now when at last Anu was captured, an army was sent by the Thai government to drive the Vietnamese out of Laos. Phra Mahasonggram was sent out by the Thai government to visit all the towns along the frontiers and kept garrisons in order to protect the country from any more Vietnamese intrusions. Thus Phra Mahasonggram visited in 1836, long before French arrival in Saigon, the towns of

Tchepone, Muong Wang, Muong Pin, Muong Nong, Muong Xieng Hong, Muong Phabang. Soldiers were quartered at Muong Sek, Ban Poh (at Muong Wang), Mahaxay, Lamnao Nong Prue, Xieng Hom, Ban Nahin at Kamkeut Kammuon, and Ban Nakai (at Muong Wang).

The kings of Luang Prabang and Champasak were appointed by the supreme king of Bangkok. The governors of all these towns were confirmed by Bangkok, right down to Xieng Taeng in the South. Many towns were established and royal charters establishing them were given by the King of Bangkok. The Governor of Xieng Taeng went to meet Francis Garnier during his trip up the Mekhong in 1858 in the capacity of Thai governor. This fact was mentioned by Francis Garnier himself. There was no Vietnamese hold anywhere throughout the whole of Laos. The theory of Laos as a dependency of Vietnam was therefore a fabricated claim put up by the French in order to annex Laos. The Vietnamese may have pretensions over these territories but they never held them. But there were further incidents by which the claims grew up gradually into open hostilities between France as the accuser, putting all the blames of aggression, lies, treachery, ambushes, dishonesty, etc. on the Thai, who defended and knew that she had to yield to force. Might is above right, and that foreign

intervention was only the shadow of a hope. She must rely on her own abilities to reduce the claims to the minimum, and this is what she did, even though she knew that she was right and yet she had to yield. Her men at the time were described by the West as half-savages. They were not in a position to fight a first rate Power of the world. There was as yet no education in Thailand in the modern sense. The people were illiterate and did not know the use of modern weapons. After the travels of King Chulalongkorn, he tried to modernize his country by opening up schools, cutting roads and railways, reorganizing the administration of the country, putting up post and telegraph system, retrained his army units along modern lines, but this could not be done all at once, the French were already knocking upon her doors. The king engaged foreigners to train his men. Thus many of the navy commanders were Danish, and so also the first police officers and harbour-masters. The land had to be surveyed for accurate maps as these were urgently needed to settle boundary and territory claims. An Englishman was engaged, called McCarthy, who was the first head of the Survey Department. A German was employed as the first Director of Railways. A Belgian was employed to reorganize the administration of law and justice. The king of Thailand engaged indeed many Europeans to organize and

train his men, and started to send his many sons to various countries of Europe to study the various branches of knowledge, so that they could come back and help him in the scheme of modernizing the country. So much so it was said that at this time the men were trained to understand orders given in English, and in turn they delivered the orders in English. It was right at this time that France sent up two gun boats to reinforce her ultimatum served to Bangkok. The men who guarded the entrance of the river to Bangkok in the forts, had not yet been taught how to fire cannons. It was said that the Danish officers had to run round the forts and the ships helping the men to fire, and shouted English orders, to which the men were quite bewildered because they did not know what was required of them. Even then the men did put up an honourable resistance against Frenchmen who were better armed and well trained to the teeth. What a tremendous odd to fight against modern weapons with men from the most powerful country of the world, and only with gut and will alone. The king himself went through sleepless nights in consultation with his brother, Prince Devawong, the Foreign Minister, in order to bring France back to understand reason and take arbitration by a third power, which of course they refused since they know very well that with the

real reasons and truth of the matter they would certainly lose. The king had to bear all this with patience. The Conqueror of the Hearts of People, as Pavie termed himself, even refused to receive a Thai ambassador who was sent by Prince Devawong to talk with him, and when Mom Rajothai, the ambassador, wanted to explain, he was pointed to the door by Pavie, and sent down the staircase with Pavie's own feet, so the rumour went, and the Thais would not record it in history, so humiliated was she these days. An ultimatum for Pavie meant acceptance forthwith, with all the cession of Thai territory at once and no explanation nor any further discussion were required. It was for them to ask, and for the Thai to accept, whether right or wrong. Such was the vehemence of the time. But the annexation of Laos fell in three phases: the first phase is what the French called the pacification of Tongking; the second phase is to march in and seize Laos by force; the third phase is to cross over the Mekhong River and seize the adjoining territory on the right bank. There is a fourth phase whereby Thailand itself is to be annexed, but the endless onward French expansion caused alarm to the British, and the advance was finally checked. Maps made by French agents and explorers at this period already marked off half of modern Thailand to the East of the Menam Chao

Phya River as French Zone. Even some of the French agents began to put forward a hypothesis that the Northern part of Thailand is a semi-independent State, and therefore did not really belong to Thailand (see Macey: Five Years in Laos, with maps attached). French tactics in the assertion of its claims of overlordship over Laos was to take the country first and talk afterwards. By this means she would have a firm grip of the country and the rival could be talked out of it. This was also the tactic France used with England. England was afraid of France coming face to face with her in the Shan States and proposed to have a buffer State between them. It was accepted by both at first that this buffer territory would be created somewhere between the Salween and East of Muong Singh, giving Muong Singh to Thailand, so that Thailand will separate their territories straight up to the Chinese frontier in the North. The exact position and boundaries will be fixed by a mixed Anglo-French commission. This was the result of the discussions between the French ambassador in London, Mr. Waddington, with the English Foreign Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury. The matter however was stopped there. It was not taken up until France annexed Laos and occupied Muong Singh, when England woke up again to continue the talk of the buffer State between them. France however would not give it up once she had secured the territory away from Thailand.

THE FIRST PHASE OF ANNEXATION :

This was aimed at Sibsong Chutai, or the region of the twelve principalities with Laichau, Theng (Dien-Bien-Phu), Son-La, Samneua (or Hua Pan), as principal towns. They were considered by the French as part of Tongking. Once they had captured Hanoi and all the neighbouring towns, they also sent military columns to capture the towns of Sibsong Chutai, and then also to Chieng Khouang which is near to Sibsong Chutai. At the time Thai garrisons were stationed in Muong Theng, Son-La and Xieng Khouang. Pavie has been appointed by the French government as Vice-Consul at Luang Prabang, and he arrived there to take up his post on 10 February 1887. At the contention put forward by the French that the region of Sibsong Chutai and Xieng Khouang belonged to Vietnam, the Thai government proposed that a mixed commission be set up to settle the claims. Pavie suggested that the whole region be first inspected by the commission and that a status quo be kept.

In spite of this French promise Pavie hastened across the Tran Ninh (the Plain of Xieng Khouang or the Plain of Jars which was called Tran Ninh by the Vietnamese) without waiting for a Thai commissioner, and went to fetch a French military column, commanded by Colonel Pernod, whom he had asked to

come from Hanoi and meet him in Sibsong Chutai. The French had been at war with the prince of Muong Lai (or Laichau in Vietnamese), Kham Houm, or Deo-Van-Tri, who put up a strong resistance. When Pavie went to meet the French military column and went straight up to Laichau, the town was already burnt down by the French, and the Laichau chiefs had gone into the jungles. Pavie brought the French column to next occupy Muong Theng and Son-La. The Thai military garrison would not withdraw, but Pavie used his ruse as usual, telling them that instead of fighting they should withdraw and let the two governments discuss and settle the matter at higher level in Bangkok. This the Thai complied, but the French column just moved into it, a curious way of keeping the status quo indeed. Pavie then used another tactic of finding out the Deo-van-Tri family, made promises to them that he would get their brothers back from Bangkok. The Laichau princes were already embittered over their brothers being taken away to Bangkok, finally sided with the French and made an act of submission to France in 1889, thus ending the age-long feud between France and the princes of Laichau.

The French allowed Deo-van-Tri to rule as a local chieftain in reward for his submission, but the whole region was organized into the Fourth French

Military Territory of Tongking with the military headquarters at Yenbai, and with Colonel Pennequin as the fourth military territory commander. The four territories were established in 1891 at Moncay, Langsong, Tuyen Quang and Yenbai. Each territory was subdivided into circles and then into sectors. A circle had a commander and a sector a company. We are only concerned with the fourth territory covering the Black River basin where Colonel Pennequin was the territory commander, and therefore it was he who occupied and organized the whole of Sibsong Chutai, including Muong Theng and Hua Pan right up to Laichau.

A few words might be mentioned with regard to the people inhabiting this region. The French claim that they were part of Vietnam was a false one. The basins of the three big rivers : Black River, Red River and White River were inhabited by a branch of the Thai race, who had come down from Yunnan, just in the same way as the Thai of Laos and the Thai of Thailand. The people were called Thai Dam, Thai Deng and Thai Khao, or the Black Thai, the Red Thai and the White Thai. They settled down in twelve towns with twelve petty princes, hence the region was also known as Sibsong Chutai meaning the region of the Twelve Princes. The people spoke a dialect of Thai, and they had a script still

to be found everywhere in the villages, written on mulberry paper, which they know how to make from the barks of a tree called Khoi in Thailand. They had always ruled among themselves by their own princes, and paid tributes to Luang Prabang, and then to Bangkok. Deo-van-Tri was a white Thai. His real name was even Thai, Kham Houm. The Thais of course live on both sides of the frontier, China on one side and Tongking on the other, but many of them are also to be found on the present Lao side. It is therefore quite a pretention for the French to claim that Sibsong Chutai was Vietnamese. But some sort of pretext had to be put up in order to claim the land away from Laos. After the occupation no more mention was made of the fixed commission and the Thai just let it go without raising further issues until the French put up an ultimatum to cede it outright in July 1893.

However the French, having seized Sibsong Chutai, did not stop at that. The Governor-General of Indochina now picked up an article written by Mr R.P. Blanck in the Bulletin of the Geographical Society in 1884 called 'Tran-Nigne' which stated that 'under the reign of Gia-Long and Minh-Mang the powerful empire of Vietnam extended its sway far and wide. All the principalities along the Mekhong River paid tributes to the emperor. This also included

the Kingdom of Vientiane.' There was no proof of this saying of course as past history has been traced out in detail. It was the first step for the French to lay claim to the whole of Laos as part of Vietnam. By the order of the Governor-General, Captain Luce, of the artillery corps of the marine, was entrusted with the task in 1888 of finding out a convincing proof, whether right or wrong, of the incontestible right of Vietnam over these territories. Captain Luce's investigation included taking evidence from the imagination of the Vietnamese empire builders in support of the French legacy. The outcome of course was quite convincing for France to put forward a claim of what constituted the incontestible rights of Vietnam over these territories. Therefore France must have it back. To the proposals of the Thai government to arbitration and examination of claims by the third neutral power, France would not listen and flatly refused, there was nothing to discuss but to have it by force. All the territories to the East of Mekhong River must be given over to France.

Meanwhile other things developed, and France was watching to heap reasons to pounce upon the Thais.

In September 1891 the Governor of Chieng Khouang, Phra Niwet, arrested Bang Bian, the youngest brother of Deo-van-Tri, and sent him as a

traitor to Bangkok. Bang Bian was a white Thai chieftain and the territory he ruled next to Chieng Kwang was considered Thai territory. Bang Bian even hoisted a Thai flag in Tung Chiengkam where he resided, but when the French arrived, they incited him to put up a French flag instead. This Bang Bien was a certain Chau Pan of the White Thai tribe. The title Bang Bian was given to him by the Vietnamese. Being encouraged and supported by the French to open rebellion, he even pulled down a Thai flag at Ban Don.* Phra Niwet asked him to unhoist the French flag as the territory was Thai, Chao Pan refused, and so he was arrested and sent down to Bangkok, as a traitor to Thailand.

Pavie was in the meantime appointed French minister in Bangkok in 1892. He asked that Bang Bian be released, but the Thai government refused. Then another incident happened. Two French traders at Outene, Champenois and Esquilot, traded in opium, smuggled in this traffic by all sorts of means. The Thai authorities therefore expelled them from Outene in September 1892. The French at once jumped at

* The whole affair of Tung Chiengkam was described by Chao Pan himself in: "Mémoires de T'aà P'an: à Muang K'am le 20 Septembre 1932, histoire de Muong Puon".

this opportunity and accused the Thai of expelling their nationals without cause and without explanation. Again the French agent at Luang Prabang, Massie, by some unknown reasons, on his travel down the Mekhong, committed suicide at Champasak. Again the French seized opportunity of putting the cause of his suicide on to the Thais. The latter were blamed for driving him into madness and despair so that he had to commit suicide, although of course the Thai knew nothing about it. Prince Orléans wrote in a book stating that the Thai attached a fish-tail to the tricolour and hoisted it up in ridicule. This was cause enough in the French eyes to drive Massie mad and commit suicide! The foreign witnesses at the time said it was quite a surprise since the Thai had nothing to do with Massie's suicide at all and yet they were blamed for it. However, matters became worse, a French colonial party was formed in the French Parliament with a leader called Francois De-loncle, and they examined every incident which came through all the false publicity tales very closely in order to make a case of them in Parliament forcing the French government to have recourse to armed intervention. The cases of the two French men expelled as smugglers and the suicide of Massie were taken up in a great rage by Deloncle and his party, and talked of Thai aggression in his speech to the House on the

4th February 1893 asking the French government to take up arms, which of course everybody roared for revenge on "Thai savagery" and "aggression".

The Thai Government requested that the affairs of Tung Chiengkam and of Outene be submitted to enquiry on 5th May 1893 but the French refused, and instead the Chamber of Deputies asked the French government to advance the armies from Cambodia and Vietnam to seize the contested region.

THE SECOND PHASE OF ANNEXATION :

Three French military columns advanced into Laos from three directions. The first column advanced from Cambodia in April 1893 and was commanded by Chancellor Bastard and Captain Thoreux, and swooped down upon Stung Treng and the Isle of Khone without further ado. The Thai government strongly protested, the outposts asked the advancing army to stay while their governments could discuss at higher levels, but the French army would not listen. The Thai army tried by all sorts of means to avoid the clash and in the end had to defend themselves and their territory. At Khone the French army met with strong resistance. Thoreux was captured on the 3rd May 1893 and brought to Bangkok. The French side of the story was again different. In view of open hostilities, French aggressions and onward fight

for several days causing heavy casualties on both sides, the French circulated quite an impossible story after so much blood spilling that Captain Thoreux was going on mission on the Mekhong with three men (sic! He attacked the country and he went with three men, how foolish) when he and his men were captured by the Thai authorities and held prisoners. This tactic of psychological warfare helped to flare up French public opinion and pushed the French government to take firmer actions against small Thailand, which was becoming more and more "insolent" and more "aggressive" every day. Deloncle declared in the National Assembly that this puny country is already thinking that they are a big power when we are trying to be nice and soft with them.

The second column commanded by the Résident and the Inspector of the Indigeneous Guards Garnier entered Laos from the Ai-Lao Plateau and pushed through without any resistance on 26 May 1893 and came to settle down in a village on the Mekhong bank opposite to Khemmarat.

The third column was commanded by Resident Luce of Vinh who advanced to Kammuon. The Governor of Kammuon at this time was Phra Yot Muong Khwang. (He was asked to pack off and give way to the French army who is now master of the land. Phra Yot said he could not move since he had no

instructions from Bangkok to do so. The French would not listen and had recourse to armed force. On 23 May 1893 Groscurin with a troop of Vietnamese recruits were sent by Luce to force Phra Yot to evacuate, to disarm him and to send him to the other bank of the Mekhong River. Phra Yot had to yield to force. However he wrote to the Governor of Outene to send him assistance. Groscurin knew of this design and had Phra Yot's adjutant, Luang Anurak, arrested. Phra Yot came back with fresh men on 5 June 1893 and met Groscurin at his house with all his Vietnamese soldiers at Keng Kieck. At once Phra Yot asked Groscurin to release his assistant Luang Anurak, but Groscurin fearing that Luang Anurak might run away from his house, where he was shut up, seized Luang Anurak and fired at Phra Yot. The shot missed the latter but killed one of the men standing beside Phra Yot. Then ensued a tough fight whereby many of Phra Yot's men were killed but Groscurin and a number of Vietnamese were shot dead. The rest escaped. A Cambodian interpreter in Groscurin's company, by name of Chann, was arrested, and the Thai made a mistake of allowing him to live, since it was he who assisted Pavie in putting up a report in order to put all the blame on to the Thai side, and accused Phra Yot of laying an ambush to a bed-ridden Groscurin, who had nothing but peaceful

intentions! in spite of the fact that he almost shot down Phra Yot by his own hands.*

The French were ready for more accusations. At once in order to save the dignity and prestige of their fighting army, especially in the eyes of the Lao whom they declared they have come to liberate from Thai yoke, they fabricated a story that Groscurin was lying sick in his bedroom, when Phra Yot laid an ambush and assassinated him. The story had its effects in France. The French government then ordered the commander of the Far Eastern fleet stationed at Saigon, Admiral Humann, to send gunboats to Bangkok and to force Bangkok to give up all the land to the left bank of the Mekhong River. Two gunboats were sent: the 'Comet' and the 'Inconstant' piloted and led up the river Menam Chao Phya by a mail-boat 'J.B. Say' which made the journey between Saigon and Bangkok.

THE PAKNAM INCIDENT, OR "R.S. 112 INCIDENT" AS CALLED BY THE THAI.

At this time the British had a gunboat called the "Swift" moored in Bangkok, and the French had also one called the "Lutin". In view of the critical

* The case of Phra Yot and the incident at Keng Kieck are to be found reported in the "Courrier de Haiphong", under the title "A la cour de Bangkok."

situation the English sent a warship "Pallas" up from Singapore to guard its nationals and British interests. According to the treaty no war boats can come up the river without consent nor notifying the Thai government. The Pallas therefore moored at Paknam. Mr. Pavie informed the Thai government on the 10th July 1893 that in view of the situation, the French government was sending up two gunboats to protect French nationals. A disinterested onlooker at the time mentioned that there were only three Frenchmen outside the embassy and one gunboat should be more than enough and not three.* For this Mr. Pavie insisted saying that the French had all the rights to send up gunboats to Bangkok in view of the treaty signed between France and Thailand in 1856, article 3. The treaty however stated that France can send up the gunboats as far as Paknam and if they wanted to come up to Bangkok they must inform the Thai government and get their agreement. Pavie, in the usual manner, interpreted it to mean that he need only to inform and that permission is not necessary. So he affirmed that French warships had the right to come up and will come up. However on 11 July 1893 the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs answered that they did not agree to the French sending the two gunboats up the river, and as no other Power had more than one

* Warrington Smyth: Five Years in Siam.

warship in Bangkok, the Thai hoped that the French would not insist in sending the two boats up. However to think that any country should claim to send gunboats as many as they like and point their cannons into the Grand Palace of the king, and when they were on the warpath to annex the country, is not really understandable how they could have a dare-face to demand as if the territory already belonged to them and under such pretentions.

It must be mentioned however that all this was premeditated by France. The *Inconstant* and the *Comet* had already made preparations to blockade Thailand ever since 27 May 1893 at least as stated by the Commandant himself in his book,* and was even contemplating of sending up the gunboat "*Styx*" to dismantle all the ports of Bangkok. Moreover two more French gunboats the "*Forfait*" and the "*Lion*" were to come up and stay at Paknam, while in Saigon three more boats were held ready: the "*Aspic*", the "*Viper*" and the "*Papin*" in case the ultimatum failed to be accepted. Two more torpedo boats were ordered to get ready: the "*Triumphant*" and the "*Alouette*". According to the words of Commander Bory, who commanded the two gunboats, the *Comet* and the

* Journal d'un commandant de la *Comète*, par le commandant Louis Dartige du Fournet, Plon, Paris, 1897.

Inconstant, were to destroy the Thai navy, go up the Menam, attack the forts of Paknam both from in front and behind, then come back to Bangkok with all the forces to speak to the Thai like masters, because the French were here by force of arms and not at all as guests tied down by any treaty obligations.

By 5 P.M. of 13th July 1893 the two French gunboats were sighted off Paknam. The harbour-master tried to stop them going up the river, but plans were already made to frighten Bangkok into accepting an ultimatum, and so they would not lend any ears. The commander of Phra Chula Fort, a Danish under Thai government employ, Commodore de Richelieu, therefore fired two blank cartridges by way of warning, but the French returned real shots against the fort at 6.45 P.M. forcing the forts to fight. Battle then ensued and the French gunboats forced their way past Paknam. It was a dark moonless night, and nobody knew who shot whom. According to an eyewitness,* the exchange of shots lasted twenty-five minutes and by nine o'clock P.M. the two gunboats came to cast anchor near the *Lutin* in front of the French embassy. Three Frenchmen were shot dead, three wounded, and the pilot boat *Jean-Baptiste Say* foundered at the mouth of the river. The French claimed that their victory was complete with their only 196 men and 8 cannons they

* Warrington Smyth: *Five Years in Siam*.

forced their way through nine Thai warships and two forts with 63 cannons, 6 machine guns and at least 1500 to 2000 fighting men. The Thai lost 25 men and 39 wounded. The French claimed that most of the Thai boats were hit and put out of action. The 'Makut-Rajkumarn' itself had a big hole in the middle. The 'Coronation' had its mast broken, and so on. As usual the French stated that they fell into an ambush (although they forced their way up), while they were on a peaceful mission going up the river as it was within their rights according to the treaty, and the Thai acted so cowardly to sink a weak defenceless ship, J.-B. Say!

The terms of ultimatum, to be answered within 48 hours, were harsh: the abandonment of all rights on the left bank of the Mekhong, the payment of indemnities, damages for Thoreux, Groscurin, the two smugglers, damage for the two gunboats, the punishment of Phra Yot for the "foul murder" of Groscurin, and the release of Bang Bian.

It was said that the British government was getting quite frightened to see that France had demanded from Thailand the whole of Laos, leaving out the question of a buffer State between their frontiers as previously agreed upon. This would bring French territory into touch with the English frontier.

An English writer* at the time said: "In 1889 the French ambassador, M. Waddington, had stated that the French government did not wish to ask for Luang Prabang, but they would propose to draw a line from a point nearly due East of that place southward to the Mekhong River, and below that point to make the river the dividing line between French territory and Thailand. Relying on this assurance the British government had acted nothing in this Paknam incident, considering it to be a local affair between Thailand and the French government. It was now evident that the French scheme of aggression included robbing Thailand of Luang Prabang, a province which had been acknowledged to be under Thailand for the last eighty years, and to which the rights of Annam were the most ghostly both in point of age and unsubstantiality.

But besides being a matter of serious import to Thailand depriving her as it would of nearly a third of the whole area of her territories, it opened up other more serious matters in the North, for it threatened to bring England and France face to face West of Nam Ou. That Luang Prabang could not fairly be included in the term "left bank of the Mekhong" was implied by Lord Rosebury's instructions to Lord Dufferin of July 20 (in the Blue Book on

* Warington Smyth: Five Years in Siam.

the affairs of Siam). But the claim was definitely made by Mr. Develle, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Lord Dufferin of July 22.

The weakness of the French claims to Luang Prabang was lucidly and concisely stated at the time by Mr. Curzon in a first-rate article in the "Nineteenth Century" of July 1893. He showed that the "incontestible right" of Annam to that province were contested by French writers, by French maps, by the history of the last eighty years, and by the admission of the French government itself. The claims of Thailand, on the other hand, were based on actual possession dating from the last century, and by the practical consolidation and active development of her rule during recent years. While Thailand had made proposals for friendly discussion and delimitation, and subsequently for a neutral zone pending settlement by international arbitration, France had made no replies but reiterated assertions and forcible advance"

However to Lord Rosebury's protests, Mr. Develle's excuse for including Luang Prabang in the ultimatum, in spite of all the promises which had been made, "the ultimatum", he said, "having once been published to France and to Siam, it was impossible for the French government, in the excited state of public opinion, to withdraw, or modify it. However it was again accepted on the understanding that an

independent territory should be constituted between the British and the French empires later on. This is another one of a series of French promises, and it would soon prove false as usual, because France allowed no such territory to be created, and just annexed all land right up to the Burmese frontier.

Moreover during the crisis the Thai government appealed for support from the British government, and the British government had assurance from the French government that the "Comet" and the "Inconstant" would stay only at Paknam. Again the French broke the promise. The French promised again to the British that they would occupy Chantaboon as guarantee for the execution of the terms of the treaty only for one month, but they occupied it nine years.

Be that as it may when the time limit of the ultimatum expired the Thai answered accepting only part of the demands while asking the rest to be settled by enquiry and arbitration. As mentioned above the French would not climb down once a demand had been made, Pavie left Bangkok with the French gunboats on the 24th July 1893 and declared the blockade of Thailand. The boats were joined by other French boats waiting outside the bar, and they seized the king's summer palace at Koh Sichang as their base of operations. The British government advised the Thai government to accept the terms of the French,

although the Thai position was on the whole logically correct, a weak Asiatic kingdom may not argue a question of right or wrong with a first-class European power on a basis of equality.

Seeing that he had to stand on his own without outside support, King Chulalongkorn accepted the French terms unconditionally. The blockade was called off on the 3rd August 1893. Mr. Le Myre de Vilers was appointed special envoy of the French Republic. He arrived on the 20th August 1893 and was received by the king. The terms of the treaty were very slow in being drafted since the French insisted upon imposing more clauses. The treaty was at last signed on the 3rd October 1893.

A special tribunal was set up in order to decide the case of Phra Yot as murderer. The tribunal which at first was composed of two Thai judges and one French judge could not find any reason that Phra Yot had murdered Groscurin. The witnesses of the accuser gave contradictory statements, and so Phra Yot was acquitted of the crime.* This caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the French, and so the French government disregarded the sentence of the Thai court and set up another tribunal to try him in the French

* The details of statements of Phra Yot and the accuser along with the latter's witnesses are to be found in the *Courrier de Haiphong*.

consulate. They then demanded that the accused be delivered by the Thai government so that enquiry and sentence could be passed, and the French consul, as empowered by the treaty to see to it that the sentence be fully executed. There were three French judges appointed by the French Consulate: M. Mondot, M. Camatte and M. Faynel, and so that the sentence might look just, two Thai judges were asked to be present, these were Phya Amatya and Krasien Subba Kari. When the court was convened on the 9th June 1894 the Thai government refused to give up Phra Yot, seeing that this was just an unfair, biased and dictatorial court, but the French insisted, quoting the terms of the treaty, and the Thai government had to yield and give him up to the French on 12th June 1894.

From the British who were present they stated that in the eyes of all those present it was clearly seen that Groscurin was in command of an armed force of a foreign Power which was committing acts of aggression, and indeed of actual warfare in territories administered by Thailand and that the accounts first published detailing the treacherous murder of Groscurin were proved quite false at the trial*, Groscurin's own party having been the first to open fire, and at the time Groscurin was by no means

* Through the Buffer State, McGregor

sick. The French still insisted their own way and accused Phra Yot of wilful premeditated murder and sentenced Phra Yot Muang Khwang to twenty years imprisonment. Phra Yot had to spend the rest of his days in prison, for he died in prison, weeping over his innocence, and his just cause of defending his own motherland. The Thai judges disagreed and refused to sign the verdict. The French then accused the Thai of always trying to violate the spirit of the treaty, the penalty of which Chantaboon must be occupied until the full spirit of the terms of the treaty was fulfilled. And whatever the Thai endeavoured to do this spirit could never be called by the French as fulfilled.

The French always blamed the Thai for being slow to execute the terms of the treaty and tried to put all sorts of difficulties and hindrances in the French way. The terms of the treaty were interpreted according to their own and never the Thai way, for example, according to the treaty all nationals who have been moved away from the Lao side must be returned to Laos, and no hindrance must be made in order to stop them. The French interpreted almost everybody to be Lao and must be handed over. This meant almost the whole of Thailand. There were no separations between Thai and Lao. There were cases where the French stated that the Laos have been moved

away from the other side as far back as a century ago, and when these people did not any longer want to go back, having already settled down on this side of the Mekhong, the French blamed the Thai for having put an obstacle. So in spite of the fact that the terms of the treaties have been complied with, indemnities paid, new boundary marked, territories ceded, the conflicts still went on, and the French claimed to have the right to occupy Chantaboon much longer. Finally when they gave up Chantaboon, they did not withdraw altogether but went over to seize Trat and Darnsai next. It is not the place to go into the details here as we are concerned especially with the question of Laos.

THE QUESTION OF MUONG SING.

At first the British wanted to create a buffer State somewhere around Muong Sing,* but with the treaty of 1893 the French claimed Muong Sing to be theirs, because the Thai had now ceded it to them, and they meant to keep it. When Scott, the British representative, went up to Muong Sing soon after the Paknam incident, he found a French flag hoisted up. Scott brought it down, put a Union Jack up instead and asked for a contingent under Mr. Sterling from Chiengtung to come and guard it. The matter then

* Same word as Singh

became a point of quarrel between Scott and Pavie.* Mr Pavie contended that Muong Sing was merely a town of the Thai province of Muong Nan. The Nan forces had been sent up in 1888 to Muong Sing and the latter had taken an oath of allegiance to Nan, acting on the authority of Bangkok. The matter was therefore referred to both the governments at home for settlement, when in 1896 the British agreed to the surprise of all, to allow the French to keep all the territory to the left bank of the Mekhong including Muong Sing, but both the British and French governments agreed among other things to respect the independence of Thailand, and not to extract undue favours or territories from the Thai government any more.

THIRD PHASE : FURTHER ANNEXATION.

But France still coveted for more territory. The despatch of French gunboats up to Bangkok, the serving of French ultimatum to the king under threats of the cannons from the gunboats pointed at his palace, and the blockade of the Gulf of Thailand, caused a lot of fears in British government circles lest France should annex the whole of Thailand but England acted very cautiously, because while she was

* Scott of the Shan Hills, Mitton, John Murray, 1936.

engaged herself in the conquests of Burma, she did not want to be directly involved in another war with France. However she realized that her interests in Thailand were enormous and she could not afford to lose them. King Chulalongkorn was hoping that England would intervene. It did not have results at once, but in 1896 England came to terms with France whereby Thai independence was guaranteed (15 January 1896). But this was not all. In virtue of the Franco-Thai treaty of 1893, Thailand must demilitarize the zone of 25 kilometers on her own side of the frontier, and trade was to be free in that zone. France posted commercial agents all along the Mekhong River : at Luang Prabang, Outene, Champasak, Stung-Treng, Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Sene, Pak-Lay, Xiengkarn, Nongkhai, Nakorn Panom, Mouk-Daharn, and Khemmarat. These commercial agents were semi-political. Apart from representing the trade guilds in France, they acted as consuls and also as invigilators and informers for the French residents (or governors) on the opposite bank. Later the French government also put up vice-consulates at Udorn and Ubol, in order to watch Thai army movements. Later in 1904 these agents were only posted at Xiengkarn, Nongkhai, Chayaburi, mouth of Nam-Khan, Mouk-Daharn, Khemmarat and mouth of Nam-Moun, simply because many of the posts above were

inside French territory and therefore did not become necessary. The French commercial agents acted throughout in a high-handed and domineering manner of which the Government of Bangkok had no means of interfering even though things were done in Thai territory. Protests of Thai government only meant for them that the Thai lacked co-operation and tried to put all sorts of obstacles in the way of the French agents to put the 1893 treaty into force. They gave another series of fabricated story which was given to the press, so as to alienate French public sympathy against Thailand, and made it ready for them to seize more lands. It could be imagined how the local people without the protection of their own government suffered under foreign hands, but the Thai government could not do anything.

The 25 kilometer zone was virtually under French control since Thai authorities from outside were not allowed to have any control over these areas, and the French could import anything into the area freely without any control whatever. As Thai officials were not allowed if they were not local men over there, the French authorities established themselves on the right bank belonging to Thailand and started even to collect taxes in the name of the king of Luang Prabang, and arrested Thai officials sending them in chains to Luang Prabang.

Laos was made a province and part of the Union of French Indo-China under the rule of the same Governor-General as Tongking, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia. The first Governor-General was De Lanessan, who was appointed in 1894. He already arrived in Indochina in 1891 and had already been appointed as Résident Général then. He was succeeded by Paul Doumer as Governor-General in 1896. The same fiscal regime, the same police administration, educational scheme, methods of tax collection, currency notes, etc. were applied to all the States in the French Indochina. There was no boundary as far as these administrative arrangements were concerned.

The territory of Laos was considered to be a conglomeration of different principalities and the French did not wish to unite them, as it was easier to govern when they were separated into bits. At first the Province of Kammuon was annexed to Annam as has been a declared policy that the country belonged to Vietnam, but in 1895 it was given back as part of Laos again with Song Khone as seat of the province. Laos was divided into Upper Laos and Lower Laos with separate French governors. Lower Laos consisted of Stung-Treng, Attopeu, Khong, Saravane, Ban Muong, Song Khone and Kammuon. But in 1899 both parts united under one governorship

and Lt.-Colonel Tournier was appointed the first Governor (or Résident Supérieur).

After long discussions this led to another agreement between France and Thailand on 7 October 1902 whereby in order to get Chantaboon back to Thailand and to abolish the 25 kilometer zone on the right bank of the Mekhong River, Thailand agreed to cede the two southern provinces of Melouprey (Manoprai in Thai) and Champasak to France. France retreated from Chantaboon but seized Trat and Darnsai instead. The French Parliament would not ratify this treaty since, as master and heir of Cambodia, the two Cambodian provinces of Battambang and Siemrap were not considered in this treaty. The French Parliament wanted more. Moreover the King of Luang Prabang was suzerain of both banks of the river and not only of one bank. His privileges over the right bank opposite to Luang Prabang had not been considered at all. The French therefore negotiated for the Convention of 13 February 1904 which settled the boundary to be further ceded, but it did not restitute the two Cambodian provinces mentioned above to Cambodia. It only imposed upon the Thai not to keep any military contingents in the said two provinces, thus preparing for the next step, when they finally annexed them in 1907. The French compensated Cambodia at the time by giving them the Lao province

of Stung-Treng and half of Khong Province, and this is how this Lao territory of Stung-Treng, peopled by Lao, is to be found attached to Cambodia to this day. Laos was further amputated. Half of the Province of Attopeu and the Plateau of Darlac were given to Vietnam.

The final boundary of Laos was again to be regulated by the treaty of 23 March 1907 when Darnsai was given to Thailand in exchange for Trat, which France agreed to return to Thailand. The treaty of 1907 at last fixed the boundary as Laos has found herself today. The strip of land on the right bank of Luang Prabang was now ceded by Thailand and given to Laos. Thailand also had to give up the three Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Siemrap and Sisophon to France as a result of the 1907 treaty. This treaty was at last ratified by the French Parliament on 21 June 1907, and the era of disputes between Thailand and France had at last come to an end.

WHAT HAPPENED UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Was Laos (or the pretensions of Vietnam) ever consulted? Was there any treaty signed with these countries that they were to come under French administration? None. Laos was not consulted. This only implied that France annexed a territory belonging

to Thailand, and the treaty with Thailand was enough, and could not be otherwise. If any trouble arose with Laos afterwards, France would then suspect Thailand as being at the back of it. In many of the French writings at the time there were indications that France wanted to annex the whole of Thailand. Seeing that this was not possible she wanted to annex the country East of the Menam, leaving the West to England. Laos would then be very much larger. France always contended that Laos territory extended on both sides of the River Mekhong, hence as champion of Lao liberty, she wanted to get the Eastern half of Thailand. At the time before the British annexed the Shan States in Burma, the French had bigger territorial aims, and posted a Consul-General in Burma, when the French started to make a survey in order to put up claims. Of course England was not such an easy prey for her as little powerless Thailand, and the Anglo-French Treaty of 1896 put an end to French dreams of a bigger Lao empire under Lao kings.

However that may be, once she has got Laos, she did not consider it as a united country. She used the colonial method of "Divide and Rule" as everywhere else. She declared that Kammuon (Cammon in French) and Ailao regions belonged to Annam and annexed them to Annam. She gave the Province of Stung-Treng (Lao: Xieng Tèng) to Cambodia. She

gave Hua-Pan-Tang-Ha-Tang-Hoc (the twelve principalities which belonged to the ancestors of Lao kings, and even the capital town of Muong Theng which was built by the first Lao king, Khun Borom), to Tongking.

Laos was not given any degree of freedom. More and more French administrators crept in, into all spheres of official capacity, first asking the king to issue orders, then they placed themselves above the king, by asking him and his cabinet to submit everything to the High Commissioner (Résident Supérieur) for approval, then they discarded with even this and put him on annual pay, substituting the Royal Treasury by a local budget, entirely played it off into their own hands, so that they would hold the key to the administration. Then they started to tax the country more and more and started a system of tax collection, both direct and indirect. So that the Lao can never gain any authority in the affairs of their country, instead of training the Lao to handle things themselves, they started to import a lot of Annamites to do the clerical work for them, and immigrate a lot of the Annamites either as soldiers or to people the country, with the result that all the economy and trade of the country passed into Annamese hands.

Laos is a landlocked country. Her communications have always been through Thailand in order to

get to the sea. On the other side of Laos are dense jungles and Annamitic chains of very high mountains, not very easy to cross over to the seas on the Vietnamese side. In order to cut Laos economically off from Thailand French policy has been to find mountain passes in the Annamitic chains for cutting roads through the mountainous region to the Annamite coast, and also a road to connect Laos with Saigon through Cambodia. She also started a steamship transport service along the Mekhong River, so as to cut Laos from having anything more to do with Thailand, and be more attracted towards Vietnam and the French union of Indochina, with the capital at Saigon and Hanoi. She did not even encourage national language and culture, nor local education, preferring more that Laos go to Phnom-Penh or Hanoi for education, where a university has been set up, and for a better Lao elite to go to France. All the more so she tried to make the Laos forget their own national script and prescribe a system of romanization so that the Laos will not be able to read Thai Lao books from the other side of the Mekhong river, since language and script are so similar to both banks. Whereas France has been able to implant romanized form of script for the Vietnamese, she has not been able to do so in Laos. It was not considered necessary by the Lao people. They already had an alphabetical system

similar to the Thai, using the same common Thai characters, akin to both the Thai and the Lao, whereas the Vietnamese used Chinese ideological form of writing, and therefore it was easier for the Vietnamese to adopt romanized characters. However Lao national education was so stifled that the cultured Lao today do not find it easy to express or write in their own language and have to continue to use French as a medium of communication even in official circles. Even though after independence Lao Parliament declared Lao to be official national language and yet the Lao have to carry on the French language in their official correspondence and documents. Lao technical and abstract language had not been developed for modern ways of expression. Poetry was very elementary. Books were not printed in Lao. Lao literature did not progress, and the Lao had to learn their own history from French sources or what the French wrote for them in a form which would suit French political reasons. They were even denied the truth about their own country. It is very strange to find that up to recently even in primary schools Lao children have to learn every subject through French textbooks. If they were taught to read Lao books with Lao alphabets, then they will also be able to read Thai books since the national alphabets of both countries are almost the same and the majority of

words are the same. Romanization of characters would therefore stop the Lao from reading books in the Thai language. Unfortunately the French did not stay long enough in the country to enforce the romanized Lao alphabets which they have launched on the eve of Japanese occupation. In spite of all these hindrances it is a wonder that Lao literature did develop in the distant villages, where people still write on palm leave books with a stylus, and one would sometimes find poets among very simple folks like peasants. The Lao by nature love the art of singing, especially in accompaniment of their bamboo musical instrument called the Khène.

After French annexation Pavie was appointed the High Commissioner for Laos (Commissaire Général) on the 5th June 1894. There was no stable government, nor any sort of definite plans in the beginning. The French just sent men from the adjoining territories of Vietnam and Cochin China to administer the different towns in Laos. Pavie brought in Mr. Vacle as his assistant or commissioner. They went to organize the various towns of Northern Laos. For Middle Laos two administrative agents were sent by the Governor of Annam to organize the administration in different towns and they had their Headquarters at Faureville (Pak-Hin-Boun) and at Song-Khone. In the South Commander Tournier was

sent to organize Khong, Stung-Treng, Attopeu and Ban Muong. Then three more administrators were sent to replace Tournier. It was not until 1895 that a High Commissioner for the whole of Laos put together was sent. This was Mr. Bouulloche, whose position as High Commissioner of Laos was later called 'Résident Supérieur'. Laos was part of French Indochina and Mr. Bouulloche was under the Governor-General of French Indochina, at the time it was Mr. De Lenessan. Under Mr. Bouulloche, Laos was divided into Upper Laos and Lower Laos, each under a Commandant Supérieur. Upper Laos is just above the territory of Kammuon and had Luang Prabang as seat of Government. Lower Laos had its administrative seat at Khong. Upper Laos comprised six provinces and Lower seven. Each province is divided into townships (Muong), Muongs into Tassengs (or cantons), and each canton into villages. At the head of each province was a French resident, and at a sub-division of a province, a French délégué or Naikong. Since 1892 the French had already created posts for commercial agents all along the Thai side of the frontier: Outene, Bassac, Stung-Treng, Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Sene, Pak-Lay, Xiengkarn, Nongkhai, Nakorn Panom, Mouk-Daharn and Khemmarat.

The attributions and powers of the commissioners were numerous and vast. They were responsible

for every field of administration, including police work, tax collecting, selling of opium, public works, rendering of justice, education and medical work in addition to administration, and even sometimes communications.

In 1899 the two regions of Laos, Upper and Lower, were combined into one, and brought directly under one authority, that of the Résident Supérieur, and Lt. Col. Tournier was appointed the first Résident Supérieur of the united Laos. The posts of the Commandants Supérieurs for Upper and Lower Laos were abolished. The administration of the provinces were directly under French administrators. It had no parliament, no Lao elected representatives as councillors. However on the 13th October 1920 the French created a Lao council in each province, consisting of all the Chaomuongs (Heads of Townships), two notables from each Muong, appointed by the provincial commissioner. These councils were purely advisory and had no power whatsoever.

The King of Luang Prabang had also a council, and the views or decision taken by them were again submitted to the Résident Supérieur for approval. The seat of the Résident Supérieur was at Vientiane, whereas the king stayed at his palace in Luang Prabang.

Henceforth Laos consisted of 12 provinces: Ou-Neua, Ban-Houie-Sai, Hua Pan, Luang Prabang, Xieng-Khouang, Vientiane, Pak-Hin-Boun, Savannakhet, Saravane, Bassac, Attopeu, Khong. Champasak (Bassac) and Khong were later united into one. Ou-Neua was replaced by Phongsaly, Ban-Houie-Sai by Namtha, and Pak-Hin-Boun by Thakhek. Phongsaly constitutes a military territory, created as the Fifth Territory on the 3rd March 1916 after the other four in Tongking. The King of Luang Prabang ruled over Luang Prabang, Samneua and the Fifth Military Territory only, the rest were directly under French administration. In 1923 the French created in Vientiane a Consultative Assembly of local representatives elected from the various provinces. They met annually in order to learn about the affairs of the State and see to themselves that matters were well administered.

The French said that Laos was happy under French rule and that the country was pacified and peaceful. However the period between 1893 and 1944 when King Sisavangvong declared independence on 8th April 1944 there were small outbreaks chiefly among the small minorities. The first one was in 1901 when the Khas of Boloven under Bac-Mi led a revolt of what is called "Phou-mi-Bouns". They were severely suppressed and cut down by the French, and the heads of rebels exhibited to villagers.

In 1919-20 there was another uprising of the Meo mountain tribes in Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang led by Batchai.... Again it was severely suppressed.

There was still another Kha revolt started in 1910 by Ongkeo and Kommadam. Although the revolt was suppressed after many years and only by French treachery, the spirit of revolt lived on in the independence movement when the descendants of Kommadam known as Faydang and Sithon joined with Soupanouvong in the Pathet Lao Movement to fight against the French after the Japanese had surrendered.* In order to suppress this first uprising the French commissioner invited their leader to a peace talk, promising him safe-conduct, but when he turned up unarmed, the commissioner took a revolver hidden in his hat and shot him down.

EVENTS LEADING TO LAO INDEPENDENCE.

During the second World War Admiral Decoux was Governor-General in Indochina. He replaced General Catroux on 25 June 1940 because the Vichy Government thought that Catroux was becoming too soft for the Japanese and had given them too many concessions allowing the Japanese to control their communications and transport through Tongking into

* see Burchett : Mekhong Upstream.

China. At the time the Japanese were fighting the Chinese on the mainland and they found that France was supporting the Chinese by sending ammunitions through Hanoi into Yunnan. Japan wanted to stop this. The French tried to evade, but Japan would not listen. On 22 September 1940 she served an ultimatum. The French in Indochina tried to bargain for conditions to avoid armed control of the country, and allowed the Japanese army to land. France was already defeated by the Germans and a provisional Government was set up in Vichy. The Vichy Government could not do anything to help the situation in Indochina.

Seeing that France had lost the war and that the French possessions in Indochina were passing away into the hands of another foreign power, the Thai government under Marshal Pibul Songgram informed France that since the land on the left bank of the Mekhong River was taken away from her, and if France could no longer keep it, it should be returned to her. Of course France refused. Thailand had always felt that against all international practice the Thalweg was not made the basis of boundary line in the Mekhong River. Thailand therefore asked for revision of boundary along the Mekhong River so that justice should be rendered to her. It was felt all the time that if the Mekhong should be considered

a natural boundary, why then should certain parts of French territory cross over the Mekhong on to the Thai side, and why should all the islands in the Mekhong belonged to France when some of them at low ebbs even formed part of mainland Thailand. If the river is to serve as a frontier it should be a frontier line throughout and not only where it was convenient to France to say so. This again she refused. This led to tension and border incidents which grew into armed attacks by January 1941. The French used the usual way of trying to parade force and shoot over the frontiers,* and then made a publicity that the Thai did it first, and that was why she had to return the shots. Seeing that the French would not be persuaded to come to peace talks, and in order to save the villagers all along the frontier from being continually harassed by French shots and bombs, the Thai troops had to retaliate and drive the French forces deep into their territory, and occupy the disputed territory on the right bank of Champasak (Bassac), and on the side of the Mekhong opposite to Luang Prabang, thus finally making the Mekhong Thalweg as the natural frontier in the East. On the Cambodian front another Thai army unit drove the Poipet aggressors into Sisophon. At sea the French

* The Mekhong Incident, by S. Sivaram.

issued a secret order also to attack the Thai naval bases** all along the Gulf of Thailand and destroy the Satahib base. Admiral Terraux was the naval Commander of a small fleet left in Indochina, and stationed at Saigon. His tactic was to launch a combined attack both on land and at sea fixed for 16 January 1941. The land forces could not do much as they had to retreat towards Sisophon. Three French cruisers led by the La Motte-Picquet commanded by Captain Bérenger gave a surprise attack on the Thai naval unit off Koh-Chang on 17 January 1941. They already sent reconnaissance planes to find out the exact positions of the Thai boats anchoring off at Koh-Chang, and gave an attack on the Thai navy unit on the 17 January 1941 quite early in the morning just after 6 A.M. The Thai naval unit comprised of a coastal guard "Thonburi", three torpedo boats "Rayong," "Songkhla," "Cholburi" and two other small boats, commanded by Luang Prom Viraphan. Thus the Thai naval unit was taken by surprise and received severe damage, while the French boats after a severe combat, withdrew to Saigon, claiming that the victory was theirs.

After this the Japanese Government offered to

** Marine Indochine, Jacques Mordal, Amiot-Dumont, 1953. P. 25.

mediate. The French and Thai delegations met in Tokyo. By the Tokyo Convention of 9 May 1941 France recognized the thalweg of the Mekhong as boundary between Thailand and French Laos from the North right down to Champasak, and ceded the provinces of Siemrap, Sisophon and Battambang which they have taken away from Thailand in 1907 back to the latter.

On the 8th December 1941 Japan launched an attack against U.S.A. and England and sent troops to occupy Malaya, Singapore and Burma. The La Motte-Picquet was moored in Saigon harbour, when in the midst of air-raids carried by the Americans on all Japanese occupied territories, the La Motte-Picquet was hit and sunk on 12 June 1945. The French continued to sabotage and give intelligence of Japanese army installations in Indochina to the Allies. This the Japanese were aware of and thus they were forced to have Indochina completely under their control. Consequently on the 9th March 1945* the Japanese ambassador Matsumoto served the ultimatum to Admiral Decoux, Governor-General of French Indochina. The latter refused to have Japanese military occupation. The Japanese therefore arrested him and Admiral Bèrenger, but before arrest they managed to

* Full account in "Agonie de l' Indochine," Admiral Decoux.

send out orders to the French marines at 8.50 P.M. At half past nine fight started in Saigon and spread all over the country. The French units were rounded up by the Japanese and arrested. Some fled into the jungles. The French units in the North escaped into China to join their colleagues the Chinese in Kunming. The French boats were shelled and the rest were sunk by the French themselves so as not to be of use to the Japanese. French rule in Indochina was broken up. Japan declared the independence of the liberated countries including Laos.

LAOS INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE JAPANESE.

The news of Japanese occupation of Saigon and Hanoi reached Vientiane by the Saigon broadcast the same morning on 9th March 1945. On the 10 March Prince Petcharat who at the time was in Vientiane went to see the Résident Supérieur who invited him to lunch on the occasion of the visit of General Tourguin from Saigon on a tour of inspection. The Japanese had already moved in from Vietnam and had seized Xieng Khouang. There was a Japanese company seen that morning at fire range just outside Vientiane. French army units of Vientiane went out that morning for a fire drill, spotted them without knowing that the Japanese had arrived, and so the fight started. Prince Petcharat, as Viceroy and Prime

Minister, hurried back to Luang Prabang through Vang Vieng in order to see the king. Phya Kammao was the provincial governor of Vientiane at the time. At Vang Vieng General Tourguin and his soldiers prepared a barrage to stop Japanese advance. Several French refugees were already assembled there. Prince Petcharat had to walk through mountain passes and did not reach Luang Prabang until the fourteenth. There the news reached Luang Prabang that the French Résident Supérieur with all his French officials in Vientiane were arrested and imprisoned by the Japanese. The French military in Luang Prabang which belonged to the De Gaulle party declared the French Résident of Luang Prabang and his officials deposed, and the military prepared a retreat. The Japanese led by Colonel Ichibashi moved in. There was no fight. The French asked the people to build a bridge for their retreat, they then retreated and burnt up the bridge behind them. The French would not stay to protect the people as was solemnly promised by Pavie in 1893. They gradually saved their own skins by retreating through the North into South China. Many Lao who were ordered out by the French to fight the Japanese had to retreat and accompany them into China. The Japanese arrested all the Frenchmen who were left behind, both officials and civilians, but did no harm to the Lao people,

and they respected all the temples and palaces. They said they came to liberate the people. Colonel Ichibashi approached Prince Savang Vatthana, the Crown Prince, and persuaded the King to make a declaration of independence on 8th April 1945. About 60 Frenchmen were imprisoned in Vientiane. They lived under very hard circumstances, when Prince Petcharat arrived back in Vientiane, the Résident Supérieur asked for his help. Prince Petcharat went to the Japanese and asked that the French be imprisoned by him instead, to which the Japanese agreed. Since then the French lived under easier circumstances. When however the Japanese capitulated, the Frenchmen were set free. They came out and wanted to take control of the Government as before. Here Prince Petcharat refused. If anything was to be done, he said, a new agreement had to be made.*

During Japanese occupation the Japanese appointed a Supreme Councillor to the Court of Luang Prabang, and a Japanese High Councillor in place of the French Résident Supérieur, whose seat of administration was moved from Vientiane to Thakhek.

The Japanese did not stay long in the country. After the atomic bombs were dropped by the Americans

* Full account of Prince Petcharat's independence Movement in : "The Iron Man of Laos", published in Thai, in Bangkok.

on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 6th and 9th August 1945, the Japanese capitulated on 14th August 1945.

The French appointed a new Governor-General to come and take charge of Indochina as before. The Lao people wanted to keep their independence once gained. The Chinese army also moved in from the North to disarm the Japanese. According to peace terms the Allies gave the Chinese the responsibility of disarming the Japanese all along the North right down to Savannakhet, leaving Pakse, Saravane and Attopeu to be the responsibility of the English. The French were given no part in this affair.

HOSTILITIES WITH FRANCE UP TO FRENCH RECOGNITION OF LAO INDEPENDENCE.

The father of Lao independence is Prince Petcharat (1890-1959), considered the strong man of Laos. He was sent by the French Government to France to be educated to love France, but escaped French vigilance to England in order to learn English, which the French tried to stop him. Instead of being educated to love the French, liberation had been in his mind ever since he returned home from his studies. The French never trusted him, and marked him down in a secret circular for special watching. This circular was found out during the Japanese take-over. It was also he who tried to unify the country. When the

French offered him to rule over Vientiane, as separate from Luang Prabang, he refused. It was in his mind that the division of the Kingdom only leads to quarrels between the successors of both kingdoms which had led the country to foreign subjugation in the past. Prince Petcharat was the son of the last viceroy, Prince Boonkong, and grandson of the famous Prince Souvanna Pomma. The latter fought against the Hos, led by Deo-van-Tri, who ransacked Vientiane and drove King Ounkam to Chiengkarn. Prince Souvanna Pomma was finally arrested and killed by the Hos in the midst of the fight, defending his country to the last. Prince Petcharat was eldest brother to Prince Souvanna Pomma and Prince Soupanouvong, of whom we shall hear of a great deal later. When the Japanese capitulated, the French were set free, and they came back to govern as before. To this Prince Petcharat refused to accept their control, saying that the French had promised protection according to the treaty, but they had failed to give protection to the Lao in times of war, the treaty therefore ceased to exist, and Laos will maintain their independence once already gained. Accordingly he solemnly declared Lao independence on 1 September 1945. In order to unite all Laos under the same king, he deputized Ngone Sananikone to go to Thakhek, Savannakhet, Saravane and Champasak to ask them to join in the

Lao union. To this they all agreed and Prince Petcharat declared the unity and inseparability of all Lao territories on 14 September 1945.

Prince Petcharat then cabled the King in Luang Prabang to rule over a unified independent Lao kingdom. But Prince Petcharat's determination was premature. Back in Luang Prabang the king was approached and coerced by the newly French Résident Supérieur who came back to assume former French control. The king agreed to continue under French rule, and so on the 7 September Prince Petcharat received a cable from the Minister of Interior in Luang Prabang saying that the king desired that the Kingdom of Luang Prabang remain as a French colony. This cable, if disclosed to the people, might cause consternation, discontent and even revolution. Prince Petcharat therefore kept it a secret. After the declaration of unity and Lao independence on 1 September 1945, the king was very displeased, and sent a cable on 10 October 1945 relieving Prince Petcharat from both the viceroy and Prime Minister, because he carried out a policy against the king's orders. Prince Petcharat therefore communicated the king's wishes that the country remained under French rule and the order of his dismissal to all the officials and people of Vientiane. The people reacted strongly to the king's order and at once established a

provisional National Assembly which appointed on 12 October 1945 a new Lao independent government headed by Phya Kammao, and sent a cable to the king to answer within 24 hours whether he will accept and approve this new government or not. The king did not reply and the new National Assembly voted the king deposed on 20 October 1945. While the Lao independent government was thinking of sending a detachment to seize Luang Prabang, another Lao independent party in Luang Prabang led by Prince Bunyavat, joined by Uan Ratikul (then a lieutenant) and other officers, went to the palace, seized the king and the royal family on 4 November 1945.

After this the new national assembly tried to persuade the king to join them again and sent a delegation to see the king. This time the king agreed, stating that in order to avoid civil war and bloodshed, he would co-operate with the new government. The king was again officially reinstated on his throne on 23 April 1946. The same day he issued a royal decree promulgating the provisional constitution of 12 October 1945, and legally appointed Phya Kammao as Prime Minister. But the newly organized Lao defence could not fight against the French forces, who seized back Vientiane on 24 April 1946. The French seized Luang Prabang on 13 May 1946, and Ban-Houie-Sai on 23 September 1946.

Prince Boun Oum of Champasak, Thao Nyoui Abhai and Thao Leuam co-operated with the French and helped them to get back the control of the Southern provinces.

Members of the Lao independent government (known as the Lao Issara) had to run away from Laos and came to settle down in exile in Thailand. Among the more important members who came to live in Thailand at that time were Prince Petcharat, Prince Souvanna Pouma, Prince Soupanouvong, Prince Somsanit, Prince Khamtan, Prince Sakprasoet, Phya Kammao, Phya Oun Heuan, Prince Bounyavat, Katay D. Sasorith, Phya Muongsen, Uan Ratikun, Poumi Nosavan, and many others. Most spectacular of them all was perhaps Thao Oun Sananikone who swam across the Mekhong into Thailand because he had refused to work with the French. Many of the people found employment among the Thai people and officials. The Lao Issara Movement invited Prince Petcharat to be their leader. Prince Soupanouvong as commander-in-chief continued to organize the armed resistance, even in exile. He had as his lieutenants Singapore, Kammuen and Sithon. The exile government consisted of Thao Katay as Minister of Propaganda, Prince Khamtan as Minister of Finance. The exile government co-operated with the Vietnamese and Cambodian

allies, who had all the same end of driving the French out and get their independence.

Meanwhile the French had appointed Prince Boun Oum of Champasak as Prime Minister and a modus vivendi was signed between H.R.H. Prince Savang Vatthana (now king) and Mr. De Raymond, French Commissioner for Laos, on 27 August 1946. The following year a Constituent Assembly was established with Bong Souvannavong as chairman. The French assisted in drafting the Lao constitution until it was completed and promulgated by King Sisavangvong on 11 May 1947. According to the new constitution Laos was given the status of an independent State in the French Union. After the promulgation of the constitution, the first general election was held, and also a Franco-Lao Convention was signed in Paris on 19th July 1949 between King Sisavangvong and President Vincent Auriol of the French Republic, in which France recognized Laos as an independent country within the French Union, and Laos became an Associated State of Indochina. The High Commission of the French Union was created and H.R.H. Prince Khammao represented Laos at the High Commission.

The French then tried to persuade the members of the Lao Issara Movement to come back to Laos. Seeing that Laos had now become independent many

members such as Prince Souvanna Pouna, Phya Kam-mao and Thao Katay came back in 1949. Prince Souvanna Pouna became Prime Minister between 1953-55 then again in 1955 until 1958, and again after the Konle revolution. Many members would not agree to come back unless Laos should really be completely independent without any French intervention in Lao affairs. The more important of these were Prince Petcharat and Prince Soupanouvong. Prince Petcharat was offended because some of the members went to conclude terms for the return with the French without telling him, and when all was agreed for them to return, they came back to tell him to accept. This he thought was contrary to his ideas of leadership, so he refused to return. The Issara Party considered their aims achieved and dissolved the Lao Issara Movement and deposed the leader. Prince Soupanouvong determined to resist until complete independence from the French would be obtained, so he also decided to stay on in exile.

After the return of the French to Indochina the French demanded the return of the four provinces which they had ceded to Thailand during the war. By the Washington Agreement Thailand agreed to return the four provinces: Sayaburi (Pak Lay), Champasak to Laos, and Battambang and Siemrap to Cambodia. After this the Thai government under

Pibul Songgram wanted to restore friendly relationships with France and could not allow military arrangements to be made by the Lao Issara from Thai territory. Consequently Prince Soupanouvong fled to Tongking where he started to organize the Pathet Lao movement among the border provinces of the North with the help of the Vietminhs who had common ideals with him to continue the resistance and fight against the French. On the Vietnamese front the French had found a deadly foe in the Vietminhs who were led by a very able leader, Ho-Chi-Minh. The latter also wanted complete independence without any French intervention in Vietnamese affairs, so he continued the fight even when independence was granted. China under Chang-Kai-Shek was also retreating southwards. He wanted to have allies in Tongking and Vietnam, and assisted to train Pathet Lao military personnel. Supported by Vietminh forces, both Pathet Laos and Vietminhs now attacked French positions all over Laos. First they seized Samneua and Phongsaly, which since then became the principal strongholds of the Pathet Lao forces. In April 1953 they drove southwards and attacked the French at three different fronts. They soon seized the Plain of Jars, Xieng Khouang and threatened Luang Prabang and Vientiane. In the South the Pathet Lao attacked and seized Xeno and then captured Thakhek and burnt it.

The French had a setback everywhere. In Tongking they retreated until they came to hold a position in the mountain valley of Dien-Bien-Phu, or the old Muong Theng of Khun Borom. This was thought by the French to be invincible. The whole army commanded by Brigadier General De Castries was not expecting any serious Vietminh attack, since the region had no roads and was full of dense jungles. But by surprise a road was built in no time, the French were surrounded up in their impregnable stronghold and was forced to surrender in 1954. The taking of Dien-Bien-Phu signified that French power in Indochina had at last broken down, and the rights of France over this region were no longer incontestable. The Indochina war had caused so many lives and France was getting tired to continue such a costly and "dirty" war. In the meantime the powers concerned tried to stop the war in Laos and Vietnam. France, U.K., USSR, U.S.A. and Communist China met in order to come to a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, which were agreed upon by the Powers in Geneva on 20 July 1954, and ceasefire to start as from 6 August 1954. An International Commission of Control consisted of representatives of India, Canada and Poland was set up to supervise the execution of the provisions of this agreement.

Prince Soupanouvong at last agreed to collaborate with Prince Souvanna Pouna in order to form a mixed cabinet consisting of ministers from both Pathet Lao and government parties. The territory held by Pathet Lao will be incorporated into the Lao unity. The country will be neutral. This was agreed upon by both sides at the Joint Declaration of the Delegation of the Royal Government of Laos and the Delegation of the Pathet Lao forces at Vientiane on 10 August 1956. Prince Soupanouvong joined Souvanna Pouna's cabinet as Minister of Public Works. The Pathet Lao Movement was dissolved and a political party called Lao Hak Xat set up in its place. At the same time the Lao government sent a delegation to Thailand on 15 August 1957 consisting of representatives of the Government and the National Assembly, and a written letter from the Chief Patriarch of Laos to invite Prince Petcharat to return, to which he finally accepted, after an exile of eleven years in Thailand. He was confirmed as Viceroy or Second King. After the union, the two princes, Prince Souvanna Pouna and Prince Soupanouvong, again differed on many principles of policy. The two parties which supported the government, united together known as Lao Home Lao, and one of the leaders, Thao Phui Sananikone, was elected to form the cabinet in August 1958. Phui was a rightist and supported the Western

camp. Soupanouvong was ousted and lived in retirement at his residence in Vientiane. He was soon accused of treason and arrested by the Phui government on 28 May 1959 along with his colleagues of the left camp, including Singapore and Sithon. But he soon escaped from prison with his colleagues on 24 May 1960 with the help of his former men and went over to Pouxair from where he proceeded to Samneua and soon rallied his old adherents to his cause. He reorganized the Pathet Lao Movement and made Samneua his stronghold as before. Fighting then resumed all over the country between the Pathet Lao and government forces. Meanwhile Somsanit became Prime Minister and he was supported by General Poui Nosavan, who became Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. King Sisavangvong who had died in 1959 in Luang Prabang could not be cremated and his body was still lying in State owing to the trouble in the country. Thinking that the time had now come to settle the details of King Sisavangvong's cremation Prince Somsanit, General Poui and many other members of the cabinet flew over to Luang Prabang to confer with King Savang Vatthana, the new king, over the rites for the cremation. Back in Vientiane, during their absence a revolution started in the early hours of 9 August 1960. It was led by up to now an obscure officer, Captain Kongle, commander of the

second battalion of paratroopers. Captain Kongle seized the Government, invited all the important members of the Government to his Headquarters at the Prime Minister's Office, had them held up. He called a meeting of the National Assembly and dissolved the cabinet. He declared a policy of neutrality. He said that for ten years he had been watching Laos killing Laos, and that the foreigners on both sides were helping Laos to kill Laos. He will have no more of this fighting for which only the Laos were to suffer. Laos will become neutral, will belong to no camp, and will no longer accept any foreign interference. He invited Prince Souvanna Puma to head the new Government and to start talking with the Pathet Lao in order to bring them back again to the homeland and cease civil war. General Poui, having heard of the trouble in Vientiane, flew back to Savannakhet, his own home, and started organizing an army from the South. He then led an anti-revolutionary party, invited Prince Boun Oum to head this new government. Kongle had now to fight Poui's army advancing from the South in order to take Vientiane. Kongle had the support of Quinime who was leader of a political party, more to the left, called Santipap. Quinime became Foreign Minister for Kongle. However Poui's army gained strength every day. On the 13th December 1960 Poui's army arrived in Vientiane.

Battle between Kongle's men and Poumi's raged three days and the town was at last taken by Poumi while Kongle retreated inland towards the North. Souvanna Pouna had already left Vientiane for Phnom-Penh before the battle, disheartened in not being able to make anybody listen to him, leaving the control of the country in the hands of General Sunthorn. But as soon as he left Quinime took over the government as a minister still left behind. However the town of Vientiane was taken over by Poumi who asked Boun Oum to be head of the Government. Kongle was beaten at Vang Vieng and ultimately retreated to Xieng Khouang where he made his military headquarters. Souvanna Pouna refused to co-operate with the Boun Oum Government and flew to Xieng Khouang to join his former allies, Kongle and Soupanouvong. It is to be noticed that there were two Lao governments at this period, the Boun Oum Government and Souvanna Pouna Government. The latter still considered himself the rightful prime minister, and of course he was supported by his two parties as well as the Communist Powers. Souvanna Pouna tried very hard to organize a coalition government between his own party supported by Kongle, Boun Oum's party and Soupanouvong's party. Both the leftists and the rightists demanded key positions in the cabinet, i.e. Minister of Interior and Minister of Defence.

At last when a formula could be worked out whereby Souvanna Pouna took the two posts himself, but he could never call all the ministers together. Soupanouvong was still afraid to appear in Vientiane. The matter was aggravated when Quinime, the Foreign Minister, a man who had a leftist tendency, was assassinated in Vientiane by the soldiers guarding his house. Since then it was not considered safe for leftist ministers to stay in Vientiane. Prince Soupanouvong had fled to his quarters in Samneua and began to attack government positions in Xieng Khouang guarded by Kongle. Thus Kongle first started leaning to the left, had assisted and supported the Souvanna Pouna government and now found himself fighting his former ally, the Pathet Lao. The government of Souvanna Pouna had great difficulties to keep a neutral policy with only Poumi left behind in the cabinet. Seeing that the leftists attacked government positions and there was no hope of rallying the leftists to a united cause, the rightists tried to seize power and force their own issue. Colonel Bounleut tried to seize power in February 1965 supported by General Poumi and General Siho. But then General Kouprasit, faithful to the Government, counter-attacked, repelled the rebellious army towards Pukhao Kwai where the Poumiists surrendered. General Poumi and General Siho fled to Thailand.

Huge problems still lie ahead of Souvanna Pouna to realize a reunion of all the parties concerned, since foreign powers and neighbouring countries have keen interests in the future of Laos. Communist countries and North Vietnam wanted to see that Soupanouvong, the Red Prince, gain supremacy of control in the country. The Vietminhs wanted to have Red Laos as an ally and a stepping stone towards South Vietnam, whereas Red China has common frontier with her, through which her men could penetrate towards the extreme corner of Southeast Asia. This was against American interests, Souvanna Pouna's tremendous task is not only against his own countrymen but also how to neutralize and conciliate two opposing interests and views of the Red Camp and the Western Camp found both pressing hard on his own country. The issue is still to be solved and how, and meanwhile civil war in Laos continues. Kongle, not being able to stop Laos from fighting Laos, was disappointed and resigned to live in a foreign country. His position as leader of the neutralist army was taken over by Khampet, who put up his quarters for the neutralist army in Vang Vieng. After Pouna's flight, Uan Ratikun succeeded him as head of the Pro-Western forces. Meanwhile France looks on, playing a seemingly disinterested party, supporting the

neutral policy. Her economic interests in Laos are still very great and she does not want to lose the French culture injected. She therefore dislikes U.S.A. endeavour to give an education a new trend towards the English culture.

Unless all the big powers lay their hands off from all sides, it will be difficult for Laos to find a solution for themselves. After all they wanted to be entirely independent without any foreign intervention nor purse-strings.

Modern Period

During the Second World War Japan seized countries of South-East Asia + declared the independence of Laos but when the war ended the Japanese had to withdraw. France came back to reclaim her old colony of Laos in 1946. Prince Somsanit and then Prince Suwanna Pouma formed a government after French were rounded up in Dien Bien Phu, surrounded by the Vietnamese with Lao participation. France had to capitulate and declared the independence of Laos, but another party, the Pathet Lao, was organized by Prince Supanuvong to call for the complete independence of Laos. They fought & seized Samneua as his base with the help of the Vietnamese which had since obtaining independence turned to the communistic block under Ho-Chi-Minh. Prince Suwanna Pouma tried to form a coalition government with the Pathet Lao party of Prince Supanuvong and formed a coalition govt in 1957, but as Phoui Sananikorn succeeded Suwanna Pouma as Prime Minister, he had the Supanuvong party who formed the coalition govt. and sent them to a prison camp outside Laos, but they escaped to Samneua, their stronghold. The U.S.A. tried to gain the Lao government on their side by paying heavily for the military units of Laos. A party led by Captain Kongle seized the Government and declared a neutral policy, and asked Suwanna Pouma to form a government of neutral Laos. Thus American help was withdrawn. Another strong man, General Poui moved from the South and seized the neutral government, the war again subsidized by American aid. Again Suwanna Pouma became Prime Minister. Meanwhile the Pathet Lao made propaganda among the lower classes and the farmers : Pathet Lao gained much popularity among the populace. At last the Pathet Lao party led by Supanuvong, seized the govt. deposed the King and declared a republic with Supanuvong as Head of State and chairman of the Party with Kaysorn Pommavitharn as Secretary - General of the Party. He was proclaimed in 1950 as President of the republic. As Soupanuvong died Kaysorn Pommavitharn assumed leader of the Party, and in 1991 was declared President of the Republic of Laos.