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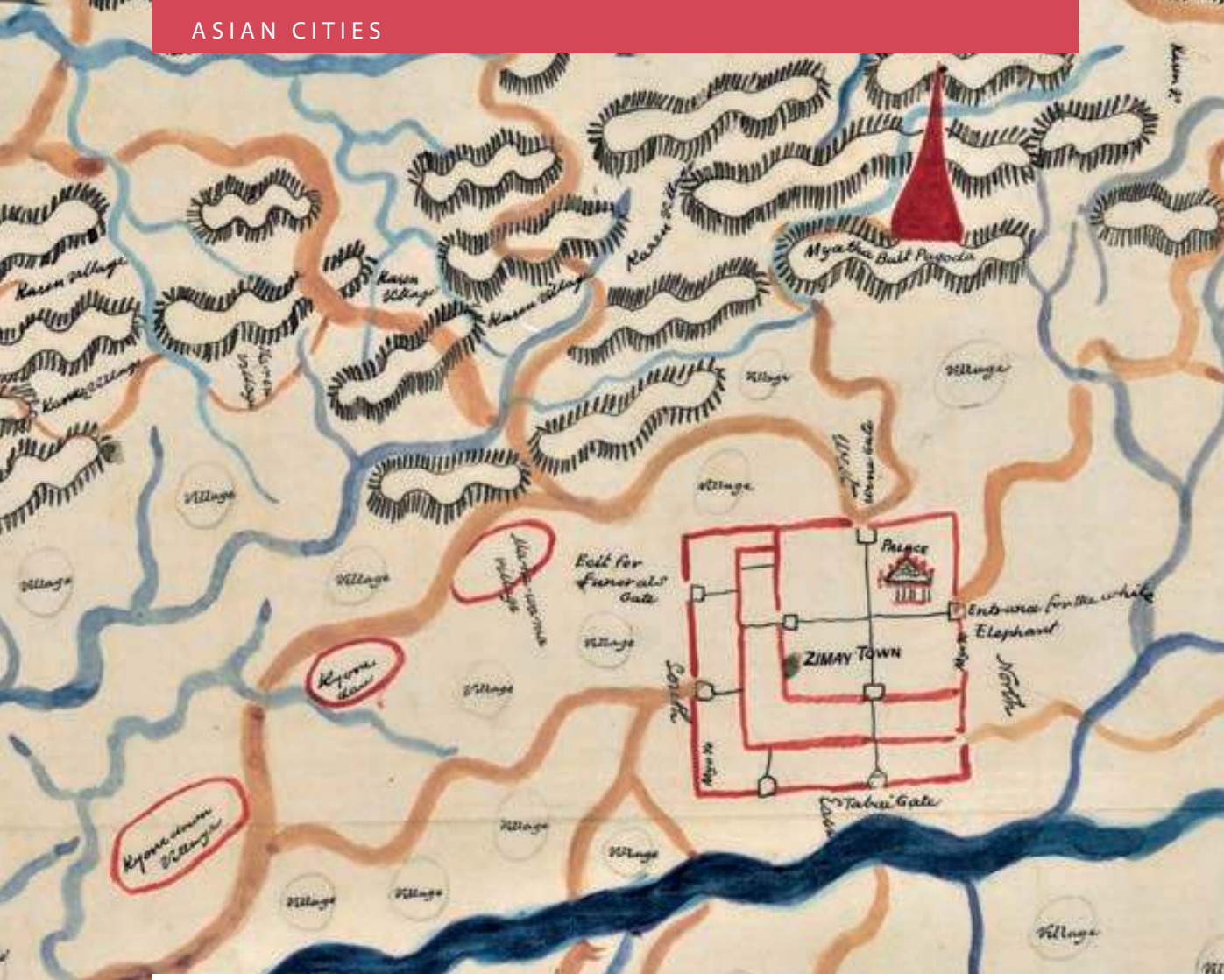

Taylor M. Easum

Chiang Mai between Empire and Modern Thailand

A City in the Colonial Margins

Amsterdam University Press

International Institute for Asian Studies

Chiang Mai between Empire and Modern Thailand

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Note on Transliteration and Sources

In transliterating Thai terms and names, this text follows the Royal Thai General System of Transcription (RTGS), with a few exceptions. For well-known personal names (e.g., Damrong, Chulalongkorn, or Vajiravudh) or place names (e.g., Nakhon Ratchasima), or in certain cases where a common spelling is more widely known than the Thai transliteration (e.g., Chamadevi instead of Chamathewi), the common spelling is retained. Also to avoid confusion, citations retain the preferred spelling of any Thai authors who have published in English for all citations attributed to them, in Thai or English (e.g., Sarassawadee Ongsakul instead of Saratsawadi Ongsakun). I have also kept the spelling for certain Thai terms as indicated in the original source material. For certain key terms, I have included the term in Thai script on the first substantive instance in the text.

This book draws on Thai- and English-language materials from the National Archives of Thailand (NAT), the Church of Christ Archives at Payap University (CCTA), The National Archives of the UK (TNA), the British Library (BL), the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), and the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS). These abbreviations are used in the footnotes and bibliography. Where possible, I have retained the original Thai script in the record locator code for references to archival materials in Thailand.

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I first came to northern Thailand as an exchange student at Chiang Mai University (CMU) in the summer of 1998, shortly after the Asian financial crisis that left so many scars on the urban landscape. As I began to explore the layers of history that seemed to emerge out of every corner of the city, the seed that would become this book was planted. I am grateful for the many friends and colleagues in Chiang Mai who taught me how to navigate its past and present. I am particularly grateful for the guidance and friendship of Chaiyan Rajchagool, Thanet Charoenmuang, Usanee Thongchai, Sarassawadee Ongsakul, Attachak Satayanuruk, Chitraporn Tanratanakul, and Rome Chiranukrom.

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the Department of History at Indiana State University, and colleagues like Anne Foster, always ready with sound advice and encouragement.

Once I realized that no archive held a box labeled "changes in urban space related to national and regional politics in Thailand," I quickly learned the most important lesson of academic research: without the patient help of librarians, archivists, and bibliographers, nothing gets done. I would like to especially thank Larry Ashmun, Southeast Asian and Hmong Studies Bibliographer at UW–Madison for all his help in finding even the most obscure publications. In Thailand everyone at the National Archives in Bangkok and Chiang Mai was very generous with their time and patient with my requests. Special thanks are due to Mr. Phiched Tantinamchai at the Chiang Mai branch of the National Archives, who procured several difficult sources for me. Everyone at the Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University, including Chaiyan Hiranphan, Arisa Lertpruks, and Kanjana Mongkhol, has always been so welcoming, whether I was there for research or to bring study abroad students for a visit. Staff at the National Library of Thailand and the Chiang Mai University library, as well as the libraries of Payap, Thammasat, and Chulalongkorn universities were all quite tolerant with my requests for "more maps!" Likewise, in London, the staff at the National Archives, the British Library, and the Royal Geographical Society all provided easy access to a wide array of maps and illustrations, some of which are included in the following pages. Much of this research was conducted with the generous support of a Fulbright-Hays fellowship as well as travel grants provided by the Mellon Foundation and UW–Madison Department of History.

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Introduction: Reading Urban Space in the Colonial Margins

Abstract
This book examines the long history of urban space in northern Thailand to advance three main goals: first, to move away from the nation-state as the dominant frame of historical analysis; second, to refocus scholarly attention away from the metropolis and toward the great urban middle; and third, to interrogate Siam's complicated relationship with colonialism and empire, both internally with tributary states and externally with western powers such as the British, French, and Americans. This book explores these questions through the lens of urban space, beginning with the deep history of urbanization in the region, through the height of urban Lanna's power, to its alliance with Siam and later incorporation in the modern Thai state.

Keywords: nation-state, intermediate cities, semi-imperialism

> *Cities are amalgams of buildings and people. They are inhabited settings from which daily rituals—the mundane and the extraordinary, the random and the staged—derive their validity. In the urban artifact and its mutations are condensed continuities of time and place. The city is the ultimate memorial of our struggles and glories: it is where the pride of the past is set on display.*
>
> – Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped*

What does the space of a city tell us? In the case of Chiang Mai, it tells us that the largest city in northern Thailand has not always been northern, or even Thai. Though Chiang Mai is often called Thailand's "second city" and is a regional center dominating Thailand's northern region, the urban space of the city tells a story that reaches beyond the nation and between competing and cooperating empires. Chiang Mai was—and in some ways remains—part of a vast network of city-states with historical and cultural connections stretching across the interior of mainland Southeast Asia. Once the center of a powerful inland kingdom known as Lanna, Chiang

Mai found itself incorporated into modern Siam as a provincial city by the turn of the twentieth century. Urban space reminds us, however, that this transition was not just a national one. This was also a story of external, overlapping colonial powers that reshaped the urban environment. In short, Chiang Mai's urban space tells a story of its peculiarly marginal position, on the periphery of the modern Thai state, removed from coastal centers of power, and located between the frontiers of both Western and Siamese imperial states.

This book aims to tell the story of that urban space. The story of old and new royal palaces, colonial-style government buildings, Western missionary hospitals, Chinese markets, and the way these forces pulled and stretched the city in different directions is certainly worth telling on its own. However, the transformation of Chiang Mai's urban space in the colonial margins also reflects several broader processes, including the regional realignment of power away from inland, north-facing networks of exchange and toward riverine and coastal trade associated with the global colonial economy; the cooperation between British and Siamese interests; the formation of the modern Siamese state; and the development of informal forms of colonialism and empire in mainland Southeast Asia.

This focus on urban space is the result of several impulses. First is the move away from the nation-state as the dominant frame of historical analysis. One major approach moving away from the nation-state has been to expand the scale of analysis to global empire and world-systems, a trend often called the "imperial turn."[1] Another path away from the nation-state leads to studies at the smaller scale, of regional and local histories, at times embedded within the nation-state but often located at the margins between two or more competing centers of power.[2] A detailed examination of urban space in Chiang Mai seeks both to follow and further these trends toward empire and local history. The challenge of local historiography is avoiding repetition of larger national narratives on a smaller scale. Rather, there is a need for more scholarship that integrates the local and the global, without parroting nationalist narratives of progress, modernization, or unification.[3]

The second impulse that this book seeks to develop is a desire to refocus scholarly attention away from the metropolis and toward the great urban

1 Burton, *After the Imperial Turn*.

2 See Sunet and Baker, *Recalling Local Pasts*.

3 See, for instance, Thongchai Winichakul's analysis of local history in Thailand, which tends either to focus only on connections between the locality and Bangkok or to replicate the national story on a smaller scale. Thongchai, "The Changing Landscape of the Past."

middle, where most urban dwellers live and where the timing and nature of historical change often differs in important and telling ways from the metropole or colonial cities. Moving the analytical frame to the level of the city can only do so much. Major cities have frequently found themselves at the center of studies of empire and nation; smaller, secondary, or intermediate cities, however, have received far less attention from scholars. As Mark Jayne has pointed out, if one takes the time to count, the typical size of cities around the world is not large but rather small or intermediate.[4] For many years, this point was somewhat muted in Thailand, where the rate of urban primacy in the 1980s was so high that the majority of the urban population in the entire country resided within Bangkok and its suburbs.[5] Nevertheless, the point remains: while more people live and work in Bangkok than in any other Thai city, an increasing number live and work in smaller cities throughout the country. As sustainable development pushes our attention to secondary and smaller cities, more historical attention is needed to understand those cities, both to make use of their potential and to protect the unique local character of those cities for residents and visitors alike.

Within the field of Thai studies, this move has particular importance, as Bangkok's domination of the urban landscape of Thailand serves as an extreme example of urban primacy. Bangkok lords over Thailand as the center of government, administration, trade, and even culture and religion. Bangkok's urban primacy within Thailand has been among the most remarkable in the world.[6] There are other cities in Thailand, of course, but the large cities near Bangkok have become absorbed into the greater metropolis as suburbs, satellite ports, or industrial towns. The larger cities of the provinces, further removed from Bangkok, have generally been able to retain more of their unique identity, but even then, these provincial cities and towns have become holiday destinations for the Bangkok elite or outposts extending the reach of the central state. There are regional centers as well, larger cities that act as administrative hubs anchoring a wider region comprising multiple provinces and districts. The three largest cities outside the Bangkok region are Hat Yai in the south, Nakhon Ratchasima in the northeast, and Chiang Mai in the north. However, none of these cities comes even close to Bangkok in terms of influence and power, or even in population or territorial extent. Even based on conservative estimates, the next largest city in Thailand, outside the central Bangkok region, is less

4 Jayne, "Globalization and Third-Tier Cities: The European Experience."

5 In 1980, 58.1% of city-dwellers lived in Bangkok. Dutt, *The Asian City*, 171.

6 See, for example, Goldstein, *Urbanization in Thailand 1947–1967*, 5.

than 1/30 the size of Bangkok in terms of population; Chiang Mai is closer to 1/40 the size of Bangkok.[7] For many Thai and visitors alike, the main urban formula is simply: Thai + city = Bangkok.

The third and final impulse behind this book is Thailand's complicated relationship with colonialism and empire, formal or informal. Anyone interested in learning about Thailand, whether by guidebook or textbook, will undoubtedly discover the fundamental fact that Thailand was never colonized. This fact has formed the basis for much of Thai historiography, underpinning an almost triumphalist narrative of Thai independence and freedom in the face of Western colonial expansion. The story goes something like this: The great kings of the past guided the Siamese ship of state through the confusing, often treacherous waters of Western colonialism with flexibility and skill, thus allowing Siam to remain independent and free. To do this, the Thai kings had to engage both with the West and with their own subjects, whom they unified within Siam's national borders. In doing so, Siam escaped the worst of Western colonialism and remained, alone among its Southeast Asian neighbors, an independent nation-state.

Siam's escape from formal colonialism has led to this dominant narrative of Thai history that placed the kings and elites in the same category as the anti-colonial leaders of other Southeast Asian colonies. Yet these same kings and elites led the transformation of Siam from a collection of overlapping, unbounded provinces and vassal states into a modern, territorially defined nation-state, very much on the model of neighboring colonial states.[8] In other words, the fact that Siam was never formally colonized encouraged certain comparisons and obfuscated others. It encouraged comparisons between Siam and Japan, or the Chakri kings and anti-colonial nationalists, while minimizing any similarities between Siamese elites and the Dutch in Java or the British in India.[9] Likewise, as Peter Jackson has pointed out, it has served to isolate Thai studies, and history in particular, from theoretical and analytical frameworks generated in the West or in post-colonial regions outside Thailand.[10] An impressive variety of terms have been deployed by scholars to describe and unpack the complex relationship between Thailand and colonialism. "Semi-colonial" was the earliest descriptor for Siam's position vis-à-vis Western colonial power and remains widely used today. The

7 Statistics taken from Brinkhoff, "Thailand: Regions, Major Cities & Municipalities – Statistics & Maps on City Population."

8 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*.

9 Anderson, "Studies of the Thai State: The State of Thai Studies," 193–247.

10 Jackson, "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand," 37–56.

British role in Siam has been viewed as a form of "informal empire," though this has been subject to much debate.[11] Other terms have included "pseudo-colonialism," "crypto-colonialism," "internal colonialism," "auto-colonialism," and "informal imperialism," to name a few.[12] Different terms come with different limitations, though. For example, while "informal imperialism" might serve to illuminate Chiang Mai's relationship with global imperial elites, particularly the British in Kolkata (Calcutta) and Yangon (Rangoon), it limits local elites to a collaborative role. While the actions of the Siamese elite may have furthered the goals of British Empire, the reverse is also true, i.e., that the British were complicit in attaining Siamese goals. Likewise, internal colonialism is a problematic term. As initially used in Michael Hechter's work on the formation of ethnicity and identity in the United Kingdom, the term often describes colonial or post-colonial policies toward minority or indigenous groups within national borders.[13] The dynamics of Siam's policy towards the vassal states north, northeast, and south of Bangkok are clearly different. While there are parallels in Bangkok's approach to various indigenous groups or ethnic minorities,[14] the question for Chiang Mai is how a political alliance between vassal and overlord became one of a province within the geo-body of Siam. In other words, the story in Siam is less about a central state's approach to autochthonous peoples and more about transforming cultural and historical similarities between distinct states into an internal matter between fellow Thais. Adding "internal" to "colonialism" has the benefit of forcing us to rethink the relationship between Bangkok and Chiang Mai, but potentially at the exclusion of other forces and actors and all without adequately explaining how the "internal" came to be imagined as such. While a useful concept—and one used throughout this book—the risk of misusing the term is a real one. Whatever aspect of this era one focuses on, Thailand and those who study its history continue to come to terms with Siam's hyphenated colonialism.

A turning point in Siam's relationship with colonialism, informal empire, and urban primacy was reached with the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, which most scholars credit with opening the country to trade with the West and beginning a process of economic transformation that would radically alter the political and economic structure of the state. Bangkok was

11 Barton, "Informal Empire: The Case of Siam and the Middle East," 254.

12 Jackson, "The Ambiguities of Semicolonial Power in Thailand," 41.

13 Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*.

14 See Thongchai, "The Others Within," 38–62.

founded as the capital of the Chakri dynasty in 1782, but the gap between Bangkok and the rest of the country truly became a gulf during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, after the Bowring Treaty.[15] After Bowring, Bangkok fit with many prevailing descriptions of colonial cities. Rhoads Murphy, for example, saw the colonial city as synonymous with the port city, which served as a nodal interface between Western economic patterns and Asian production. These colonial cities transferred Western domination in one direction, while extracting Asian goods and services in the other.[16] Increasing trade with the West meant an increase in the size and primacy of Bangkok. Kings, nobles, and wealthy elites in Bangkok began to engage with the West, and many sought ways to productively emulate what they saw as the fashionable modernity and political acumen of their Western colonial neighbors. In short, the ruling elite in Bangkok began an economic and political transformation that would place the capital atop a modern, bounded, and highly centralized state, tied together by telegraph and rail and administered through a functionally differentiated bureaucracy.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Bangkok had become the center of an expanding network of trade servicing the colonial economies of the region and beyond. It had also become the center of an absolute monarchy, set on accumulating direct power in the hands of the king and his close allies, who then extended this power with increasing alacrity throughout the immediate hinterland and beyond, into the far-flung vassal states of the north and south. None of this, by itself, fully explains the reasons for Bangkok's extreme primacy, but there are several possible explanations. The geography of the central corridor of mainland Southeast Asia was certainly a factor, as Bangkok served as a concentration point for all goods collected from the Chao Phraya basin and its northern tributaries. The fact that Siam was never colonized by a Western power also helps to explain the extreme concentration of power in the capital. Western colonial planners were often keen on developing new and existing cities, especially coastal ports for trade. Concerned with maintaining their grip on power, the royal elite in Bangkok had little incentive to establish or expand large secondary cities outside their immediate area of control. The formation of the modern Siamese state meant the extreme concentration of power in Bangkok; likewise, the expansion of its economy meant the concentration of wealth in the capital city.

The recent transformation of the political landscape in Thailand, marked by political protest and punctuated by military coups in 2006 and 2014,

15 Askew, *Bangkok, Place, Practice and Representation*, 23–26.

16 Murphey, "Traditionalism and Colonialism," 67–84.

has highlighted the complexity of Bangkok's centrality and primacy. Many commentators have resorted to portraying the split between pro-Thaksin red-shirts and anti-Thaksin yellow-shirts as reflecting an urban-rural divide. On some level, this is an accurate description. A key fault line in the color-coded crisis in Thailand lay between "largely urban, conservative, and royalist 'yellow' shirts" and "predominantly rural 'red' columns of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra."[17] Thaksin made good political use of rural resentment over the dominance of Bangkok in almost every aspect of life in Thailand, especially the concentration of wealth and power in the capital. As Thitinan Pongsudhirak points out, "for a nobody to become a somebody, all roads led to Bangkok and its prestigious prep schools and universities."[18] The connections between urban and rural geographies centered on Bangkok have provided rich material for analysis, such as in Claudio Sopranzetti's study of the mobility and politics of motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok.[19] Urban primacy centered on Bangkok looms large, and yet the non-Bangkok city remains absent from much of the political conversation. The urban-rural divide as an interpretive framework for Thailand's political crisis often places cities such as Khon Kaen or Nakhon Ratchasima alongside the rural category, while the urban remains, unsurprisingly, mostly Bangkok. Rural constituents, especially in the north and northeast, generally favor Thaksin and his political offspring over more royalist alternatives—but what about the *cities* of the north and the northeast? Are they merely large centers of rural-ness? Likewise, Bangkok is certainly the capital of the old elite, including the royal family, who remain at the center of entrenched elite power. But what about the millions of rural folk who migrate into the city for temporary labor? A street vendor in Bangkok told me a joke that, according to her, is popular among the many Thai from the northeast, a populous region known in Thai as *Isaan*, and that highlights the complex position of Bangkok in these debates:

Q: What's the largest *Isaan* city?

A: Bangkok.

She was implicitly subverting the image of Bangkok as a city of the conservative, urban elite: indeed, it was more northeastern than Bangkok, and the joke asserts a regional claim to the capital city. The urban-rural divide, like the history of cities and urban centers in Thailand, often hides more than it explains. There is rural in the city and city in the rural, as

17 Thitinan, "Thailand's Urban-Rural Split."

18 Thitinan, "Thailand's Urban-Rural Split."

19 Sopranzetti, *Owners of the Map*.

the newly popular concepts of "cosmopolitan villagers" and "urbanized villagers" demonstrate.[20]

While the in-betweenness of villagers or city dwellers has been called into question, there is also a need for an analysis of intermediate spaces, somewhere between the megalopolis of Bangkok and the villages and towns of the countryside. The focus on Bangkok, while understandable, has produced a skewed and incomplete picture of Thai urbanism and urban history in several ways. First, the extreme primacy of Bangkok obscures the great diversity of urban form and experience within and beyond Thailand's borders. Some scholars have begun to look outside the confines of Bangkok to uncover some of this diversity. Andrew Johnson's work on Chiang Mai after the 1997 financial crisis is a notable exception which explores anxieties over progress, development, and the meaning of contemporary urban space through a detailed examination of both urban planners and spirit mediums.[21] Pornpun Futrakul, for example, has studied the environmental and spatial history of Siamese towns before 1910 and found a great diversity of urban form and function, especially outside the core area of Siam surrounding Ayutthaya and, later, Bangkok. Economic expansion and political centralization around the turn of the century brought a more uniform appearance to most regional and provincial towns in central Siam.[22] The urban transformation of towns and cities outside the capital has remained largely ignored, with the historical eye fixed on Bangkok.

Second, whether as cautionary tale or ultimate prize, Bangkok lords over the urban imaginary of regional and provincial cities. Though many residents of smaller cities in Thailand would like to enjoy the benefits of modernity and wealth, both of which seem to find their highest concentration in Bangkok, just as many (if not more) are wary of the problems of urban development and expansion, or "becoming like Bangkok." For many in provincial cities, Bangkok represents not only the center of the Thai economy, society, and state, but it also epitomizes the problems of the city. In the provinces, "Bangkok" can easily become shorthand for the problems of rapid urban development and unplanned growth as the epitome of a large, polluted, and congested city. The focus on Bangkok in the scholarship has taken attention away from other possibilities, from other ways of being a

20 Keyes, "'Cosmopolitan' Villagers and Populist Democracy in Thailand"; Naruemon and McCargo, "Urbanized Villagers in the 2010 Thai Redshirt Protests."

21 Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*.

22 Pornpun, "The Environmental History of Pre-Modern Provincial Towns in Siam to 1910," chs. 3 and 5.

city. An informed urban history should help to uncover new (or perhaps very old?) forms of urban organization and space, ones that hopefully are not dominated by Bangkok.

Third, the focus on Bangkok is understandable if for no other reason than the power it wields over provincial government and even local planning. Even before Thailand's recent slide toward authoritarianism, provincial governors have been appointed directly by Bangkok, not locally elected.[23] But there are other means available to local groups wanting to effect change in their city, including appeals to international organizations (e.g., the Asia Development Bank or UNESCO) and associated discourses of urban planning or heritage management (e.g., Green Cities or the World Heritage List). Focusing on Bangkok, however, obfuscates the internal dynamics of contestation over urban space within Thailand. As I will argue in Chapter 5, when locals of various classes were faced with new demands and pressures from Bangkok, sacred space could provide commoners and elites alike with opportunities to defy or shape the influence of the central state on the cities and spaces of the north. In more recent years, Chiang Mai has seen a similar dynamic. Lacking responsive local leadership and power, Chiang Mai has undergone many changes that locals saw as both negative and emanating from Bangkok. Today many in Chiang Mai are struggling to come to terms with Chiang Mai's "urban essence" and identity in the face of decades of Bangkok-centered urban transformation.[24] Andrew Johnson traces multiple strategies used to, in his words, "re-centre" the city by recalling the urban past, either through spirit mediumship, architectural conservation, or urban planning. Magic, astrology, and sacred rituals have been deployed for political purposes both inside and outside official policy channels, of course; see, for example, the variety of ritual and astrological means used to influence and contest politics in Thailand.[25] However, the deployment of such strategies in places outside the capital can easily be missed while the critical eye of urban studies and urban history remains focused on Bangkok.

The position of Bangkok—and of other cities such as Chiang Mai—within Thailand's urban network was shaped by the unique experience of Siam during the age of high colonialism. On one level, Bangkok's semicoloniality can be seen in the transformation of the city into what closely resembled a Western colonial city.[26] Bangkok was the city that facilitated the integration

23 Wassayos, "Provincial Governor Polls 'Could Ease Political Rifts.'"

24 Johnson, "Re-Centreing the City," 516.

25 Pasuk and Baker, "The Spirits, the Stars, and Thai Politics."

26 McGee, *The Southeast Asian City*, 72.

of Siam into the regional and global political-economy and, in doing so, was forced to give up a good deal of its sovereignty. Lysa Hong has wonderfully captured the chaos that this compromised sovereignty brought to the streets of Bangkok, with overlapping and confused jurisdictions of local and extra-territorial police forces.[27] At the same time, the ruling kings transformed the city into a modern landscape meant to demonstrate their civilization and modernity to local Thais and Western observers alike.[28] Bangkok became simultaneously the center of Western access to Thai markets and production and the center of the Thai elites' production of their own modernity. In short, Siam's semicoloniality helps explain Bangkok's primacy.

On another level, Siam's semicolonial status also helps to explain Chiang Mai's transformation from autonomous capital to provincial city. While the ruling elites of Bangkok were at times subject to extreme pressure from Western colonial forces (for instance, the imposition of the unequal treaties of the 1850s and the Pak Nam crisis of 1893), these same elites found ways to increase their authority within an expanding domestic domain. Remaining in power, the ruling elite in Bangkok thus concentrated power in the capital, creating an absolute monarchy during the reign of Rama V, and integrated far-flung vassals into their modernizing Siamese state structure centered on Bangkok. Where Bangkok was subject to the impositions of the West, Chiang Mai was subject to the impositions of Bangkok as well as certain agents of Western colonialism. Siam's internal imperialism explains Chiang Mai's provinciality—and the longstanding anxiety over the space of the city.

The Urban Space of Chiang Mai

The focus of this book is the spatial history of Thailand's so-called "second city," Chiang Mai. Founded in 1296, Chiang Mai would remain a key center, if not always the dominant one, within the kingdom of Lanna. The city found itself under Burmese rule from the mid-sixteenth century until the late eighteenth, when key leaders in Chiang Mai and neighboring cities decided to ally with rising Siam against a declining Burma. Restored by a local noble named Kawila from nearby Lampang, the city existed as a vassal to Siam for most of the nineteenth century. During the latter half of that century, British pressure and Siamese ambition combined to bring

27 Lysa, "'Stranger within the Gates': Knowing Semi-Colonial Siam as Extraterritorials," 327–54; and "Extraterritoriality in Bangkok in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868–1910," 125–46.
28 Peleggi, *Lords of Things*.

Chiang Mai under the increasingly direct control of Bangkok, until the city officially became the center of regional and provincial administration under the modern Siamese state in 1899.

If it is true that "the city is a space to be read," what story does it tell?[29] As the center of a vassal kingdom that gradually became an intermediate city within the modern Siamese state, Chiang Mai offers a unique window into the development of colonial modernity in this context of empire and nation-building. The space of the city was a point of articulation between several forces of change: between premodern and modern statecraft, between coastal Siamese and inland Tai urban traditions, and between competing and cooperating agents of colonial modernity. By looking beyond Bangkok and by adopting the perspective of an intermediate city such as Chiang Mai, another side of Siamese colonial-ness comes into view, one that consists of two dynamics: internal imperialism and cooperative colonialism.

As mentioned above, Siam's incorporation of its northern periphery has been described as internally colonial or internally imperial in that the former vassal states of the north were successfully integrated into the modern Siamese state. This colonial project can be considered internal only if one of two assumptions is made: a) that these vassal states were already part of Siam during the nineteenth century, when the relationship between Bangkok and Chiang Mai was one of overlord and vassal, not capital and province, or b) that the borders of modern Siam can be safely projected back into the past, as an already-always-there geo-body. The case of Chiang Mai helps us to make sense of this conundrum by providing an example of both the transformation of the physical space of the city and the transformation of the political and historical imagination of that same space. This history of changing local, Western, and Siamese perceptions of Chiang Mai as a city serves to highlight the participation of Siamese elites in the colonial project, not just in their own backyard but in the far-flung peripheries of the north.

The second aspect of Siam's semicoloniality highlighted by the case of Chiang Mai is the dovetailing of interests and at times outright cooperation between various agents of colonial modernity. Tamara Loos, in writing about the internal imperialism of Siam in Patani, has used the term "competitive colonialism" to describe the parallels between Siamese and British colonial ambitions on the peninsula.[30] In the south, British and Siamese colonial projects clashed and competed; in the north, however, the Siamese largely

29 Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis*, 169.

30 Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms," 75–91.

worked with Western forces, especially British officials and American missionaries, to transform the region and its largest city into an outpost of the Siamese state and colonial modernity. One might be tempted to view the Siamese integration of Chiang Mai and the north as a unique instance of collaborative colonialism.[31] However, "collaboration" is a term typically used to describe the assistance provided by local elites to colonial powers, such as in French Cochin-China or Dutch Java, for example. In the case of Chiang Mai, I suggest not only that local elites collaborated with outsiders from Bangkok and Britain, but also that there was cooperation between the American, British, and Siamese, whose actions collectively transformed the urban space of the city. This is a story both of collaboration between imperial and subordinate elites and (more importantly) of cooperation among different external groups, all acting on and within the same space—Chiang Mai.

Chiang Mai is manifestly different from Bangkok, and both have very different histories; as Chapter 1 will show, these two cities emerged out of very different urban traditions. The cities of the northern periphery of the modern Thai state, especially Chiang Mai, have a long and often turbulent history. Lamphun, Chiang Mai's so-called sister city, was founded in the eighth century, and Chiang Mai in 1296. Numerous smaller cities such as Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Phayao, and Chiang Rai in the north all trace their foundations to sometime between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. These cities grew and developed as autonomous city-states, at times united as part of the Lanna Kingdom, which began in the late thirteenth century with the establishment of Chiang Mai and ended as an independent kingdom in the middle of the sixteenth century with the Burmese annexation of the region. Bangkok, on the other hand, is comparatively young by Thai historical standards, established near a riverine trading village in 1782 and borne out of the violence and dislocation of war with Burma. When the dust of war began to settle at the beginning of the nineteenth century, these two cities would find themselves connected in a vassal-overlord relationship that granted the Chiang Mai king internal autonomy in return for his loyalty and regular tribute to and trade with Bangkok.

Both cities were transformed not only by their encounters with the West but also by their encounters with each other. Royal elites in Bangkok fashioned for themselves private spaces where they could localize

31 See, for example, McCoy, Fradera, and Jacobsen, *Endless Empire*, especially pt. 6, "Subordinate Elites and Imperial Decline."

Western notions of "being civilized," glossed as *siwilai* in Thai,[32] as well as public spaces that would create a sense of royal glory and spectacle for the consumption of the urban population.[33] In Chiang Mai the transition from autonomous vassal to integrated province also entailed spatial changes at the urban scale; however, in Chiang Mai we see a different dimension of Siamese colonial-ness in action: Bangkok's cooperation with the West to transform the urban space in the north from that of a vassal to one of an internal frontier. In short, the semi-colonial critique stands out in Bangkok; in Chiang Mai and elsewhere, the internally imperial Siamese state comes into the foreground.

Organization of the Book

Chapter 1 paints a picture of Chiang Mai, both as an urban space and as a center of one of the many overlapping networks of city-states running from eastern Myanmar through northern Thailand, southwest China, Laos, and northwest Vietnam. This chapter begins with an overview of urban formation in mainland Southeast Asia and concludes with the foundation of Chiang Mai, arguing against binary classifications of cities in favor of a multi-layered approach to understanding urban traditions and urban space. While much of the underlying structure of Chiang Mai's early spatial history survived into the nineteenth century, Chapter 2 examines the restoration of the city at the close of the eighteenth century, which was responsible for creating the spatial template that would confront the economic and political challenges of Western and Siamese intervention in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3 examines the spatial and historical context of Chiang Mai's transformation. This chapter focuses on the economic and political pressures that began to shift the relationship between Chiang Mai and neighboring city-states in inland Southeast Asia and the rising coastal powers of Bangkok and Rangoon, the capital of British Burma. The shifting balance of power in the region brought British and Siamese interests to the region, while simultaneously transforming the space of Chiang Mai's hinterland from the property of the king to commercial commodities to be exploited for profit and political leverage. This period also marked a gradual but important reorientation of trade in Chiang Mai away from the inland world south

32 Thongchai, "The Quest for 'Siwilai'."

33 See, for example, Peleggi, "Purveyors of Modernity?," part II.

toward Bangkok, as trade and travel shifted away from overland routes in favor of travel via the rivers of the north, the waters of which pass mostly through Bangkok. As Chiang Mai reoriented its networks of trade and tribute away from the inland realm and southward toward both British Burma and, increasingly, Bangkok, these regional changes brought new populations to the city, transforming local patterns of production and trade. This process created a new economic center of gravity that would eventually challenge the validity of the traditional city center.

Chapter 4 introduces what I call the "micro-colonial" transformation of Chiang Mai's city center. From the local, urban scale, the dynamics of power between Chiang Mai, Bangkok, and neighboring states come into focus. By looking at the changes embodied in the spaces of administrative and legal power at the urban scale, this chapter argues that a complex form of Siamese internal imperialism sought to both tame and transform Chiang Mai. The *imperial* comes through in the space of the city center, which clearly shows Siam's intent to dominate the north and to transform Chiang Mai's urban space. The *internal*, I argue, can be seen in certain elements of the premodern space that persisted and that helped to shape the spatial manifestation of Chiang Mai's colonial moment.

Chapter 5 then examines the role of sacred space in the city and the potential for conflict and contestation over and within sacred space. I argue that while the economic and political spaces were integrated into the Siamese state, sacred space was largely ignored or unaccounted for and thus remained open to manipulation and mobilization. After a series of dramatic socioeconomic changes leading to a period of intense distress and crisis, these spaces were mobilized by a remarkable monk known as Khruba Siwichai. His story shows how the sacred space of the cities of the north played an important role in shaping the relationship between Chiang Mai and Bangkok and set up anxieties that persist even today. After this "last stand" of the autonomous Chiang Mai state, the new postwar Thai state began the task of fixing the meaning of the city's history through statuary monuments and public ritual in an attempt to ensure the spatial history of Chiang Mai would remain durably linked to Bangkok. Finally, in the conclusion, I use examples of continuing conflicts over the meaning of Chiang Mai's urban space to illustrate the importance of this history. These issues allow us to view Chiang Mai not simply as a provincial center in modern Thailand, but rather as a complex urban palimpsest in the margins between nation and empire.

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1 The City Founded

A Deep Urban History of Chiang Mai

Abstract
The deep urban history of mainland Southeast Asia shows a complex, overlapping history of urban traditions that influenced the foundation and form of Chiang Mai and neighboring cities. The city emerged as both an urban space and a center of one of the many overlapping networks of city-states running from eastern Burma through northern Thailand, southwest China, Laos, and northwest Vietnam. This chapter begins with an overview of urban formation in mainland Southeast Asia and concludes with the foundation of Chiang Mai, arguing against binary classifications of cities in favor of a multi-layered "urban palimpsest" approach to understanding the history of urban space.

Keywords: Urban history, Lanna, ancient cities, Tai, Lawa

The urban space of Chiang Mai has a deep history. The goal of this chapter is to set the stage for a discussion of the late nineteenth-century transformation of Chiang Mai by reviewing the origins, foundations, and early history of the city and the urban traditions that influenced it. I begin this chapter by tracing the broad outlines of the establishment and expansion of urban centers and space in the inland reaches of mainland Southeast Asia. The discussion then turns to the foundation and early history of Chiang Mai, which built upon these urban traditions, creating a novel political center for the newly established kingdom of Lanna. Chiang Mai would become one of several inland Buddhist kingdoms competing for predominance during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, before falling to the Burmese in 1558. Throughout this history, and even under Burmese rule, the city maintained its status as an important urban center, with trade and cultural connections throughout the region.

There are three general arguments proposed in this chapter. First, this chapter will show that the region surrounding Chiang Mai has a long history

Easum, Taylor. *Chiang Mai between Empire and Modern Thailand. A City in the Colonial Margins*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023
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of urbanism and that understanding this urban tradition is fundamental to understanding the political and social development of later centuries, including the present. Second, much of the work on cities in general, and those in Southeast Asia in particular, has been overly concerned with categorization, classification, and various forms of binary analysis—e.g., orthogenetic vs. heterogenetic, primary vs. secondary, etc. This chapter argues that binary analysis and classification is less than useful in understanding the early urban history of Southeast Asia. A more fruitful approach, I argue, is to examine the overlapping layers of urban influence and tradition, as evidenced in the urban space of the city. The ethnic group most closely associated with Chiang Mai would today be identified as *khon mueang* (คนเมือง), while in past scholarship it was more common to refer to Chiang Mai as a city of Yuan (ยวน) origin.[1] However, the city was in fact the product of a variety of groups who influenced and shaped the urban form in the river valleys of northern Thailand. Third, it is useful to explore the deep history of cities and urban networks rather than narrowly focus on the relatively brief period of post-WWII urbanization, as some urban studies tend to do. Through this approach, I argue that although there are many similarities between cities of the inland Tai (i.e., the Yuan, Shan, or Lao) and lower Tai (i.e., Siamese), in terms of urban space, there is a cultural divide between the Angkorean/Mon world of the south and the inland Lawa-Mon-Tai world surrounding Chiang Mai, Lanna, and its neighbors.

Urban Genesis in the Mainland

The study of the development of early cities is riddled with binaries and oversimplified classificatory schemes. Wheatley, for instance, distinguishes between two types of urban generation: urban imposition and urban generation. The former refers to the imposition of an urban tradition from an external power. Urban generation, however, does not spring purely from within a society, but rather can result from interaction with external urbanized cultures.[2] Another binary common in studies of early cities is the distinction between orthogenetic and heterogenetic cities. Orthogenetic cities tend to be inward-looking and focused on cultural replication—that is, the reproduction of established cultural patterns. Heterogenetic cities, on

1 *Yuan* is a common term used to describe the dominant ethno-cultural group in the mountain valleys of north-central mainland Southeast Asia.

2 Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery*.

the other hand, are more outwardly oriented, culturally and economically diverse, and open to cultural change.[3] Likewise, another common approach to cities after the initial period of urban genesis is to classify them into various categories. Terence McGee, for instance, identifies a handful of city archetypes: the sacred city, the market city, and the colonial city.[4] While these distinctions help scholars think through the patterns of urbanism and the forms and functions of cities, this terminology is in many ways inadequate for the task of narrating the history of the city. Chiang Mai, the section below will argue, cuts across and straddles many of these binaries and categories. It does so not because it is particularly unique, however. Like many cities, Chiang Mai contains multiple elements that are in fact necessary for it to function as a city. In other words, it would be impossible for any city to exist purely as any one of these categories.

Cities have a long history in Southeast Asia. Much contemporary scholarship on Southeast Asian cities tends to gloss over the early history of urban formation and genesis, instead viewing the megalopolises of the twentieth century as products of some combination of economic development, globalization, and Western colonialism. Archaeological research, however, suggests the presence of urban centers in Southeast Asia by the early first millennium CE. Beikthano, a Pyu center located along the Irrawaddy River, for example, probably flourished between the first and fifth centuries CE. Archaeologists have worked on other sites that could also be considered among the earliest cities or urban centers in Southeast Asia, including Oc-Eo[5] in southern Vietnam and Co-Loa in northern Vietnam.[6]

In the central corridor of mainland Southeast Asia as well, there is evidence for longstanding urban traditions that stretch deep into the past; Chiang Mai was founded in 1296, but it is worth remembering that Chiang Mai translates as "New City." As Tai groups began to expand into the region, they encountered established societies and settlements, each with their own social, cultural, political, and urban traditions. Each of these overlapping and at times competing urban traditions informed the foundation and later urban development of the city. Rather than ignore these foundations when talking about the modern transformation of the city, it is worth examining this deep urban past. Based on archaeological, epigraphical, and textual

3 Redfield and Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," 53–73; Miksic, "Early Burmese Urbanization," 88–107; Miksic, "Heterogenetic Cities in Premodern Southeast Asia," 106–20.

4 McGee, *The Southeast Asian City*.

5 Manguin and Vo, "Excavations at the Ba Thê/Oc Eo Complex (Viet Nam)."

6 Kim, Lai, and Trinh, "Co Loa: An Investigation of Vietnam's Ancient Capital," 1011–27.

records, the discussion below outlines the traditions prevalent in the region that are most relevant for understanding the foundation and history of Chiang Mai: Lawa, Mon, Khmer, and Tai. In doing so, I argue that such binary schemes as those discussed above do not help explain the types of urbanism found in this region. Rather, a more productive way to think about cities in general, and early cities in particular, is to consider multi-layered, overlapping traditions. The sections below examine several of these layers in turn.

The Lawa

Even before the establishment of Khmer outposts such as Sukhothai and before the arrival of the Tai, there were other groups settled in the region who had established urban centers and networks of varying degrees of complexity and scale. One of the earliest such groups was the Lawa (ล๊ั๊วะ or ละว้า), who are often considered to be the autochthonous peoples of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin. The chronicles and popular memory acknowledge them as the original inhabitants of the area. The precise nature of their society and settlements, however, remains a point of academic debate. Condominas argues for the existence of a pre-Tai Lawa kingdom in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun region, centered on a capital established in the foothills of Doi Suthep (ดอยสุเทพ).[7] The Chiang Mai Chronicle (CMC) specifically mentions that Mangrai chose the site for his new city of Chiang Mai on a former Lawa settlement, while others mention simply that he consulted the "elders of the domain."[8] The role of the Lawa as predecessors of the Tai, and often as the "original inhabitants," is a common theme in both political ritual and chronicle texts of the Lanna kingdom. The Lawa play a prominent role, for example, in many royal processions throughout the inland states. This usually consists of a Lawa leading the procession, sometimes carrying a chicken, meant to symbolize the peaceful coexistence and relatively peaceful transition from Lawa to Thai rule. In other rituals, the Lawa enter first, only to be ritually chased away by the stronger and more "civilized" Yuan.[9]

In several chronicles composed or compiled in the early nineteenth century, the Lawa figure prominently as the original inhabitants of the land

7 Condominas, *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai.*

8 Wyatt and Aroonrut, trans., *The Chiang Mai Chronicle.*

9 Aroonrut, "'Lua Leading Dogs, Toting Chaek, Carrying Chickens' Some Comments," 1–5.; Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 31–32.

and at times even as the original founders of both city and kingdom. In the Suwankhamdaeng Chronicle, for instance, a Lawa lord establishes a city at the present location of Chiang Mai and requests ritual protection for the city and its inhabitants from Lord Indra himself, who provides the *inthakhin* pillar (อินทขีล) for such protection.[10] The pillar protects the wealthy city from attacking invaders, but lapses in piety cause the Lawa to lose both the pillar and their city's wealth. The pillar that stands today is, according to this chronicle, a replica Indra allowed them to cast as a replacement. Another chronicle, the Mahathera Fa Bot, adds Buddhist and Yuan elements to the story but repeats the theme of a Lawa foundation for the city of Chiang Mai and of eventual decline. In this case, however, the invading armies are not turned into traders but are simply turned back, and after such trials and tribulations, the Lawa lord simply abandons the city to return to the mountains. Only centuries later does Mangrai, the founder of Lanna, stumble upon the remains of this ancient Lawa city and essentially re-establish the city. In doing so, Mangrai was careful to check with the Lawa to ascertain the proper rituals and layout for the city. According to the Nopburi Mueang Ping Chiang Mai Chronicle, "after Mangrai founded Chiang Mai he checked with Sikhunchuk, a [Lawa] noble, about an auspicious gate for the entrance. After consulting with other [Lawa] leaders Sikhunchuk said that Mangrai should enter through the Hua Wiang Gate, meaning 'head of the city' (now Chang Phueak Gate)."[11]

Neither of these chronicles date from the periods they describe. In fact, the copies available today date primarily from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. The relationship between the Lawa, the Yuan, and the city posited in these chronicles can perhaps be best explained by understanding the context in which they were compiled. These chronicles say something interesting about the spatiality of the city in the eyes of the Yuan who came to dominate the region. First, in establishing a city and a kingdom, the relationship with the original inhabitants of the land needs to be articulated. With the Lawa, the relationship is not one of conquest but rather of passing legitimate ownership from one group to another, with the new rulers ostensibly representing a more cultured, civilized society. The prominence of the Lawa in many of the chronicles dating to the early nineteenth century highlights the importance of constructing an urban lineage. One major function of chronicles such as these is to establish the legitimacy of kings and their dynasties. These chronicles, however, show

10 See Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 68–69.

11 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 32.

a particular dimension of that legitimacy, namely the need for the Lawa to establish a legitimate urban tradition, one that at least connects to the original inhabitants of the land and spells out the terms of urban occupation.

Second, many of these chronicles, in particular Suwankhamdaeng, establish a sacred topography linking the center with important sites throughout the entirety of the domain. A prolonged pursuit of a magical golden deer, for example, allows the author of the text to weave together a web of important sites throughout the region, including the sacred mountains of Doi Ang Salung and Doi Suthep, all of which are eventually connected to the center at Chiang Mai.[12] In other words, these chronicles highlight the importance of the relationship between the Tai lords and the autochthonous Lawa at the level of the urban center; they also articulate the extension of this center into the hinterland and beyond. In these chronicles lie the textual foundations of Tai urban networks.

In sum, though it is difficult to recreate a sense of Lawa urbanism with the available evidence, it is likely that the Lawa existed in the region not simply as village-dwelling cultivators but as a functioning urban society. Condominas identified this as the "social space" of the Lawa, which by the twentieth century had become severely limited within modern Siam/Thailand but which had once been conceived broadly enough to be called a kingdom in the pre-Tai era. The Lawa occupation of this social space in the pre-Tai period manifested itself in the formation of centers of power, or urban spaces, which were in turn connected in a larger urban system. The chronicle texts discussed above highlight the importance of that tradition of urbanism to the Tai kings that ruled in the centuries to follow.

12 In this chronicle, Kham Daeng, the son of a powerful and rebellious lord, is charged with pursuing a magical golden deer, who is revealed to be an incarnation of Lord Indra's deputy, Visukam. He chases the deer around the region, pausing at multiple sacred and auspicious sites surrounding the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley. The chase finally stops at the foothills of Doi Suthep, near the present-day site of Chiang Mai, when the deer mysteriously disappears into the forest. Although they fail to locate the deer, Suwankhamdaeng's men discover nine ponds, each with ordered and organized groups of lotus flowers and a *kwaw* tree covering not grass, but beautiful white sand. They then ask a hermit (*ruesi*) to interpret their discovery. The hermit tells them to stop searching for the deer and to tell their lord that he should build a city on that exact spot, "for it will be a large city, a capital. Don't doubt that it will have wealth and splendor." The lotus flowers, he explains, are a positive omen indicating that the city will be both agriculturally productive and wealthy. Once the wealth of the city becomes known, however, invaders come to attack the city. Asked to protect the city, Indra then orders two demons (*kumphan*) to dig up the *inthakhin* pillar, which apparently had been there all along and, once installed, magically transforms the invading armies into traders. See Wijeyewardene, *Place and Emotion in Northern Thai Ritual Behaviour*, 234.

The Haripunchai Urban System

Another important center of power in the immediate area of Chiang Mai was Haripunchai, known today as Lamphun. The Haripunchai era had three characteristics that are important for understanding urbanism in the region as a whole. First, the city was founded in and through the meeting of (at least) two distinct socio-cultural groups. Haripunchai was founded in the eighth century by a hermit of unknown origin named Wasuthep along what was then the western bank of the Ping River.[13] Wasuthep then summoned the daughter of the king of Lopburi, Camadevi (*Chamathewi*), to come to and rule over this newly founded sacred city.[14] Her arrival at Haripunchai represents, according to Swearer, a sort of second founding of the city, and in the chronicles this takes the form of a wholesale importation of Mon (มอญ) society and culture. A princess of Lawo (present-day Lopburi), a powerful Mon center in the lower Chao Phraya valley, Camadevi brought with her a retinue of monks, scholars, and officials to establish Haripunchai as a civilized Mon Buddhist state. With the arrival of Camadevi and the establishment of Mon civilization in the area, many Lawa migrated north, either to the foothills or to the more sparsely populated areas in the northern half of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley, where Chiang Mai would later be established (see later in this chapter).[15]

This narrative of the establishment of Haripunchai follows patterns noted by many scholars of the Southeast Asian city. Several historical geographers, including Wheatley, McGee, and others, distinguish between two modes of urban generation: outside imposition and internal development. Wheatley, for example, closely associates urban formation in mainland Southeast Asia with the spread of Indic culture in the region. In Southeast Asia, he argues, external forces helped to stimulate or accelerate the process of urban genesis within a local sociocultural framework.[16] In the case of Haripunchai, external forces came in the form of an influx of Mon culture from the Chao Phraya basin, not from across the Indian Ocean. Indeed, Suraphon Damrikul argues that the development of Haripunchai did not stem from internal development but rather resulted from the expansion of Mon states and trade routes north from the Chao Phraya basin.[17] In this context, the story

13 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 71.

14 Swearer, "The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center," 106.

15 Withun, *Sathapattayakam Chiang Mai*, 2.

16 See Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery*, Chapter 1.

17 Cited in Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 37.

of the arrival of the Mon princess at the behest of the Lawa chief clearly fits Wheatley's model and shows the importance of external forces in the formation of urban centers. Local agency still played a role, however, and characterizing Haripunchai as simply a Mon city would be incorrect. It is more accurate to view the early history of this important city as a process of localization and adaptation between Mon and Lawa, which worked itself out over several hundred years. The formation of cities and urban spaces in early mainland Southeast Asia was thus most likely a complex process of localization and adaptation, largely at the behest of local rulers and "men of prowess."[18] This interpretation is further supported by the archaeological and epigraphical evidence, which only begins to show a truly widespread and dominant Mon Buddhist influence centuries after the likely foundation of the city, perhaps by the tenth or eleventh century.[19] The urban system of Haripunchai was thus the product of local combinations of Lawa and Mon culture, with the latter becoming increasingly dominant by the eleventh century.

Second, the morphology of Haripunchai shows the evolving relationship between urban design, social stratification, and the natural landscape. The design of Haripunchai centered on the river and its city walls. The Ping River provided the city with a transport link to its immediate hinterland, as well as one element in the defensive perimeter of the urban core. Rather than imposing a rectangular grid upon the landscape, as later Haripunchai-era towns would, or Chiang Mai after that, the layout of the city, its moats and city walls, follows the contours of the natural landscape. In addition to defense, the city wall also served as a spatial boundary distinguishing the space of the ruling elites from the wider domain. Indeed, some scholars have posited that it was the increasing importance of social stratification between ruling elites, nobles, commoners, and monastic communities that gave rise to more complex urban designs, especially fortifications and walls, throughout mainland Southeast Asia.[20] In Haripunchai the palace was placed in the center of the city, around which lived other members of the ruling class.[21] During times of war, much of the population outside the city walls would have been brought inside the gates for protection and to marshal forces against the enemy.

18 See Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*.

19 Swearer, "Myth, Legend and History in the Northern Thai Chronicles," 67, 86–88.

20 Moore, "Ancient Knowledge and the Use of Landscape Walled Settlements in Lower Myanmar," 18.

21 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 36.

Third, Haripunchai introduced not only a complex city-state into the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin but also a sophisticated urban hierarchy. According to Sarassawadee, the foundation of Haripunchai "introduced urban society into the region [of Chiang Mai]."[22] Given the discussion of the Lawa above, such a claim might be an overreach—was there indeed nothing in this region we might recognize as urban before Haripunchai? The real innovation, however, was in the formation of urban hierarchies and networks that spread throughout the rice-growing plain, allowing the center to establish some control over agricultural production and manpower. Surrounding Haripunchai there were several "satellite communities" located primarily in the southern half of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin that formed a Haripunchai urban network. Haripunchai's immediate influence likely did not extend north of Chiang Dao, but the southern half of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin, which was fertile and wide, was controlled by satellite communities such as Wiang Tha Kan, Wiang Mano, and Wiang Tho. Morphologically these towns differed; some, like Wiang Tha Kan and Wiang Mano, were rectangular, while Wiang Tho, like Haripunchai itself, was oblong and followed the bend of the riverbank.[23]

Haripunchai, then, was a city that a) was founded with both imported Mon and local autochthonous elements, b) morphologically oriented around important natural features while maintaining sacred and social distinctions within its urban core, and c) ruled through a localized network of urban centers that commanded the hinterland. Haripunchai was not the only urban system with these features; there were other important zones of Mon urbanism in neighboring areas of early Southeast Asia. In the Chao Phraya River valley, several urban centers formed the core of the Dvaravati culture that flourished until the expansion of the Khmer empire during the ninth to eleventh centuries. Mon settlements in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin represent in many ways the northernmost extension of this Dvaravati Mon society and culture. Many used to think that the Dvaravati culture represented an early state formation in the Chao Phraya valley. However, there is little evidence for any central administration, and most scholars now see Dvaravati as a cultural zone rather than a hierarchical state.[24] In Haripunchai, however, there is clearly an urban hierarchy and evidence of control in the hands of the capital. One reason for the difference is simple geography—in the lower delta, an expansive open and flat terrain meant

22 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 35.

23 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 36–38.

24 Dhida, (*Sri*) *Dvaravati: The Initial Phase of Siam's History*.

that competition between cities and towns for primacy would have been costly, perhaps prohibitively so. In Haripunchai, however, the cultivable area of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin was large enough to be productive but also enclosed by mountains that made the formation of a more centralized urban hierarchy possible, even efficacious.

In both the Haripunchai and Lower Chao Phraya Delta zones, city plans were diverse, with some being ovular or shaped after a conch-shell, while others were rectangular or square. Most were encircled in earthen walls or ramparts and followed a bend in the river for defensive protection.[25] This pattern of urban design, one that closely hews to the landscape, is also found in lower coastal Burma, another zone of Mon urbanism.[26] Elizabeth Moore has argued that Mon urban centers here tended to "mirror the contours of the terrain" in ways that others, especially the Pyu cities established in the more arid plains of upper Burma, did not. Mon settlements, she argues, were designed and built to be more adaptive to the terrain, for example, by using locally available laterite for constructing fortifications.[27]

Local inflections of the same theme—urban genesis through contact, conquest, or cooperation between local and external groups—are found in other urban centers throughout the region. Another particularly important city established through local contact with Mon court culture was Khelang, known today as Lampang. There are numerous connections and parallels between the two centers in the chronicles. The most direct link, according to the Camadevivaṃsa chronicle, is that both cities were ruled by one of Camadevi's two sons. Her eldest succeeded her at Haripunchai, while her younger son, Anantayot (or Anantayasa), requested a kingdom of his own to rule. With the blessing of his mother and older brother, Anantayot headed east and sought out a learned sage living on a nearby mountain, who then led him to a "charming site near the Wang River" where he built the city of Khelang.[28] In this story the Lawa once again figure prominently in the foundation of the city. The sage was a Lawa hermit named Phraphrom (or Mahabrahma) who founded the city for Anantayot to rule; the combined prowess and magical power of both the hermit and the Mon prince attracted many Lawa and Karen to move to and settle in the area surrounding

25 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 36.

26 The antiquity and nature of the earliest Mon presence in this region and its role in Burmese history are the subject of some historical debate. See Aung-Thwin, *The Mists of Ramanna*.

27 Moore, "Ancient Knowledge and the Use of Landscape Walled Settlements in Lower Myanmar," 4.

28 Swearer, *The Legend of Queen Cama*, 82.

Khelang.[29] Finally, like Haripunchai, Khelang also had a series of satellite communities spread across its rice-growing hinterland.[30] There were some important differences, however; for example, unlike Haripunchai, Khelang was built in the shape of a square. The Camadevivaṃsa chronicle points out, however, that Khelang was "prosperous in every respect like the city of Haripuñjaya [*sic*]."[31]

Haripunchai's urban network laid the basis for political power and administrative control in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin. Three features of this urban society stand out. First, these urban centers were founded through the intercourse of various groups, both local and external. Second, these cities were designed to make use of natural features and materials rather than simply impose an imported cosmological or political ideal upon the landscape. Third, the city-states of the eighth to thirteenth centuries may not have introduced urbanism wholesale where it did not exist before, but they did firmly establish a pattern of state formation through urban hierarchies. Haripunchai had its satellite communities, as did Khelang, and it was through the formation of centers and sub-centers that states began to form in the mountainous inland region of mainland Southeast Asia.

Khmer Urbanism

The Dvaravati city-states of the lower Chao Phraya River valley were overtaken by the expanding Khmer empire of Angkor, from roughly the eleventh to the thirteenth century. Lopburi (Lawo), the city of Camadevi's birth, became a Khmer outpost at the beginning of the eleventh century and thereafter was ruled by Khmer governors and royalty.[32] The Khmer empire eventually extended its furthest reach into the upper Chao Phraya basin, into the region around present-day Sukhothai, which would become the center of an important early Tai state in the thirteenth century when a local Tai lord decided to take advantage of a period of weakness at Angkor and break from Khmer rule (see later in this chapter).[33]

The urban form of Khmer cities and outposts differed in several ways from early Mon or Lawa centers. At the core of the kingdom, in Angkor just north of the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia, the Khmer built an impressive

29 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 40.
30 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 40–41.
31 Swearer, *The Legend of Queen Cama*, 82.
32 Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, 24.
33 See Wyatt, "Relics, Oaths and Politics in Thirteenth-Century Siam," 3–66.

urban society marked by massive temple complexes and extensive water management facilities. A far-reaching network of roads connected this core with outposts located throughout present-day Cambodia and the northeast of Thailand. Khmer cities are generally marked by square or rectangular layouts and follow a cosmogonic pattern that seeks to replicate in miniature the foundation and space of the universe. The city of Angkor Thom in the kingdom's core represents perhaps the epitome of this particular urban form. Built as a square and oriented to the cardinal directions, the city is centered on the impressive Bayon temple and is divided into four equal sections by straight roads leading from the Bayon to the middle of each city wall. This layout served to replicate the cosmos at the level of both individual temples and the city as a whole. The urban space of Angkor Thom therefore encompassed not only monumental sacred architecture but an entire urban settlement; according to one scholar, Angkor Thom was "the fruit of an encounter between the urban idea of a royal capital inspired by the world of India and profoundly Khmer ways of living."[34]

This general urban form can be found throughout areas under Khmer influence, though settlements further from the core tend to replicate this pattern more loosely. It would be an over-simplification to equate the presence of square or rectangular city plans with exclusive Angkorean control, as there was much intermixing and hybridity in the interface zones between the Khmer, Mon, and other local populations.[35] Khmer influence can be found throughout the southern half of northeastern Thailand, either in the form of ruined cities or complexes (i.e., Phimai or Phnom Rung) or cities that were established on the foundations of old Khmer outposts (e.g., Khorat).[36] It is fair to say, however, that cities with square or rectangular fortifications and site-wide morphologies that more closely reflect Hindu-Buddhist cosmology had some significant Angkorean influence.

One such center can be found at Sukhothai, often referred to in conservative nationalist historiography as the first Siamese capital. The morphology of Sukhothai reflects the more rigid cosmological urban design of Khmer cities, with a rectangular city wall and straight roads leading from the principal gates into the center of the city. After the city fell into Tai hands, this Khmer influence remained, although with some modification. The

34 Gaucher, "The 'City' of Angkor. What Is It?," 36.

35 See, for instance, Brown's critique of Bernard Groslier in *The Dvaravati Wheels of the Law and the Indianization of South East Asia*, 21.

36 Korat was established by King Narai of Ayutthaya on the foundations of a much older Khmer outpost established in the tenth century. See Evers and Korff, *Southeast Asian Urbanism*, 98.

original Khmer design of the city followed the cardinal points precisely. Roads leading into the city were probably straightened by the Khmer to match the axes of north-south and east-west. After the local Tai leaders rebelled against the Khmer in the mid-thirteenth century, they established a triple-ramparted city that in many ways followed Khmer notions of urban planning, though informed by Tai spatial concepts.[37] Temples in the new city were still oriented to the east, as they had been under the Khmer, but rather than facing directly east, as calculated by the stars, the Tai simply built their temples to face a prominent natural feature located roughly to the east of the city. Though some distance away from the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley, Sukhothai's urban design and history would come to influence the founding of Chiang Mai through the personal alliances between three Tai rulers: Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai, Ngam Mueang of Phayao, and Mangrai, the founder of Chiang Mai, as will be discussed below.

The Rise of the Tai

While the Mon states of the Chao Phraya delta were eventually overtaken by the expansive Khmer empire of Angkor from the eleventh to twelfth centuries, in the north it was the gradual southward expansion of Tai peoples that would gradually erase Mon dominance by the thirteenth century. The precise meaning of the ethnonym "Tai" is far from clear, however, and anthropologists and historians alike continue to debate its precise definition. Richard O'Connor identifies four elements of a working definition of Tai that is useful for understanding the early history of urban settlement in the region, as well as the foundation and florescence of Chiang Mai. Tai peoples are first and foremost wet-rice cultivators. This ecological niche helped Tai groups to expand demographically around the edges of existing peoples and states. Second, Tai groups have historically been, in O'Connor's words, "social-cum-political entrepreneurs." The Tai, in other words, have throughout their history created novel political and social arrangements as part of their expansion throughout the region. Such entrepreneurship in settling a new area or interacting with a new state entailed risks but also promised rewards. Third, Tai peoples live in inclusive "place-defined groups" rather than exclusive lineage-defined groups. The space of the community was defined by its place and was thus amenable to the inclusion and eventual assimilation of outside groups into the local community. This leads to the last element of O'Connor's definition: that Tai settlements and

37 Gosling, *Sukhothai: Its History, Culture, and Art*, 9–10, 22.

states have historically tended to culturally assimilate outside, ethnically distinct groups.[38]

Broadly speaking, Tai-speaking peoples migrated into Southeast Asia from southeastern China, eventually spreading across a wide area ranging from northwest Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, northeast Myanmar, Yunnan, and Assam. The Siamese that settled in the Chao Phraya valley are one Tai group; to the north, in the area later dominated by Chiang Mai, there were other Tai groups that established themselves in the cultivable inland mountain valleys throughout the region. The dominant Tai group in the Ping, Wang, Yom, and Nan river valleys were known as Yuan. The Tai Khoen (ไทเขิน) could be found in the area surrounding Kengtung (Chiang Tung), while the Tai Lue (ไทลื้อ) established their political and cultural center at Jinghong (Chiang Rung). To the west of Chiang Mai were the cities and states of the Tai Yai (ไทใหญ่), or Ngiao (เงี้ยว) in northern Thai, more commonly known as Shan.

Tai populations slowly expanded into the mountain valleys of inland Southeast Asia in a gradual process that lasted centuries and began sometime in the seventh or eighth century.[39] This expansion was based less on conquest than on Tai agricultural innovations and political organization. Tai groups were well known for their skill in growing wet rice, which involved transplanting and relatively sophisticated irrigation techniques; this supported demographic expansion. Politically, the Tai were able to accommodate, adapt, and assimilate the populations they encountered as they moved from valley to valley. Sometimes settlement in a new area meant military conquest, but with relative underpopulation throughout inland Southeast Asia, Tai expansion often began with settlement alongside existing populations and states. Although outright conflict certainly played a role, for the most part, "the Tai spread as political entrepreneurs and wet rice specialists, not conquerors."[40]

As Tai groups moved into the region, they also brought with them spatial concepts that organized their societies and gave physical shape to their settlements. As mentioned above, Tai communities were defined by their place; in the Tai context, that identity-defining place, the locus of political power and social organization, was the *mueang* (เมือง). The term *mueang*, however, is remarkably flexible and can refer to individual towns or cities or

38 O'Connor, "Who Are the Tai? A Discourse of Place, Activity and Person.," 35–50.

39 Wyatt, *Thailand*, 8–9.

40 O'Connor, "A Regional Explanation of the Tai Müang as a City-State," 432.

encompass the entire state.[41] This flexibility is important, because it means the Tai concept of *mueang* is not defined in opposition to the hinterland or countryside, but rather in opposition to un-settled and not-yet-civilized areas. City and state are thus coeval and interrelated; to study the Tai centers is to study the entire system of political and social organization of the *mueang*, and vice-versa.[42]

The *mueang* can be defined in a broad sense as a collection of villages surrounding a fortified town and bordered by hills.[43] The central space of a *mueang*, the urban center of the city-state, could take diverse physical forms, but there were several key features that could be found across the region in virtually every Tai *mueang* city. O'Connor summarizes the main features of the *mueang* center succinctly:

> The idea of a *müang* stressed its ruler's house, a shrine to the palladial spirit of the *müang* (*phimüang*) and, for the Buddhist Tai, one or more monumental temples (*wat*) housing a palladial Buddha relic or image. Many *müang* were on trade routes [...] and most if not all must have had a market.[44]

Contained within this summary definition are several key elements. First, Tai *mueang* were established as sacred spaces, with the ruler creating and maintaining a livable, habitable space for the community by articulating local spirit worship with powerful external religions. While the relationship between different sacro-spatial elements of the city developed and changed over time, Tai *mueang* cities retained a focus on the spatial manifestations of spiritual, sacred, and royal power in the center of the urban space. As *mueang*, the urban centers of the Tai connected sacred space with the population as "spiritual antennae that radiate prosperity and wealth to the countryside."[45] This connection between the sacred and urban space would play a key role in the restoration of the city (Chapter 2) and in the

41 O'Connor, "A Regional Explanation of the Tai Müang as a City-State," 432. See also Davis, *Muang Metaphysics*, ch. 2 for a detailed discussion of *mueang*, both as a spatial concept and as an ethnonym for the lowland Tai peoples in present-day Northern Thailand.

42 This Tai concept of *mueang* therefore fits nicely with Wheatley's argument that, as a social condition, urbanism exists not in opposition to rural, but rather in contradistinction to pre-urban society. In an urban society, rural areas are subsumed within the urban system; the city is simply a limited system, the localized spatial form given to the system as a whole, while the state is the extended system. See Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery*.

43 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 176.

44 O'Connor, "A Regional Explanation of the Tai Müang as a City-State," 432.

45 Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*, 41.

manifestation of resistance to the central state in the early twentieth century (Chapter 5). Second, cities with a royal ruler were classified as *wiang* (เวียง), or enclosed, fortified settlements, as opposed to more open villages, which often extended along a waterway or road. Fortified *mueang* cities were usually irregular in shape and, like their Mon predecessors, often closely followed the natural features of the landscape. Third, Tai *mueang* were established around and connected by trade and tribute. The location of *mueang* in the river valleys of the mountainous north was heavily influenced by trade routes that crisscrossed the region; likewise, the type of trade and form of transport used to conduct it influenced the internal morphology of *mueang* cities and towns.

The criteria for siting a city fell under a local branch of scientific knowledge known as *chaiyaphum* (ชัยภูมิ), best translated as "victorious emplacement."[46] The concept of *chaiyaphum* contained within it both supernatural and mundane features, and it combined local Yuan concepts with elements of Indic belief. An auspicious *chaiyaphum* might be indicated by a past visit from the Buddha, for example, by natural features that indicate the presence of protective spirits or by practical features such as easy access to a navigable river and adequate drainage. As Tai groups expanded throughout mainland Southeast Asia, they established sites that fit into various categories of *chaiyaphum*, such as coastal, riverine, and lakeside settlements.[47] If local ecological conditions at a particular site were to change over time, or if the fortunes of the city began to decline, this could be interpreted as a decline in the auspiciousness of the site's *chaiyaphum* and could lead to the abandonment or relocation of the city. In short, Tai success in mainland Southeast Asia was due to agricultural and spatial technologies that enabled them to take advantage of ecological and political niches in the margins between the established states and societies.

The early career of King Mangrai, who would eventually establish Chiang Mai in 1296, illustrates these processes of Tai political expansion and urban formation. Mangrai began his career in the area of present-day Chiang Rai-Chiang Saen after inheriting the throne of the Ngoen Yang (near present-day Chiang Saen) from his father in 1261.[48] Shortly thereafter, he expanded

46 Baker and Pasuk, *A History of Thailand*, 7–8.

47 For a more extensive discussion of the geographical features of town sites in premodern Siam, see Pornpun, "The Environmental History of Pre-Modern Provincial Towns in Siam to 1910," Chapter 1.

48 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 92.

his domain south to the Kok River valley, where he founded Chiang Rai in 1263, which he used as a base for further expansion. The immediate causes for his initial move south included a need to assert his authority among several dynastic rivals, population pressures that encouraged the southward expansion of the Yuan in search of new *mueang* to occupy and cultivate, and the growing threat of Mongol expansion from the north. These were immediate factors in the larger story of Tai expansion into the central mainland.

Mangrai chose the location for Chiang Rai based on both natural and supernatural features of the landscape. According to the Chiang Mai Chronicle, Mangrai followed his auspicious elephant, which had broken loose, to an area surrounding "a single beauteous hill" alongside the banks of the Kok River.[49] This hill reminded Mangrai of the urban foundations of his forbearers:

> When Grandfather Lao Cong built a home / for my Grandfather Lao Kao, I hear that it was [founded] at the base of Mount Pha Rao. When Grandfather Lao Khriang built M. Ngoen Yang, he built it nestled between three mountains, [...] which was very good, so I should likewise make [mountains] the navel of the town, in its center.[50]

Mangrai then built a fortified *wiang* around this hill, known as Doi Chom Thong, and named the city after himself; Chiang Rai translates literally as "the city of [king/lord] Rai." Thus, this city, the predecessor to Chiang Mai, was a distinct urban formation, sited and designed around a single hill, meant to represent the *axis mundi* and function as the "navel of the town," with a circular wall surrounding a relatively compact settlement.

After consolidating his authority over nearby Kengtung in 1267 and Fang in 1273, Mangrai turned his attention to the conquest of Haripunchai, located just 25 kilometers south of Chiang Mai's eventual location. The main attraction for Mangrai was economic:

> "This [Haripunchai] where you live: How prosperous is it?" A trader replied, "The Haribhunjaya where I live is far away, and is replete with all kinds of good things. Traders of all countries frequent it both by land and by water to trade. By water, one can reach Yodhiya [Ayutthaya], and traders from there come. In trade, the people of the domain are very prosperous."

49 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 17.
50 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 17.

> Again, the king asked, "Is the ruler [of Haribhunjaya] richly endowed with troops, elephants and horses, and retainers? Is the country rich?" A trader replied, "The King of my yonder domain is richly endowed with elephants and horses and retainers, and he has all kinds of wealth."[51]

And so Mangrai was "consumed with a desire to obtain it for his own,"[52] and he concocted a plan to send a spy to the city, intent on sowing discontent among the population. In 1292 Mangrai raised an army and succeeded in capturing Haripunchai. Here, then, are two examples that highlight both sides of Tai expansion and urban formation: Chiang Rai was established by Yuan expansion into a sparsely populated basin, whereas Haripunchai was taken by force.

Although Haripunchai's reported riches had drawn Mangrai to the city, its unique *chaiyaphum* and its status as a sacred Buddhist center made it difficult for him to stay. He made Haripunchai his capital city for only a short time. According to the Mulasasana Chronicle (*tamnan munlasatsana*), Mangrai decided that he could not stay because it was a "phrathat town," meaning a town made sacred by the enshrined relics of the Buddha.[53] The Singhonawatikuman Chronicle, however, states that Mangrai left Haripunchai because of its bad *chaiyaphum*. The layout of Hariphunchai was bisected by a river, making it what was known as a *mueang ok taek*, or "broken-heart town," and this was considered bad *chaiyaphum* because of its disadvantageous defensive position.[54] Mangrai left Haripunchai and rebuilt an old Mon settlement at Wiang Kum Kam, just south of present-day Chiang Mai, but frequent flooding eventually caused him to abandon that site as well. After successfully expanding his kingdom to the south, conquering an established and powerful Mon state, Mangrai began his search for an appropriate location in which to build a new capital city, Chiang Mai.

The multiple layers of urban space outlined above—Lawa, Mon, Khmer, and Tai—provide a specific narrative background to Chiang Mai's foundation and later fluorescence. These layers also highlight the context of cross-cultural contact, regional trade, cultural adaptation, and political innovation in which Chiang Mai was founded. Within this context of continual migration and expansion, sacred space became an important part of the urban equation as a way to legitimize the ruling elite and open

51 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle,* 18–19.

52 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle,* 19.

53 Sarasawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 264-65, n. 14.

54 Pornpun, "The Environmental History of Pre-Modern Provincial Towns in Siam to 1910," 35.

a space for diverse communities to live and form states (especially in the case of Tai *mueang*). However, although these early cities were internally legitimized by ideas of fixity through sacred space, they should not be seen as static, sacred wholes that were only later drawn into ever larger and more diverse worlds of long-distance trade and imperial politics. Rather, cities in this part of the world were, from their very earliest history, continually evolving spaces predicated on bringing diverse groups together and adapting to changing conditions over time.

The Foundation of the "New City"

One of the most successful and spatially innovative cities to be established in the region was Chiang Mai, founded by Mangrai in 1296. Previous Tai *mueang* cities had been established as relatively small royal capitals, whose fortunes would rise and fall, often according to the success of individual rulers.[55] After expanding his domain, first by settlement and then by conquest, however, Mangrai faced the task of building a capital city that was spatially and politically adequate to serve as the center for this newly established kingdom of Lanna.

His search for an auspicious site for his new capital continued in the logic of *chaiyaphum*, described above.[56] The story in the chronicles goes something like this: While traveling along the foothills of Doi Suthep (ดอยสุเทพ), he heard the story of two hog-deer that had miraculously chased away a pack of wolves.[57] Mangrai took this as a sign that neither wolves nor potential enemies would be able cause trouble here and that "this surely is an auspicious site."[58] Since he had decided to build a new kind of city, designed to be the capital of a larger and more complex state, he invited two powerful allies, Ngam Mueang of Phayao and King Ruang (Ramkhamhaeng) of Sukhothai, to meet him at the auspicious site for consultation and advice.[59] While discussing the design of the city, the three kings witnessed another

55 Sarassawadee, *Chumchon Boran Nai Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 94, 252.

56 Baker and Pasuk, *A History of Thailand*, 7; Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 17. See also ch. 1 in Pornpun, "The Environmental History of Pre-Modern Provincial Towns in Siam to 1910."

57 For the story of the founding of Chiang Mai, including the visit of Ngam Mueang and Ramkhamhaeng, see Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 40–46.

58 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 43.

59 How had these three rulers become such good friends in the first place? The first meeting of the three kings in the Chiang Mai Chronicle came with a somewhat less auspicious episode—Mangrai's mediation of a dispute between Ngam Mueang and Ruang that centered on an affair between the latter and the former's wife. See Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 25–27.

miraculous event: "an albino mouse with four followers" came from the east and scurried into a sacred banyan tree.[60] These auspicious signs convinced Mangrai to build a new city at this site and make it his royal capital.

This account of Mangrai's search for a site with suitable *chaiyaphum* clearly marks Chiang Mai as a sacred center. The auspiciousness of the location revealed itself through supernatural signs and symbols to the royal founder of the city and to his allies. Ngam Mueang and Ruang point out to Mangrai the seven aspects of Chiang Mai's *chaiyaphum*, which includes these supernatural signs:

(1) We hear that formerly two albino deer, mother and fawn, came out of the forest to the north to live on the auspicious site here. People customarily paid respects [to them].
(2) Two albino hog-deer, mother and fawn, lived on this auspicious site here. They confronted the wolves, and all the wolves fled without fighting.
(3) We saw an albino mouse and its four followers come out of this auspicious site here.
(4) This site, on which we would build a city, slopes from west to east.
(5) Here, we see that a waterfall from the Ussupabatta Doi Suthep flows into a stream flowing to the north and to the east, and there is another stream flowing to the south and to the west to surround Kum Kam city. This river is a city-boon [...].
(6) This stream flows from the mountain downwards: this is called the Mae Kha. It flows eastwards, and then southward, close to the Mae Ping, where it has the name Mae Tho to the present. There is a large swamp on the northeast side of the auspicious site [...] to the northeast. Foreign rulers greatly venerate it.
(7) The Mae Raming flows from the Mahasra [pond], which the Lord Buddha, when he was alive, came to bathe in at Bathing Bowl Mountain (Doi Ang Song), flowing out to become the Ping River—to the east of the city—as the seventh auspicious quality.[61]

This list includes both supernatural and mundane aspects of Chiang Mai's *chaiyaphum*. The first three elements are clearly related to the spirit world, while the seventh directly connects the site to the Lord Buddha. Ngam Mueang and Ruang pay equal attention, however, to the hydrological features

60 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 47.
61 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 44; Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 61.

of the area, which were conducive to both settlement and agriculture. There were five streams that ran from Doi Suthep into the Ping River: Huay Kaew, Huay Ku Khao, Huay Mae Rangong, Huay Than Chomphu, and Huay Fai Hin. These five streams would later flow into a reservoir located in what is now the Chiang Mai University campus.[62]

The location chosen by Mangrai had several other material advantages as well. The location of the city next to the Ping River facilitated trade with the south, as mentioned in the account of Haripunchai's wealth (cited above), and the surrounding valley was, and still is, the largest and one of the most fertile rice-growing regions in the north. Chiang Mai was also strategically well situated to enable Mangrai to politically and militarily control his old northern domains in the Kok River valley (known in the chronicles as the Yon domain) and his newer territories in the Ping River valley (known as the Ping domain).[63]

Within the chronicle, the main point of discussion among the three kings was not the location but rather the size of the city. Initially, Mangrai was intent on building a rather large city, which Ruang suggested would be unmanageable and difficult to defend. After due consideration of the *chaiyaphum*, Mangrai agreed and began preparations for the construction of the city on a less grand scale. Nevertheless, the size of the city reflects its status as a new kind of capital, one that marks an important step in the process of Tai expansion and political development from isolated city-states to larger confederations and kingdoms.

The size of the city was not the only indication of its increased political importance and complexity. The shape of the city also reflected an innovation in political development and urban form. Unlike previous Yuan centers such as Chiang Rai or Chiang Saen, the core of Chiang Mai took a rectangular form that was more reminiscent of Khmer urban morphology than Mon, Lawa, or Tai. The shape of the city wall is rectangular, almost square, and most likely represents an indirect Khmer influence via Sukhothai and its king, Ramkhamhaeng (called Ruang in the CMC). This likely signals a desire on Mangrai's part to elevate the cosmological significance of the city above that of his previous establishments. This new design was more than symbolically indicative of political complexity. Functionally, the large central urban space allowed for inclusion of more than just the king and his court. Whereas Chiang Rai was a royal capital, Chiang Mai was envisioned as a more inclusive urban space that incorporated royals, nobles, artisans, agriculturalists, ritual specialists, and traders from distant kingdoms.

62 See Sarassawadee, "Angkepnam Boran Lae Faidin Nai Mahawitthayalai Chiang Mai," 117–31.

63 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 58.

The preparation and actual construction of the city as related in the chronicles supports this notion of Chiang Mai as a broader, encompassing urban space. The CMC stresses that the buildings at the center of the city, the walls, ramparts, gates, moats, and even the city market, were all built at the same time:

> King Mangrai organized these conscripted groups to build everything, and began the construction of the various palaces and moats and the building of the city walls in 658 of the era [...], when all the construction was commenced, when the city moats were dug beginning from the northeast corner proceeding towards the south along all four sides, all simultaneously.[64]

> The three kings had the city built together with the towers as a single set, and the consorts' palace and king's dwelling, all of them, and had them completed, all of them, in four months, complete in all respects.[65]

Offerings for the guardian spirits were prepared and divided into three parts: one for the auspicious site at the center of the city, another for the albino mouse spirit, and, finally, one for the five gates to be erected. The site where Mangrai witnessed the auspicious signs and built his sleeping pavilion later became a temple, still in existence today, known as Wat Chiang Man. An inscription at this temple marks the founding of Chiang Mai:

> Phya Cao and Phya Ngam Muang (and) Phya Ruang, all three of them, having built a sleeping pavilion at the chaiyaphum (for) the Royal Palace, (began) digging a moat, building a triple rampart on all four sides, and erecting a cetiya [chedi] exactly on the site of the pavilion, in the village of Chiang Man, at that moment; and that piece of land was afterwards made into a monastery as an offering to the Three Gems, and given the name Wat Chiang Man, (which it still has) up to the present time.[66]

None of these sources are contemporaneous to the events they describe; the CMC was composed in the early nineteenth century, and the Wat Chiang Man inscription was composed in the sixteenth century, two decades

64 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 45.

65 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 45.

66 Nagara and Griswold, "Epigraphical and Historical Studies Number 18: The Inscription of Vat Jyan Hnan (Wat Chieng Man)," 126–27. The spellings in this passage have been adjusted for clarity.

after Chiang Mai fell to the Burmese. Nevertheless, these accounts of the city's foundation, filtered as they are through their own political contexts, highlight the idea of Chiang Mai as a truly "new city," conceived, designed, and built as a novel whole. The consultation with his royal allies, combined with the simultaneous construction of distinct parts of the city and the organization of spirit offerings at strategic points throughout the city, provide clues as to what Chiang Mai was to Mangrai—a new city, imbued with sacred power and designed for a great king to rule a politically complex state.

Before the establishment of Chiang Mai, several overlapping and interconnected traditions of urbanism existed in the region, all of which play a prominent role in popular conceptions of the city's history and spiritual life.[67] At each stage of the historical development of local settlements and centers into identifiable cities, hybridity and diversity were crucial factors. Part of what made these spaces urban, in other words, was their emergence from distinct social or political groups. Haripunchai was not simply "Mon," but rather "Mon-Lawa." This form of urbanism resulted in a complex urban landscape that included physical markers, such as city pillars, spirit shrines, and Buddhist reliquaries, each emerging out of diverse traditions and each giving meaning and structure to the space of the city. In short, this was an urban tradition forged out of cultural and religious contact, adaptation, and adjustment.

Likewise, Chiang Mai was (and is) more than a Yuan invention. The spatial framework of the city included Mon Buddhism and Lawa spirits, while adding both size and an overlay of Khmer cosmology to bolster its new position as a city at the apex of the largest kingdom yet seen in the region. Thus, it might be more appropriate to describe this "new city" as a Yuan-led reconfiguration of Lawa, Mon, and Khmer urbanism. The urban space of Chiang Mai therefore reflected its broad function, not as the center of a lowland valley city-state but as the center of a novel political creation that ambitiously sought to project its power across the hills and mountains of the north.

Center, Hinterland, Region

Chiang Mai before the nineteenth century did not exist in isolation. Chiang Mai was a central point in networks of exchange—political, cultural, social,

67 For a detailed account of the spiritual strands of Chiang Mai's foundation, see Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*, ch. 2.

economic, and religious—that stretched north to Yunnan, east to Vietnam, west to Burma, and south to Siam. This was not simply a regional center but rather an often-but-not-always dominant center among many in the inland constellation of city-states that dotted the river valleys of the region.[68] The inland region that Chiang Mai was situated within was in many respects qualitatively different from the coastal Mon-Khmer deltaic urban network of Siam. The spatial composition of Chiang Mai was the product of a long process of urban genesis and state formation. Likewise, the networks of profit, pilgrimage, and power that linked Chiang Mai to other cities and towns—in short, the broader urban system—also developed out of long-standing patterns of trade, religious practice, and political development. The discussion has thus far focused on Chiang Mai's role as a political, economic, and sacred center, designed to function as the royal capital of an expansive kingdom; this section widens the discussion first to the hinterland of Chiang Mai and, second, to the broader region it anchored through an interconnected network of autonomous urban centers.

Before Chiang Mai, Haripunchai was the dominant city in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley. As argued above, Haripunchai was founded as a Lawa-Mon center, and it anchored an urban network that spread throughout the southern half of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley. The origin of Haripunchai, and later urban networks, is, however, subject to some debate. There are two basic possibilities for the formation of Haripunchai's urban network: internal initiative and external stimulus. As cited above, some argue that internal factors were insignificant and that the foundation of Haripunchai as an important center of trade and culture in the region stemmed exclusively from the expansion of political and trade connections from Mon states in the Chao Phraya basin.[69] Though direct evidence is scant, chronicles and legends strongly suggest that a regular boat trade via the Ping River between the north and the states of the Chao Phraya delta had been established before Haripunchai's founding.[70] The northern expansion of Mon urban culture therefore did not come through conquest, but most likely via trade connections that had been established between the Dvaravati centers near the Gulf of Thailand and the inland regions that both produced important items for regional trade, such as aromatic woods, and served as nodal points in overland trade routes. But local initiative should not be discounted in this

68 I borrow this term from Castro-Woodhouse, *Woman between Two Kingdoms*, 8–9.

69 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 37.

70 Chusit, *Phokha Ruea Hang Malaengpong Nai Hoi Luang Lum Maenam Ping* (*Pho. So. 1839-2504*), 20–22.

process. Evidence suggests that these trade connections were transformed into urban settlement and expansion primarily through the invitation of local leaders rather than through political expansion or diffusion.[71]

Thus, the earliest urban networks in the Chiang Mai region developed as a result of connections beyond the immediate hinterland. A similar process brought elements of Tai urbanism into the region on the heels of Yuan expansion. After the early connections with the Mon states of Lower Burma and the Chao Phraya River delta, the orientation of the Chiang Mai-Lamphun basin shifted toward the north and northeast. During and after the Tai century, the direction of urban settlement and cultural connection ran from the upper/middle Mekong, near the present-day Golden Triangle, where Mangrai's home region of Ngoen Yang was located, southwest toward Haripunchai. After Chiang Mai's foundation, then, this region represented not the northernmost extent of Mon culture, originating in the south, but the southernmost extension of an inland network of city-states originating in the north.

The economic success of Chiang Mai stemmed from long-distance trade as well as a productive hinterland. As mentioned above, Mangrai was drawn to the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley by the economic success of Haripunchai.[72] Diverse ecological and economic conditions among the hinterlands of these inland states, however, likely formed the initial catalyst for the development and expansion of overland trade routes. Lampang, for instance, has at various times throughout history found it difficult to produce enough rice for the population. In 1892–93, for example, missionaries reported a serious famine in the region.[73] This meant that Lampang became a rice importer, mostly from Chiang Rai, which had a larger agricultural hinterland than Lampang. Similarly, while Luang Prabang is located in an easily defendable location replete with auspicious elements of the natural landscape, it sorely lacks in agriculturally productive land.[74] Dynamics such as these encouraged the growth and development of early trade routes linking the inland Tai city-states.

Chiang Mai clearly served as a nodal point in a variety of trade networks. The most important has been described by Ratanaporn as the "Five Cities Network,"[75] which lasted hundreds of years and which connected Chiang Mai,

71 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 73.

72 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 18–19.

73 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 126.

74 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 133.

75 Ratanaporn calls this system *rabob kankha ha chiang*, referring not to any city, but specifically to *chiang*, which are walled and fortified centers with a ruling king in residence.

Chiang Rai, Kengtung (Chiang Tung), Jinghong (Chiang Rung), and Luang Prabang (Chiang Thong).[76] Trade between these cities was conducted almost entirely by overland routes, using either elephants or, more likely, oxen. Some segments could be expedited by boat travel. For instance, caravans traveling from Chiang Mai to Chiang Tung would often load their goods onto boats for the journey between Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen, for example, before carrying on to Chiang Lap, Mueang Yong, and, finally, Chiang Tung on foot.[77]

Each city in this network had a different role and was able to serve as an interface point with different regional networks of exchange. Chiang Mai was particularly well situated to serve as a point of interface between inland cities and the port cities along the Burmese and Siamese coasts. Chiang Rai, on the other hand, was particularly good at producing and exporting the rice needed not only to feed the populations of these cities but also to provision the caravans plying the trade routes connecting them. Kengtung/Chiang Tung was a center for trade with the Shan city-states, whose residents mostly came to Chiang Mai to exchange local products for textiles or other manufactured goods attained via coastal ports. Jinghong/Chiang Rung was the center of Sipsongpanna, a noted source of salt, an important commodity whose value increased the further it was carried from its source.[78]

These links would later shape the city in a variety of unexpected ways. For example, the forced relocation of war captives to repopulate the city in the Kawila era (see Chapter 2) also brought with it specific types of monasteries and associated urban spaces. Wat Hua Khuang, for example, existed in three cities before the eighteenth century, all well to the north of Chiang Mai. After the Kawila's repopulation of Chiang Mai and other Lanna cities, we see Wat Hua Khuang in Lampang, Phayao, Phrae, Mueang Long, and Nan.[79] These temples, associated with and located near the open spaces common to Yuan cities known as *khuang*,[80] are therefore evidence of the importance of the inland connections between these cities and the spatial and architectural influences that moved through these urban networks.

Political, economic, and cultural links between the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley and the southern coast had existed since ancient times and produced one of the earliest urban traditions in the region at Haripunchai. However, overland connections between the region and the inland states of the Shan,

76 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 127–34.

77 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 128.

78 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 133.

79 Suraphon, *Khuang Mueang Lae Wat Hua Khuang*, 294–95.

80 The term *khuang* refers to a wide variety of open spaces or plazas in the urban space of Yuan cities; see Chapter 2 for greater detail.

Tai Lue, Tai Khoen, upper Burma, and others have played an equally, if not more important, role in shaping the urban landscape. While the urban traditions of coastal Siam included Mon, Khmer, and Tai elements, Chiang Mai's urbanism grew from different roots. Chiang Mai was therefore not only a point of articulation between inland trade and coastal ports; it was also a city on the edge of two urban worlds.

Conclusion

For several centuries, as the fortunes of Chiang Mai rose and fell, the basic spatial arrangement of the city remained intact. Chiang Mai remained one of the major cities of the region, both as a capital of the independent kingdom of Lanna and later as a center of Burmese administration from 1558 to the late eighteenth century. On one level, the discussion of urban development in this chapter shows that cities have a long and rich history in this part of mainland Southeast Asia. On another level, this history shapes the experience of the city and its urban space in later years. The development of Chiang Mai built upon multiple traditions of urban settlement, including Mon, Lawa, Tai, and even some elements of Khmer urban planning. Rather than see Chiang Mai as one type of city or another, based on simple binaries or classificatory schemes, a more fruitful approach would be to unpack the overlapping layers of urban space that produced this "new city" in the thirteenth century.

This accumulation of layers did not stop at the city's foundation. Burmese rule continued to add to the layers of Chiang Mai's urban space, while simultaneously shifting its position in the networks of trade, tribute, and pilgrimage in the inland constellation. Though two centuries of Burmese rule certainly left their mark on Chiang Mai in a variety of areas, including "religion, architecture, art, cuisine, and literature,"[81] their influence in terms of urban space is somewhat harder to gauge. The Burmese influence on temple architecture, for example, has been generally misinterpreted. For example, most of the so-called Burmese temples in Chiang Mai date from the nineteenth century, not the period of Burmese control, and most new temples were built not by Burmese, but by Shan merchants who migrated to Chiang Mai to take part in the teak trade.[82] The Burmese did, however,

81 Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 285.

82 See Chotima, "The Architecture of Burmese Buddhist Monasteries in Upper Burma and Northern Thailand: The Biography of Trees."

patronize existing temples, especially important state temples associated with the ruling Mangrai dynasty—see, for example, the discussion of the Wat Chiang Man inscription discussed above. Burmese princes and governors sent to rule portions of Lanna sponsored spirit worship rituals, funded the creation of new Lanna-style Buddha images, and supported the construction of new stupas in several temples. According to Hans Penth, some Burmese nobles specifically inquired about the customs and rituals of various Lanna states.[83] There are other ways in which the Burmese imprint on Chiang Mai's urban space can be seen. For instance, the Burmese began to decrease the space for the *khuang luang* when they erected the residence of the Burmese commissioner (*kha luang*) appointed to rule the city.[84] The Burmese also brought with them their own spatial schemes, such as the *thaksa mueang*, which likened the city to the nine astrological planets (see the following chapter for more details). The popularity of this system most likely resulted from contact with Burmese merchants and monks. Though the demographic and economic composition of the city fluctuated somewhat over time, Chiang Mai remained firmly entrenched in this inland network of trade and tribute that connected the city with the various inland city-states of the Tai Khoen, Tai Lue, and Shan, located at points west, north, and east, though Burmese rule likely shifted this orientation in favor of the Shan. Burmese rule eventually did affect Chiang Mai's location within the urban networks of power in Lanna, however. In the initial period of Burmese rule, Chiang Mai maintained its central role in the administration of the region, but by the seventeenth century and accelerating in the eighteenth, Chiang Mai's importance within Lanna was diminished as the Burmese elevated Chiang Saen's status in the Burmese administration.[85] In effect, the Burmese divided Lanna into northern and southern provinces, with the intent of making the entire region easier to control.[86] Though this policy certainly influenced Chiang Mai's position in the inland networks of urban power, it also reflected longstanding patterns of political division in Lanna.[87] Though this period is ripe for further research and study, Burmese rule provides yet another layer in the shifting history of Chiang Mai's urban space.

The palimpsest of Chiang Mai's urban space accumulated layer upon layer of influence until the destruction of war and the subsequent abandonment

83 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 181–82.

84 Worachat, *Yon Adit Lanna*, 17.

85 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 121, 123–24.

86 See Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 285–86.

87 For a discussion of the divisions within pre-Burmese Lanna, see Liew-Herres, Grabowsky, and Aroonrut, *Lan Na in Chinese Historiography*.

of the city in the late eighteenth century. A Yuan lord from neighboring Lampang named Kawila would eventually restore the city, building upon past layers while also adding to the city the latest layer, one that would prove to be definitive for most of the nineteenth century. The following chapter discusses this formative period known as the Kawila restoration and the urban space it created.

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2 The City Stabilized

The Kawila Restoration and Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century

Abstract
While much of the underlying structure of Chiang Mai's early spatial history survived into the nineteenth century, this chapter examines the restoration of the city at the close of the eighteenth century under the rule of King Kawila. This "Kawila restoration" was responsible for creating an urban spatial template that built on the earlier history of the city but effectively amounted to the creation of a new Chiang Mai. The urban configuration created under Kawila would, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, confront the economic and political challenges of western and Siamese intervention.

Keywords: Urban restoration, repopulation, city walls, warfare

Throughout Lanna's existence as an independent inland kingdom, Chiang Mai dominated the political, cultural, and economic landscape as one of its most important centers. Even the Burmese conquest, which many histories of Lanna portray as a period of decline for both capital and kingdom, did not mark a drastic break from Chiang Mai's urban past. Unlike the Burmese sack of Ayutthaya, the Burmese conquest of the north, while wrought through violence, was less of a transformation than a change in management. After the Burmese began to incorporate Lanna into their imperial system of government in the sixteenth century, they initially maintained Chiang Mai's centrality in the region and continued to observe the spatial rituals that conferred legitimacy on the ruler. Though warfare and rebellion continued throughout the two centuries of Burmese rule in the former Lanna states, the basic structures of urban space and urban networks in the region persisted.

A more dramatic challenge to the continuity of Chiang Mai's urban tradition and dominance came not with the beginning but with the end of

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Burmese rule in the late eighteenth century. In the 1770s a Yuan-Siamese alliance wrested control of the city away from the Burmese, and the warfare and destruction that accompanied this bitter conflict devastated the city and led to its abandonment. By the end of the eighteenth century, one of the Yuan leaders of this alliance against the Burmese, a Yuan lord from neighboring Lampang named Kawila, was designated king of Chiang Mai by the king of Siam and charged with rebuilding the city. Although Kawila self-consciously attempted to maintain a link between the city's deep historical past under the Mangrai dynasty and his own efforts to both restore the city and establish his own dynasty, he also changed the space of the city in subtle yet important ways. In short, the Chiang Mai that found itself transformed in the late nineteenth century by Siamese officials, British merchants and diplomats, and American missionaries began with Kawila's restoration as much as Mangrai's foundation. This chapter examines the Kawila restoration, when both city and state were restored, rebuilt, and repopulated. This period marked not only the restoration of the city but also the beginning of a tributary relationship with Siam that would last until the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter therefore addresses the relationship between the Chiang Mai discussed above—founded by Mangrai, ruled by Yuan kings, and eventually annexed by the Burmese—and the re-established city of Kawila and his nineteenth-century descendants. The Kawila restoration, this chapter argues, was a pivotal moment for the history of Chiang Mai and for its relationship with Siam and neighboring states. To what extent were Kawila's efforts to restore the city to its former glory successful in maintaining the socio-political and spatial arrangements in place for centuries? Alternatively, to what extent did his intervention in the region represent a distinct break from the past, the formation of a new kind of space? In short, this chapter asks a simple question: Was the Kawila restoration a moment of change or continuity?

This chapter also provides an overview of the logic of urban space in premodern Chiang Mai in the mid-nineteenth century, as it reflected both the particular political context of the historical moment and the long historical development of the city and the region. In the various elements making up the fabric of Chiang Mai's urban space, one can see the overlapping layers of urban traditions, as well as the new context of tributary relations with Siam.

This chapter will argue that the Kawila restoration created a new Chiang Mai, one that was more of a sacred center than what had existed before, partly due to the need for order amid the chaos of warfare and partly because of Kawila's special need for legitimacy as an outsider from Lampang, appointed by Bangkok to lead the newly reconstructed, repopulated, and

restored city and kingdom of Chiang Mai. The legitimacy conferred upon Kawila by his occupation and restoration of the city center in some ways foreshadowed and conditioned the Siamese appropriation of urban space one century later. Although the previous chapter argued for a deep urban history in the region, the Kawila restoration represents both a continuation and a break with that past, making Chiang Mai in the early nineteenth century a re-imagined space from all sides—Burmese, Siamese, Yuan, and even British.

Chiang Mai Abandoned

Chiang Mai was far from peaceful under Burmese rule. This was especially so during the most of the eighteenth century, when the Burmese began to face several challenges to their authority throughout the Lanna city-states.[1] In 1727 a local noble from Mae Sariang attacked and captured Chiang Mai from the Burmese. Shortly thereafter, a member of the Lan Xang royal family, Ong Kham, took control of Chiang Mai with Burmese support and governed largely independently for over three decades. King Hsinbyushin, also known as Mangra, established direct Burmese control over Chiang Mai for the third and final time in 1763; in the process "he deported the entire population."[2] Once control of Chiang Mai and the rest of Lanna had been established, the Burmese continued to Ayutthaya, which they sacked in 1767. As the center of the rival Siamese kingdom, the Burmese devastated Ayutthaya, laying waste to that city and burning most of it to the ground. The Burmese quickly withdrew from Ayutthaya to attend to other matters, such as a Mon rebellion and the threat of invasion from China. Chiang Mai, however, was an important point along the northern march to Siam and had been in Burmese hands for two centuries; therefore, the destruction of the city was less than in Ayutthaya. In Chiang Mai the Burmese remained and intensified their rule. King Mangra installed military commissioners, or *po*, in each of the main Lanna centers, including Chiang Mai. According to the local chronicles, their rule during this period of warfare and expansion was oppressive and contributed to the decision of local rulers such as Cha Ban and Kawila to shift their allegiance from Burma to Siam. During this period Chiang Mai was down but not yet out. The city had been depopulated, but only briefly. Burmese attention remained in the north, fixed on the need to

1 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 126–27.

2 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 127.

extract economic and manpower resources sufficient both to wage war with Siam and to counter the potential threat of Chinese invasion. Nevertheless, even during this time of war, Chiang Mai remained an important center.

After the Burmese sack of Ayutthaya in 1767, the Siamese kingdom to the south emerged from devastation and destruction under the martial leadership of the remarkable King Taksin. The son of a Teochiu immigrant and a Siamese woman, Taksin rose to prominence in the aftermath of Ayutthaya's fall, breaking through the Burmese lines and rallying supporters to the southeast of the city, in an area dominated by Chinese settlers and merchants.[3] Though both Burma and Siam had experienced a decline in trade and a rise in warfare and destruction that led to the collapse of both kingdoms in the late eighteenth century, the response of Siam to these challenges began to shift the balance of power away from the Burmese and toward a resurgent Siam, first under Taksin and after 1782 under the Chakri dynasty.[4] It was within this context that several northern nobles began to plot against the Burmese.

One of the leading nobles to move against the Burmese in alliance with Siam was Kawila. Born in 1742 or 1743, Kawila was firmly entrenched in the ruling elite of Lanna. His father was the ruler of Lampang, and his uncle had been declared *Phaya Cha Ban* of Chiang Mai, a title similar to "lord mayor of Chiang Mai."[5] Growing up in this tumultuous period of war, Kawila would eventually emerge as a key leader of the Yuan against the Burmese, the first independent ruler of Chiang Mai under the *chao chet ton* dynasty (เจ้าเจ็ดตน), or the "dynasty of the seven brothers," and trusted vassal of the Siamese kings. During this period Kawila rose in power for several reasons, including his martial skill, noble lineage, and, significantly, his alliance with a powerful ally to the south.

The idea of alliance with the Siamese against Burma was slow to develop. As late as 1770, the Yuan fought alongside Burmese forces to defend Chiang Mai from a Siamese attack.[6] By 1774, however, Cha Ban and Kawila devised a plan to join with Taksin and expel the Burmese from the region, marking the beginning of a period of almost uninterrupted warfare that would last over thirty years. Kawila's shifting allegiance should not be read as an assertion of independence, but rather the choice of one overlord over another—an understandable choice given the aforementioned shift in the

3 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 41.

4 Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 302.

5 Penth, "King Kawila of Chiang Mai, 1742–1816," 43.

6 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 130.

regional balance of power in favor of Taksin's forces.[7] With the Burmese distracted by internal rebellion in 1774, Taksin seized this opportunity to attack Chiang Mai. Taksin appeared personally before the walls of the city, which fell to the Siamese in January 1775.[8] Taksin named Cha Ban king of Chiang Mai, and Kawila ruler of Lampang in 1775. The Chiang Mai Chronicle describes this period succinctly: "At that time, war was everywhere."[9] Bitter battles between joint Siamese-Yuan forces and the returning Burmese that same year caused so much devastation and loss of manpower that Cha Ban decided to abandon the city. Unlike previous rebellions or conflicts in and over Chiang Mai, the end of Burmese rule meant the devastation and the complete abandonment of the city. Once again, the Chiang Mai Chronicle captures the moment: "At that time, Chiang Mai was abandoned, and overgrown with weeds, bushes and vines. It was a place for rhinoceros and elephants and tigers and bears, and there were few people."[10] The city itself was severely damaged, less by Taksin's attack in 1775 than by the numerous Burmese attempts to recapture the city, which caused the population to flee and damaged the rice fields surrounding the city, making it impossible to field an army, let alone support an entire city. For twenty-two years—from 1775 to 1797—Chiang Mai remained desolate and abandoned.

Thus, in the space of eight years, the cities of Ayutthaya and Chiang Mai were violently attacked, severely damaged, and ultimately abandoned. Shortly thereafter, Siamese and Yuan forces regrouped and established new cities to serve as secure bases from which they could marshal their forces and pursue the Burmese. Taksin established Thonburi on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River about 65 kilometers south of Ayutthaya, while a few years later Kawila established Pa Sang about 40 kilometers south of Chiang Mai. Both cities served as staging grounds for military campaigns against the Burmese and as spaces to foster the legitimacy of an outsider king. Eventually, after deposing Taksin, Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty moved the Siamese capital to Bangkok; several years later, Kawila reoccupied and restored Chiang Mai. Why did the Siamese abandon Ayutthaya and start anew at Thonburi and later at Bangkok, while Kawila set out to restore Chiang Mai? Why should one be abandoned and another restored?

7 Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (I)," 303.

8 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 50.

9 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 146.

10 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 147.

Ayutthaya's complete destruction was one simple reason for the relocation of the Siamese capital. After capturing the city from the Burmese, Taksin was confronted with a ruined city with collapsed walls and burnt-out buildings, and rice fields that had been untended and destroyed. The cost to repair all of this would have been massive; more pressing, however, was the speed with which such a task would need to be completed, since the threat of Burmese attack remained imminent.[11] Another reason was more political. As a military strongman and an outsider with no royal blood, Taksin knew he would face challenges to his rule from surviving royals and nobles. This political tension is nicely symbolized in the explanation for Taksin's decision to abandon Ayutthaya found in legends and poems: "[Taksin] had a dream in which the former kings drove him away from the old capital and he therefore had to search for new headquarters."[12] Thus, to re-establish the royal center of Ayutthaya would be to invite such challenges. Rather, Taksin stayed away from the old royal center, fostering for himself an image as "a protector of the people" and "a leader of the common folk."[13] A final reason might have been economic. Though Ayutthaya was a powerful center of trade with a diverse population of traders from around Eurasia, the city's distance from the coast and the shallow water of the Chao Phraya River that far inland limited the possibilities for trade, which would soon begin expanding to include bulkier goods transported on larger ships. Furthermore, even if Ayutthaya had remained the capital and a new port was built near the coast, such an arrangement would potentially lead to friction between the political and religious city, on the one hand, and the port city, on the other.[14] Thus, immediate need for a new capital and the availability of a fortified settlement located closer to Taksin's base of support and away from royal challengers to his throne made such a move logical.

In 1782 the Taksin dynasty ended, subtly changing the context of military and political alliance between Siam and Lanna. One of Taksin's most trusted generals, Phraya Chakri, took control of the kingdom in 1782 after forcing Taksin to abdicate and then executing him. The newly crowned Rama I quickly bestowed upon his ally Kawila the title of "King of Chiang Mai," who

11 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 42–43.

12 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 43.

13 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 43.

14 Sternstein, "From Ayutthaya to Bangkok," 20. This argument essentially posits an origin for the primacy of Bangkok at this moment of restoration and renewal of both state and capital. This could be reading Bangkok's twentieth-century primacy into the historical record, or there may well have been an inherent concern with unifying urban functions in a single, controllable center, especially in the aftermath of Burmese conquest and the political disunity within Siam that precipitated the fall of the kingdom.

began his own project of urban renewal in the Chiang Mai region, discussed in detail below. Rama I wasted little time after taking power—only fifteen days—before moving the capital across the river to Bangkok.[15] As Terweil points out, many elites must have thought Thonburi an unsuitable site for a capital for some time; the site of Taksin's capital was small and subject to erosion, and the palace had become hemmed in by two important temples. Moreover, the site across the river, though swampy, offered better security from Burmese invasion, which the new king knew would be coming.[16] There is some evidence, albeit circumstantial, that Taksin himself had been planning to move the capital across the river before he was deposed.[17] Whether or not this is true, his successor Rama I oversaw the establishment of Bangkok as a sacred seat of Siamese imperial power. In some respects, Rama I modeled Bangkok after Ayutthaya in an effort to replicate the old kingdom. The "most outstanding symbol" of Rama I's new capital, for example, was the Grand Palace, which was modeled on Ayutthaya's Grand Palace.[18] As in Ayutthaya, the palace in Bangkok contained the most sacred temple and image of the kingdom. The long and symbolically loaded name of Bangkok reflects its intended status as a divinely sanctioned capital and specifically references Ayutthaya.[19] According to Larry Sternstein, "Rama I did not wish to create a wholly new city but to re-create Ayutthaya, to reproduce the form of the old capital as an essential part of his wish to restore the whole of the Ayutthayan way of life."[20] Still, even if, as the chronicles report, Bangkok was intended to represent continuity with Ayutthaya, "full replication was not achieved."[21] In essence, rather than moving the capital back to Bangkok, Rama I sought to move Ayutthaya downriver to the new capital.

It is important to view Kawila's efforts to restore Chiang Mai to its former glory within the broader context of the political resurgence of Siam and the establishment of its new capital at Bangkok. Rulers in both cities sought to construct or reconstruct a viable, prosperous, sacred, and above all secure capital from which to rule their respective kingdoms. Though Kawila's efforts at Pa Sang and Chiang Mai will be discussed in detail below, a few points bear mentioning here. The same year Rama I founded Bangkok, Kawila

15 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 64.
16 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 65.
17 Sternstein, "From Ayutthaya to Bangkok," 19.
18 Srisakara, "The Establishment of the City Sacredness in the Reign of King Rama I," 39.
19 Askew, "Transformations and Continuities," 68.
20 Sternstein, "From Ayutthaya to Bangkok," 21.
21 Askew, "Transformations and Continuities," 69.

established his own fortified base at Pa Sang (see later in this chapter), where he began to regroup his forces, preparing to fight the Burmese and, eventually, to reoccupy the empty city he now ruled. However, although Pa Sang and Bangkok were built in the same year, Pa Sang appears functionally similar to Thonburi—a temporary base of operations with security as its foremost concern. Similarly, several aspects of Bangkok's establishment and status as a new capital and sacred center bear on our understanding of Kawila's efforts in Chiang Mai. First, like most Tai centers, the sacrality of Bangkok did not stem from a strict replication of the cosmos. Instead, as Askew argues, "privileged sites of royal power, monuments, and sacred sites were arranged into hierarchies and activated at times of state ceremony."[22] In both Kawila's Chiang Mai and Rama I's Bangkok, hierarchies of sacred space associated with royal authority and merit were necessary and played an important role in legitimizing both their rule and the city. In a very real sense, all three ambitious kings—Kawila, Taksin, and Rama I—were outsiders in their new capitals, seeing legitimacy through the spaces and practices available to them. For Taksin this meant, at least initially, a retreat to his base of support south of Ayutthaya and the establishment of a fortified capital. For Rama I, this meant attempting to replicate the plan of Ayutthaya in its broad outlines and in its most efficacious urban spaces, i.e., the palace and royal temples. For Kawila, this meant restoring the old city, though within the context of ongoing war and vassalage to Bangkok. Second, although Buddhist spaces stood out in the city and the legitimacy of the king was increasingly imagined in Buddhist, as opposed to Brahmin, terms, non-Buddhist spaces remained important. One such space, Bangkok's *lak mueang* (หลักเมือง), or city pillar, was erected before construction began on the city.[23] Bangkok, like Chiang Mai, was established amid warfare, dislocation, and chaos, underlining the necessity of a fixed, secure, and powerful space, which the *lak mueang* nicely symbolized. According to Pornpun Kertphol, the widespread practice of establishing and venerating *lak mueang* pillars had its origins in the early Bangkok era, when the ruling elite promoted the idea of the pillar as a potent symbol of the political center. Accordingly, the ruling elite of Bangkok enforced a policy of establishing city pillars in each of the important or strategic centers

22 Askew, "Transformations and Continuities," 69.

23 For more on the city pillar of Bangkok, see Pornpun, "Kanplianplaeng Khati Khwamchuea Rueang Sao Lakmueang Samai Ratanakosin Tangtae Pho. So. 2325-2535"; Tho. Kluaimai, *Lak Mueang Krung Rattanakosin*; and Terwiel, "The Origin and Meaning of the Thai 'City Pillar,'" 159–71.

throughout the kingdom.[24] Likewise, as discussed below, the city pillar of Chiang Mai received renewed attention under Kawila.

Chiang Mai Rebuilt

Rama I moved Ayutthaya, and all the sacred and political capital the city represented, to his new capital at Bangkok. Kawila, on the other hand, faced with a similar choice, chose to restore the old capital at Chiang Mai. Why? Though the sources provide no direct answer, a few clear factors emerge. First, a return to Ayutthaya would have been difficult due to the complete destruction of the old capital. Though the capital was the main prize for the Burmese campaigns of 1767, they were too overstretched by the time they captured it, and so, rather than let it become a base for a renewed Siamese attack, the Burmese forces burned the city to the ground. Chiang Mai was also devastated, but it had been a Burmese possession for two centuries and was not targeted for such systematic destruction. In simple terms, there was just more of Chiang Mai left to restore. Second, as a smaller city, the cost of reconstruction must have seemed more manageable than at Ayutthaya. Though construction of new fortifications and defenses took a great deal of time and manpower, to a certain extent the accounting must have added up in favor of restoring Chiang Mai. The restoration of Ayutthaya would have consumed resources that Taksin simply did not have in 1767: labor, grain, and, importantly, time. Finally, the political dynamic facing Taksin and to a lesser extent Rama I was absent from Chiang Mai. Though all three kings faced the problem of legitimacy—when Rama I made him King of Chiang Mai, Kawila's base of power was Lampang, while Taksin and Rama I came from mixed Sino-Siamese backgrounds with little connection to the old Ayutthayan royalty—there is little evidence for any political backlash to Kawila's assumption of the throne. The reason for this was simple: any local leadership that would have resisted an outsider such as Kawila had long been displaced by the Burmese. Finally, the idea of abandoning or moving a city has a tradition of being seen as bad, or even taboo. Consider the following admonition from a manual text found at Wat Ku Kham in the Wat Ket district of Chiang Mai:

> Fortified cities [*wiang*] and villages that are already established are good. If later it is moved to a new location, that is not good [*bo di*, บ่ดี]. If the city is not deserted/ruined [hang], then many dangers will confront the

24 Pornpun, "Kanplianplaeng Khati Khwamchuea Rueang Sao Lakmueang," 43–58.

> people of that mueang. If a mueang, the effects will be seen in 3 years; if a house, in 3 months; if a kingdom [*phaendin*], in 7–8 years.[25]

Though this quote may very well date from after the Kawila restoration, it nevertheless reflects a longstanding concern with continuity of place.

Although Rama I appointed Kawila ruler of Chiang Mai in 1782, the city he nominally ruled was still empty. It was not until 1797 that Kawila finally lived up to his appointed title and reoccupied Chiang Mai. Before Kawila could even consider reoccupying Chiang Mai and restoring it to its former status as regional center, basic preparations had to be made. Two interrelated concerns were most pressing: a lack of population and a lack of food to support the population and military force needed to hold off the Burmese.

With these goals in mind, Kawila established a new capital at Pa Sang on October 16, 1782.[26] Located approximately 40 kilometers south of Chiang Mai, the main purpose of Pa Sang was to serve as a secure base from which Kawila could attract and capture new populations, prepare troops to reoccupy Chiang Mai, and, if needed, fend off Burmese counter attacks. As the main danger of Burmese attack was from the north, Kawila located Pa Sang south of Chiang Mai in an attempt to ensure relatively clear access to Lampang, Kawila's former domain and the stronghold of Siamese power in the north during the wars with Burma—in this sense, a similar strategy as that taken by Taksin fifteen years earlier. The waterways surrounding Pa Sang also served as natural lines of defense against attack from the north.[27] Furthermore, the area around Pa Sang was a fertile rice-producing area that had seen little damage compared to Chiang Mai's immediate hinterland. All these features made Pa Sang an ideal location from which to prepare for the reoccupation of Chiang Mai.

Using Pa Sang as a base, Kawila began to repopulate Chiang Mai through forced resettlement campaigns, capturing entire villages from nearby states and bringing them back to the Ping River valley. Many scholars have called this the era of "*kep phak sai sa, kep kha sai mueang*" (เก็บผักใส่ซ้า เก็บข้าใส่เมือง), perhaps best understood as a political or military directive to "gather people into towns or cities as one would gather vegetables into baskets."[28] In Chiang Mai, Kawila settled most of these groups in areas to the south

25 Khomnet, *Khuet: khoham nai Lanna*, 2. The transliterations in this quote are taken from the northern Thai version of the text.

26 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 152.

27 Sarassawadee, *Chumchon Boran Nai Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 157.

28 See Kraisi, "Put Vegetables into Baskets, and People into Towns"; Grabowsky's "Note on Kep Phak Sai Sa Kep Kha Sai Müang," 67–71, and "Forced Resettlement Campaigns in Northern

and southeast of the central city, either in outlying villages or, especially for those with particular handicraft skills, in the area between the inner and outer walls. Beyond these areas, several other communities outside the inner city walls can trace their history back to Kawila's repopulation campaigns, such as the concentration of Shan communities and temples located north of the city wall.[29]

Although its function was primarily defensive, Pa Sang nonetheless contained spaces that highlight Kawila's future plans for Chiang Mai, his strategies for self-legitimation, and the subtle changes that the Kawila restoration would bring to the urban spaces of the north. There are only two temples at Pa Sang, Wat Pa Sang Ngam and Wat Inthakhin. The latter was established in 1794 by Phraya Upparat Thammalanka, Kawila's third brother, and houses Pa Sang's *inthakhin* pillar.[30] The pillar was most likely erected when Pa Sang was constructed in 1782, the same year as Bangkok's *lak mueang*. The relationship between temple and pillar at Pa Sang shows how new spatial relationships were forming during this transitional period. *Lak mueang* pillars in the past had not been associated with or located within Buddhist temples, and the concept of building a temple at the same location as the *inthakhin* pillar had not appeared before this point. Since the pillar was almost certainly erected in 1782 and thus existed before Wat Inthakhin's construction in 1794, the temple likely took its name from the extant sacred space it was built over. As Sarasawadee points out, the building of Wat Inthakhin in this manner is a clear example of the synthesis of Buddhism and older beliefs.[31] Moreover, this also represents a practice seemingly unique to the Kawila era. In short, the need for legitimacy during this tumultuous era produced new kinds of sacred urban spaces, a process that continued apace under Kawila and his successors in Chiang Mai.

Kawila's military and political accomplishments were substantial. He and his army fended off the Burmese and led raids into neighboring states to capture and resettle sufficient numbers in the Chiang Mai region. In order to transform that military and political capital into legitimacy, Kawila needed to reestablish Chiang Mai as a powerful center. In the years between his

Thailand during the Early Bangkok Period"; and Bowie, "Ethnic Hetereogeneity and Elephants in Nineteenth-Century Lanna Statecraft."

29 Wyatt and Aroonrut mention, for example, that families from Mueang Naen, now located in Myanmar, were resettled near the Chang Phuak gate just outside the city wall. See *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 154.

30 Sarassawadee, *Chumchon Boran Nai Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 157; Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 161.

31 Sarassawadee, *Chumchon Boran Nai Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 157.

appointment as ruler of Chiang Mai and the actual occupation of the city, Kawila was very conscious of important temples in and around the city. In 1788 Kawila and two of his brothers placed a parasol (*chatra*) on top of the Phrathat Doi Suthep.[32] After 1795 Kawila also supported the restoration of various temples inside the city, such has Wat Chedi Luang.[33] Furthermore, before Kawila moved his court back to Chiang Mai, "the First Great Royal Merit-Making Ceremony" was held at Pa Sang's Wat Inthakhin.[34] Kawila's efforts to restore and patronize important temples in and around Chiang Mai continued throughout this period of reconstruction.[35]

Kawila's first attempt to move his court back to Chiang Mai came in 1792, but he was prevented from doing so by a lack of manpower. The Chiang Mai Chronicle (CMC) provides a frustratingly inadequate explanation, stating simply that "the time was not right."[36] The "right" time apparently came five years later, when Kawila successfully relocated his court to Chiang Mai.[37] Kawila had carefully planned his entry to activate the hierarchies of sacred space in the city.[38] The CMC describes Kawila's ceremonial re-occupation of the city in great detail. He and his entourage arrived first at Wat Buppharam, then circumambulated the city before entering through *chang phueak* (ช้างเผือก) gate, and finally spent the night in front of Wat Chiang Man. The following morning, at an "auspicious moment," he entered the royal palace, which, the CMC points out, "had been the home of previous rulers in former times."[39]

This procession into the city follows the general contours of earlier royal processions mentioned in the chronicles, such as Setthathirat's arrival in

32 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 158.

33 Penth, "King Kawila of Chiang Mai, 1742–1816," 49.

34 There is some confusion among scholars as to which Wat Inthakhin is referred to in this passage. Sarasawadee sees this as the Inthakhin temple at Pa Sang, whereas Aroonrut identifies this passage with the Wat Inthakhin in the center of Chiang Mai. I lean toward Sarasawadee's interpretation primarily because this passage appears in the Chiang Mai Chronicle immediately before Kawila's ritual procession from Pa Sang, through Lamphun, and into Chiang Mai to reestablish his court there. Thus, it makes sense that this great merit-making ceremony would take place in Pa Sang rather than in the center of Chiang Mai. Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 161. See also Sarassawadee, *Chumchon Boran Nai Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 157; and Aroonrut, *Wat Rang Nai Wiang Chiang Mai*, 106.

35 For details, see Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 39–40.

36 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 160.

37 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 161–62.

38 I borrow this concept of royal procession activating hierarchies of sacred space from Askew, "Transformations and Continuities."

39 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 162.

Chiang Mai to rule Lanna in 1546.[40] In both cases, the king approaches and then circumambulates the city, enters from the northern gate, and properly observes the important Buddha images of the city. When Rama I crossed the Chao Phraya and occupied Bangkok as its king, he similarly activated a network of sacred spaces, though in his case not sacred spaces that had been restored but rather spaces that had been specially constructed to reference, if not replicate, the old capital at Ayutthaya. Thus, as in the case of Bangkok discussed above, the act of royal procession served to activate Chiang Mai's diverse collection of sacred spaces.

There were, however, novel elements in the eighteenth-century cases. Bangkok references Ayutthaya, as mentioned above, but without fully replicating the old capital. Though a new capital had been built, specific references were made to the established sacred spaces of the old capital. This reference came in spatial form, with the layout of individual buildings and the city as a whole intended to mirror Ayutthaya, and in physical form, with bricks floated downriver from Ayutthaya that were used in the construction of several important monasteries. In Chiang Mai, Kawila's procession included the Lawa, an element not seen in earlier processions, such as Setthathirat's in 1546. The Lawa were the dominant group in the region before the influx of Tai migrants and the kings and states that followed them.[41] Various state rituals, including these royal processions, reenacted the historical relationship between the indigenous Lawa and the conquering Tai.[42] The emphasis placed on the Lawa in both ritual and text can be understood in the context of the ethnic diversity resulting from the repopulation of Chiang Mai. The context of the time—having to refer to an abandoned capital as the source of legitimacy or having to refer to the newly constituted population of the city—necessitated changes in the rituals meant to confer legitimacy upon the new ruler of both cities. In this way Chiang Mai followed a pattern found throughout Southeast Asia and beyond, where newly established rulers and dynasties sought to legitimate their rule by taking a revised look at the past through royal and religious chronicles.[43] In this case, the role of the Lawa was old and new: old in that

40 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 113–14.

41 Condominas, *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai*, 5–19.

42 See Tanabe, "Autochthony and the Inthakhin Cult of Chiang Mai," 298. The precise relationship varied from place to place within the former Lanna states, however. In Kengtung the ritual involves inviting a Lawa to sit in the throne hall before being chased out by a group of Tai. See Aroonrut, "'Lua Leading Dogs, Toting Chaek, Carrying Chickens' Some Comments."

43 See Reynolds, "Religious Historical Writing and the Legitimation of the First Bangkok Reign," 107.

there was a historical relationship between Tai, Lawa, and Mon peoples in the region, but new in the way the Lawa were now visibly incorporated into the rituals of state. The chronicles detailing the Lawa and their legendary role in the history of the city served to explain the new reality through old stories; the legendary history of the Lawa's relationship with the Yuan helped to open a space for a suddenly and intensely multi-ethnic Chiang Mai to legitimately exist.

In early 1801 the sacred status of the city received renewed attention. First, the three brother princes bestowed a new name on the city, "Muang Ratanatimsa Abhinavapuri Chiang Mai," meaning "Great New City Full of Thirty Precious Things."[44] They also rebuilt an impressive array of statues and shrines: two images of albino elephants (*chang phueak*) north of the city wall, two demon guardians (*kumphan*) of the *inthakhin* pillar in front of Wat Chedi Luang, and an image of Lord Sudorasi (one of the ascetics that founded Haripunchai) west of Inthakhin hall.[45] Two years later, they also rebuilt two stylized lion statues (*khuang sing*). In addition to these sites specifically mentioned by the CMC, Kawila and his brothers restored other temples within the city and reinforced the city walls, fortifications, and gates.

Why did the ruling elite of Chiang Mai undertake such projects? The reasons stated in the chronicles are clear. The name of the city was changed "to be victorious over enemies,"[46] and the statues and images were erected (or restored) "to be auspicious for the people of the country."[47] The underlying rationale, however, was the revival of previously important sacred space. As the CMC states, "At that time, all the abandoned places were revived."[48] Unlike Bangkok, after all, this was not the creation of a new capital, but the revival of an old one.

The question then becomes what, precisely, was revived? In the case of the albino elephant statues, what was revived was clearly different from what had existed before. According to the CMC, the albino elephant statues were constructed by Saen Mueang Ma sometime around 1400 to honor Ai Op and Yi Ra, two of his soldiers who had carried him back to Chiang Mai from Sukhothai after a military defeat. These two men lived in Chiang Som, a settlement just north of the walled city, where "they fashioned two white elephant statues which were placed to the left and right of the thoroughfare,

44 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 136.
45 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 163.
46 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 163.
47 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 164.
48 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 164.

and people have had to pass between them, ever since ancient times; and those two elephant statues have never been razed."[49] Thus, the original purpose of these statues was to commemorate two local figures who were considered heroic because of their service to the king.

For Kawila and a restored Chiang Mai, however, these statues seem to have taken on a slightly different but no less important meaning. Rather than commemorate loyal service to the king, the statues as rebuilt in 1801 reflect a grander cosmological symbolism important in the context of reestablishing Chiang Mai as a sacred and militarily dominant center amidst war with the Burmese. The northern statue was named *prap chakrawan*, and the western one *prap mueang mara mueang yak*, meaning, respectively, "Lord World-Conquerer" and "Lord Conquerer of Demons and Devils."[50] However, no mention is made at this point in the CMC of the earlier meaning and history of these statues. Rather, for Kawila, these statues were important as relics from an ancient and *independently* legitimized past.

Another important change regarding the sacred space of the city took place in 1800, when Kawila moved the *inthakhin* pillar to Wat Chedi Luang.[51] The original site of the *inthakhin* pillar is often assumed to have been Wat Sadue Mueang: "According to the anthropomorphic topography of the Khon Muang, *sadue mueang* (สะดือเมือง), or the navel of the *mueang* domain signifies the centre, hence the original site of the Inthakhin pillar is frequently identified with that of the former monastery."[52] Though this is a logical assumption, there is little evidence to suggest when such an association was made or even when that temple acquired the name that associated it with the *inthakhin* pillar.

The question remains: Why did Kawila move the city pillar? One very basic answer should not be overlooked: because he could. Simply by showing that he, as the rightful king, could establish, restore, or move sacred objects and spaces, Kawila was asserting his legitimacy. Other answers, however, address the changing relationship between king, legitimacy, and sacred space. One possibility is that the pillar, like many of the sacred sites and objects restored or rebuilt during this time, was in a state of neglect and decay, and Kawila simply moved the pillar to an active temple in an effort to restore its importance and protect it from further decay. This argument does not, however, explain why Kawila would not have simply restored

49 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 67.

50 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 67, n. 43.

51 For more on Chiang Mai's city pillar, see Sommai, "A Cult of the City Pillar," 184–87.

52 Tanabe, "Autochthony and the Inthakhin Cult of Chiang Mai," 299.

Wat Sadue Mueang, the presumed location of the *inthakhin* pillar. At this time, according to the chronicles, Kawila was supporting the restoration of several important temples throughout the city, and only five years later, he also chose to establish Wat Inthakhin at the former location of the pillar.[53]

A more intriguing answer has to do with the role of Wat Chedi Luang in the sacred landscape of the city and a debate over the antiquity of an astrological horoscope for the city, known as *thaksa mueang* (ทักษาเมือง). Simply stated, *thaksa mueang* refers to an anthropomorphic view of the city in which particular meanings are assigned to nine points within the space of the city—the center and the eight cardinal and intermediate directions—akin to those associated with individuals. Further debate has erupted over the existence and origin of a system of nine temples corresponding to this system beyond the city walls, the evidence used to substantiate these claims, and how such a system could be used to limit over-development or protect certain historical sites, such as Wat Chet Yot.[54] However, some scholars have argued that the moving of the *inthakhin* pillar to Wat Chedi Luang marked the beginning of this citywide network of nine temples through the potent concatenation of the *inthakhin* pillar and the cosmologically significant Chedi Luang.[55] In this view, then, the pillar was moved to create a sort of spatial synergy, a new sacro-spatial network that was more than the sum of its spatial parts.

Yet another possible reason for moving the pillar has to do with the context in which Kawila was operating. In Bangkok the city pillar had taken on an important political role as a symbol of central and regional political hierarchy and control throughout the Siamese kingdom.[56] As a loyal vassal to the Chakri monarch, Kawila would have been aware of this, especially after receiving his title as king of Chiang Mai the same year in which he established Pa Sang. Thus, moving the pillar was a way for Kawila

53 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 172.

54 See Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*, 142–45 for an overview and explanation of this controversy. The existence of *thaksa mueang* temples was originally posited by Sarasawadee Ongsakun in a 1993 article entitled "Wat Chet Yod: A Reflection of Chiang Mai," 138–47. Sarasawadee addressed several criticisms of her work in 2005 with "Thaksa Mueang Lae Wat Nai Thaksa Mueang Chiang Mai Mi Ching: Bot Phisut Khwamching Doi Withikan Thang Prawattisat," 33–54, published in the same volume as Somchot Ongsakun, "Wat Nai Thaksa Mueang." A diverse array of scholars, local experts, and religious figures responded later that year in Duangchan Aphawatcharut, Yuphin Khemmuk, and Worawimon Chairat, *Mai Mi Wat Nai Thaksa Mueang Chiangmai*.

55 See several articles and conference transcripts in Duangchan, Yuphin, and Worawimon, *Mai Mi Wat Nai Thaksa Mueang Chiangmai*. See, for example, pp. 6–7, 27–29, and 104–5.

56 See Pornpun, "Kanplianplaeng Khati Khwamchuea Rueang Sao Lakmueang," ch. 2.

to reemphasize the importance of Chiang Mai's *lak mueang* at a time when such pillars were increasingly important for his overlord.

Finally, as noted above, it was this period of the Kawila restoration that saw the composition of a range of chronicles describing the Lawa, the discovery of the *inthakhin* pillar, and its sacro-spatial history. The motivation behind Kawila's decision to move the pillar when and where he did most likely related to all these factors: creating self-legitimizing sacred spaces and sacro-spatial networks, working within the context of his new political alliance, and incorporating ethnically diverse populations needed to resettle and restore his new capital and kingdom.

Though the basic spatial arrangement of the city remained intact from the earlier period, much of what is considered "ancient" Chiang Mai today actually dates from the time of the Kawila restoration. Though the imprint of the early history of the city remained and Kawila himself did not create wholly new spaces in the city, his restoration of the city crystallized a spatial logic for Chiang Mai unique to the nineteenth century. In restoring the city, Kawila clearly sought to retain both the overall layout and specific sacred spaces of the city, dating back to its foundation. The differences arose largely out of the new conditions both he and the city found themselves in—a new alliance with Bangkok, near constant warfare and destruction, and a newly constituted population, drawn from multiple ethnic groups throughout the region. Nevertheless, even with the expansion and repopulation of the city, the idea of Chiang Mai as a sacred and secure center remained important, as new spaces and spatial relationships were being produced in and among the old. In the final analysis, then, the difference between the urban space and the political meaning of the city in Bangkok after 1782 and Chiang Mai after 1797 might not be so acute. While Bangkok failed to achieve full replication of Ayutthaya, Chiang Mai, perhaps unsurprisingly, failed to achieve full replication of itself.[57]

The Nineteenth-Century Logic(s) of Chiang Mai's Urban Space

After Kawila's death, the dynasty he had placed in firm control of the former Lanna city-states, the *chao chet ton* dynasty, continued its alliance with Bangkok while maintaining religious, political, and economic ties with neighboring inland states, such as Sipsongpanna to the north and the Shan states to the west. Chiang Mai was both internally autonomous and

57 Askew, "Transformations and Continuities," 69.

regionally dominant, while at the same time politically beholden to Bangkok. External influence was minimal or held at bay in the early nineteenth century. Before the 1830s, there was little direct interaction with the West, and though the ruling elites of Chiang Mai and other northern states made regular trips to pay their respects and report to the Siamese court, there was no regular official Siamese presence in the north until 1873. Chiang Mai in the early 1800s was therefore the product of internal and regional dynamics, largely apart from Western or Siamese influence.

The spatial layout of Chiang Mai reflected this situation, as the urban space of the city continued to follow the spatial patterns set in place by the Kawila restoration. This section will outline the logics of urban space in early nineteenth-century Chiang Mai and introduce the elements that made up the urban environment. In brief, the central part of the city was bounded by a rectangular brick wall, built originally by Mangrai and reconstructed by Kawila, and was primarily the domain of the royal-noble elite of Chiang Mai (the *chao* / เจ้า), the temples they supported, and the central market, *kat li*. Lords and nobles from the neighboring city-states of the inland constellation also came to reside inside the city walls, and it was in this area that the greatest density of temples, Buddhist monuments, and royal dwellings could be found. Extending to the south, southeast, and east of the square inner city were the "suburbs" of the city, populated by war captives and divided mostly along lines of ethnic and/or geographical origin.[58] Leading out from the eastern gate was an important road and market area, which extended to the river, where the boats that traded between Chiang Mai and Siam docked. Roads and trails extended out from the city gates to both neighboring towns and to the numerous rice-growing villages throughout the valley, bringing in local merchants trading in grain, produce, and local products, as well as overland caravans carrying a variety of goods to and from distant realms such as Yunnan and Assam, primarily to the eastern edge of the city.

Borrowing from Kostof, the city as a whole was assembled from distinct elements, all of which combined to shape the overall form of the city.[59] Before considering the overall logic(s) of Chiang Mai's urban space, the main features that defined the urban landscape are considered below, including the city walls, the palaces of the royal-noble elite, waterways, roads, markets, and sacred spaces, especially temples.

58 Vatikiotis, "Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiangmai"; Aroonrut and Grabowsky, "Ethnic Groups in Chiang Mai by the Turn of the Twentieth Century."

59 See Kostof, *The City Shaped*, and *The City Assembled*.

City Walls

One of the most defining features of Chiang Mai since its foundation has been the city walls. According to Hans Penth, the original city walls spanned approximately 1.7 by 1.8 kilometers and consisted of triple ramparts constructed out of earth, much like the walls at Sukhothai, Chiang Dao, and other ancient towns.[60] In approximately 1345, during the reign of Phya Phayu (r. 1336–55), the outer two walls were removed, and the remaining wall was covered in brick. A moat surrounding the main wall was also built, with a width of approximately 15 meters. Though the inner walls had five main gates originally, as it does today, at some point in the late fifteenth century there was a sixth gate, most likely located near the northeastern corner of the city.[61] In 1465 Tilokarat (r. 1441–87) tore down the northeast corner of the wall and built his palace there. This was a form of sacred sabotage, instigated by a Burmese monk sent by the Ayutthayan king specifically to convince the Chiang Mai king to destroy the auspicious spaces in the city, which would in turn weaken the city, the ruler, and the kingdom.[62] Under Phya Kaew (r. 1495-1525) the walls of Chiang Mai and neighboring Lamphun were once again upgraded. Penth points out that at this time increased warfare combined with the increased use of firearms necessitated the invention of new kinds of walls and defenses. This new design involved an earthen base, covered with either laterite or brick, and topped with defensive crenellations.[63] Sometime after 1550 the walled portion of the city expanded with the construction of the outer wall, commonly known as the *kamphaeng din* (กำแพงดิน, lit. "earthen wall"), which still runs from the northeast corner around the city to the west and south, before rejoining the inner wall at its southwest corner.[64] There are several possible origins

60 Penth, "Prawat Kamphaeng Wiang Chiang Mai nai adit doi sangkhep," 10.

61 See Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 110, 115. This chronicle makes several mentions of a "Si Phum" gate, which shares its name with the northeast corner of the inner city wall. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the gate was located somewhere near the Si Phum corner, most likely on the eastern wall, somewhere between the corner and Tha Phae gate.

62 Penth, "Prawat Kamphaeng Wiang Chiang Mai," 13.

63 Penth, "Prawat Kamphaeng Wiang Chiang Mai," 14; Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 156.

64 Though commonly known as the *kamphaeng din*, or earthen wall, this is a bit of a misnomer. Maps from the late nineteenth century, several interviews, and site visits confirm that at least two portions of the wall were at one point encased in brick or mortar—the northeast corner, running around an important temple, Wat Phan Ta Koen, known today as Wat Chai Si Phum, and the *Thippanet* bastion located at the southwest corner of the *kamphaeng din*, nearest to the present-day Airport Plaza. Perhaps a better way of describing these walls, then, would be to distinguish between the inner and outer wall.

for the outer wall, but it was most likely either built by Phya Mekuti around 1550 or by the Burmese ruler of Chiang Mai in approximately 1620.

As part of his reoccupation and restoration of the city, Kawila had the walls thoroughly reconstructed. The walls now had five baffled gates, one on the west (*pratu suan dok* / ประตูสวนดอก), north (*pratu chang phueak* / ประตูช้างเผือก), and east wall (*pratu tha phae* / ประตูท่าแพ), and two on the south wall (*pratu suan pung* / ประตูแสนปุง and *pratu chiang mai* / ประตูเชียงใหม่). During Kawila's reign, five reinforced bastions were also built, four at each corner of the inner wall (*ka tam* / แจ่งก๊ะต้ำ, *hua lin* / แจ่งหัวลิน, *si phum* / แจ่งศรีภูมิ, and *ku huang* / แจ่งกู่เฮือง) and a lesser-known bastion (*thippanet* / ทิพย์เนตร) located at the southwest corner of the outer wall (*kamphaeng din*). The city walls were therefore an essential element in the city's defense, made even more important by the constant warfare that ran from about 1770 to 1806.

The need for security and defense is wonderfully communicated by an evocative map held at the British Library (Figure 2.1).[65] This map of the city—perhaps more accurately called an abstract plan—came to the library as part of the papers of George Finlayson, a Scottish naturalist who accompanied John Crawfurd on his diplomatic mission to Siam and Cochin-China in 1821–22.[66] Though the map is labeled, with awkward spelling, "Cheing Mai before the inner wall was removed," many refer to it simply as the "Finlayson Map," even though there is no connection between this map and the rest of the papers in the Finlayson collection at the British Library, nor is there any mention of the map or, indeed, any conversation pertaining to Chiang Mai or the area surrounding it. The map therefore lacks direct evidence of its production, context, or meaning. But the map can be roughly dated based on the watermark of the paper, which indicates approximately 1815, and the date of the Crawfurd mission, during which Finlayson must have acquired the map, in 1822. Henry Ginsburg used this information to date the map to approximately 1815–20.[67] Other than the date and the diplomatic mission that brought it to the British Library, little is known about the map.

65 BL WD 1750 (India Office Prints and Drawings). *Cheing Mai before the Inner Wall Was Removed*, n.d.

66 This map has been previously published, though mostly for illustrative purposes, and rarely examined in terms of its meaning, symbolism, and political context. See the cover of the Journal of the Siam Society containing Grabowsky, "Forced Resettlement Campaigns in Northern Thailand during the Early Bangkok Period"; and pull-out map 11 in Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship.*

67 Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 39.

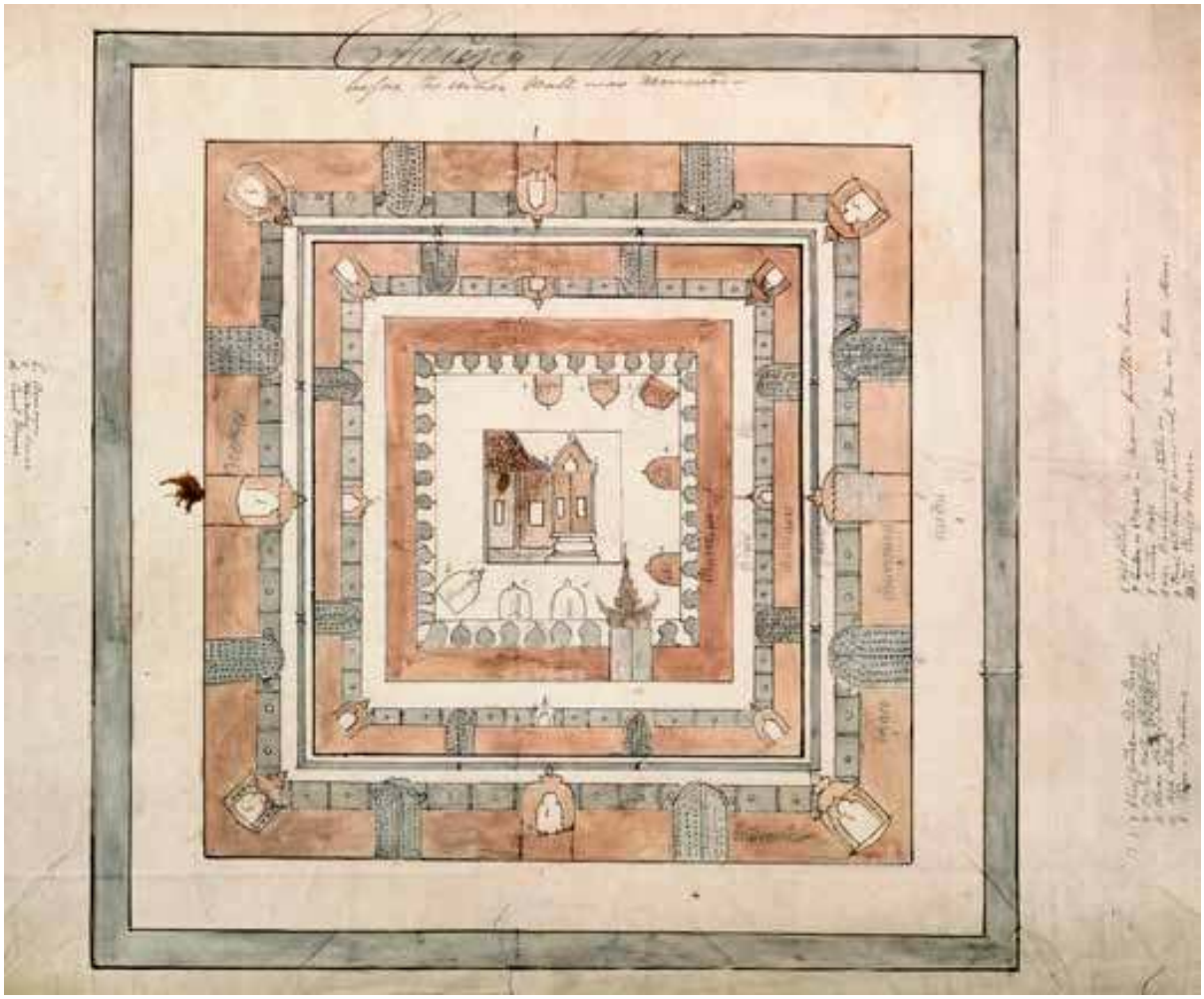

Figure 2.1 "Cheing Mai before the inner wall was removed," ca. 1815–20. (Source: British Library, India Office Prints and Drawings [BL WD 1750].)
Note: Reprinted with permission from British Library

Based on comparisons with other maps and the military and political context of the period, however, it is possible to draw a few conclusions relevant to the role of city walls in Kawila's Chiang Mai. First, the main purpose of the map is to show a strong and secure Chiang Mai. The most prominent feature of the map is the city wall, comprised of three concentric walls and two moats, and each corner of the two outer walls is clearly marked as bastions (*pom* / ป้อม). This is the most obvious anomaly in this map, as Chiang Mai was never known to have three concentric walls.[68] If the wall surrounding the royal palace is included, Chiang Mai could indeed be said to have had three walls, though not in neat arrangement as depicted

68 However, as mentioned above, Penth argues that the original wall built during the Mangrai era was a triple rampart. See Penth, "Prawat Kamphaeng Wiang Chiang Mai," 10.

here. Indeed, a French visitor in early 1884 described the royal palace in a way that seems to correspond to the inner wall of the Finlayson Map but noted that it was "surrounded by a small, crenelated wall, whitened with lime and flanked by two small towers in the four corners."[69] There are two possibilities: either the wall described here was a reconstruction of the one "torn down" according to the caption on the Finlayson Map, or that the caption was added at a much later date, after the one described here was torn down. However, confusion over the walls of Chiang Mai remained for some time; another contemporaneous map drawn by a Shan scholar for a British officer, for example, shows two walls,[70] while another map (see Figure 3.4), shows three walls in the city, though in an arrangement different from the Finlayson Map.

The center of the map also shows the royal compound, or *ruean phya*, on this map, though among the Yuan of Chiang Mai, this would be called the *wiang kaew ho kham* (เวียงแก้วหอคำ). This royal palace is surrounded by warehouses indicating the material and martial strength of the city—an armory, "wardrobe house," courthouse, stables, a treasury, and warehouses for fish, salt, and other products, etc. Although there appears to be a sacro-spatial element to the security of the center, the overall emphasis is on walls and security. The inner wall appears to be marked with *sima* stones, which typically mark the boundary of a temple or ordination hall within a temple and designate a sacred space in which ordinations may legitimately occur. Furthermore, the gate into the innermost section of the city also seems to be the most ornate, suggesting a temple or palace entrance. Yet there are no other overtly religious or sacred signs that one might expect in such a map, even if only to serve as landmarks, such as Buddhist *chedi* or even Doi Suthep to the west of the city.[71] Indeed, perhaps the most striking feature of this map or city plan is that it contains no information about any space outside the city walls.

Second, similar maps were produced regularly as documents of military intelligence, used either to prepare for or document an attack. For example, a map depicting the defensive fortifications of Kedah, then known as Saiburi,

69 Neis, *Travels in Upper Laos and Siam*, 150.

70 RGS MR Thailand S/S.2 (Map Room). Sa-ya-pay, "Sketch of the General Disposition of Zimmay Town and Its Approaches," 1870.

71 Ginsburg says that the center of the map includes "the location of a temple with a stupa and the residence of the ruler," but the structure in the center is clearly labeled "royal residence." It is possible that this labeling, in Siamese and English, was incorrectly added after the map was produced. Nevertheless, I find it debatable at best that the map contains a temple as such. See Narisa, *Siam in Trade and War*, 27.

depicts walls and fortifications in a similar style.[72] On a basic level, both are city plans, and both highlight fortifications. The Saiburi map provides details of a specific campaign, whereas the Finlayson Map shows only the walls, gates, moats, bastions, and the royal residence with its stockpiles of provisions. Nevertheless, they both seem to communicate the defensive readiness and strength of the city. Other contextual evidence supports this argument. Before the Bangkok period, outlying *mueang* made reports on the condition of their city's defenses to the court in Ayutthaya. This was a matter of policy—if a dependent *mueang* wanted to add to or change their city's defenses, they had to report this to their overlord; otherwise, such an act might be construed as preparation for rebellion.[73] This is precisely what happened in Chiang Mai during the reign of Kawila's successor, Thammalangka (r. 1815–21). In 1818 the king ordered the construction of a series of canals around and through the city.[74] In 1819 a moat was dug, starting at the southwest corner of the inner wall, running along the outer earthen wall to the south, and ending at Hai Ya gate.[75] Toward the end of 1821 or 1822, shortly before Thammalangka died, a fort was built at the northeast (*si phum*) corner of the inner wall, and a brick addition to the outer *kamphaeng din* wall was erected.[76] Thus, while direct evidence is lacking, it seems clear that the purpose of the Finlayson Map was in many ways similar to the other maps at the time—to document the defensive readiness of the city in the face of attack.

Given the history of reporting defensive constructions to the Siamese overlord, the similarity between the Finlayson Map and other maps of known military provenance, and the flurry of interest in building walls and moats between 1815 and 1821, it is fair to conclude that the Finlayson Map was produced as part of such a report, possibly during one of the regular visits of the Chiang Mai king or other royals to Bangkok. The fact that this map found its way into the hands of a member of a British diplomatic mission to Siam in the early 1820s makes sense, as this map would show the British that this important vassal of Siam, Chiang Mai, was strong and protecting the northern march into the kingdom. In sum, the Finlayson Map represents a snapshot of Kawila's Chiang Mai and of the importance of military preparedness in the new alliance between

72 Narisa, *Siam in Trade and War*, 24–26.

73 Pornpun, "Kanplianplaeng Khati Khwamchuea Rueang Sao Lakmueang," 44.

74 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 194.

75 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 195.

76 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 196.

Siam and Lanna. The city walls in the Kawila period and into the first few decades of the nineteenth century served as a marker of Chiang Mai's urban space, not only for its king but also for the Siamese who considered Chiang Mai a vassal.

The city walls remained a defining feature of Chiang Mai. The ruling elites periodically restored or rebuilt certain sections of the city wall and moat, and foreign visitors to Chiang Mai, who began arriving in increasing numbers as the nineteenth century progressed, consistently remarked upon the city walls. In 1837 Captain McLeod visited the city and described both the inner and outer walls as "forts":

> Of the town we could only see that the inner fort is a square, with a ditch all round it, and the outer fort, as it is called, is built on the eastern and southern side and is irregular in form.[77]

In 1859 Robert H. Schomburgk, the British Consul-General to Siam in Bangkok, toured Chiang Mai with the Siamese Deputy Viceroy and made the following observations regarding the city walls and fortifications:

> We extended our ride around the town "proper" not including the suburb [i.e., the area enclosed by the outer wall]. It is surrounded by a double wall—each having a ditch in front. The entrance of the town is by double gates with bastions to protect them. The suburbs are stockaded, but the gates of that portion of the town, are also fortified.[78]

To these nineteenth-century observers, the city wall was not simply a defining element of Chiang Mai's morphology, but a very real defensive feature that needed to be reported on to the British government, either in India via the colonial office or in London via the Foreign Office.

As discussed in Chapter 2, once the threat of Burmese invasion and conquest had abated after the early decades of the nineteenth century, the walls became less a military barrier and more a social and sacred boundary. The central walled portion of the city was called the *wiang*, which normally refers to a walled or fortified city; the walls also marked the inner city as a sacred space. Entering the city meant, in essence, entering the sacred space of the ruling dynasty. The city walls remained important in a number of ritual capacities, providing both a site for propitiation

77 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 307.

78 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai," 393.

of the guardian spirits of the city and a boundary between the internal sacred core and the external world of trade, pilgrimage, and diplomacy. Wijeyewardene points out that the city wall of Chiang Mai was itself marked as sacred and considered a *bai sima*, the marker of sacred Buddhist space in which certain rituals, such as ordinations, may be carried out.[79] This meant that, in a sense, the entire inner city could be considered a sacred space, similar to the specially delineated space of the ordination hall in Thai Buddhist *wat*.

There are other examples of the city wall as a sacro-spatial boundary. One of the more peculiar examples of this came in a ritual designed to improve the city's fortunes, known as *phithi sado khro yai sathan* (พิธีสะเดาะเคราะห์ย้ายสถาน):

> On the 5th of January R.S. 113 [1893], at 4pm, the greater and lesser royals went to the Chao Mueang of Chiang Mai, who asked why they had come. The nobles said that the royals, nobles, lords, and people, all of them, would not let him remain as the Chao Mueang, and that he should leave today. [The Lord replied] I have done nothing wrong. [The royals said] all are agreed that he must leave quickly. [The Lord asked for a reprieve.] Tomorrow, in the very early morning, I will go. On the 6th, at 11pm, the Lord of Chiang Mai got on a palanquin with 20 servants and left the city, by which way no one saw, and exited the city walls through an embrasure/gunslit [*chong puen*]. He stayed at Wat Pa Kluai, at one of the sala, with no set date for him to re-enter the city [*khao wiang*]. [This is a] ritual of the *tu chao* of Wat Pa Kluai, who was the leader [i.e., of the ritual] to remove the bad fortune by relocation [*phithi sado khro yai sathan*]. I asked the royals, who answered that this ritual had not been performed since ancient times, and nobody knew the procedure.[80]

The Siamese commissioner described this event as "an especially unusual ritual."[81] More than a mere curiosity, however, this ritual provides a glimpse into the spatial logic of the city in the nineteenth century. The king resided inside the walled city, or *wiang*, and to "chase him out" amounted to a "reboot" of the kingdom.

79 Wijeyewardene, *Place and Emotion in Northern Thai Ritual Behaviour*, 119.

80 NAT, ม.58/116. Song Suradet to Damrong Rajanubhab, March 30, 1893.

81 NAT, ม.58/116.

Socially, the walls loosely defined the limits of royal, common, and foreign space within the city. Between the inner and outer walls was the space of the diverse ethno-linguistic groups subject to the king, though not of noble or royal lineage, mostly those who had been forcibly resettled during the population raids of Kawila's reign. Anything considered foreign was relegated to the area outside the city walls, where Yunnanese Muslims, overseas Chinese, French Catholics, American Presbyterians, British teak merchants, and Siamese officials would all come to settle by the end of the century, a process described in the following chapters.

Royal Palaces

In the opening paragraph of the published account of his visit to Chiang Mai in 1859, Schomburgk described the city, especially its royal center, in a slightly mocking tone:

> The journey was undertaken to acquire some knowledge of the interior of Siam as far as the city of Xiengmai, called variously Changmai, Zimay, Zumay, and in the inflated language of the Asiatics, by the Burmese, "the City of the Golden Palace," although if such a splendid structure once existed, it must have been swept away, for nothing palatial did I observe in the structure of any of the habitations in that city.[82]

Twenty-two years earlier, McLeod had made similar assessments of the palaces of the ruling elites throughout the region, describing one palace in Lamphun as "a common bamboo building, not superior to that of its neighbors" and another in Chiang Rung as a "miserable place."[83] Though it may not have lived up to Schomburgk's or McLeod's standards, the residence of the reigning king was a central feature of the city throughout its long history, as were the residences of other high-ranking royal-noble elites living in the city. The Finlayson Map discussed above already shows the centrality of the royal residence, at least in the image of Chiang Mai projected to the Siamese and British. The Chiang Mai Chronicle also points to the significance of the palace in the history of the city; besides numerous references to the dwelling of the king in the city center, the chronicle text ends with a description of a new palace built in the center of the city, just

82 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai," 387.

83 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 185–86.

south of the old site.[84] In order to remove any bad luck before occupying the new palace, the king fled the city for seven days, similar to the *phithi sado khro yai sathan* ritual mentioned above.

Compared to their cohort in the later period discussed in detail in Chapter 4, the royal and noble elites lived in relatively modest homes during the early nineteenth century, while much of the country was still recovering from war and dislocation. The Yuan of Chiang Mai and neighboring states used a variety of terms to refer to the homes of the ruling elite. The general term for the residence of a royal or noble is *khum* (คุ้ม), commonly found in the former city-states of Lanna and its neighbors, especially in areas dominated by the Tai Yuan in northern Thailand and the Tai Yai in the Shan States. *Khum* most commonly refers to the residences of the highest-ranking royals, members of the *chao khan ha bai* (เจ้าขันห้าใบ), a five-member ruling council including the king, and, in descending order of status, the Upparat, Ratchabut, Burirat, and Ratchawong.[85] While *khum* can refer to any residence of high-ranking royal or noble elite, *khum luang* (คุ้มหลวง) is a term reserved for the palace of the reigning king. Another term with an almost identical meaning is *ho kham* (หอคำ), which is used throughout the inland constellation to describe the palace of the king.[86] This term is common among the Tai Yuan, Tai Yai, Tai Khoen, Tai Yong, Tai Lu, and even Tai Ahom in Eastern India. These complexes were crucial to the legitimation of royal rule both in the city and in the surrounding rural areas. Calavan calls this the "khum complex," which "involved elaboration and validation of a proper prince's teak palace and compound called a khum."[87] She goes on to say:

> A khum served as a legitimate locus of secular and supernatural authority in a given jurisdiction—whether in a capital city or rural area. In establishing a khum, a prince of northern Thailand was styling his position on the traditional model of Southeast Asian Buddhist kings to the degree his limited resources would allow.[88]

Thus, *khum* were central places that physically represented the legitimate control over an area and its people by a *chao*. In Calavan's case, a single lord dominates a rural rice-producing area south of Chiang Mai. In the city itself,

84 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 206.

85 Withun, *Sathapattayakam Chiang Mai*, 54.

86 In certain areas further afield from Chiang Mai, variations of this term predominate, such as *ho non* or *ho luang* in Assam. See Renu, *Phongsawadan thai Ahom*.

87 Calavan, "Princes and Commoners in Rural Northern Thailand," 75.

88 Calavan, "Princes and Commoners in Rural Northern Thailand," 75.

however, multiple lords with competing and overlapping interests built these complexes within a fairly concentrated area in the middle third of the city. Through most of the nineteenth century, the distribution of royal and noble palaces followed a distinct spatial pattern. The most important palace in Chiang Mai, the *wiang kaew ho kham*, was built by Kawila and could be found in the upper third of the city center, near the city's original *chaiyaphum*. The *wiang kaew* was in fact more than just a palace—it was a walled compound consisting of a *ho kham* and other buildings, as indicated in the Finlayson Map. Kawila's early nineteenth-century successors built their own *khum luang* or *ho kham* in roughly the same area, the central third of the city center, around the large open space known as the *khuang luang* (discussed in greater detail below). The third king of the chao chet ton dynasty, Khamfan (r. 1823–25), built his Khum near the city center, and his successor, Phutthawong (r. 1825–46), built his across from Wat Phra Sing. Later palaces built in the area include the *ho kham* of Mahotaraprathet (r. 1847–54), Kawilorot (r. 1856–70), Inthawichayanon (r. 1873–96), and Inthawarorot (r. 1901–9). High-ranking *chao* who were members of the *chao khan ha bai* or who held other positions of power also built several *khum* in the same area, including the Khum Chao Ratchawong (*Lao Kaew*) and the Khum Chao Burirat (*Chao Kaew Mung Mueang* or *Noi Kaew*). As the area surrounding the *khuang luang* became more crowded, more *chao* began to build palaces in the geographic center of the city. Some *khum* located in this area include the Khum Chao Ratchabut (*Chao Somphanit na Chiang Mai*), Khum Chao Burirat (*Maha-in*), Khum Chao Ratchawong (*Chao Busaba Chomchuen na Chiang Mai*), and Khum Chao Burirat (*No Mueang*).[89] Some *khum* were built in and around the city by nobles from neighboring cities allied to Chiang Mai, who came to live in Chiang Mai along with their followers.[90] Royal-noble elites in Chiang Mai had built palaces in these two areas of the inner city since the founding of the city, and they continued to do so well into the nineteenth century.

This pattern held until the mid-nineteenth century, when several changes to the political and economic environment surrounding Chiang Mai began to break down this spatial logic. The declining threat of warfare lessened the importance of the walled city as a secure area, and increased trade with Bangkok meant that the eastern section of the city extending to the Ping River grew in importance. As a result, several *chao* began to build riverside palaces along the west bank of the Ping River, including the Khum Chedi

89 Withun, *Sathapattayakam Chiang Mai*, 54–62.

90 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 208–9.

Ngam, now the US Consulate in Chiang Mai, and the Khum Chao Inlao (*Praphanphong na Chiang Mai*). The final king of Chiang Mai, Kaew Nawarat, also built his near the Ping River, on a site that is now part of Warorot Market and a Chinese gold shop. Kawilorot gave his *khum tha*, or riverside palace, to his son, Inthawichayanon, upon his marriage to Thepkraison.[91] By the twentieth century, as the old spatial boundaries between royals, commoners, and foreigners weakened, palaces could be found scattered outside the city, including, for example, Darapirom palace in Mae Rim, Khum Rin Kaew (built in the late 1920s) on Huai Kaew Road near the site of the Chiang Mai Orchid Hotel, Khum Chao Ratchabut na Chiang Mai, and, by 1961, Phuping Palace near the top of Doi Suthep.[92]

Markets

From very early times, markets have been integral to the structure of Tai *mueang*. As Ratanaporn Sethakul points out:

> When Phya Mangrai chose the location for Wiang Kum Kam, he built a market that would be convenient for the people coming there to trade. When he noticed that the villagers who came to trade there faced difficulty, always having to cross the river by boat [...] he decided to build a bridge across the river. When he built Chiang Mai, he built a market at the same time.[93]

By the fourteenth century, Chiang Mai had at least three markets: one at the northern edge of the city (*hua wiang*), one in the city center (*klang wiang*), and one outside the eastern city wall at the *chiang rueak* (*tha phae*) gate.[94] Evidence suggests that by the early nineteenth century, two of these had survived and prospered under Kawila's restoration: *klang wiang* and *tha phae*. The origins of the Klang Wiang Market could be traced back to the Mangrai dynasty. This market extended from the front of Wat Phra Sing to the Bodhi tree in the center of the city.[95] This market area likely expanded into the open space of the *khuang luang* as well. The other main market extended

91 Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 29.

92 Withun, *Sathapattayakam Chiang Mai*, 54–62.

93 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 123, n. 160.

94 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 98.

95 NAT ม.58/126. Damrong Rajanuphab, "Rueang talat thi mueang Chiang Mai: krommuen Damrongrachanuphap krap bangkhom thun ratchakan thi 5," April 24, 1900. See also Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 231.

from the old *chiang rueak* gate and followed Tha Phae Road between the outer city gates and the Ping River. Though this market began much earlier in Chiang Mai's history, it almost certainly grew in importance after the mid-sixteenth century, when the outer walls were built, formally extending the eastern section of the town toward the river.

These two markets were more than simple centers of long-distance trade and local produce. The *klang wiang* market, for example, was associated with the royal center of the city and the kingdom. This market was also known as *li chiang* market, *li* being an old Yuan word for market, and *chiang* referring to the city itself. The original name for Wat Phra Sing was Wat Li Chiang Phra, or "the temple of the city market." The origins of this important *wat* can be traced to a *chedi* that Phya Phayu (r. 1336–55) built to house the remains of his father, Phya Khamfu (r. 1334–36). Shortly thereafter, the temple itself was founded. During the reign of Saen Mueang Ma (r. 1385–1401), the Phra Sing Buddha image (*phra phuttha sihing*) was brought to the temple, which then changed its name to Wat Phra Sing. In this way, the market was linked to the sacred legitimacy of the kings of the Mangrai dynasty. The market was important to the royal family in more prosaic ways as well; in pure financial terms, members of the royalty and nobility earned a substantial portion of their wealth from their control of various economic activities, including long-distance trade and control of local markets.[96] Finally, legend and fate bound this market to the fate of the king: in 1317 Mangrai died in the *klang wiang* market. Today there is a shrine to Mangrai, who has become a guardian spirit to the city, near the site where some sources say he was struck down by lightning.[97] The Chiang Mai Chronicle itself simply says that "he passed on to the next world with the fruits of his actions, dying in the Chiang Mai market, in the middle of the city, in s. 679, a *müang sai* year (1317/18)."[98] Through the mechanisms of legitimacy, profit, and legend, the *klang wiang* market was inextricably tied to the kings of Chiang Mai.

The *tha phae* market meant more to the urban space of Chiang Mai than simply a place of economic exchange; located along the road entering the front of the city, the *tha phae* market area was in a very real sense the face of the city, at least for outsiders who came to visit or trade. Though one of

96 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 243.

97 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 105; Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 69. Mangrai died in either 1511 or 1517, according to Penth. There is a shrine to the spirit of Mangrai near the city center, but it is now located behind a shophouse. A newer shrine has been erected for public worship at the actual intersection.

98 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 54.

these visitors, Captain McLeod, described the market in 1837 as merely a "tolerable bazar,"[99] this market, located along the road leading into the city from the river where mule caravans from Yunnan and riverboats from Siam converged and unloaded their cargo, reflected Chiang Mai's role as a node in larger regional networks of trade and tribute.

Importantly, these morning markets in Chiang Mai were temporary. Early in the morning, the open space provided by the two largest east-west roads were occupied by mostly female merchants, who sold fruits, vegetables, various forms of dried or preserved fish, betel nut, tobacco, lime, and beef. Pork was sold by males.[100] In later years, Chinese and Burmese merchants built shophouses and storefronts in the area behind the rows of women selling their goods along these roadside markets. In the early nineteenth century, however, the market was the road and the open spaces along it, rather than any permanent structure or space.

The mostly female merchants streaming into Chiang Mai every morning also represented a physical connection between hinterland and center. In this sense, these markets, both *klang wiang* and *tha phae*, embodied the relationship between Chiang Mai and its hinterland through the everyday flow of people and goods, a flow made possible by productive agricultural land and forests, the centrality of the city, and infrastructure of roads and trails focusing on the city.

As will be discussed below, major economic shifts in the region began to impact the material foundation of royal rule in Chiang Mai, the relationship between cities, long connected by overland caravans and long-distance river traders, and finally, the urban space within the city, as market spaces became contested spaces (see Chapter 4).

Waterways

The management and flow of water was crucial to the well-being of Chiang Mai, from its foundation to the nineteenth century. Sarasawadee points out that of the seven elements of the city's *chaiyaphum*, four concerned water:

4. The western topography was high and sloped down toward the east.
5. The Mae Kha Stream flowed down from Doi Suthep, circled the town, and flowed towards Wiang Kum Kam.

99 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 309.

100 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 233–34; See also, for example, Bock, *Temples and Elephants*, 229–30; Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 309.

6. There was a large reservoir in the northeast where the animals could drink.
7. The Ping River flows to the east of the city of Chiang Mai.[101]

The streams flowing east from the foothills of Doi Suthep, including the Huai Kaew and Mae Kha, originally embraced the city, forming a natural moat. In later years, canals were built directing this flow into two moats, one surrounding the inner wall and another around the outer *kamphaeng din*. City residents created small reservoirs and irrigation channels designed to manage this easterly flow of water and mitigate the risk of flood. But the restored Chiang Mai of Kawila and his early nineteenth-century successors contained more than major moats and canals; the interior of the inner walled city was filled with canals and waterways, as McLeod noted in 1837: "The inner fort is abundantly watered by watercourses intersecting it in all directions, the water being brought down from the hill, entering the ditch and fort at the northwest angle."[102]

Larger reservoirs also helped to provide a buffer against drought and flood in Chiang Mai. The best known of these was the Nong Bua Chet Ko, often referred to simply as Nong Bua in nineteenth-century accounts, which was located to the northeast of the city and remained in place until the mid-twentieth century.[103] The importance of hydraulic infrastructure for Chiang Mai was noted in several chronicles: "In any year that Nong Bua Chet Ko lacked water, the city suffered. If Huai Kaeo had no flowing water that emptied into the city moat and one couldn't hear the roar of waterfalls at night, the city suffered."[104]

The prominence of the Nong Bua may have contributed to one of the earliest misperceptions of Chiang Mai in the Western world. Many maps of Asia from the mid-sixteenth to the early nineteenth century show a giant lake somewhere in the interior of Southeast Asia, named Chiamay, Cayamay, or some other variant of Chiang Mai and which was thought to be the source of several Southeast Asian rivers.[105] The idea of a great Chiang

101 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 61.

102 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 308.

103 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 62.

104 *Tamnan phuen mueang lanna Chiang Mai*, cited in Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 62.

105 See, for example, Brown, "Cayamay Lactus – Apocryphal Source of the Five Great River Systems of Southeast Asia." While the ubiquity of the Chiang Mai lake says more about western cartographic fantasies than Chiang Mai itself, there are two points to be drawn from this imaginary lake. First, this highlights the remoteness of Chiang Mai from the coastal regions that were much more exposed to western influence. Second, while speculative, the development

Mai Lake can be traced back to 1542–43, when a Portuguese captain named Antonio de Faria y Sousa sailed through the Gulf of Siam and recorded the earliest report of the Chiamay Lacus. Two years later the idea was picked up by Fernão Mendes Pinto, a Portuguese explorer of somewhat dubious reputation who published his account.[106] From that point until the late eighteenth century, the idea of an inland lake as the source of four or five rivers, including the Irrawaddy, Salween, and Chao Phraya, persisted. Though it is of course unknown exactly how this particular cartographic misnomer was born, certain observers visiting Chiang Mai in the nineteenth century were free to speculate:

> On the north-eastern angle of the town is an extensive marshy ground. During the rainy season it forms a large expanse of water which has given rise to the accounts that prevailed in the 17th and 18th century, that it was a large lake something like the fabled lake of Parince of the western continent, a kind of Caspian, and that the Menam flowed out of it.[107]

Whether Schomburgk was correct in attributing the legendary Chiang Mai Lake to the Nong Bua is impossible to say, as there are other candidates in the inland regions upriver from the coastal ports where stories of an inland lake would have circulated. The most obvious possible candidate, for example, might have been the much larger Phayao Lake. In any case, by the mid-nineteenth century when Schomburgk was writing, the idea of a Chiang Mai Lake had been thoroughly disproven and abandoned.

The lake may have been a myth, but one of the rivers that mistakenly stemmed from it on early maps was critically important to Chiang Mai, both in its connection to the coast and in the urban space of the city. Traders began plying the route from Ayutthaya and other "southern cities" to Chiang Mai in long scorpion-tailed boats (*ruea hang malaengpong*) centuries

of this idea shows the overlapping subjectivity of Chiang Mai within the regional political context. The information that turned into the mythical lake would have reached Portuguese ears in the coastal ports of Burma and Siam. In either context, Chiang Mai would have simply been an "inland" or "interior" state. In ports near the mouths of the Irrawaddy, Salween, or Chao Phraya River, somehow the knowledge that Chiang Mai was far upriver likely gave rise to the misapprehension that a single site was the source for all these rivers. In short, the "Chiamay Lacus" can be seen as a metaphor for Chiang Mai's interior-ness vis-à-vis the many coastal ports of mainland Southeast Asia.

106 Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*.

107 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai," 396.

before Kawila; such trade and communication by river likely originated during the Mon period, with contact between Haripunchai and Lavo. By the nineteenth century, the Ping River had become an important highway of trade and transport between Chiang Mai and other cities, especially those to the south and toward the coast. River traders would often venture between Chiang Mai and Pak Nampho, or modern Nakorn Sawan, where the river systems of northern Thailand converge to form the Chao Phraya River; some would extend their routes all the way to Bangkok. In the city, several docking locations had been established by the nineteenth century, located on both banks of the river but between the *chedi kio* (เจดีย์กิว), near the present-day US Consulate building, which the boatmen used as a marker for the end of the route.[108]

Though Chiang Mai was never "the Venice of the East," as Bangkok was known to the West, the flow of water from west to east and from north to south was critical to the economic success and security of the city. This flow of water was crucial for defense, for agriculture, and for transportation and trade. Though there is little evidence for large-scale urban transportation via canals as in Bangkok, the Ping River served as a main artery of communication with nearby cities and towns and with Siam to the south, while the network of canals, channels, and streams provided some measure of protection from yearly floods, a steady supply of water, and an important element of the defensive fortification for the city.

Roads, Tracks, and Paths

While waterways provided important connections between Chiang Mai, its immediate hinterland, the coastal economies of the Mon-Khmer and Siamese worlds to the south, and overland routes and roads were critically important in connecting Chiang Mai to the inland constellation of states. This is illustrated clearly in Figure 3.4, one half of a map composed in 1870 by two local scholars for a British official in Burma, which shows the numerous roads and paths between Chiang Mai and neighboring villages and cities, including Lamphun, Chiang Rai, and Lampang. These were not permanent roads but rather represented basic routes and trails connecting these cities and towns. Regionally speaking, the most important connections were the trails of the caravan trade. These trails crossed the valleys surrounding the lowland states and the mountains that separated them, from the Shan states and Assam to the west; Kengtung and Jinghong to the north; Phrae, Nan, and

108 Chusit, *Phokha Ruea Hang Malaengpong*.

Luang Prabang to the west; and to other towns and villages along the way. These tracks were not permanent, as the annual monsoons washed away all traces, but certain routes were well known and re-tread by caravans of porters, mules, or elephants from season to season. Within the immediate hinterland, tracks plied by oxcarts wound through rice fields in the dry season, when overland travel was possible, and connected Chiang Mai to the agriculturally rich villages of the surrounding basin. This oxcart in particular was crucial to the economic life of Chiang Mai even after the arrival of the railroad and automobile and was used well into the 1960s. Within the city, roads and streets also played an important economic role. First, and most obviously, these roads facilitated the movement of people and goods in and out of the city. The main roads of the city served another important economic function as well by providing the space for the aforementioned *tha phae* and *klang wiang* markets. Both of these markets were located on and along the major east-west streets of the city, as well as along intersecting roads in the city center.

The street was crucial for the shape and life of the city. In the words of architectural historian Spiro Kostof, "[t]he only legitimacy of the street is as a public space. Without it, there is no city."[109] In addition to the two basic economic roles noted above, streets in the city proper also served an important ritual function, especially during times of royal ceremony and crisis. The most notable example of this use of Chiang Mai streets is during the grand royal processions into the city, which often marked the ascent to the throne of a new king, especially outsiders from other *mueang*, such as Setthathirat in 1547 and Kawila in 1796 (see above). There are other examples of the road as sacred space. The long poem *Khrao so sang thanon nai mueang Chiang Mai* details the building of the road around the city, connecting each of the four corners of the inner city wall.[110] Composed during the reign of Inthawichayanon, this poem details the ritual requirements of this undertaking—precise offerings to be made at the four corners, the deities to be worshipped (Indra, guardian spirits, etc.), as well as the more prosaic threat of drunken thieves who might steal any offerings of food left overnight. This poem reflects the importance that the building of certain roads—in this case, those connecting the corners of the inner city—held for both king and city. Finally, although there are clear practical reasons for those outside the city to live near a

109 Kostof, *The City Assembled*, 194.

110 Saenphrommawohan, *Khrao Doi Suthep; lae Khrao so sang thanon nai Mueang Chiang Mai*, 25–44.

major road, there appears to be an ideological motivation here as well, as Richard Davis pointed out in his study of a village in Nan province. According to Richard Davis, whereas personal space "is classified as left or right," political space in Yuan culture "is classified according to distance from the centres of culture and political power, along a continuum from the towns, through the villages, and into the forested wilderness."[111] Settlements, he argues, are conceptually arranged in a hierarchy running from villages (*mu ban*) to towns (*wiang*), and finally to the *mueang*, which can refer to "either a town or a political hierarchy of towns and villages with a single town at the apex."[112] In Davis's words, "[l]iving next to a road means being civilized: in spite of the added noise, dust, and exposure to petty theft, by living next to a road people are brought closer to the 'glory of the muang.'"[113]

What did this mean for the morphology of the city? The major roads in the city were relatively wide and straight and tended to connect important landmarks of the city, such as city gates or important temples. In 1837 McLeod described the roads of the city, highlighting what for him were the primary roads (see dashed lines in Figure 2.2):

> One main street runs from the gate near the north-east bastion of the exterior fort [the outer earthen wall] to the gate in the eastern face of the main fort. From this gate again a road runs to the opposite gate in the western face; about half way between these gates a road runs at right angles to the northward, to the White Elephant Gate in that face [*chang phueak* gate], and also one to the southward (inclining a little to the eastward), about half way between the cross roads and western gate; another road runs to the outer gate in the southern face of the fort.[114]

There were other roads as well, especially those leading from the gates of the inner wall to those in the outer wall, from the northeast and southeast corners to the river, and along much of the riverbank.

Besides these larger, mostly straight roads, much of the city was filled in with lanes and paths that circulated around the various houses, temples, and

111 Davis, *Muang Metaphysics*, 81.
112 Davis, *Muang Metaphysics*, 82.
113 Davis, *Muang Metaphysics*, 84.
114 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 308.

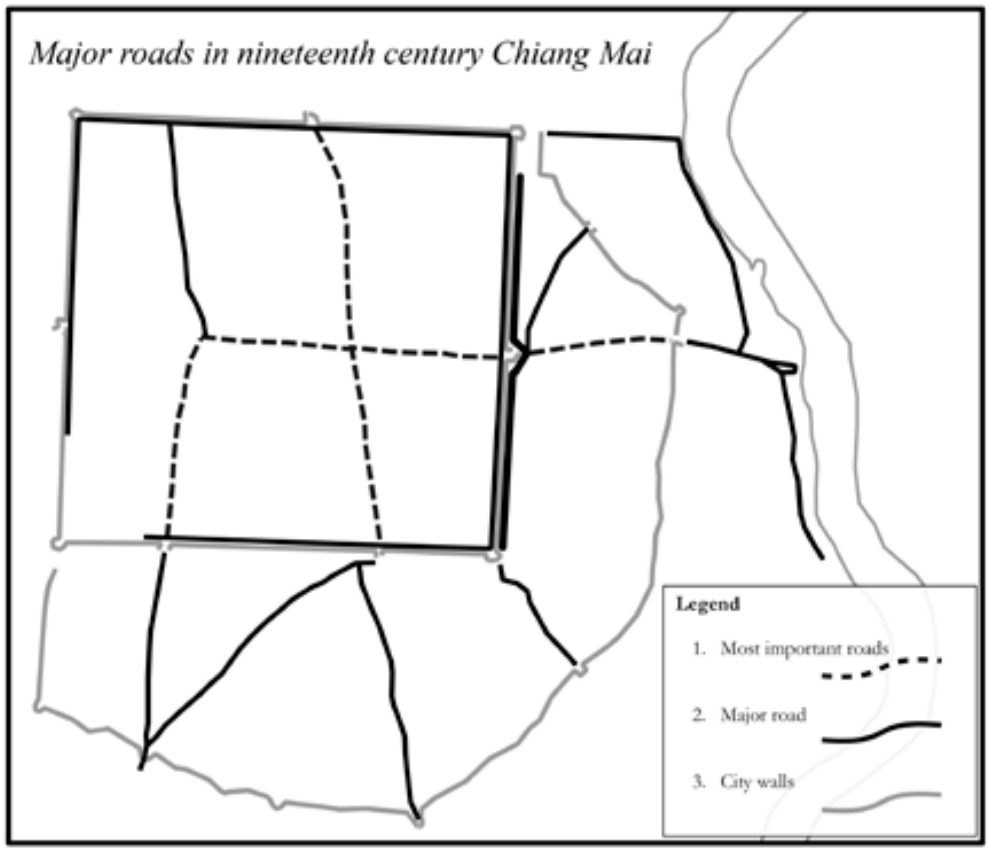

Figure 2.2 Major roads in nineteenth-century Chiang Mai.
(Source: Produced by author based on 1886 Map of Chiang Mai [NAT ผ.ม.35] and other documents and maps held at the National Archives of Thailand and the Church of Christ in Thailand Archives in Chiang Mai.)

royal landholdings of the city center. Spatially, these roads may be differentiated from the major thoroughfares in a simple but important way. The small lanes that fill in much of the old city were made up of the space between other spaces, between homes, temples, royal gardens, and shophouses. The major roads, however, especially those described by McLeod, were spaces defined by their activity and their ritual significance for the city and its ruler. Roads, streets, and paths not only facilitated the movement of people and goods; some also served ideological and ritual roles for the city as well, either by transmitting the barami of the center to the hinterland or by marking the ritual space of royal procession and possession. But the form, function, and ideological role of streets and roads would change significantly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a subject discussed in Chapter 4.

Wat and Monuments

The overall impression of Western visitors to Chiang Mai focused on the city walls and the Buddhist monuments, known as *chedi*, which shaped the skyline. In 1859 Robert H. Schomburgk, the British Consul-General in Bangkok, recorded his first impressions upon entering Chiang Mai:

> On approaching the city, I saw a number of peculiarly shaped towers, evidently built of bricks, and so odd in appearance that it seemed they had been standing there for centuries, without any person caring whether they might fall down, or be taken possession of by a tropical vegetation, which had already covered them with twiners and creepers. These towerlets are Phratshedees, the topes of Buddhist architecture.[115]

Captain McLeod, when viewing Chiang Mai from Doi Suthep, made a similar observation:

> We could not distinguish a single house for the number of cocoa nut and betel nut trees which fill the town, the old ruined pagoda, before mentioned, in the center of it, Zedi Luang (or Great Zedi) alone was visible.[116]

The proliferation of *chedi* in the urban landscape noted by McLeod and Schomburgk highlights the social and political importance of sacred space in premodern Chiang Mai. Some scholars draw a sharp line between secular and sacred architecture; Kostof, for example, argues that "[u]ntil the coming of the secular state, [...] the dominant accent of the skyline was the architecture of sacred buildings."[117] Clearly, in the mid-nineteenth century, sacred structures dominated Chiang Mai's skyline.

The primary religious structure in Buddhist Siam or Lanna was, and still is, the *wat* (วัด), which is most often translated as "temple" or "monastery." These two terms, however, do not accurately reflect the definition and function of these spaces for Chiang Mai under Mangrai, under Kawila, or even today. A useful definition of a *wat* is provided by Worrasit Tantinipankul, who summarizes this complex and important space as "a bounded group of religious structures that must at least have the holy space of ubosot or an

115 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai," 389.
116 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 307.
117 Kostof, *The City Shaped*, 288–90.

ordination hall for completing ecclesiastical rituals, a shrine and a living monastery."[118] More than a single place of worship, the *wat* is therefore a complex set of spaces and structures that connect monastic and communal life and often defines both. Some *wat* contain significant images of the Buddha that serve as palladia for the state, while others house important spirit shrines or monuments, such as the *inthakhin* pillar at Wat Chedi Luang in Chiang Mai. The space thus serves both the needs of the lay population for various rituals and services and provides the monastic community with a place to live and study and the means to support themselves through the lay community.

Chiang Mai was particularly notable for the number of *wat* within its walls. McLeod noted that according to the "chief priest [...] there were 75 monasteries, or residences for priests [...] in the town alone, occupied by 344 priests, who, in the whole of his jurisdiction, amount to about 2,000, exclusive of probationers."[119] Here McLeod is referring to temples within the inner city wall, where temple space was closely associated with royal power. Wat Phra Sing, originally known as Wat Li Chiang Phra, changed its name once Saen Mueang Ma brought the important *phra phuttha sihing* to Chiang Mai and had it installed in the temple. Wat Chedi Luang was renovated to serve as a monumental center for the city in 1448, and in 1468 the famous Emerald Buddha image was enshrined in a niche on the eastern side of what McLeod calls the "Great Zedi." Years later, under Kawila, the *inthakhin* pillar was moved to the temple as well, thereby combining multiple layers of belief in one central space. These and many other temples had explicit ties to royalty, and the most important were included in rituals such as the *suep chata mueang* ceremony to prolong the life of the city, or royal processions into the city.

Wat were also important for the wider population and often formed the focal point for smaller, more remote village communities throughout Chiang Mai's hinterland. For peasants and war captives in and around the city, for example, the major pilgrimage center and holy site was not in the inner city but rather Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep. In the urban space of nineteenth-century Chiang Mai, *wat* retained their function as a central, communal space for many of the communities forcibly taken from elsewhere in the inland constellation and resettled in the city's so-called "suburbs." Michael Vatikiotis notes the importance of the "ritual symbolism" of Chiang Mai's sacred spaces, including *wat*, "to the nature and distribution of social

118 Worrasit, "Modernization and Urban Monastic Space in Rattanakosin City," 24.

119 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 300–301.

groups within the city as it developed in the 19th century."[120] When Kawila led raids to capture and resettle groups in his new capital, entire villages and communities were taken. In the nineteenth century, many of these communities could be mapped based on the affiliation of the local *wat*. The *wat* outside the inner city wall include a variety of ethnic groups: Shan from Mueang Sat, Pan, and Phu; Burmese; Lue from Sipsongpanna; Khoen from Kengtung; Yuan from Chiang Saen, Mon, and Pa O (Tongsu).[121]

Morphologically, *wat* fulfilled a variety of roles in the city, at times serving as focal point for royal rituals or festivities, while at other times simply serving as an open space for common communal activities. The multifunctionality of *wat* and their importance meant their proliferation in nineteenth-century Chiang Mai. Many *wat* had been abandoned in the aftermath of war with Burma and the depopulation of the city. The efforts of Kawila to restore the city and its sacred spaces and the subsequent expansion of the royal and noble families in Chiang Mai brought more patrons and, by extension, more *wat* to the inner core of the city. Likewise, the repopulation of the city meant the proliferation of *wat* in ethnic suburbs both inside and outside the outer earthen wall. During the relative peace and stability of the mid-nineteenth century, these *wat* could prosper. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, once the political and economic balance began to shift in Chiang Mai, many of these *wat* found it difficult to survive. Yet their ideological importance for the city and its people would remain well into the twentieth century, when such spaces would become fertile ground for conflict and contestation between local monks and the Siamese state.

Khuang

Another key element in Chiang Mai's urban space is defined by its lack of built structure that exists primarily as an open space. Many early Western observers noted that provincial Siamese towns often appeared imbalanced, with large empty spaces in the fortified city center. Based on her study of the general form and layout of provincial Siamese towns in the nineteenth century, Pornpun Futrakul points out that this "imbalanced layout" was in fact planned and not evidence of a settlement's decline.[122] As the threat of

120 Vatikiotis, "Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiangmai," 44.

121 Vatikiotis, "Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiangmai," 47. See also Aroonrut and Grabowsky, "Ethnic Groups in Chiang Mai by the Turn of the Twentieth Century."

122 See Pornpun, "The Environmental History of Pre-Modern Provincial Towns in Siam to 1910," 52–60.

warfare abated over the course of the nineteenth century, settlements grew mostly along riverbanks, which provided access to trade and communications with other villages, towns, and cities. Thus, Western observers at times commented on the contrast between the densely populated areas outside a city's walls and the relative emptiness within the central fortifications, and they often concluded that the fortunes of the city had declined from an imagined glorious past, when the inner city would have been densely packed with buildings and people. Rather, the oft-cited notion of manpower control being more important than land in Southeast Asia helps to correct this misapprehension. The fortified centers of towns and cities were often deliberately designed to be large to accommodate the marshaling of troops and the defense of the population in times of war or siege. During times of relative peace, much of the population would naturally settle outside the city walls and closer to the waterways that provided access to the outside world; during times of war, people had the option of fleeing or congregating inside the city walls.

In the cities of Lanna, these open spaces are called *khuang*, and the central *khuang* associated with a royal city was called *khuang luang*. Suraphon Damrikul identifies the *khuang* as one of several primary sacro-spatial elements found in Lanna cities: *lak mueang*, *ming mueang*, *phra mahathat klang mueang*, and *khuang mueang*.[123] Suraphon points out that the large *khuang mueang* open space in the center of the city was used not only for defensive or martial purposes but also for various festivals or ceremonies of state. Written references to the *khuang mueang* of Chiang Mai can be found as far back as the reign of Phya Kaew (r. 1495–1525). The area comprising the *khuang mueang* of Chiang Mai is marked at present by Wat Hua Khuang, located just inside the city walls, near the northern (*chang phueak*) city gate. This area would most likely have extended from the area around this temple, south toward the city center, where the Three Kings Monument is located today. This space was used for mustering troops, as mentioned above, and for state or official functions. For example, several coronations are known to have taken place in the *khuang luang* of Chiang Mai, including Phaya Kaew in 1520[124] and Phaya Ketchettarat in 1526.[125] Through the historical development of Chiang Mai city, however, the changing political and economic context served to reduce the size and functional scope of this

123 Suraphon, *Khuang Mueang Lae Wat Hua Khuang*, ch. 4.

124 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 106.

125 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 108.

space.[126] After Kawila's restoration of the city, parts of the *khuang mueang* were parceled off and used for the residences of the ruling royal and noble elites of the city (the *ho kham* and *khum chanai*) discussed above.

As Chapter 4 will discuss, much of the former *khuang luang* area also became an administrative center, and once the fortunes of the *chao* began to decline, many of the areas in and around the old *khuang* were sold off and converted to shophouses or put to other commercial use.[127] After the Siamese began integrating Chiang Mai into the modern *thesaphiban* (เทศาภิบาล) system of provincial government, many parts of the *khuang mueang* were used for places of administration, and residences and lands belonging to local lords and noble were later sold off. Today the only remaining remnant of the old *khuang luang* in Chiang Mai is the open area between the Chiang Mai Arts and Culture Center and the district courthouse across the street. Moreover, in the twentieth century, the loss of these open spaces became keenly felt and continues to animate discussions around the future of the city center;[128] even today, the central *khuang* of the city is a site of contestation and debate, as discussed in the conclusion.

The Overall City

Chiang Mai may be viewed as the product of the individual elements discussed above—the walls, streets, canals, palaces, markets, and open spaces of the city. However, it is also, as the cliché goes, more than the sum of its parts. In short, the city can also be imagined as a whole in a variety of ways: an artifact of royal prestige and power, a product of planning and design, a living, anthropomorphic entity, a collection of social divisions, and an extended system of sacred political power.

Perhaps most relevant for Kawila and his successors, the entire city was an artifact, a form of royal regalia inscribed and built upon the landscape. Within the city, various spaces and objects make up the symbols of kingship, such as the various Buddha images, the *inthakhin* pillar, or the royal palace. However, the city *as a whole* can also be seen as a royal artifact, made up of all the elements discussed above, which all serve as testament to the prowess of the king, his ability to maintain order, and his authority to rule. The inscription of a city plan into the landscape, primarily in the original rectangular city plan established by the three kings—Mangrai, Ngam

126 Suraphon, *Khuang Mueang Lae Wat Hua Khuang*, 149.
127 Suraphon, *Khuang Mueang Lae Wat Hua Khuang*, 149.
128 See also Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*, 139–42.

Mueang, and Phya Ruang—make the city plan itself a spatial component of royal regalia. This concept has deep historical roots in Tai textual traditions. According to one chronicle, the founder of Mangrai's royal lineage, the legendary Lawacangkarat, "constructed a very extensive country and built farms and fields, markets and walls, for example, paddy fields, gardens, and weirs and canals, to adorn his country."[129] The language here strongly suggests the idea of the kingdom, including the various elements of urban space, as a symbol and sign of royal power.

That the city as a whole works to prove royal power and legitimacy is in part because it was planned by kings, a message conveyed textually through chronicles and visually in the Three Kings Monument currently located in the city center.[130] The three kings were essentially the city's first planning commission, applying a basic set of planning principles to the environmental and social context of late thirteenth-century inland Southeast Asia (see discussion in Chapter 1). The expansion and contraction of the city under successive dynasties undoubtedly involved additional planning, and by the nineteenth century, repopulation under Kawila and his successors required renewed attention to planning, resulting in a sort of zoning that socially divided the city between royals and nobles in the center, outsiders by the river, and those forcibly resettled in the middle. These divisions suggest another way of viewing the city, namely as a series of neighborhoods, differentiated by ethnic origin and class. In other words, the form of the city as a whole both shapes and is shaped by the distribution of distinct groups. Michael Vatikiotis points out that in the inland cities of Lanna, "spatial planning [...] highlights [...] the importance attached to the separation of different groups in the traditional urban social structure."[131] Spatial differentiation came at times in the form of function (e.g., economic vs. religious space), and at others in terms of ethnic difference (e.g., Shan neighborhoods north of the city wall, Burmese near the southeast corner). Thus, we can see the city as a collection of zones and divisions, the most obvious being those marked by city walls.

While planning could divide, there were also many ways of imagining the city as a unified whole. The notion of the city as a human organism, following the contested *thaksa mueang* tradition mentioned earlier in this chapter, is one example.[132] Not only does this anthropomorphic notion of the

129 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 6–7.

130 Easum, "Sculpting and Casting Memory and History in a Northern Thai City."

131 Vatikiotis, "Ethnic Pluralism in the Northern Thai City of Chiangmai," 41.

132 It should be noted that this concept, as applied to South and Southeast Asian cities, differs from that discussed by scholars of Western cities such as Kostof, who argues that cities have been seen as human organisms largely since "the rise of modern biology, the science of life."

city give it a human form; it also provides the city with a horoscope just as an individual might have, and this horoscope identifies certain directions as more or less auspicious and assigns particular values to these directions. Beyond the horoscope, the space of the city itself may be imagined as a reflection of the human form, with the head to the north, the feet to the south, and arms extending east and west.[133] The assignment of human characteristics to the city in some ways helped to impose a single, unified identity on an otherwise diverse social and political space. With lords and nobles living in the central core of the city, merchants traveling to and from all directions, and ethnically diverse urban villages scattered outside the inner square, the anthropomorphic city can be seen as a unification of urban space through identification with the human form. However, in practice, the anthropomorphic city was equally used to spatially differentiate urban functions and qualities; by associating areas of the city with different areas of the body, this way of seeing the urban landscape is more about differentiation of use than unification of form.[134] As there are high and low parts of the body, so there are high and low parts of the city.

Other important elements of Chiang Mai's nineteenth-century urban space can be found outside the city altogether. This follows from the flexible definition of *mueang* in Tai urban culture, discussed in Chapter 1, which encompasses the city but refers to the extended space of civilized, settled territory. Thus, what constitutes the logic of urban space in the nineteenth century extends beyond the city to include the sacred landscape of mountains, and the chronicle texts place Chiang Mai at the center of an extended system of sacred, civilized *mueang* space.

Sacred mountains were crucial to the power of Chiang Mai and to Kawila and his successors. It is easy to see how mountains could dominate the sacred landscape of power in Thailand's urban north. As Swearer observes:

> Mountains embody awesome power. They simultaneously harbor the primordial guardians of the land and symbolize the axis of both cosmology

Though the case of Chiang Mai does not view elements of the city in biological terms (e.g., parks as lungs, streets as veins, etc.), the scheme outlined here is the result of a distinctly Asian "science of life," based in part on astrology, politics, and more recognizable elements of urban planning. See Kostof, *The City Shaped*, 52–53.

133 There is a similar tradition in South Asia, *vashtu purusha*, where the spirit of the city is aligned with the idealized form of the city. See Sachdev and Tillotson, *Building Jaipur*, 45.

134 See Withun, *Sathapattayakam Chiang Mai*, 10; and Sarassawadee, "The Plan of Chiang Mai City: Concepts and Local Knowledge," 55–57.

> and the state. For this reason, mountains also figure prominently into Buddhist conceptions of kingship.[135]

For this reason, Kawila paid much attention to sacred mountains. Sometimes, this involved royal visits to restore or support Buddhist reliquaries associated with mountains, such as Kawila's aforementioned visit to Doi Suthep in 1788.[136]

Moreover, this era also saw the copying or composition of several texts in the *tamnan* tradition that sought both to relate the legendary founding of Chiang Mai and create a sacred landscape centered on the city and king. For example, the chronicles mentioned in connection with the Lawa in Chapter 1, such as the Suwankhamdaeng Chronicle, refer to legendary events preceding the historical foundation of the city in 1296 but were produced during the Kawila period. This particular chronicle relates the story of Chao Luang Kham Daeng, the "ghostly founder of the North," his pursuit of a golden deer, and his ultimate end at the hands of the demon In Lao. In doing so, however, it also creates a sort of mystical map of the *mueang* that connects Chiang Mai with Doi Suthep and especially Doi Chiang Dao, the final resting place and spiritual abode of Kham Daeng.[137]

The sacred landscape created by this text and the popular traditions surrounding it is useful to the rulers of Chiang Mai in that it offers a channel between the supernatural power of the mountains and the city that could be used to recharge the city in times of crisis. Indeed, this is precisely what happens with the *suep chata mueang* (enhancing the fate of the city) ceremony, historically performed only in times of crisis. Today, however, the connection is clear:

> Before the ritual, city workers stretch a string from Doi Chiang Dao to Chiang Mai, circling around each gate and corner and also resting atop the Inthakin, thus recognizing the mountain's peak as the fount of sacred power that, once linked to Chiang Mai via the white thread, can be used to recharge the city's charisma.[138]

The city is thus connected to the power of the sacred mountains that surround the city. While today the string represents this connection

135 Swearer, Sommai, and Phaithoon, *Sacred Mountains of Northern Thailand*, 21.
136 Wyatt and Aroonrut, *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 158.
137 Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*, 55–60.
138 Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City,* 59.

of the city to the region, the texts produced in the Kawila era laid the foundations for that connection. In the nineteenth century, the surrounding sacred landscape was a crucial element in the logic of Chiang Mai's urban space.

These different ways of thinking about the city as a whole—as royal artifact or regalia, as a planned urban space, as a human organism, as a collection of neighborhoods and ethno-economic clusters, or as a focal point in an extensive sacred landscape—ebbed and flowed over the course of the city's history. Under Mangrai, the city was planned and also served as its own form of royal regalia. Only in later centuries, likely after years of contact with Burma, did the notion of the anthropomorphic city take hold. The city could have been interpreted as a collection of spatially differentiated ethno-economic clusters during the Mangrai dynasty, but in Kawila's Chiang Mai, this way of seeing the city became essential. Nevertheless, by the early nineteenth century, the city could be imagined in all these ways—and likely more that have been left out of this discussion. This was how royals, nobles, residents, and visitors from hinterland, region, and beyond would have understood the city. While the individual elements of urban space saw both dramatic and subtle changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so did the image of the city as a whole, as discussed in the proceeding chapters.

Conclusion

Urban space in early nineteenth-century Chiang Mai crystallized under Kawila, who imposed on the city a particular urban logic, forged of both new and old elements and uniquely suited to the political, environmental, and social context of the time. The urban elements discussed in this chapter—the city walls, roads, waterways, markets, palaces, religious monuments, as well as sacred landscape within and beyond the city—would find themselves transformed in one way or another over the course of the nineteenth century as the balance of power shifted between the Burmese, Siamese, Yuan, and eventually British. Before looking more closely at the transformation of the city's urban space in Chapters 4 and 5, the next chapter examines the regional context of political and economic change that brought these forces to bear on Chiang Mai.

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Abbreviations

NAT	National Archives of Thailand	
	มท	Ministry of the Interior
	ยธ	Ministry of Public Works

ศธ Ministry of Education
ศร Prime Minister's Office
ค Treasury
ผ Map Collection

RGS Royal Geographical Society
MR Map Room

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3 The Region Transformed

Forests and Foreigners and State Formation in Chiang Mai and "The North"

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the shifting balance of power in the region that brought British and Siamese interests to the region, which simultaneously a) transformed the space of Chiang Mai's hinterland from the property of the king to commercial commodities to be exploited for profit and political leverage and b) reoriented trade and travel away from overland routes in favor of travel via the rivers of the north, which flowed through Bangkok. As this watershed was crossed, new patterns of regional exchange brought new populations to the city, transforming local patterns of production and trade and in so doing created a new economic center of gravity that would eventually challenge the validity of the traditional city center.

Keywords: Cooperative colonialism, informal empire, unequal treaty, forestry, missionaries

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Chiang Mai emerged from the eighteenth century as a restored city, the center of a vassal state owing tribute and alliance to neighboring Siam. Lanna had been revived, though within a new regional context of tribute and trade increasingly dominated by Bangkok. Kawila and his successors were politically autonomous within Chiang Mai and its hinterland, as were the lords and kings ruling over neighboring city-states, though a good deal of their legitimacy derived from their relationship with the new dynasty in Bangkok.

The political and economic relationship between the emerging and expanding Siamese state, on one hand, and the inland constellation of city-states formerly subject to Burma, on the other, remained relatively

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stable through the first half of the nineteenth century. The regional context began to change dramatically, however, during the second half of that century. This chapter outlines the broad context of this transformation, in essence providing a wide-angle view of the inland realm. Two developments in particular began to affect the relationship of Chiang Mai to the neighboring powers in Burma, Siam, and within the former states of Lanna. First, the balance of power in the region shifted away from the Burmese as the British, who were interested in both protecting their Indian empire and extracting certain natural resources from the inland states, gradually expanded their empire into Burma. Second, the court in Bangkok took this opportunity to extend its influence, and eventually control, over its northern periphery as British colonial and American missionary interests clashed with local rulers. These broad, regional shifts set the stage for and ultimately conditioned the urban transformation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which will be examined in Chapter 4.

The nineteenth-century restoration of Chiang Mai both transformed the internal logic of urban space discussed in Chapter 2 and took place within a developing external, regional logic. Overlapping networks of trade, tribute, and pilgrimage were forming across the region, into which the restored city of Chiang Mai was embedded as a key political, religious, and commercial center. Often, though not always, Chiang Mai dominated this extended network of inland states, both in the immediate hinterland and in the broader inland constellation. This chapter examines and explains the changing regional context of the inland states in the nineteenth century and the role Chiang Mai played within it. The first section of the chapter briefly examines the middle of the century, part of which has even been called the "second golden age of Lanna." This period was marked by a relatively stable balance of power between Bangkok, the Lanna city-states, and Burma, from around 1810 through the middle of the nineteenth century. The next section addresses the pressures that came to bear on that balance of power, as British economic and political interests moved into the region through direct colonialism in Burma and informal empire in Lanna. The chapter ends with the response to these challenges, not only local but Siamese and British as well. This chapter thus aims to foreshadow the transformation of Chiang Mai's urban space by providing context, both in a spatial sense (i.e., the context of Chiang Mai within the inland region) and in a historical sense (i.e., the context of political economic change during the onset of high colonialism).

Lanna's "Second Golden Age"

Much of the previous chapter covered Chiang Mai in the mid-nineteenth century, when the region was relatively peaceful and prosperous. Once Kawila had driven the Burmese out of the region, by about 1809, the chaotic violence and displacement of his early years gave way to a stable and relatively peaceful relationship between Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Kawila himself enjoyed this arrangement for only a few years before his death in 1813, after which the throne passed peacefully to the second king of the *chao chet ton* dynasty, Thammalangka. After Thammalangka's death, however, conflict erupted between the Phraya Upparat (Khamfan) and Phraya Ratchawong (Suwannakhammun) over the throne.[1] Khamfan, one of Kawila's brothers, ruled for only three years as king of Chiang Mai. After his death, Phutthawong, the son of Kawila's uncle, took the throne, and ruled for twenty years, from 1826 to 1846. Phutthawong's reign has been described as the second "golden age" of Lanna, and the chronicles describe him as "Lord of the Peaceable Kingdom."[2] More broadly, it is fair to say that from roughly 1809 to mid-century, with the exception of a brief conflict over succession, Chiang Mai experienced a time of relative peace and stability—a second "golden age."

This stability was made possible by several factors. First, the Burmese were, for the time, neutralized as a threat. By 1810 the Yuan-Siamese alliance had largely succeeded in driving out Burmese forces from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and the rest of the inland realm. Though Burma remained a potential threat in the years following 1810, Chiang Mai and other centers were finally able to begin to expand their economies, both in terms of production and intra-regional trade. Later developments would even more dramatically remove Burma from the political equation. By the 1820s the Burmese turned their attention to their western frontier with British India. After its defeat in Lanna, Burma continued to flex its somewhat weakened military muscle by expanding westward into Assam; this expansion, however, brought the Burmese into conflict with the British, who had been harboring Assamese exiles in their territory. When the Burmese launched a military campaign against Bengal, the British quickly declared war on Ava. After two years of hard and costly conflict in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824–26), British India acquired Assam and Manipur in the west, and

1 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 140, 143–44.

2 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 140; Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 10.

the British East India Company acquired Arakan and Tennasserim along the coast.[3] The Treaty of Yandabo, which concluded the war, also provided that Ava renounce all claims to Siam, which the treaty called a "good and faithful Ally of the British Government."[4] Second, the arrival of the British also brought opportunities for trade, initially in cattle and elephants, which the lords of Chiang Mai could use to their advantage. Third, during this period the reach of Bangkok was quite limited, and the lords of Chiang Mai enjoyed almost total autonomy in internal affairs. Bangkok held certain rights as overlord, such as the power to appoint and reward royal officials in Chiang Mai, but in practice Bangkok's ability to interfere was constrained by distance, geography, and the political structure of tributary relations in the nineteenth century.[5]

Rather than view Chiang Mai and the surrounding inland region in isolation, or through the anachronistic lens of modern Thai history, it is worth asking how this region was understood during this period from multiple directions. What did the space of Chiang Mai mean to the Burmese, to the Siamese, to the British, and, of course, to the leaders and people of Chiang Mai?

Chiang Mai from the West

A glimpse into the Burmese and British perception of Chiang Mai and the surrounding region can be found in a set of maps published in the early nineteenth century.[6] In 1795 Francis Hamilton, a British official resident at Ava obtained several Burmese maps of the Chiang Mai region, which he later published in 1820 and 1824 in a trio of articles in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*.[7] Hamilton notes that these maps were produced for him by a "slave of the king at Amapura," or Ava, and that he had obscured or erased many of the place names in order to avoid detection and possible punishment from Burmese authorities. These maps provide a glimpse into

3 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 14–15.

4 Aitchison and Talbot, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, 273.

5 For more discussion of the limits placed on Bangkok's influence in Chiang Mai during this period, see Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (I)," 311.

6 For a cartographic interpretation of these two maps, and others collected by the same British officer, see Schwartzberg, "Southeast Asian Geographical Maps," 741–827.

7 See Hamilton, "Account of a Map of the Countries Subject to the Kings of Ava, Drawn by a Slave of the King's Eldest Son," 89–95; and "Account of Two Maps of Zænmæ or Yangoma," 59–67.

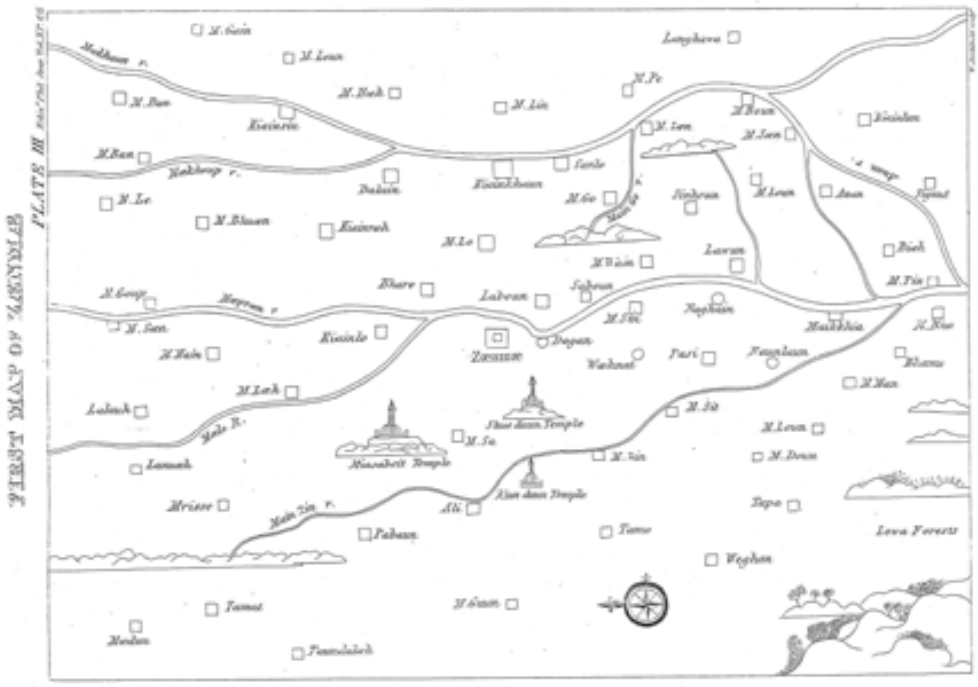

Figure 3.1 First Map of Zænmæ, ca. 1795.
(Source: Francis Hamilton, "Account of Two Maps of Zænmæ or Yangoma," *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 10 [1824]: 59–67.)
Note: Out of copyright

the view of Chiang Mai from the west, first from a Burmese perspective and then from the British.

The "First Map of Zænmæ" (Figure 3.1) places Chiang Mai (Zænmæ) in the center, with the north located to the left. A series of rivers crosses the map from left to right, including the Ping, as well as the Mekong. The bottom edge of the map, Hamilton tells us, represents the Salween River, which he notes was the accepted border of Lanna at the time. The bend in the Mekong is conspicuously absent, as was the case with most early Western maps of the region.[8] Curiously, the Nan River (labeled "Anan r." in this map) appears to link the Mekong and the network of tributaries that flow from north to south throughout Lanna. This map depicts a large number of settlements along rivers and in the hills between them, as well as three stupa monuments west of Chiang Mai, listed as "Miasabeit Temple," "Shue daun Temple," and Kiun daun Temple." It is unclear to which temples or monuments the latter two refer, though the "Miasabeit Temple" is almost certainly Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep. The orientation of west at the top of the map and the representation

8 See Thongchai's discussion of early western maps of Siam in *Siam Mapped*, 113–15.

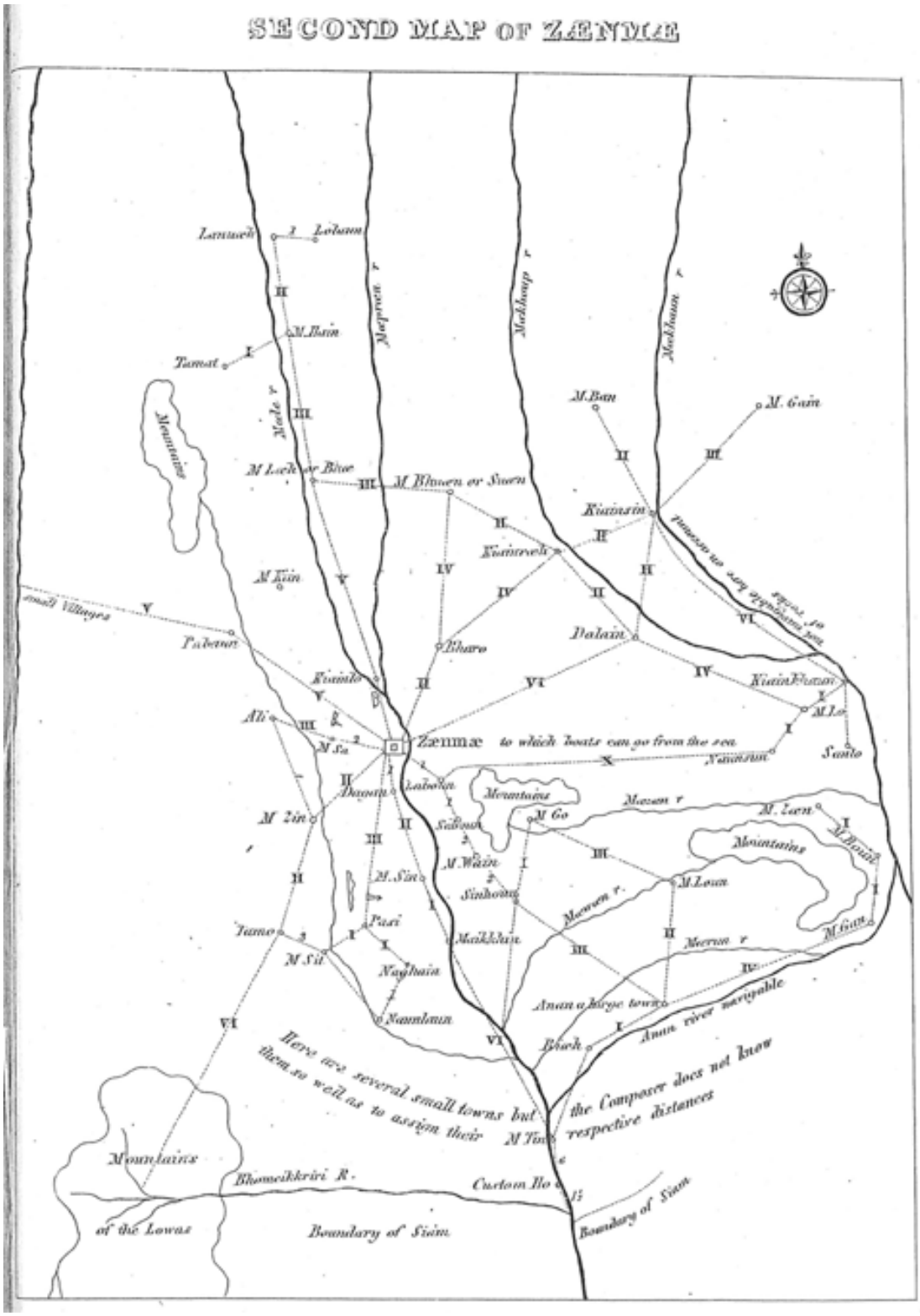

Figure 3.2 Second Map of Zænmæ, ca. 1795.
(Source: Francis Hamilton, "Account of Two Maps of Zænmæ or Yangoma," *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 10 [1824]: 59–67.)
Note: Out of copyright

of important landmarks—temples and mountains—in abstract profile are characteristic of route maps of the period.

If the first map represents a Burmese spatial memory of the Chiang Mai region, the second map represents early steps toward a British imagining of that same regional space. After the slave produced the first map and gave it to Hamilton, he promptly asked for a modified version: "as [the first map] contained no distances, he, at my request, made out the second map, in which these are given; and the manner of delineating the country is altered."[9] Thus, the "Second Map of Zænmæ" (Figure 3.2) depicts the same region, but by placing north at the top of the map and indicating in rudimentary form distances between cities and towns, this version conforms more to British cartographic expectations. The rivers are still mostly straight, as in the first map, and the "Anan River" still connects the Mekong and the Chao Phraya; most of the placenames remain unchanged and are roughly in the same location. Absent from the second map, however, are the temples and profile representations of mountains and rivers. There is an erasure of sacred space in the second map; instead, the concerns of the mapmaker become travel, trade, and territory.[10]

First, at Hamilton's request, the new map included distances between places. However, he complains that these are not always accurate, and certainly not drawn to scale.[11] While this is partly due to the nature of memory and the stylistic conventions of premodern mapmaking in Southeast Asia, there is another fact overlooked by Hamilton: the composer seems to have indicated travel *time* as opposed to *distance*. Nonetheless, the second map reflects a British desire for information on travel and communication between cities and towns of the region, as opposed to the religious landmarks that figured prominently in the first map.

Unlike the first map, the second map indicates a clear boundary between the regions dominated by Chiang Mai and Siam. This boundary falls below an imagined confluence of the "Anan River" and, presumably, the Chao Phraya. Between this confluence and Siam proper, the map simply notes that there are "several small towns, but the Composer does not know them so well as to assign their respective distances." This note explains the gap between the region surrounding Chiang Mai on this map and the domain of Siam. Nevertheless, the

9 Hamilton, "Account of Two Maps of Zænmæ or Yangoma," 59.

10 The information from this map found its way into other maps published in the early nineteenth century. See, for example, Thomson, "Birman Empire." This map identifies Lanna as part of Burma, includes the same peculiar "Anan" river, and makes many of the same notes as Figure 3.2.

11 Hamilton, "Account of Two Maps of Zænmæ or Yangoma," 60.

distinction between the region of "Zænmæ" and Siam was important enough for the composer of this map to note, even while compressing the intervening space between Lanna and the headwaters of the Chao Phraya River. Although the British would view Chiang Mai as part of Siam later in the century, this was clearly not the case in the 1820s, as this so-called boundary indicates.

Finally, this map also indicates, somewhat curiously, that Chiang Mai is a place "to which boats can go from the sea." Though boatmen had plied the trade route between Chiang Mai and Siam for centuries, as discussed in the previous chapter, the entire route was not navigable by boat. At certain points, cargo and boats would have to be dragged out of the water and transported beyond obstacles such as rapids or shoals. The downstream trip from Chiang Mai to Bangkok could be made in ten days, but at the leisurely pace usually taken by the Chiang Mai *chao*, the trip usually took between twenty and thirty days. The return trip, on the other hand, could take as long as three months.[12] Nevertheless, the fact that Chiang Mai was reachable by river was clearly important to the British, looking eastward at the kingdoms bordering their Asian empire. Taken together, the changes from the first to the second map highlight the British perception of Chiang Mai and Lanna; the British needed to know how to travel between the major centers of the region, how this region related to and was divided from Siam, and how trade could be carried out via the rivers that flowed south through the region.

Little can be concluded from these maps alone, of course, as they clearly represent a complex, remembered understanding of the region far removed in both time and space. The context in which they were produced and published, however, is important. Hamilton received these maps during the prolonged wars in which Burma "lost" this region to the Siamese-Yuan alliance, and they were published at the outset of the event that would seal Burma's decline from aspiring regional hegemon to British colony, the First Anglo-Burmese War, the conclusion of which effectively removed Burma from the political equation in Chiang Mai. Burmese defeat convinced the Siamese that the "invincible Burmans" were anything but.[13] It was in the context of the beginning of British Burma that the two maps of Chiang Mai published by Hamilton should be considered. The revision of the map at Hamilton's request—to specify distances between towns, to mark the boundary between Siam and Lanna, and to clearly indicate navigability of the river system—highlights the preoccupations the British placed onto the space of their new neighbors in Chiang Mai: trade, commerce, and regional diplomacy.

12 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity: The Case of Northern Siam," 53.

13 Lord, "Missionaries, Thai, and Diplomats," 415.

Though removed from the political equation, Burma nevertheless remained a crucial part of the regional economy. The currency in circulation in Chiang Mai was the rupee, reflecting longstanding economic ties with Burma. It took several decades and policy initiatives to convert the currency in the north to baht, a process that was not complete until the late 1920s.[14] Chiang Mai may have been reachable by the Ping River, but coastal access was more conveniently provided via Moulmein (Mawlamyine), a port city along Burma's Tennaserim coast. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show a fascinating map composed by two learned Burmese or Shan officials ("Tsaya Pay & Ko-Shoay Kho"), which highlights the regional place of Chiang Mai at mid-century. Chiang Mai is represented by a large red square in the center of the right half of the map (Figure 3.4). Directly above is a large monument in red, labeled as "Mya-tha-beit," similar to the "Miasabeit" found on the Hamilton map mentioned above.[15] This map, like the Hamilton maps, identifies important cities and towns and the roads and rivers that connect them, with small references to important sacred spaces, especially in Chiang Mai. Two large rivers, the Salween and the Ping, dominate this map, demonstrating that Chiang Mai has two routes to the sea—one down the Ping River, through Siam via the Chao Phraya, and the other overland to the Salween, down the river to Moulmein via Burma, which after 1826 was controlled by the British East Indies Company. "Moulmein" and "Martaban" are indicated by the confluence of rivers in the upper left-hand corner of Figure 3.3. Mail service to Chiang Mai was originally established in 1884 via Moulmein; a year later, the Siamese established their own mail service, not wanting to allow British Burma to control communications in and out of the region.[16] However, it was only after the railroad was extended to Chiang Mai in 1922 (see later in this chapter) that the service via Moulmein was superseded.

Thus, from the west, Chiang Mai and the surrounding inland region appeared first to the Burmese as a lost frontier and then to British India as a new neighbor with real potential for trade and commerce.

Chiang Mai from the South

While for Burma and Britain Chiang Mai was more important in economic rather than political terms, Bangkok, at least initially, saw Chiang Mai as a

14 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 292–94.

15 This likely refers to the reliquary at Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, given its location relative to the city of Chiang Mai on the map.

16 McGilvary, *A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao; an Autobiography*, 256.

Figure 3.3 Left half of "Map Composed Jointly by Tsaya Pay & Ko-Shoay Kho of the District between Moulmein & Zimmay," ca. 1870.
(Source: Royal Geographical Society [RGS ref. Burma S.35].)
Note: Reprinted with permission from RGS

political ally of relatively little economic consequence. Chiang Mai was first and foremost a key defensive ally against the threat of Burmese invasion. During the wars with Burma that straddled the turn of the nineteenth century, the importance of Chiang Mai as protector of the northern march into the kingdom of Siam was clear to the rulers of Bangkok. Indeed, as

Figure 3.4 Right half of "Map Composed Jointly by Tsaya Pay & Ko-Shoay Kho of the District between Moulmein & Zimmay," ca. 1870.
(Source: Royal Geographical Society [RGS ref. Burma S.35].)
Note: Reprinted with permission from RGS

suggested in the previous chapter, the need for strategically important vassals such as Chiang Mai to report on the status of their defenses might very well be the context that explains the otherwise ambiguous Finlayson Map (see discussion of Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Bangkok only rarely interfered in the royal affairs of Chiang Mai for most of the nineteenth century; the

Siamese king had the power to veto any appointment made in Chiang Mai, but this was rarely exercised. Northern lords also had to travel to Bangkok to receive investiture and to pay the triennial tribute. Chiang Mai's autonomy has been explained as the result of geographical distance and topographical obstacles, which made communication with the inland difficult and time-consuming. However, the relationship between Bangkok and outlying *prathetsarat* (ประเทศราช), or vassal states, was determined by more than geography and topography—it was also shaped by the political realities of alliance and regional defense. Chiang Mai's independence from Bangkok was part of what made it an effective defensive perimeter against external enemies. In Brailey's words, "the tributary relationship with Bangkok seems to have survived up to 1850 largely on the basis of lengthening tradition, and on the continuing reputation for non-interference of the Siamese."[17] Had Bangkok attempted to interfere more directly in Chiang Mai's politics, they would have risked pushing the northern lords away, either to Burmese or to British allies. In short, there was both a geographical and political logic to non-interference by Bangkok in Chiang Mai.

Chiang Mai in the early nineteenth century has been described as "a buffer to defend against invasion from the Burmese."[18] Could Lanna be seen as a kind of buffer state between Siam and its enemies to the north and west? The concept of a buffer state has proven controversial in understanding the formation of the modern Thai state and its supposed survival as an intact and independent state, and it is worth briefly examining here. The main argument for Siam as a buffer state has been that France and Britain, having expanded their territory in Southeast Asia, actively looked for ways to avoid direct confrontation and that, by ensuring Siamese independence, the two European powers could avoid any conflict. Chaiyan Rajchagool argues emphatically against the explanatory value of the buffer state in understanding Thai history. First, the territories of the two powers did meet, without any conflict or confrontation, along a border stretching north of Siam. By the 1890s France had acquired a large expanse of territory extending up to the Chinese border, and Britain had annexed the Shan states after the Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885–86). Thus, along a small strip of territory between Siam and China, the boundaries of *Indochine* and British India collided. In 1896 Britain and France concluded an agreement establishing the boundary between their respective colonies, along with a buffer territory

17 Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (I)," 315.

18 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 150.

around said border. That same agreement stipulated "that neither [Britain nor France] will, without the consent of the other, advance their armed forces into the region."[19] The agreement seemed to establish similar buffer status for Siam. Britain and France agreed that "the above agreement shall not hinder any action on which 'they may agree and which they shall think necessary in order to uphold the independence of the Kingdom of Siam.'"[20] However, whereas the buffer zone north of Siamese territory was officially off-limits to prevent any sort of confrontation, the kingdom itself was open to influence, interference, and intrigue. Furthermore, Chaiyan argues that the notion of a buffer state has survived largely due to its ideological role in Thai historiography: to reinforce the notion of Siam as independent and free from colonialism, while in fact its sovereignty was severely compromised.[21] In short, Siam was not a buffer state; rather, it was simultaneously a political ally and a potential target in the colonial ambitions of Britain and France.

There are two kinds of buffers discussed in this historical context, both of which have relevance for the regional context of nineteenth-century Chiang Mai. The first kind is an empty space—the actual buffer between French and British territory, for example, succeeds in its purpose by forbidding action and by removing the chance for confrontation. It is, in essence, an empty space that prevents contact between two other occupied spaces. The second sense of a buffer state, more relevant to the discussion here, is by necessity an occupied space that only works as a buffer so long as the state that occupies it remains viable and, at least nominally, autonomous. Chaiyan argues that the former is the only true buffer state in the Siamese case and that to apply the term to Siam in the second sense is inaccurate and misleading. The idea of a buffer state as applied to Siam, he argues, is clearly flawed. The actual buffer between French and British colonial territory along the upper Mekong worked because it was not truly a state. The notion of Siam as a buffer between France and Britain, however, works only if the Bangkok court remains in power.

To argue that Siam "survived" colonialism as a buffer state protected from outside interference would clearly be a misinterpretation of the evidence. Nevertheless, Siamese and British attitudes toward Chiang Mai were in some ways analogous to British and French treatment of Siam. In this sense, Chiang Mai and "the north" were important to Siam in the second sense

19 Tej, *The Provincial Administration of Siam 1892–1915*, 91; cited in Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 36.

20 Cited in Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 36.

21 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 34–40.

of a buffer state, an occupied space, internally autonomous yet allied to Bangkok. By the latter third of the nineteenth century, however, Bangkok began to see Chiang Mai as a potential target for incorporation, for reasons that will be explored below. Therefore, from the south, Chiang Mai was initially seen as a defensive bulwark, a buffer state (of sorts), and only later as a target for incorporation.

The Regional Perspective of Chiang Mai

If Chiang Mai appeared as a lost frontier for the Burmese, a potential marketplace for the British, and a defensive buffer and bulwark for Siam, within Chiang Mai the region appeared as a restored, if fractured, inland kingdom. In any modern history of Thailand, the revival of Chiang Mai and the expulsion of the Burmese can easily be taken to mean the restoration of the kingdom of Lanna. To an extent this is correct; Kawila self-consciously attempted to revive the royal traditions of past kings of Lanna, which included maintaining family ties between Lampang, Lamphun, Chiang Rai, and other city-states of the region. And although Bangkok vested Kawila with royal titles and regalia, the expectation was that he would rule independently as an ally and tributary king in the north and not as a province of Siam. There were, however, important limits to the idea of a revived Lanna kingdom. When the northern lords joined with Siam to fight the Burmese, they did so mostly as individual lords representing separate states rather than a unified Lanna kingdom. Chiang Mai and Lampang allied with Siam early, but Chiang Saen, for example, was only "liberated" by the Siamese-Yuan alliance in 1804.[22] Moreover, the states in the eastern portion of old Lanna, Phrae and Nan, competed with Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang during the initial period of restoration. Western observers in the early nineteenth century noted that communications between the western Lanna states (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang) and states to the east (Phrae, Nan, and Luang Prabang) were woefully inadequate. McLeod lamented the fact that the lords of Chiang Mai could not tell him whether the king of Nan was alive or not, and years later, another British diplomat noted that "profound ignorance prevail[ed] in Chiengmai with regard to Muang Nan."[23] The old divisions between cities in the north so evident in the Chinese records discussed in Chapter 1 remained valid after the expulsion of the Burmese. Thus, though in the rhetoric of rulers such as Kawila one might find evidence

22 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 133.

23 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 8.

of an imagined restoration of Lanna, the reality was that of a fractured, diverse, and underpopulated region, soon to be labeled simply the "north."

The constant warfare and slave gathering in the early part of the century shaped the spatiality of the entire region. As entire villages, sometimes including nobles and other ruling elites, were removed from the periphery and relocated in the core, this process of repopulation through warfare established socio-ethnic connections across topographical divisions. Entire villages, along with their leaders, were relocated to major cities and towns. These relocated groups did not forget or sever links to their homeland, however. McLeod reported, for example, that before he left Chiang Mai, "the Kiang Túng people came to ascertain, whether I am going to Kiang Túng, and would take charge of letters and a musical box."[24] At the same time, this warfare emptied entire regions of the necessary means of production and statecraft: manpower. This created large zones of politically and demographically empty space as a byproduct of the restoration of urban centers such as Chiang Mai. Thus, within the region, the manpower-gathering warfare carried out by the lowland states created empty spaces between these states, especially between the Yuan core and the Shan states to the west and Sipsongpanna in the upper Mekong, from which many of the war captives had been taken. Chiang Rai suffered tremendous population loss during this period, for example, and was not re-established until 1844, when the city was expanded to nearly double its original size to handle population growth.[25] The repopulation campaigns of the early nineteenth century meant both social and ethnic connections between the lowland states of the region and the realignment of state-space, which favored the few strong cities and towns at the expense of surrounding hinterlands and border zones.

Trade and tribute continued to connect and shape the inland states throughout this period. Chiang Mai was well positioned as a central point in trade networks extending to the north, east, and west. By the 1830s Chinese caravans arrived yearly in Chiang Mai, usually in mid-December,[26] bringing textiles, "cooking vessels, and trifling articles of Chinese manufacture" from Yunnan, and a steady trade with Moulmein brought British manufactured goods "in return for cattle, ivory, and a small quantity of stick-lack."[27] Shan merchants also visited Chiang Mai and were well known for trading in horses. To the east, in Luang Prabang, fish and fish eggs were major products and

24 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 321.

25 Penth, *A Brief History of Lan Na*, 188.

26 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 136.

27 Cited in Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 54.

were collected and traded to Chiang Mai once a year. Traders would travel from Luang Prabang by river to Chiang Saen before continuing overland by elephant to Chiang Mai.[28] The northern lords carried out their own trade between the cities and towns of the region, making use of their shares of labor, tribute, and rice.[29] The control of local production, taxation, and trade on the part of the *chao* was substantial and afforded them a privileged role in both intra- and inter-regional trade.[30] It was only near the end of the nineteenth century, however, that a regular and significant trade between Chiang Mai and Siam developed.[31]

Rice, of course, was crucial to the entire system; the mid-century period of prosperity was largely made possible by the expansion of cultivable land and the trade and taxation of rice. Using primarily written and oral evidence documenting conditions from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, Bowie has convincingly argued against the idea of a subsistence economy in the Lanna states. She points out that peasants in the Chiang Mai valley and elsewhere in the north regularly experienced shortages of rice and often had to travel far and wide to compensate.[32] There were several reasons for rice shortages. Famines were not uncommon and could cause the movement of people, and at times even entire villages.[33] Other reasons could be found in overly onerous exactions of the state. For example, one newspaper reported in 1912 that people fled several districts near Chiang Mai (Mae Wang, Mae Chaeng, and Chiang Dao) for other districts in the north, and some even fled across the border into British Burma; the reasons given for this flight were a lack of cultivable land, taxes, or forced labor.[34] Even if we allow for the possibility that increased pressure on resources and population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made conditions worse during that period, it is safe to conclude that even during the so-called "golden age," the risk of rice shortage and famine due to natural disaster or political pressure remained. This constant risk and fluctuation encouraged the interconnection of cities, towns, and villages throughout

28 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*.

29 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 149.

30 Bowie, "Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century," ch. 6.

31 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 54.

32 Bowie, "Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century," ch. 3.

33 *The Bangkok Times Weekly Mail*, August 1, 1912, "Letter to the Editor, 'Famine in Siam,'"; and Consul Stringer's 1891 "Report on the Trade of Chiengmai."

34 *The Bangkok Times Weekly Mail*, August 26, 1912, "Northern News," 11.

the region. Even in less calamitous times, certain areas of the north were generally rice-rich, while others were rice-poor. For example, the area north of Chiang Mai was, in general, able to produce a surplus, while in Lampang and Chiang Mai, rice was in high demand more regularly.[35] These variations and fluctuations meant that Chiang Mai and the north were intimately interconnected at multiple levels of society, far from being a subsistence economy with only occasional trade carried out at purely elite levels.

Although, as argued in Chapter 1, Chiang Mai was from its foundations a city on the edge of two distinct urban worlds, the city-states of the inland constellation were still connected economically and politically across a complex and difficult topography by overland and riverine trade routes that converged on Chiang Mai. Many Western observers noted at the time that Chiang Mai "had a central position as an intermediate trading centre."[36] Thus, in the nineteenth century, Chiang Mai remained at the edge of two spheres: one oriented to the north and connected by overland caravan routes, and the other to the south, via overland and riverine trade routes to Bangkok or, more likely, Moulmein. From the perspective of Chiang Mai, during this "golden age," the region appeared resurgent, though fragmented in its alliance with Siam and economically and culturally connected to Burma, the Lao states, and Sipsongpanna. Spatially, power and population were concentrated in key centers, leaving underpopulated, undercultivated, and ungoverned spaces between the lowland centers such as Chiang Mai. As peace prevailed, these spaces gradually filled with peasants and traders, bringing increased production and commerce throughout the region.

Shifting the Balance

What changed this regional balance? The relationship between Chiang Mai and neighboring regions remained relatively stable, especially in the years between 1810, after which the Burmese had been driven from the areas surrounding Chiang Mai, and 1855, when the Bowring Treaty was enacted, setting in motion a series of changes that would eventually transform the political and economic landscape of Siam and her tributaries. The Bowring Treaty did not come about in isolation, nor were its effects identical to those felt in central Siam. The Bowring Treaty clearly represents a key turning

35 Bowie, "Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century," 91.

36 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 181.

point in Siam's relationship with the West and the culmination of decades of frustration and pressure on the part of Western powers, especially the British, who wished to extend their economic reach into Siam and the tributaries owing allegiance to them. The treaty, which represented a significant loss of sovereignty for Bangkok, eventually led to changes in Chiang Mai as well.[37] Eventually, more unequal treaties would set in motion the Siamese integration of its "north" while also maintaining its spatial difference from the rest of the kingdom. I argue below that the main impact of foreigners, primarily British and American, was to shift the spatial balance of power in favor of both Bangkok and British India, whose interests mostly overlapped and who mostly cooperated in remaking the region as a Siamese periphery.

The presence of non-Asian foreigners in Siam and their role in trade during the "age of commerce" have been relatively well-documented, going back to the early days of Portuguese, Dutch, and British factories in Ayutthaya in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[38] Visits to inland states such as Chiang Mai were much rarer. Most early visitors were controversial figures, who came seeking fortunes through trade but whose documentary record often cannot be trusted. The earliest known visitor to Chiang Mai was Ralph Fitch, a London merchant from the sixteenth century who claimed to have visited the city during a long journey through Asia between 1583 and 1591. The published account of his journey, however, is widely regarded as unreliable.[39] In 1613 Thomas Samuel, a merchant with the British East India Company, traveled to Chiang Mai to trade in textiles. He was captured by the Burmese and died in Pegu, leaving little documentary record of his journeys.[40] Thus, it was not until the journeys of Richardson and McLeod in the 1830s that Chiang Mai would again receive Western visitors, and fortunately, both men left detailed and useful journals. Like their predecessors in Siam and Chiang Mai, McLeod and Richardson's main goals were to secure and expand trade relations, this time with what they called the "Siamese Shan," i.e., the Yuan in (primarily) Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang.

After the arrival of the British at Siam's doorstep in the 1820s, the first point of economic order was, initially, security. The first official British

37 Strate, *The Lost Territories*, 29–30.

38 See, for instance, the general treatment of Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680, Volume One: The Lands Below the Winds*; and the works of Dhiravat, "Crown Trade and Court Politics in Ayutthaya During the Reign of King Narai (1656–88)," and "Ayutthaya at the End of the Seventeenth Century: Was There a Shift to Isolation?"

39 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 6.

40 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*.

mission to Bangkok was led by John Crawfurd in 1822 and included George Finlayson, the surgeon who somehow acquired the map discussed in Chapter 2. Crawfurd largely failed in his attempts to establish free trade for British ships calling at Siamese ports, but he did gain important information about Siam's international economic position and its court politics.[41] After defeating the Burmese, the British felt the need to clarify issues of legal jurisdiction and punishment to secure the eastern flank of their South Asian empire and to allow for profitable trade. In 1826 the British sent Captain Henry Burney to conclude the first Anglo-Siamese treaty, which provided the framework of British relations with Siam for almost three decades. Many historians view the Burney treaty as simply another failure on the part of the British to improve trade relations with Siam. Though the treaty was indeed a failure on this front, a more pressing concern was security and diplomacy between two neighboring powers. The fourteen articles of the treaty were almost entirely concerned with issues of security and cooperation between the Siamese court and the British government in neighboring Burma. The treaty also encouraged the stability of the Siamese kingdom by prohibiting the import of opium and export of rice and restricting the import and sale of firearms to government officials.[42] An addendum to the treaty addressed questions of trade and established a lengthy and complex list of import duties as well as a detailed protocol for the handling of commerce. Burney failed to improve the position of British traders in Bangkok largely because the Siamese were distrustful of British claims of friendship, especially after their impressive victory over the Burmese.[43] It should be noted that the early nineteenth-century diplomatic efforts of Crawfurd and Burney represented almost exclusively coastal interests. The British began their dominion over Burma as a coastal power in Tennaserim and looked to its coastal neighbor, Siam, to come to terms over securing the expanding edge of the British Empire in Southeast Asia.

Direct relations with inland states focused, at least initially, on more narrow economic issues. The impetus for establishing a relationship between Chiang Mai and their new European neighbors in Moulmein came not only from the British but also from the Chiang Mai lords. According to one parliamentary report:

41 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 96.

42 The full text of the Burney Treaty is available in Manich, *King Mongkut and Sir John Bowring*.

43 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 109.

> Dr. Richardson received an overture from the Zunmay [*sic*] chiefs in March 1825, another in 1828, and one in December 1829: the letter expressed a readiness and anxiety to receive at court any British officer Mr. Maingy, the Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces, might depute.[44]

Richardson left for Lamphun and Chiang Mai on December 11, 1829, along with the messengers who had brought the letter from the Chiang Mai king earlier that month. He returned the following March, having addressed numerous British concerns. The first concern was, as with the French in *Indochine*, to identify and gain access to trade routes through the region into China. The Parliamentary record noted that in his first trip to Chiang Mai in 1829, Richardson "reported on the great but unknown potential of opening up trade with China via the overland routes passing through Chiang Mai and neighboring states."[45] Eight years later, McLeod would lament the challenges of establishing such a route: "I have found the greatest possible difficulty in obtaining any satisfactory information respecting the road to China, though I have been here [in Chiang Mai] for so long."[46] Indeed, as Turton points out, such tactics were standard fare: "delays and re-routings were among numerous tactics for managing and limiting the success of diplomatic missions."[47]

The second economic concern addressed in Richardson's early missions to Chiang Mai was the cattle trade. Cattle was needed to supply and feed the new British possessions in Tennaserim and the ever-growing population of "beef-eaters," especially in the British garrison at Moulmein.[48] Richardson traveled to Chiang Mai and Lamphun initially to secure agreements allowing for free and open trade in cattle between British Burma and the inland Lao and Yuan states. In his first mission, Richardson secured the procurement of approximately 1,000 head of cattle for the military garrison at Moulemain.[49] Lamphun (and Lampang) agreed rather quickly. Chiang Mai, however, initially balked. They seemed concerned that increased trade would leave Chiang Mai vulnerable in case of disease or natural disaster and that they might lose the ability to control and tax the trade. Additionally, there was a strategic concern, namely that the British might in turn supply the Burmese

44 *Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 130.
45 *Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 130.
46 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 318.
47 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 108.
48 Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 78.
49 *Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company*, 130.

with cattle.[50] The unsavory reputation of traders from Moulmein was also an obstacle to establishing better trade relations between Chiang Mai and Moulmein. Richardson eventually convinced the *chao upparat* of Chiang Mai to agree to "free and unrestricted trade in cattle."[51] Phutthawong's reluctance to agree to British demands and the need for Richardson to obtain approval from the lord of Lamphun highlight the influence, if not outright control, the *chao* had over the trade. Elephants were also an important item of trade, and a very lucrative one at that for the *chao*. Though neither Richardson nor McLeod mention this trade in any detail, this could simply be because the trade was uncontroversial in the 1830s, or perhaps because this trade only became an issue in the latter half of the century, when the number of officials and merchants traveling to, from, and within the region was on the rise. Elephants were especially useful for overland travel, clearing land, and working in the increasingly important teak logging industry.[52]

That single commodity—teak—was probably more responsible for the transformation of Chiang Mai and the north than any other item of trade. Teak was one of the most abundant natural resources of the area and a convenient timber in which to trade, being strong enough for substantial construction yet light enough to float down the many waterways that flowed into the Salween or Chao Phraya Rivers. In British India, there had long been a tension between state-led conservation and private exploitation of teak forests.[53] Timber merchants, on one hand, tried their best to convince officials to allow unrestricted exploitation, with no limit on the size or number of trees felled in the teak forests of India and, after Britain's annexation of Tennaserim and Arakan in 1826, Burma. Officials and foresters within the colonial bureaucracy, on the other hand, worried that such unregulated forestry would lead to desiccation, deforestation, and, most importantly, a shortage of teak for current and future imperial projects such as the expansion of India's network of railroads. The policy tug-of-war between merchants and conservationists resulted in an ever-expanding

50 This was a real concern, because although the Burmese were significantly reduced in power by their confrontation with the British, they still remained a viable kingdom until the second and third Anglo-Burmese Wars. Also, the British had supplied arms to the Burmese after the settlement of the First Anglo-Burmese War. See Grabowsky and Turton, *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship*, 79, 179–80.

51 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 39.

52 For an extended explanation of the importance of elephants in Lanna society, see Bowie, "Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century," 218–24.

53 See the detailed discussion in Barton and Bennet, "A Case Study in the Environmental History of Gentlemanly Capitalism," 317–31.

informal fringe of empire, with teak merchants often at the forefront of both formal and informal expansion. One important factor in the Second Anglo-Burman War was the pressure applied to the colonial government by teak merchants "in Rangoon and Calcutta who sought access to the vast teak forests of Pegu [in lower Burma]."[54] Merchants looked beyond formal colonial territory to independent Asian states as well, both for untapped forests and to escape the meddling of the bureaucrats in the India Forest Service (IFS). In 1863 the Bombay Burma Trading Company Ltd. (BBTC) was founded and shortly thereafter began expanding its operations into the still independent territory of upper Burma.[55]

As the teak forests along the Salween and Irrawady rivers became increasingly depleted, foresters began to look east for alternatives. As early as 1835, Burmese British subjects began extracting teak from forests controlled by the lords of Chiang Mai;[56] by the 1840s the teak trade in the former Lanna states began to expand.[57] Though Siamese teak was considered more remote and thus more costly to extract, it was an attractive alternative to the Burmese forests and the restrictions placed on forestry by the IFS. In only half a century, the extraction of teak from the forests of Burma and much of northern Thailand had been so successful that merchants began to actively search for alternative timber to harvest. Rosewood, for example, which was popular for local use, was considered a replacement for teak.[58] This expansion marked an important spatial transition. A major watershed was crossed—literally and figuratively—when merchants began seeking timber concessions in forests whose streams drained not toward the Salween and British-controlled Burma but to the tributaries of the Chao Phraya through central Siam. As commodities, cattle (or elephants) could be marched overland for trade, and therefore the spatial imprint of trade in these animals was widespread and diffuse. Teak, on the other hand, naturally follows the watershed, thereby connecting the forested interior and the coastal port. Thus, a relatively minor movement from one watershed to the next in the remote inland highlands effectively created a new political and economic connection (and tension)

54 Barton and Bennet, "A Case Study in the Environmental History of Gentlemanly Capitalism," 320.

55 Barton and Bennet, "A Case Study in the Environmental History of Gentlemanly Capitalism," 325.

56 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 59.

57 Chotima, "The Architecture of Burmese Buddhist Monasteries in Upper Burma and Northern Thailand: The Biography of Trees," 224.

58 Rosewood was, however, considered too heavy to float, and thus, inadequate to the task. See TNA FO 881/5295, "Report on the Country traversed by Mr. Satow in his Journey to Chiengmai," 9.

between Chiang Mai and Bangkok. The eastward expansion of teak forestry in the far north brought Bangkok into the political and economic world of Chiang Mai in a way previously unknown.

As mentioned above, although the Burney Treaty of 1826 had established the parameters of security and diplomacy between British India and Siam, the British were keen to remove the numerous restrictions placed on Westerners wishing to trade at Bangkok. The British largely succeeded in breaking down these restrictions with the Bowring Treaty of 1855. Royal monopolies, except for one on opium, were abolished, taxes and tariffs were set in favor of free trade, and British subjects were placed under the legal jurisdiction of British consular courts rather than local Siamese law in a system known as extraterritoriality. This treaty allowed for a massive (if not immediate) increase in imports of finished industrial goods from the West and exports of domestic products, including rice and, more important for the fate of Chiang Mai, teak.

Chaiyan has argued that the cultural effects of the Bowring Treaty should not be ignored alongside its economic impact. The treaty severely curtailed Siam's sovereignty within its borders and represented a clear confrontation between two worldviews, a confrontation that Britain clearly won.[59] In Chiang Mai, however, both the economic and cultural effects of this treaty were somewhat muted and removed. Sovereignty in Chiang Mai was already complex and compromised, with a "Lord of Life" holding, in theory, absolute dominion over his territory and subjects, while simultaneously beholden to Bangkok. The ruling elites of the inland states had no say in the coastal diplomacy that resulted in the Bowring Treaty. The economic effects took longer to reach Chiang Mai as well. The massive expansion of rice cultivation that followed the Bowring Treaty did eventually include Chiang Mai, but in the mid-nineteenth century, the most immediate impact of the new openness to trade in Bangkok was the rapid increase in the export of teak, much of which came from the forests of the former Lanna states.

The ruling *chao* held hereditary rights to the forests and thus the right to grant concessions to anyone wanting to harvest timber. Before mid-century, the forests were not considered to be especially valuable. As Stott has argued, in the spatial organization of the premodern Tai state, the forests were not considered to be *thammachat*, or "nature," but rather *pa thuean*, or the "wild," "uncivilized," even "illicit" forest space existing outside the civilized space of the *mueang*.[60] But before the explosion of interest in teak, the forests had

59 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 42–44.

60 Stott, "Mu'ang and Pa: Elite Views of Nature in a Changing Thailand," 145–46.

been used primarily as a source for small quantities of building material used in royal construction projects, and on occasion, teak logs were sent down to Bangkok as part of the triennial tribute. After his death, Phutthawong's control over the forests passed with little difficulty to his successor, Mahotaraprathet (r. 1846–54). By the end of Mahotaraprathet's reign, however, control over the forests had become an increasingly valuable commodity. When Mahotaraprathet died in 1854, conflict developed among the ruling nobility of Chiang Mai.[61] The new king, Kawilorot (r. 1854–70), inherited the rights to major forests through his wife, Chao Usa, Mahotaraprathet's daughter. Even though he was the most powerful lord, he could not control the other descendants of Mahotaraprathet, many of whom had inherited their own rights to various forests. The *chao* made good use of their prerogatives. Once Burmese British subjects began expressing interest in obtaining concessions in royally owned forests, the *chao* began to exploit the situation, charging various fees, demanding bribes, and even leasing the land out to more than one forester at a time. For example, two nobles leased the forests surrounding Mueang Yuam (present-day Mae Sariang) to a British subject teak merchant named Mong Suai At; at the same time, the *chao upparat* sold teak from this forest to another merchant.[62] This created conflict not only between the lords of Chiang Mai and Burmese British subjects but also between the lords, as they competed for the benefits of the teak trade. As British logging interests expanded, numerous conflicts such as this arose over these overlapping forestry concessions and ambiguous jurisdictions.

Around the same time, conflicts between American missionaries and the Chiang Mai king, Kawilorot, began to threaten the balance of power in Chiang Mai. Christian missionaries, like adventurous diplomats and merchants, have had a long history in mainland Southeast Asia. Catholics in particular had a significant early historical impact on the region, including in Ayutthaya beginning the sixteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries began to arrive in Siam. The first Protestant missionary arrived in Bangkok in 1828, and within a few years, several more had arrived, mostly to work among the Chinese in Bangkok rather than among the Thai. The best-known missionary in Siam was perhaps Daniel Beach Bradley, a proselytizing pioneer from America who arrived in Bangkok with a printing press in 1835.[63] Best known for his role in bringing modern printing, education, and medicine to Bangkok, he had little success

61 Wilai, "Chiangmai kon 'thesaphiban' pho. so. 2389-2442," 162–63.

62 Wilai, "Chiangmai kon 'thesaphiban' pho. so. 2389-2442," 163.

63 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 117.

in converting the Siamese to Christianity; at the time of his death, he could count only one conversion among his accomplishments. The first permanent Presbyterian missionaries, Rev. Stephen Mattoon and Dr. Samuel R. House, arrived in 1847 and continued working in the areas of medicine and education. These early missionaries played key roles in such modernizing efforts and in diplomacy, often serving as interpreters for the diplomats who came to Siam to negotiate treaties.[64]

The most important missionary for Chiang Mai was Daniel McGilvary. He arrived in Bangkok in 1858 and proved himself a quick study and an adept social networker. He met with King Mongkut, married Daniel Bradley's daughter Sophia, and befriended other missionaries and US diplomats in Bangkok.[65] He was able to broach the question of establishing a mission in Chiang Mai after meeting with Kawilorot during his triennial visit to Bangkok in December 1860. While Kawilorot seemed open to the idea, in the short term McGilvary headed north to establish a mission at Petchabun. In 1863 he and a fellow missionary traveled upriver to visit Chiang Mai, still hoping to open a mission there. Finally, in 1866, during another one of Kawilorot's triennial visits to Bangkok, McGilvary used his connections at the US Consulate and in the Siamese government to arrange a meeting to seek formal approval for a Chiang Mai mission. Kawilorot agreed to McGilvary's proposal, which included preaching and establishing schools and hospitals; the Chiang Mai king even promised McGilvary "free land and cheap timber."[66] With approval secured from all parties, McGilvary and his wife Sophia traveled to Chiang Mai in 1867 to establish the first station of what would eventually be called the "North Laos Mission."

Kawilorot's promises were to remain unfulfilled, however, and it seems that he was quite unhappy with the actual conversion of some of his subjects to this new, foreign religion. While Bradley and other missionaries had very limited success in Bangkok, McGilvary and his mission began to have some measured success in their first two years. Unhappy with this success, Kawilorot struck back, ordering the murder of two Christian converts in September 1869. The Americans appealed for help to Siam, which eventually came in the form of a special emissary from Bangkok in December. At the meeting between the Siamese official, McGilvary, and the Kawilorot, McGilvary famously accused the king of murdering his converts for no reason other than their religion. Kawilorot reportedly erupted in a rage:

64 Pascal and Chambers, "Oblique Intervention," 35–38.

65 Pascal and Chambers, "Oblique Intervention," 50.

66 Pascal and Chambers, "Oblique Intervention," 52.

> Siam is one government. Chiang Mai is another. The King at Bangkok may permit his subjects to become Christians. I will kill every one of mine who forsakes Buddhism for the religion of Jesus. Those who embrace Christianity are rebels against me and will be treated as such. If the missionaries teach their religion & continue to make Christians I will banish them from the country.[67]

As one scholar rightly points out, Kawilorot was trying to protect his power, which was "founded on religious pillars."[68] For Kawilorot, conversion to Christianity was tantamount to rebellion. Quite understandably, the Chiang Mai king attempted to forcefully assert his power and autonomy in front of agents of both Siamese and Western power. When the American Consul petitioned the Siamese government for help in this matter, the Siamese foreign minister characterized the relationship between Bangkok and Chiang Mai in terms remarkably similar to that of Kawilorot:

> They have their own laws and customs which they enforce as they see fit. They do not use the same laws as in Bangkok… [Kawilorot] can execute [the Christians] without having to inform the minister in Bangkok. Mr. Consul will consider this a violation of the treaty only if it occurs in Bangkok, not in a tributary state.[69]

Rather quickly after his confrontation with the Siamese official and the American missionary, this conflict became irrelevant when Kawilorot died and a more pliable ruler, Inthawichayanon (r. 1870–97), was installed.

After receiving numerous complaints about teak concessions in the forests controlled by the Chiang Mai lords, the British sought help from the Siamese. Likewise, after receiving complaints of persecution and unfair treatment of Christian converts and American missionaries in Chiang Mai, the Americans looked to Bangkok for help. Both the British and Siamese made a crucial assumption, based on their spatial perspectives as coastal powers, of inland Chiang Mai, namely that it was in fact an integral part of Siam and that problems occurring therein could best be approached through Bangkok. Though this may have been the most practical course by 1874,

67 Swanson, "Kawilorot's Threat," September 3, 1995.

68 Swanson, "Kawilorot's Threat," September 3, 1995.

69 Ratanaporn, "Political, Social, and Economic Changes in the Northern State of Thailand Resulting from the Chiang Mai Treaties of 1874 and 1883," 161–62; cited in Iijima, "The 'International Court' System in the Colonial History of Siam," 43.

it is worth noting that the Bowring Treaty was unclear on the question of territorial extent. Practically speaking, provisions of the 1855 treaty applied to Bangkok and the core area of Siam. Immediately after the Bowring Treaty was concluded, the Siamese government issued proclamations explaining and publicizing the treaty's provision to the public. One such proclamation explained the new rules for selling or renting land to foreigners, which was limited to royal subjects within a rather limited zone surrounding Bangkok.[70] Documents needed to process the sale of land in Chiang Mai to a foreign subject, for example, noted that the treaties in place required special permission for any location outside a core area in central Siam, defined as "anywhere within a distance of 24 hours journey from the city of Bangkok, to be computed by the rate at which boats of the country can travel."[71] In letters to foreign governments, however, Mongkut styled himself as the supreme king over Siam and various outlying *prathetsarat*—peripheral tributary states such as Chiang Mai, the Lao states, Cambodia, and so on.[72] Thus, there seems to have been a spatial disconnect between the internal realities of power and authority on one hand, which were somewhat limited and which viewed outlying tributary states as separate from but beholden to Bangkok, and, on the other, the external projection of power, which included all such territories as part and parcel of the Siamese kingdom.

By the 1870s, the space of the entire region was changing, in both the British and Siamese view, from a buffer or lost frontier to a periphery of Siam. The conflicts over the handling of the teak trade and the conflicts over missionary activity in Chiang Mai culminated in the First Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874, which sought to settle the border issues between Burma and Siam and address the backlog of lawsuits relating to the teak concessions. In dealing with Siam directly, the British recognized that Chiang Mai and the northern states were part of Siam; as part of this agreement, Bangkok sent a Siamese commissioner to "supervise and assist" the Chiang Mai lords. The mere fact of this treaty therefore points to a simple yet inescapable spatial shift. Though the treaty is referred to as the "Chiang Mai Treaty," it was, in fact, concluded by representatives of British India and the Siamese court at Bangkok—Chiang Mai had no say in the matter and was not party to negotiations. The treaty was *about* Chiang Mai, not *with* or *by* it. This treaty

70 Sathian, *Prachum Kotmai Pracham Sok*, 198–201; cited in Iijima, "The 'International Court' System in the Colonial History of Siam," 35.

71 NAT ค.4.4.ก/7. *Khon Nai Bangkhap Angkrit Cha Kho Sue Thidin Nai Khwaeng Mueang Chiang Mai* [British subjects requesting to purchase land in Chiang Mai district], 1898, 27.

72 See a brief discussion of letters to Napoleon III and the US President James Buchanan in Iijima, "The 'International Court' System in the Colonial History of Siam," 36.

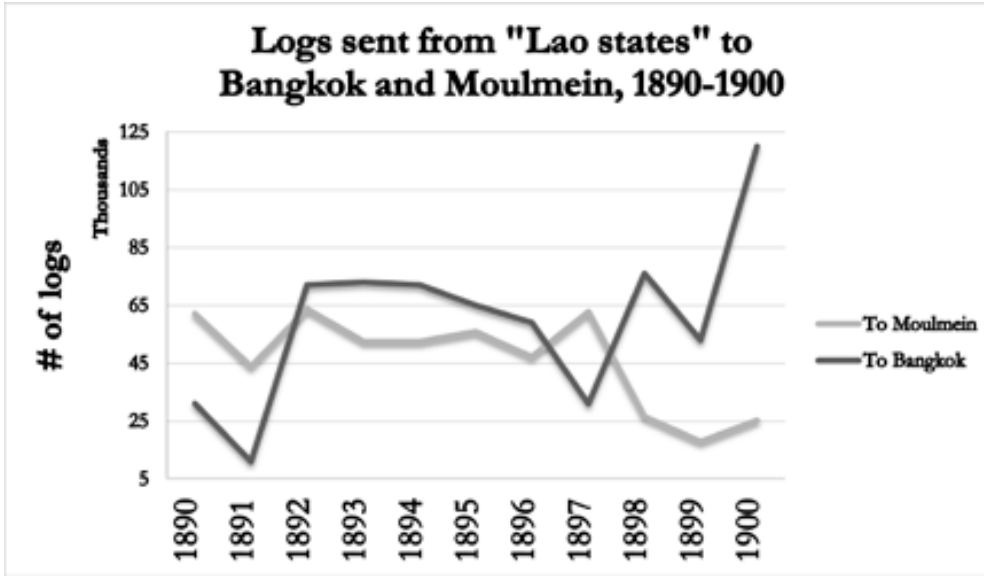

Figure 3.5 A comparison of the number of logs sent from the Lao states to Bangkok and to Moulmein, 1890–1900.
(Source: Produced by author, based on Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 289.)

thus marks a crucial step in the transition of Chiang Mai and the region from tributary and buffer to periphery. The geographies of teak extraction (see Figure 3.5) and mission incursion increasingly passed through Bangkok, thereby pulling Chiang Mai out of the inland realm toward the coast, and, of course, into a more direct relationship with Bangkok.

The 1874 treaty marked an opportunity for the young King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910) to assert his authority over the conservative noble elite, led by the powerful Bunnag family, which had effectively run the kingdom for decades. Brailey points out that the conservative nobility saw Chiang Mai as an independent kingdom allied with Bangkok and not a necessary part of the kingdom. A British diplomat observed that Si Suriyawong, a key member of the Bunnag family and regent to young Chulalongkorn, seemed to follow a policy directed toward the Malay Peninsula and would likely give up the inland states of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, etc.[73] The king, however, viewed outlying states such as Chiang Mai as "part of his royal birthright" and acted accordingly to secure them.[74] Two decades later, turning his attention far to the south, Chulalongkorn would make a similar observation regarding the contested states of the Malay Peninsula, admitting that

73 See Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (II)," 446, n. 118.

74 Brailey, "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (II)," 446.

> we have no particular interest in the Malay states aside from having the Malay states as an outer province of the kingdom bordering Westerners. Another point, if we lost these states to the British, we suffer no material loss except the *bunga mas* [ceremonial triennial tributes], which are not of great value. However, I feel it would be a loss of great honour [for the kingdom], therefore I want to see it be a stable place to protect against this occurrence.[75]

Similarly, in the 1870s, while the old elite saw little value in the north, Chulalongkorn saw a key part of his kingdom at risk of falling into British hands, especially given the growing economic ties between Chiang Mai and Moulmein. Whether for political or economic reasons or for royal honor, the king decided to act in the north. The king and his supporters sidestepped other members of the royal elite to negotiate the First Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874, and he likely played a key role in selecting the first Siamese official to attempt the reform of government in Chiang Mai. Shortly after the treaty had been enacted, however, the political pendulum swung back in favor of the old guard after the so-called Front Palace Incident, which threatened to erupt into a major crisis for the king. Instead, the resolution of the crisis shifted the balance of power in Bangkok toward the old elite, who reacted strongly to the king's early efforts at reform and consolidation of power.[76]

In Chiang Mai, however, problems continued. Lawsuits over teak concessions grew, and the judicial cooperation established by the 1874 treaty broke down. A second crisis erupted among the missionaries as well, in the middle of 1878, when two young converts were to be married. However, the bride's grandfather was not a Christian, and he therefore demanded a small "spirit fee" to fund a feast in honor of the local spirits. McGilvary refused on religious principle. His next act, however, shows the slow progress of Chiang Mai into the Siamese orbit. He first visited the Siamese commissioner in Chiang Mai for assistance. After seeking help from him and from Inthawichayanon, neither of whom could help, the commissioner advised that he appeal directly to King Chulalongkorn for religious toleration in general rather than special treatment in this single case. The king responded positively to McGilvary's request, issuing the proclamation of the Edict of Religious Toleration in 1878. Here the king likely saw an opportunity to exert his unique royal authority against both the conservative noble elites who had thwarted his

75 Cited in Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms," 83–84.

76 See Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 181–85, for more on this incident and its consequences.

earlier attempts at reform in the north and the recalcitrant lords of Chiang Mai and the north.[77]

The pace of change proceeded slowly, in fits and starts, until the second Chiang Mai Treaty in 1883, which marked the beginning of a period of intense reform under a prefectural system, under which the Siamese gradually reduced the power of the ruling Chiang Mai elites. Chulalongkorn's ability to carry out his reform policies increased in the early 1880s, mostly for the simple reason that the powerful noble elites that had previously blocked his earlier efforts began to pass away.[78] The British also had renewed interest in updating the 1874 treaty. The British were disappointed that banditry in the forests had not been addressed and that the aforementioned court system failed to adjudicate even a single case. Finally, though small-scale foresters had worked many of the forests since the 1840s, as mentioned above, by the 1880s much larger and better capitalized teak companies wanted to move into the rich forests of the north but would only do so if firm legal protections could be guaranteed by treaty.

In the mid-nineteenth century, then, there were two important spatial changes that occurred in the region surrounding Chiang Mai. First, the forest became a hinterland, moving from a space of wild uncivilization to a cultivable, manageable, and productive space. Second, as Britain began to assert its colonial strength in Chiang Mai, they did so under the assumption that Chiang Mai was spatially a part of Siam, even though many Siamese elites saw the far north as an autonomous tributary state not worth the effort needed to keep it from falling into British hands. The British applied their own sense of statecraft, allegiance, and space and thus treated Chiang Mai accordingly.

Siamese State Formation in the North – A "Silent Revolution"?

By the 1880s, Bangkok and Chiang Mai were faced with an ever-changing political dynamic that now included a powerful European colonial neighbor with expanding economic interests in the periphery and a consequent increase in the number of foreign groups with extraterritorial rights, not subject to local law. These pressures formed the background and context of the Siamese state-building project in Chiang Mai.

77 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 86–88; Pascal and Chambers, "Oblique Intervention," 67–71.

78 Terwiel, *Thailand's Political History*, 194–96; Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 92–93.

It is important to note that the incorporation of Chiang Mai and the surrounding region into Siam was central to the formation of the modern Siamese state as a whole. The Ministry of the Interior was formed out of the Ministry of the North. Prince Damrong, who led that Ministry until 1915, initiated major provincial reforms in the north. Furthermore, the Siamese ruling elite applied the lessons learned in the northern states in other areas of the kingdom. As Charles Tilly has observed, in cases where cultural and social differences between center and periphery were "relatively minor," "an administrative innovation installed and tested in one region had a reasonable chance of working elsewhere, and officials could easily transfer their knowledge from one locality to another."[79] Though northerners might not have seen the differences between themselves and the Siamese as "relatively minor," the Siamese officials sent out to the northern, northeastern, and southern peripheries certainly perceived that these distinct regions had enough in common for Tilly's dynamic to work. The imposition of Bangkok power in the north was thus central to the overall formation of the modern Thai state.

Tej Bunnag offers a conservative, even classical view of the formation of the modern Thai state. In the early nineteenth century, the Siamese state exerted control over Bangkok and its immediate hinterland, as well as strategically important areas along easily navigable routes. Beyond this core were states like Chiang Mai—nominally subordinate to the authority of Bangkok, but internally autonomous vassals. By the early twentieth century, the central government, based in Bangkok, administered a bounded territory through the creation of the modern *thesaphiban* system of provincial administration.[80] This transition has become one of the most important arcs of the master narrative of Thai history: the story of how Siam survived the colonial threat by forging a modern nation-state out of the pre-modern tributary and vassal kingdoms sandwiched between the encroaching French and British empires. This view is encapsulated by Tej in his 1977 study of the provincial administrative reforms under Prince Damrong:

> [T]he Ministry of the Interior and the *Thesaphiban* system of provincial administration had indeed helped to preserve the Thai Kingdom as the only independent nation of South-East Asia in the age of European imperialism. Under [Damrong's] leadership, their work had embraced most and touched all branches and levels of the government's activities

79 Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992*, 100.

80 See Grabowsky's introduction in *Regions and National Integration in Thailand, 1892–1992*, 2.

> throughout the country. During that period, Siam was transformed from a conglomeration of states and provinces without clearly defined boundaries to a compact state with a definite frontier. The foundations were laid for a modern central administration and a centralized provincial administration. The people were emancipated from semi-vassalage and slavery and initiated in self-government.[81]

Therefore, according to Tej, the establishment of provincial administration "preserved" Siam, protecting it from the colonial threat.

How have scholars characterized the formation of the modern Siamese state that took root in late nineteenth-century northern Thailand? An early attempt to provide a historical overview of the north was provided by Reginald le May, a late colonial-era scholar who wrote widely on Thai history, culture, and art.[82] He characterized the imposition of Bangkok rule in the north as a "silent revolution," borrowing the phrase from a contemporary missionary observer. In le May's view, the whole of the north had been successfully integrated into the Siamese state with a minimal amount of resistance. With very little noise, power had "gradually passed" from the northern princes to the Siamese commissioners, and the northern states "almost imperceptibly became an integral portion of the Kingdom of Siam."[83]

Another interpretation of this transfer of power comes from James Ramsay, who views the creation of a bureaucratic polity in the north as a response to increased demands made on the central state. Ramsay argues that at mid-century, the political system of Siam was in a state of equilibrium "in terms of the demands made [on the state], the structures for mobilizing manpower and revenue to meet those demands, and the socio-economic composition of the society from which the resources were drawn."[84] The central Siamese state was only able to extract a moderate amount of resources from the outlying provinces and the tributary states, but in 1850 this was enough. A change in demands, however, necessitated a change in the political system. The ensuing late nineteenth-century changes in the north, which he refers to as a "development episode," ended with the political system once again in a state of equilibrium in 1915 (the year Damrong retired from the Interior Ministry). Thus, for Ramsay, the external pressures placed on

81 Tej, *The Provincial Administration of Siam 1892–1915*, 261.

82 In addition to *An Asian Arcady: The Land and Peoples of Northern Siam*, le May's other publications include *A Concise History of Buddhist Art in Siam* and *The Coinage of Siam*.

83 Le May, *An Asian Arcady*, 54–55; see also Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 95.

84 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 8.

Siam and the northern states by the British, as discussed in the preceding section, were the critical factors that contributed to the integration of the north through the creation of new governmental structures and the removal of power from the local ruling elites. Ramsay argues that a central state will usually respond to increased demands by initially attempting to increase the extraction of manpower and revenue through existing local elites, with only minor reforms in local administration. The most typical approach is to offer these elites compensation. However, if they "are not given some kind of compensation and if they see themselves as being suddenly deprived of power, prestige, or income by the reforms in the structures of regional and local governments, they are likely to obstruct the reforms, and, in extreme cases, to rebel."[85]

Where Ramsay's emphasis is on Siamese responses to outside pressure, Brailey's approach was to see the integration of the "Lao states" as an extension of elite politics in Bangkok.[86] He viewed Siam's forward movement in the region as an assertion of royal prerogatives, largely to gain advantage vis-à-vis competing members of the ruling elite. In this view, the formation of the absolute monarchy is tightly wound together with the integration of Chiang Mai and other peripheries, and the emphasis falls more on Siamese goals rather than Western demands.

Whether as a response to external pressure or the result of internal politics, two dominant themes emerge in the study of the Siamese effort to build a new state structure in Chiang Mai: 1) that the formation of the modern Siamese state both resulted from and protected Siam against European imperialism and 2) that the imposition of Siamese power in the north was, relative to the more troubled peripheries in the northeast or the deep south, smooth and quiet. Many scholars have challenged these interpretations. Returning for a moment to the contemporary Euro-American observers, le May, following McGilvary's observations, argued that Chiang Mai was integrated into the Kingdom of Siam in a "silent revolution" that happened "almost imperceptibly" as power "gradually passed" from the northern lords to the Siamese.[87] Embedded in the "imperceptibility" of this transition is the notion of "crypto-colonialism," a term coined by Michael Herzfeld and adopted by many historians of Thailand, including Thongchai

85 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 10–11.

86 See Brailey, "The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Western Laos, 1850–92"; also see "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (I)"; and "Chiengmai and the Inception of an Administrative Centralization Policy in Siam (II)."

87 Le May, *An Asian Arcady*.

Winichakul.[88] Herzfeld uses this term to describe experiences at the edge of formal colonial power, where countries "were compelled to acquire their political independence at the expense of massive economic dependence, this relationship being articulated in the iconic guise of aggressively national culture fashioned to suit foreign models."[89] Essentially, crypto-colonies paid for their circumscribed independence through economic subordination, which is in turn concealed by celebratory narratives of national history. As a crypto-colony, Siam's marginality relative to the Western colonial powers was determined by key events that circumscribed Thai sovereignty, notably the Bowring Treaty and its equivalents in the mid-nineteenth century, and the Pak Nam gunboat crisis of 1893. These events, however, are obscured in Thai historiography, in favor of a triumphalist narrative placing the monarchy at the center of an independent Thai nation that "survived" rather than being produced by the colonial threat.

Chiang Mai's peculiar marginality vis-à-vis Bangkok bears comparison with Siam's position relative to the West. Rosalind Morris argues that Chiang Mai's "tributary relationship" with Bangkok was "converted into a form of provincial membership as part of Siam's efforts to stave off British and French imperialism." She continues:

> The processes of internal colonialism in the north were deep and deeply effective. They included the displacement of the local ruling family (chaos); administrative encompassment, including a restructuring of land title and inheritance law, as well as new forms of taxation; the imposition of new religious forms (through the Thammayut order founded by King Mongkut); enforced cultural submission through education in the Central Thai language (which differs significantly from the indigenous dialect, kam müang); and the loss of centrality in the network of nested and overlapping tributary states which previously paid their debts to Chiang Mai. In dominant historiography, Chiang Mai is now represented as the primitive origin of a national teleology whose end point is Bangkok and the Chakkri dynasty (to which the present king belongs).[90]

Not only were the internally imperial policies of Bangkok toward the northern states particularly effective, but their very success has masked

88 Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism"; and Thongchai, "Prawattisat Thai baep ratchachatniyom."

89 Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," 900–901.

90 Morris, "Surviving Pleasure at the Periphery," 363.

the political and cultural differences that necessitated, from Bangkok's perspective, the integration of the north in the first place. The forcible integration of one state by another becomes a common defense against a colonial threat; what was once a conflict between "others" becomes the historical revealing of the Tai family tree. The cultural project that followed the political integration of the north simultaneously sought to erase the history of that same assumption of power. In short, much like the crypto-colonial position of Siam, as argued by Herzfeld and Thongchai, Chiang Mai exists in a sort of "crypto-internally colonial" position vis-à-vis the Siamese state. The imperceptible, gradual, and silent transformation of Chiang Mai from vassal to province was, therefore, intentional and shares important parallels with Siam. Moreover, as Morris points out, Chiang Mai now serves as a sort of origin point of the Thai nation, a non-threatening other that figures prominently in domestic tourism and nationalist fantasies of a shared Thai past.[91]

The notion that Siam "survived" the colonial threat has also been challenged. Chaiyan Rajchagool, for example, emphasizes the *formation* as opposed to the *survival* of the Thai state. In reference to the north, Chaiyan argues that

> it was not the imperialist threat of British penetration, as the Thai official view holds, that drove Bangkok to the North. On the contrary the British interests in the North were assisted and safeguarded by the new administration sent from Bangkok and it was with the instigation and support of Britain that Bangkok's state power was expanded. It was the friendship with imperialism that brought the northern part of Siam into the orbit of the Bangkok powers.[92]

Chaiyan further concludes that "Britain and Bangkok together pursued their common interests at the expense of the local rulers."[93]

Siam came into contact with colonial powers in other peripheries as well. Tamara Loos has described the Siamese colonial project in the deep south as a form of "competitive colonialism" in which Siam viewed itself not as the victim but as a fellow colonial power, on more or less equal footing with

91 See, for example, Kittaya's discussion of historical and cultural representations of the north in Thai melodrama: "Combi-Nation: Thai Nation Building and National Identity in Thai TV Dramas with Northern Thai Focus," ch. 3.

92 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 20–21.

93 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 20-21.

the British, with whom they competed for control over the Malay states.[94] Siam was not only subject to the cultural, political, and economic demands of Western colonialism; it was also an imperial force in its own right among its peripheries. It was, in Loos's phrase, an "imperialist colony."[95]

The case of Chiang Mai suggests another dynamic to Siam's imperialism among its peripheries. While Siam may have competed with Britain for dominance in the Malay south, in Chiang Mai, as Chaiyan points out, Siamese goals largely went hand in hand with those of the British, where the British needed to secure their Burmese border with Siam and create the necessary conditions to allow for the expansion of British enterprise in Siam, especially in terms of the extraction of teak. As increasing numbers of British subjects began working in areas controlled by the Chiang Mai kings, British officials spent much of their time dealing with the fallout from these cases, pursuing redress through whatever legal channels were available to them. The goal of British policy in the late 1860s to the early 1870s became to simplify this process and ensure consular protection for British subjects in the northern states, which eventually resulted in the treaties of 1874 and 1883. The only way for these goals to be met in Chiang Mai, according to Knox, the British Consul in Bangkok, was for Siam to "be made to clearly understand that on them devolves the duty of looking after the proper government of Chiengmai."[96] After the first Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874, British India reminded Knox that "H.M.'s Govt consider it advisable to continue to hold the Siamese Govt ultimately responsible for the conduct of the Chief of Chiengmai and for the fulfillment of the treaty engagements contracted by it in the year 1874."[97] British correspondence in the 1870s concerning the problem of Chiang Mai thus indicates that they were not interested in taking control of the region; rather, most British officials felt that task belonged to Bangkok. In 1892 the British vice-consul in Chiang Mai wrote of rumors that Inthawichayanon wished to throw off his allegiance to Siam:

> I think it is quite possible that the Chief of Chiengmai would like to transfer his allegiance to the British if he thought he could accomplish the transfer without danger to himself, and I think it is likely that such a change would be welcomed by the people not only of Chiengmai but of

94 Loos, *Subject Siam*, 80–88; Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms."

95 Loos, "Competitive Colonialisms," 75.

96 TNA FO 69/60. Thomas George Knox to Foreign Affairs Office, London, September 11, 1872.

97 TNA FO 69/94. India Office to Thomas George Knox, December 20, 1877.

> the other four northern Provinces also, but I believe that it is understood by the Chief of Chiengmai and the chiefs of the other provinces that the British Government do not desire such a change, and that they have therefore no choice but to remain under Siam.[98]

This appears to be less a case of competitive colonialism than one of enforced cooperation. Similarly, in allowing the American missionaries to move and work freely in the north, Siamese policy facilitated American goals, while the missionary presence provided crucial opportunities for Siam to advance its agenda in Chiang Mai. In this way, the nature of external influence in Chiang Mai echoes other cases of informal or "multilateral" imperialism. For example, the imposition of western power in China during the nineteenth century through the treaty port system has often been described in these terms, though few scholars have placed the Qing dynasty alongside the colonial powers.[99] In the Thai case, however, the interests of the Bangkok state clearly overlapped with the multilateral interests of Western powers. In short, while the Malay states can be explained as a case of *competitive* colonialism between British and Siamese interests, I argue that Chiang Mai and the inland states of the north should be viewed as a case of *cooperative* colonialism. I use this term here to indicate the overlap of objectives and policies between multiple forces outside the region, namely the British, Americans, and Siamese, sometimes through outright collusion and at other times through pushing in the same direction.

If British policy was clear on the subject, what accounts for the anxiety of the Bangkok court over Chiang Mai's position within the kingdom? There were, of course, other signals reaching Bangkok than those mentioned above. First, French colonial expansion had accelerated, and by the late 1880s, conflict between France and Siam over the interface between their respective states was pushing Siam toward a disastrous confrontation. This confrontation was the Paknam crisis of 1893, in which French gunboats blockaded the Chao Phraya River and essentially forced the Siamese king to sign a treaty ceding a large area, now part of Laos, to the French.[100] Sharper confrontation put the Siamese elite on notice, and even though Chiang Mai was much further to the west and therefore clearly under British influence, the concern over French expansion also animated Siamese policy

98 TNA FO 628/210. A.W. Stringer to Captain Jones, March 15, 1892.

99 One example is Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade*, which focuses on Qing efforts to retain control of Korea alongside western and Japanese imperialism.

100 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 109–12.

in Chiang Mai. Moreover, Chiang Mai routinely sent its own mixed signals. As noted in the quote preceding, there were rumors that Inthawichayanon wanted to ally himself with the British. Another rumor, this time concerning Inthawichayanon's daughter, Chao Dara Rasami, can also be explained in the context of colonial tension. The rumor, which is found commonly in accounts of Chao Dara's life, asserts that a British official approached Inthawichayanon in 1881 to discuss the possibility of offering Dara for adoption by Queen Victoria.[101] Castro-Woodhouse argues that it was most likely Dara Rasami's parents, *Mae Chao* Thipkraisorn and *Chao Luang* Inthawichayanon, who "themselves invented the rumour as a means of improving their political currency with the Siamese," which "succeeded in prompting Bangkok to upgrade the status of Chiang Mai's rulership."[102] Shortly after this episode, Chulalongkorn sent gifts with the new Siamese commissioner in Chiang Mai, Prince Phichit Prichakon, along with a letter soliciting Chao Dara's hand in marriage. A few years later, in 1886, she traveled to Bangkok with her father to be presented to Chulalongkorn as royal consort.[103] The Queen Victoria rumor sent a message to Bangkok that was completely opposite that of the previously quoted British officials: that Chiang Mai could indeed fall into British hands. The problem was not with the British, however, but more so with French aggression and Chiang Mai efforts to "upgrade their status."

In the cooperative colonialism of the north, Siamese activities were not exclusively "at the expense of local rulers" as Chaiyan argues.[104] It would be a mistake to view the Chiang Mai lords as simply the victims of British and Siamese imperialism; rather, as the example above suggests, they were perfectly willing to play colonial forces off one another, which in this case meant British Burma and Siam. And yet, as mentioned above and as Ramsay points out, under certain circumstances the removal of power from local elites without adequate compensation can result in resistance, even rebellion. The question for the final section of this chapter is therefore the regional and historical context of resistance to the Siamese state-formation effort in Chiang Mai and the north. If le May, following McGilvary, called the imposition of Siamese rule in Chiang Mai a "silent revolution," the question remains: How silent was it? What "noises" were made in the north in opposition to these changes? What form did any such resistance take?

101 Castro-Woodhouse, *Woman between Two Kingdoms*, 27–28.
102 Castro-Woodhouse, *Woman between Two Kingdoms*, 28.
103 Castro-Woodhouse, *Woman between Two Kingdoms*, 75–76.
104 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 21.

There were two large rebellions that significantly challenged the Siamese state. First was the Phya Phap revolt of 1889.[105] This revolt was largely the result of a change in tax policy that resulted in a substantial increase in taxes owed by peasant producers. In the initial period of integration, especially after the Second Chiang Mai Treaty of 1883, one of the key reforms came in tax collection. The Bangkok-appointed special commissioner in the north, Prince Phichit, instituted a series of tax reforms, including new taxes, changing the form of payment from payment in kind to payment in cash, and the creation of tax monopolies.[106] These monopolies were then farmed out to tax collectors, most of whom were Chinese immigrants from Yunnan.[107] In Chiang Mai the tax concession was purchased by Noi Wong, a Chinese man who then became the tax farmer (*chao phasi*) for the area. The specific difficulty that led to the Phya Phap revolt began when the method for calculating taxes collected on betel, areca, and coconut trees.[108] When local producers offered to pay their taxes in kind rather than in cash, which in the 1880s was in relatively short supply, Noi Wong refused. To make matters worse, he strictly punished nonpayment by having individuals arrested and detained, exposed to the elements, outside the village headman's house. Some local leaders and the relatives of those arrested filed an appeal with the local court, which eventually made its way to the Treasury Department, which replied that they were powerless to affect the situation, as Noi Wong had complete authority in the realm of tax collection. Local leaders then began to quickly plan a revolt, but they found only tepid support from the ruling *chao* in Chiang Mai.

Initially, the target of the rebels was clearly Noi Wong and his oppressive means of tax collection and enforcement. Phya Phap sent a letter to the Siamese commissioner explaining this precise point in mid-September 1898.[109] By the end of September, however, the target had clearly changed:

> [Phya] Prapsongkram and [Phya] Ratanakhuha ordered the rebels to march on Chiang Mai city [...] They were ordered to wipe out the Siamese

105 For a clear and theoretically informed description of the events of the Phya Phap rebellion, see Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions," 94–102.

106 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 189.

107 Ratanaporn, "Political, Social, and Economic Changes in the Northern State of Thailand Resulting from the Chiang Mai Treaties of 1874 and 1883," 202–3.

108 Whereas previous taxes had been collected on mature, productive trees, Noi Wong began assessing taxes on immature, damaged, and otherwise non-productive trees. This amounted to a significant increase for peasant producers, in the amount of 10 to 200 rupees in taxes per year. See Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 230; and Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions," 94.

109 Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions," 98.

> and Chinese and burn down every building along the banks of the Mae Ping River.[110]

The goal of the rebels rapidly changed from removing Noi Wong and eliminating taxes to "[killing] Bangkok officials and Chinese tax collectors."[111] As the goals widened, so too did the spatial extent of the rebellion. Though discontent had begun in a handful of villages clustered around San Sai, the tax reforms and the pain they caused made conditions ripe for such a rebellion anywhere in the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley where peasants grew crops for trade. Phya Phap drew support from areas west, north, and south of the city and likely had supporters inside the city as well.[112] The quote above hints at another important spatial dimension as well; the targets listed by the rebels were spatially concentrated in a small area east of Chiang Mai along the Ping River, where the Siamese compound and most overseas Chinese were located (see Chapter 4).

The immediate revolt in Chiang Mai was put down rather quickly. Phya Phap fled Chiang Mai for Chiang Tung, where he was well received and supported. He raised another force and marched on Fang, taking that city and hoping that doing so might revitalize his effort. This part of the revolt dragged on into 1890. Though the Siamese had quickly put down the rebellion in Chiang Mai, it did have an important effect on their goals in the region, and they ultimately pulled back on the policy of centralization for several years.

The second—and more dangerous—rebellion in the north was the Shan Revolt, also known as the Phrae Revolt, of 1902. The causes of this rebellion reflect changes in the process of administrative reform. Whereas the object of aggression in 1889 had been both Chinese tax collectors and Siamese officials based in Chiang Mai, which resulted from changes introduced following the 1883 treaty, the 1902 rebels targeted Siamese officials at the local level, who were there as a direct result of reforms instituted in 1899 and the establishment of the *thesaphiban* system of government.[113] The revolt itself began in Phrae in July 1902 when a band of 300 rebels attacked the local police station, manned by just twelve officers, and stole all the weapons.[114] They then proceeded to destroy all communications equipment at the post office to prevent any Siamese officials calling for help. The target of these

110 NAT ม.58/98. Cited in Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions," 98. Ratanakuha was Phya Phap's kinsman and one of the four elected co-leaders of the rebellion.

111 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 192.

112 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 112.

113 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 205–6.

114 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 231.

actions remained the Siamese, not the local *chao.* In fact, the rebels had planned to place the *chao* of Phrae back on the throne, to rule as he once did before the Siamese arrived. The Shan Revolt, like the one led by Phya Phap in Chiang Mai, was a conservative effort, not intended to overturn the existing order but rather to return things to the way they were before the "southerners" began meddling in local affairs.

In one sense, the main source of resentment that produced the Shan revolt was the introduction of a new tax designed to replace the state requirement for conscripted labor in 1899, the first year of the *thesaphiban* system.[115] When local officials assigned by Bangkok began ignoring this policy, instead calling on peasants to contribute their labor to infrastructure projects such as road construction in the area, this caused widespread resentment. Moreover, the degree and character of centralized state penetration had changed. Before 1899 the actual Siamese presence on the ground was rather thin. In 1899, however, district and sub-district level positions were created by the Interior Ministry and filled with Siamese officials. Thus, for the first time, large numbers of northern peasants were encountering Siamese officials, many of whom, according to the British vice-consul at the time, "[were] the best hated officials in the Monthon."[116] A new Siamese commissioner, Phraya Surasi Wisutsak, arrived in the north in 1902, in the aftermath of the Shan Revolt, and quickly instituted new policies and reforms designed to ameliorate the conditions that had led to uprisings and resistance. An army division and a large police force were stationed in Chiang Mai to give these new policies muscle and dissuade locals from considering future rebellions.[117] These new forces were, however, just as disliked as the local officials mentioned above. A contemporary observer remarked that "their conduct 'has been such as to bring the Siamese race into the greatest odium, and they have made themselves feared and hated wherever they have been stationed.'"[118]

In another sense, however, the Shan Revolt resulted from a much larger spatial transformation affecting the whole of the inland region. The Shan had generally occupied the space between the Burmese and Lanna realms and had freely moved between the cities and towns of the region, often

115 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 205–6; Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 212–13.

116 Vice-Consul Beckett, "Report on the Shan Uprising," undated report, cited in Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 214.

117 Rujaya and Wyatt, "Administrative Reforms and National Integration in Northern Thailand," 68.

118 British Consul Moor, cited in Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 95.

participating in the caravan trade or the teak industry. But after the Bowring Treaty and the two Chiang Mai treaties of 1874 and 1883, Shan in Chiang Mai increasingly registered as British subjects and as such were subject to certain regulations and limitations. For most Asian British subjects, the protections and perks offered by extraterritoriality were positive; for many Shan, however, this new status simply restricted their movement and activities in what had for decades been a free and passable frontier space. Siam now required passports for British subjects to travel in the country. British subjects could not own land in Siam. Failure to prove one's status as a British subject meant that one had to pay a labor tax.[119] These restrictions contributed to a general feeling of discontent with the imposition of the modern space of the state—its geo-body.

There were other smaller-scale outbreaks of violence, rebellion, and revolt in addition to the Phya Phap and the Shan Revolt. Yet the question remains: Why was there not *more* violent conflict in the north? Chaiyan argues that "the combination of the relative military weakness of the townships and Bangkok's clever political moves meant that the use of physical force was rarely needed, although of course the threat was always present."[120] Katherine Bowie has also posited several explanations, which mostly involve strategies of divide and conquer: by enforcing and encouraging divisions in production, ethnic clustering, and economic production, the lords made rebellion and revolt difficult.[121] It is also important to remember that, aside from the obvious rebellions, many Bangkok royalty and nobility saw the north as a dangerous place, generally hostile to Siamese. This is why the visits of crown prince Vajiravudh, the future Rama VI, in 1906, and that of Prajadhipok, his successor as Rama VII, were symbolically important—these royal tours signified the pacification of the north.[122] However, as Sarassawadee points out, the Shan uprising "revealed clear splits and lack of understanding between [...] Lan Na People and [...] Thai people."[123] Her conclusion aptly summarizes the effect of these two rebellions on the general process of political and cultural consolidation in the north: "The idea that everyone was part of one people, one nationality, under the absolute monarchy had a long way to go."[124]

119 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 206.

120 Chaiyan, *The Rise and Fall of the Thai Absolute Monarchy*, 21.

121 See the final chapter of Bowie, "Peasant Perspectives on the Political Economy of the Northern Thai Kingdom of Chiang Mai in the Nineteenth Century."

122 Thanet, *Khonmueang*, 54.

123 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 209.

124 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 209.

In the aftermath of these rebellions, the Siamese stepped up their efforts to forge good Thai subjects out of rambunctious northerners. The two key areas of reform, however, were in education and religion. By centralizing the Buddhist monkhood and instituting an expanding school system in the north, the Interior Ministry was aiming at two key markers of northern identity: *kam mueang* (กำเมือง), the northern Thai language, and local Buddhist practices.[125] All schools began to teach in central as opposed to northern Thai, including schools set up by missionaries. Monks also began to preach and teach in central Thai, and since temples were the most important source of education for rural areas and the poor, this had the effect of dooming the northern Thai language, especially in written form, to a rapid decline.[126] To mark some of these changes, crown prince Vajiravudh completed a tour of Chiang Mai and the north in 1905–6. The timing of his visit indicates that it was in part to show the successful pacification of the north and that government policy in the aftermath of the 1902 revolt had succeeded in making the region safe. He also made it a point to visit local points and persons of interest, including the local royalty, Siamese officials, and missionaries and diplomats stationed in Chiang Mai. Importantly, he dedicated two schools, Yupparat Withayalai and the Prince Royal's College (PRC), both of which later developed into the premier secondary schools of the region.[127]

The integration of the north outlined above contrasts sharply with Siamese efforts to integrate other peripheries, most notably the Muslim south. Historically, the Malay kingdom of Patani had been quite separated from the core of the Siamese empire. The Malay leaders of Patani took the initiative in leading resistance as well as open rebellion against the imposition of the *thesaphiban* system.[128] In 1922, for example, the Ban Namsai revolt began when the former Malay nobility and some religious leaders ordered the villagers not to pay taxes and rent on land to the Thai government.[129] The northern rulers, on the other hand, responded to groundswells of discontent with either indifference or guarded, but not active, support. Whereas the visit of the crown prince to the north signaled the pacification of the region,

125 For a discussion of this phenomenon, and an impassioned plea to restore and maintain the local language of the north, see Thanet, "When the Young Cannot Speak Their Own Mother Tongue," 82–93.

126 See Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 209–13.

127 Bunsoem, *Sadet Lanna*.

128 Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 62.

129 Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 64.

resistance and rebellion in the Muslim south increased in response to the "Siamification" of Patani people in the 1920s.[130]

Spatially, as well, the Siamese stepped up efforts to integrate the north. As frequently mentioned by visitors to Chiang Mai, the city was more easily reached via Burma. The British Consul in Bangkok noted in 1872 that "Chiengmai is about six weeks journey from [Bangkok], but can be reached from Moulmein in about half that time."[131] Communications with Chiang Mai via Moulmein were always easier than via Bangkok; the first regular mail service from Chiang Mai to Bangkok was established via Moulmein by the British Consulate in 1885.[132] But by the end of the nineteenth century, with British policy settling on the assumption of Siamese control over the north and the continued expansion of the teak industry, with its thousands of logs following the watershed to Paknampho and Bangkok, the forging of internal connections between the center and the north became a paramount concern.

The first real modern technological connection between Bangkok and the north was the telegraph. The first telegraph line to the north was established to Tak, which then connected to the British line in Moulmein. Prince Phichit, the Siamese commissioner stationed in Chiang Mai after the 1883 treaty, noted that he hoped that the telegraph, once brought to Chiang Mai in 1885, "would be the forerunner of railways."[133] Indeed, the telegraph did aid in communication. News of Burma's fall to the British in 1885 reached Chiang Mai not overland via Moulmein but by telegraph via Bangkok. Satow noted that many in Chiang Mai, including Inthawichayanon, simply could not believe the news of Burma's defeat:

> The old man would not believe that the British forces had taken Mandalay; the whole story was too incredible. As if any European could have conquered the great Kingdom of Burmah, which had been too much for the Laos themselves a hundred years ago, with so little difficulty. Moreover, our own Burmese subjects in Chiengmai disbelieved the rumour. *It had been invented in Chiengmai itself by the foreigner who sat in a hut at the end of a wire and pretended to be in communication with Bangkok*.[134]

130 Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*, 64.

131 TNA FO 69/60. Thomas George Knox to Foreign Affairs Office, London, September 11, 1872.

132 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 66.

133 Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, 381.

134 TNA PRO 30/33/1. Ernest Satow, "Journal from Bangkok to Chiengmai and Back in 1885-86" (Draft manuscript, 1888). Emphasis mine.

Though the telegraph did make communications between Bangkok and its officials in the north more convenient, the most important "distance-demolishing technology," to use James Scott's term,[135] applied to this task was the railroad. Initially, there were threats that the railroad would strengthen the connection between Chiang Mai and Moulmein, when several plans for a rail link connecting British Burma and southern China via Chiang Mai were proposed.[136] Though some Siamese officials warmed to the idea, the possibility of Western companies with extraterritorial privileges building and controlling railways inside Siam was eventually rejected. The Siamese established the Royal Railways Department to build and operate the country's rail network, as they had done with the telegraph. The northern line reached Paknampho by October 1905, Lampang in April 1916, and Chiang Mai in January 1922. The slow march of the railroad north brought Chiang Mai closer to Bangkok. Even before the railroad reached Lampang, it had greatly affected travel to and from the major cities of the north:

> Apropos of Dr. McKean's down river trip [...], we are reminded of the changing conditions of travel in our field. After a down trip of twenty-two days, instead of an up-river trip of over a month, such as would have been inevitable even five years ago, two days of rail travel, and two days of hard horse-back journey brought him back to Chiengmai in less than a month after he went down with Mr. White. The journey overland to rail head, and down to Bangkok, or return, can now be readily made in two days from Pre, three or four days from Lakawn, and in five to seven days from Chiengmai or Nan.[137]

The extension of the railroad north had proceeded apace until the geographic limit of the Chao Phraya basin was reached, and the mountainous north loomed ahead. Thereafter, labor difficulties caused the railroad to go over budget and behind schedule. Initially, most of the labor was Chinese, but once construction commenced in the mountainous north, they began to experience high rates of illness and injury. Recruitment suffered, and eventually the Chinese were replaced with local laborers and some from the northeast.[138] There were also competing plans in place, with some advocating an extension from Den Chai to Phrae and on to Chiang Rai,

135 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

136 See Brailey, "The Scramble for Concessions in 1880s Siam," 522–27.

137 *Laos News* 11, no. 3 (July 1914): 70–71.

138 Sangkhit, *Buk pa fa dong... rotfai phaendin Lanna Thai*, 49–50.

while others favored pushing on to Chiang Mai, as it was the only center in the north planners and officials could be certain would help the railroad turn a profit.[139] Eventually the Thai government decided to press on with the Chiang Mai line via Lampang. The major hurdle between Lampang and Chiang Mai was the Khun Tan tunnel, which opened in 1918 after taking eleven years to complete. With that major obstacle out of the way, the railroad continued to Chiang Mai in short order, and the full line would open for service in 1922. At that point, any question of Chiang Mai's connection to Bangkok, and not to Moulmein, was rendered moot.

Conclusion

The cooperation and overlapping interests between Western colonial powers and the Bangkok state transformed the inland realm into Siam's north, and the region prospered during the relatively stable period of the mid-nineteenth century. However, the perception of Chiang Mai as an important city in the margins between kingdoms and colonial powers varied by the direction of one's gaze. Chiang Mai and its hinterland was seen as a lost territory by the Burmese, an economic frontier by the British, and a vassal-cum-buffer state by Siam. A series of events brought new pressures and populations to bear on the region, shifting the dynamics of power and the meaning of the entire region. The unique geography of the teak industry, in particular, connected north and south, while the geography of missionary travel went almost exclusively through Bangkok before spreading north. In short, teak floated toward, and missionaries from, Bangkok. These connections and flows gradually changed the space of the inland realm from a vassal and a buffer to a periphery and an internal colony, the subsequent integration of which at times met stiff resistance and violence. All the while, the interests of British, American, and Siamese elites mostly, though not always, overlapped, and there was more cooperation in bringing about these changes rather than competition over control of the region. Finally, in the early twentieth century, after the geo-body of Siam had established the borders between the inland realm and its geographically natural port, Moulmein, Siamese infrastructural projects, funded or facilitated by foreign partners, gradually filled in the connections between north and south. In this way, the inland realm became Siam's north.

139 See, for instance, the correspondence in NAT ม.ร.5 ยธ./78, *Rueang Kansang Thang Rotfai Sai Nuea*, 1908.

This broad regional transition, brought about by the extension of colonial economies and mechanisms of informal and formal empire into Siam, set the stage for the transformation of space at the urban level as well. Changes in the economic structure brought about not only by the Bowring Treaty but also by the two Chiang Mai treaties would bring new populations and connections to Chiang Mai. The next chapter discusses how, at the urban level, the Siamese "forward movement" began on the edges of the city before moving in to its symbolic and sacred center to firmly establish Bangkok's control over the city. Siamese policies transformed various administrative spaces, city markets, and street networks, making Chiang Mai a colonial city in many ways. Finally, as discussed in Chapter 5, these efforts to tame and transform the city would meet with limited success in the sacred spaces formerly associated with legitimate royal rule, which created an opportunity for a unique form of sacro-spatial resistance, one that eventually culminated in the life and work of a charismatic monk named Khruba Siwichai.

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Abbreviations

NAT	National Archives of Thailand	
	ม	Ministry of the Interior
	ยธ	Ministry of Public Works
	ศธ	Ministry of Education
	ศร	Prime Minister's Office
	ค	Treasury
	ผ	Map Collection
CCTA	Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University	
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom	
	PRO	Public Record Office
	FO	Foreign Office

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4 The City Reshaped

Power and Urban Space in Micro-Colonial Chiang Mai

Abstract
This chapter examines the transformation of Chiang Mai as a micro-colonial space in which global forces were translated into local and urban forms. By looking at the spatial negotiations over administrative and legal power at the urban scale, this chapter argues that Siamese internal colonialism tamed and transformed the political and economic authority of the Chiang Mai royal elite by exerting control over the spaces of the city center. The transformation of Chiang Mai's city center clearly shows Siam's domination of the north through urban space; at the same time, however, elements of the premodern persisted, which could be productively reimagined as "internal" to the newly formed Siamese state and which helped to shape the space of modern Chiang Mai.

Keywords: Urban space, micro-colonization, internal colonialism, mapping

The regional transformation of the inland states corresponded with the creation of Siam's geo-body, which in turn provided the intellectual and cognitive basis for the integration of the north—variously called internal colonization, internal imperialism, national integration, or semi-colonialism. However, this new spatial frame could not on its own determine the mechanisms through which the control of the center over the periphery was maintained at the local scale. In other words, spatial changes at the national level preceded and conditioned, but did not determine, changes at the local and urban level.

This chapter argues that the integration of the north paved the way for what I call the micro-colonization of Chiang Mai. The term "micro-colonization" is not intended to add to the pile of hyphenated colonialisms; rather, it is meant to call attention specifically to the unfolding of colonial power relations at the local and urban scale. The relationship between the

Easum, Taylor. *Chiang Mai between Empire and Modern Thailand. A City in the Colonial Margins*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023
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built environment and politics at the local scale, or micro-politics, extends deep into the past. Anne Blackburn argues, for example, that the "alterations to the landscape of Buddhist practice in Sukhothai and Chiang Mai occurred within the context of the micro-politics of these city-states, and efforts to alter or affirm local and regional hierarchies of status, authority and potency."[1] Though discussing the fifteenth through sixteenth centuries, this description can apply to the alterations made to the urban space of Chiang Mai in the nineteenth century, which likewise reflects the micro-politics of the city in a local and regional context. Moreover, this production of urban space represents a type of friction between the global forces of colonial modernity and the local level of urban space—city streets, government offices, and abandoned temples, for example. Colonial-era Chiang Mai represents a historical "zone of awkward engagement," to borrow from Anna Tsing, between local and regional interests and between different ways of thinking about the city.[2] Thus, "micro-colonial" is intended to highlight the micro-politics of urban space and power relations that constitute the larger transformation of early modern Lanna into a frontier of high colonialism in mainland Southeast Asia, while also highlighting relations between global and local scales.

The premodern logic of urban space in Chiang Mai maintained a socio-spatial distinction between the ruling elite, politically dependent nobles, the ethnically segmented and economically productive commoner class, long-distance traders, and foreigners. This distinction meant that as Siam extended its influence and control broadly throughout Chiang Mai and the north, two centers of power emerged in urban space. One, located in the old sacro-royal center, was based on the traditional ruling elite and the political authority vested in them by their vassal relationship with Bangkok, by their maintenance of sacred spaces and rituals associated with the monarchy, and by their inherited rights to the labor and natural resources of the city and its hinterlands. The other center was based on the presence of mainly foreign powers—American missionaries, Siamese commissioners, British diplomats, Shan and Burmese foresters, and Chinese merchants. This chapter outlines the development of these two competing centers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that developed as a result of complex and overlapping forces one might easily identify as colonial, or at least typical of the high-colonial era: technologically superior transport and communication, externally derived ideologies of modernization and

1 Blackburn, "Writing Buddhist Histories from Landscape and Architecture," 194.

2 Tsing, *Friction*.

modernity, and administrative reform. The chapter then explores the micro-colonization of the old city center by the new in the early decades of the twentieth century. However, as Brenda Yeoh has argued, "[t]he colonial urban built environment was [...] not separately shaped by either colonial control or the agency of those who inhabited its terrain, but embodied and expressed the tensions and negotiations, conflicts and compromises between different groups."[3] Thus, the conclusion of the chapter considers the complex relationships, ranging from cooperation to conflict, that helped shape Chiang Mai's urban space.

Spaces of Power – The Old Town

The spaces of power and authority from which the kings and nobles of Chiang Mai made policy and dispensed justice were situated in the center of the inner city. As discussed in Chapter 2, the residences of the ruling lords and the governing councils were all located in the central third of the inner city, as was the *khuang luang*, an open space maintained in the north-central part of the city and used primarily for public rituals or ceremonies and for marshaling peasants for military service. As discussed in Chapter 2, the palaces and the homes of the nobility were initially clustered in two areas inside the city center: near the original *chaiyaphum* of the city and along the main streets leading to and from the *klang wiang* intersection near the geographic center of the old city. Before the forceful assumption of Siamese control in the north at the close of the nineteenth century, however, the spaces of the ruling elites in Chiang Mai actually experienced a resurgence of sorts, growing in both opulence and extent, expanding outside the core area inside the inner city walls.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, palaces grew increasingly grand. Visiting diplomats or traders seeking audience with the king attest to this change. At mid-century, the British Consul in Bangkok, Schomburgk, remained unimpressed by the *wiang kaew*.[4] Later in the century, however, impressions of royal spaces and architecture changed. In January 1882 Carl Bock visited the king of Chiang Mai, "whose house and grounds, situated in the middle of the city, were surrounded by a high wall, a symbol of the rank and authority of the chief of this populous province."[5] Once again, Bock

3 Yeoh, *Contesting Space*, 18.

4 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai."

5 Bock, *Temples and Elephants*, 223.

describes the wall, which serves more to bolster the king's status than add to his defense. He goes on to describe the building in detail:

> The building was a mixture of Chinese and Lao architecture; along with the whole front extended a long, open room, partially furnished with European furniture, the only article of native workmanship I saw being a large gilt state chair or throne which Pra Udon [*sic*] the Siamese official accompanying Bock on his visit to the palace] said was reserved for the use of the head priest when he came to visit the Chow [*sic*].[6]

Visiting two years later in 1884, Hallett entered through the "enclosure wall of the palace grounds," through a large gate that led "into an extensive court containing several buildings."[7] In this passage, Hallett is describing the innermost wall represented on the Finlayson Map, the wall surrounding the royal palace in the center of the city. He continues to describe the actual building: "The palace faces the gate, and is a substantial one-storeyed building, slightly Chinese in aspect, with brick walls, plastered over with an excellent cement, and a tiled roof."[8] This was the "new brick palace," according to the missionary Daniel McGilvary, who visited the king in 1877; it was "the first ever built in this country."[9] Hallett then proceeds to describe the place interior:

> Ascending a flight of steps, paved with black tiles, we entered the audience-hall, which occupied the whole front of the building. The floor of the hall is inlaid with various woods, several chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and the walls were papered like an English drawing room, and adorned with long, narrow, gilt-framed mirrors. The remainder of the furniture consisted of a lounge, an easy-chair, a dozen drawing-room chairs, upholstered in green rep, and a small tea-table. Through the doors leading into the private apartments some elegantly designed carved lattice-work partitions were seen, which served as screens to the interior of the palace.[10]

A Baptist missionary visiting from Burma who traveled with Hallett was even more effusive, describing the building itself as a "rather European-looking

6 Bock, *Temples and Elephants*, 224.
7 Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, 101.
8 Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, 101.
9 McGilvary, *A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao*, 131.
10 Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, 101.

structure," the workmanship of the palace as "neat," the interior decoration as "tasteful," and the latticework as "prettily designed."[11]

Another British diplomat, Ernest Satow, visited a few years later and noted that the king lived "in a fine house built in semi-European style" but was less impressed with the fact that "[t]he furniture was European, and on the floor were spread a number of gaudy Brussels carpets."[12] He also described Inthawichayanon's "private residence in the city" as "pleasant, [...] built of teak, and surrounded by a pretty garden. The drawing-room and dining room were completely furnished in simple European style."[13] Satow visited the homes of other royals as well, including Bunthawong, the *chao upparat* during Inthawichayanon's reign, which was more impressive than the king's:

> It is the largest house in Chiengmai, probably not even excepting the palace of the Chief. Bands of carving in geometrical patterns run round both exterior and interior. The beams and side brackets are all carved. Gigantic pillars of teak wood, smoothed with the native knifesword, support the roof of the audience-hall, and here, as elsewhere, the use of saw and plane seems to have been unknown at the date of its erection. At the further end of the hall, on feet modeled as elephants and tigers, stands a handsome wooden screen; its front has a peacock in low relief facing towards us with its tail spread, while other animals, as dogs and tigers, very small in proportion, play about its feet. Behind the screen is a doorway, affording access to the other portion of the building, which is entirely without windows. At the near end of it stands a huge wooden cupboard several feet higher than the floor, which formed the state bedroom of the Uparat; being entirely covered in with planks, there was no provision for the admission of air or light. Its occupant must have felt it possible to sleep securely and soundly. This is said to be the normal style of construction for Lao bedrooms. The eaves of the roof, which come down very low and render the interior extremely obscure, are supported by wooden brackets, carved in the form of the fabulous bird Krut, the Indian Garuda.[14]

Satow was clearly more impressed with the house of the *chao upparat* than of the *chao mueang*; this is unsurprising, since it was widely understood

11 Cushing, "A Journey into Northern Siam – VII," 94.
12 Satow, "Journal from Bangkok to Chiengmai and Back in 1885–86," pt. VI-Chiengmai.
13 Satow, "Journal from Bangkok to Chiengmai and Back in 1885–86."
14 Satow, "Journal from Bangkok to Chiengmai and Back in 1885–86." Emphasis in original.

at the time that the *chao upparat*, and not his brother, held the real power in Chiang Mai.

These observations all come from the late nineteenth century, when royal life and protocol had already dramatically changed in both Siam and Lanna. In 1868 Chulalongkorn abolished the centuries-old practice of prostration, thus necessitating the European style drawing room with chairs and tables, mentioned by Hallett and Satow. In Bangkok this furniture was imported directly from Europe, while in Chiang Mai, craftsmen and women copied the relatively small amount of Western furniture imported via Bangkok.[15] One missionary even commented that she thought that Inthawichayanon's palace was a copy of, or at least inspired by, a house the Chiang Mai king had seen during one of his regular tributary visits to Bangkok.[16] In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the interior of the palace appeared decidedly simple to outside observers—even disappointing to some. But by the 1870s and 1880s, the palaces of the Chiang Mai lords had become more refined and impressive to visitors.

Not only did Inthawichayanon's palace become larger, more substantial, and more cosmopolitan in its design and decoration, but other royal homes and *khum* proliferated as well. When he visited in 1884, Cushing visited not only the home of Inthawichayanon but also Chao Ubonwanna (a powerful princess), the *chao ratchabut*, and at least two other high-ranking royals.[17] In addition to the numerous members of the Chiang Mai royal family, nobles and royals from cities and towns throughout the region came to stay in Chiang Mai, and they built their own residences in the central area of the city. With increasing traffic along the Ping River, riverside residences were established by mid-century. Kaew Nawarat, the final king of Chiang Mai, built several *khum* outside the city center—in the foothills of Doi Suthep, on Huai Kaew road west of the city, north of the city in Mae Rim, and on the west bank of the Ping River, which now stands as the American Consulate.[18] Palaces also became important centers of specialized production, which could then be used for trade. Susan Conway, writing about textile production in the various royal compounds throughout Lanna, notes that "until 1908 Lan Na royalty controlled the manufacture and sale of cloth throughout the country" and that much of that production was carried out in the various

15 Conway, *Silken Threads Lacquer Thrones*, 144.

16 Conway, *Silken Threads Lacquer Thrones*, 144.

17 Cushing, "A Journey into Northern Siam – VII," 94.

18 Jardine, "History of the U.S. Consulate Building in Chiang Mai, Thailand"; Wongsak, *Chaoluang Chiang Mai*, 172.

palaces and residences of the royal elites, both in the central palace and in the several residences along the Ping River.[19]

During and immediately following the Kawila restoration, then, the royal palaces and residences of Chiang Mai appeared modest, both in comparison with contemporary Bangkok and with Chiang Mai only six or seven decades later. Nevertheless, throughout Chiang Mai's history, the homes and palaces of the royal-noble elite remained important centers, serving as spaces of politics, production, and power. First, as demonstrated by the visits of numerous outsiders, the palace was where the king could conduct diplomacy. The king received visitors from other nearby states as well, and it was on the grounds of the royal palace that diplomatic and trade relations could be negotiated and settled. Though protocol changed over the course of the nineteenth century, the location of diplomatic exchange remained focused on the actual residences of the highest-ranking royal elite and usually took place in the front room of the building. As the numerous descriptions of the royal drawing room above indicate, the goal of the design and decoration of these spaces must have been to impress upon Western visitors local access to the trappings of colonial modernity. Second, the palaces were important centers of specialized production, where royal monopolies on skilled craft production could be mobilized for prestige and profit. Finally, the palaces served as centers of royal administration, places from which the king and his council made decisions and dispensed justice. This included having facilities to house prisoners on palace grounds, a fact discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

There were, however, other important administrative spaces in the city center besides the royal palace or *khum.* Beyond the palace reserved for the *chao mueang*, the rest of the *chao khan ha bai* resided in impressive *khum*. As Swatow observed, sometimes these *khum* were even more impressive than that of the *chao mueang*. Beyond these top royal positions were the members of the *khao sanam luang*, the traditional ruling council. This administrative body consisted of thirty-two high-ranking nobles divided into four groups: 1) two *phraya kha sanam*, 2) ten first-class *phraya sanam*, 3) ten second-class *phraya sanam*, and 4) ten third-class *phraya sanam*.[20] After the Second Chiang Mai Treaty in 1883, the Siamese commissioner, Prince Phichit, reorganized this ruling council into a Council of Six Ministers (*khao sanam luang lae hok tamnaeng*). This new council was much smaller, consisting only of six positions as opposed to the thirty-two of the *khao sanam luang*.

19 Conway, *Silken Threads Lacquer Thrones*, 242–47.

20 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 149.

The *khao sanam luang* met at the *sala sanam*, which was located in front of the *wiang kaew* in the royal center of the city (see Figure 4.2).

Although the process of reducing the power of the local lords had begun, the point here is that the palaces and ruling spaces of the kings and nobles remained important during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, many of them grew in opulence while others appeared outside the city walls. Other spaces in the inner city, such as temples, markets, and the open space of the *khuang luang*, continued to thrive. In the final decade of the century, however, Siamese policies would begin to dramatically alter the urban space in the center. These policies originated not from the old city center but from a new center of power that developed to the east of the old city, on the banks of the Ping River. The next section takes up the development of this new center of power.

Chiang Mai and the Development of a "Dual City"?

As Chiang Mai was gradually brought under Bangkok's influence and later control, the urban space of the city split into two spatially distinct centers. The first was based in the old walled city, as noted above, and remained focused on the royal palaces of the highest-ranking local royal elites, as well as the city center (*klang wiang*) market and important temples and sacred spaces. The second center was based around the banks of the Ping River to the east and developed gradually with the arrival and growth of outsider groups, especially American missionaries; British diplomats; British subjects from Burma, India, or the Shan states; Chinese merchants; and Siamese officials. It is during this crucial period, from roughly 1874 to 1899, that the urban space of Chiang Mai began to develop competing centers, in some ways similar to a colonial dual city but with its own curious local inflection borne out of the unique circumstances of Siam's colonial project in the north. This project was both crypto-colonial and involved more cooperation than competition among colonial powers, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Mapping Chiang Mai

The late nineteenth century saw a cartographic confrontation between the Siamese elite and Western colonial powers that produced the geo-body of the Siamese nation.[21] James McCarthy, the surveyor and first head of the

21 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 16–18; 129–35.

Siamese Department of Maps, famously produced a map in 1888 that not only gave territorial shape and form to the Kingdom of Siam but also represented, in Thongchai's words, "just another spatial speculation and the encoding of desire."[22] However, while the spatial form of the nation was encoded through the modern map, cartography also produced and made legible the social space of the cities within that new nation. In some ways, this built on previous representations of urban centers. Earlier maps of Chiang Mai, such as the Finlayson Map (Figure 2.1), depicted the city as a defensive bulwark through an abstract representation of walls and storehouses, only vaguely arranged to reflect Chiang Mai's square-walled city center. Other maps, like the "Map of Pilgrimage from a Lanna Manuscript," which Thongchai describes as "more like a memoir of travels in diagram form," connect the city to an imagined larger Buddhist world centered on India.[23] These maps communicated vital information about the city to officials in Bangkok and to faithful Buddhists, but they did so in a unique visual vocabulary that was quite distinct from that of modern cartography.

While surveyors and mapmakers produced the geo-body of Siam at the national scale, urban spaces were also mapped, shaped, and made legible to the state through new technologies and techniques of cartography. Indeed, the famous "Map of the Kingdom of Siam and Its Dependencies," published in 1900 as part of McCarthy's memoir and based on the 1888 map so intimately connected to the formation and force of the geo-body, included an inset map of the city of Chiang Mai (Figure 4.1); this was presumably due not only to its status as a major city of Siam but also because it featured so clearly in McCarthy's adventurous narrative.[24] Though there is scant detail in this inset, its inclusion in the 1900 reprinting alongside only two other cities (Bangkok and Luang Phrabang) places the city in a somewhat ambiguous position between the "Kingdom of Siam" and "Its Dependencies" found in the map's title.

The effect of mapping on urban space is more clearly seen in an earlier, remarkable map held at the National Archives of Thailand, simply titled "Map of the City of Chiang Mai" and almost certainly produced by the same surveyors that worked with McCarthy on the triangulation of Siam's borders with British and French territory.[25] Though there is little contextual information provided on the map itself—a stamp on the lower left-hand corner

22 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 125.

23 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 23.

24 McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*.

25 NAT พ.มท.35. *Phaenthi Mueang Nakhon Chiang Mai* [Map of the city of Chiang Mai].

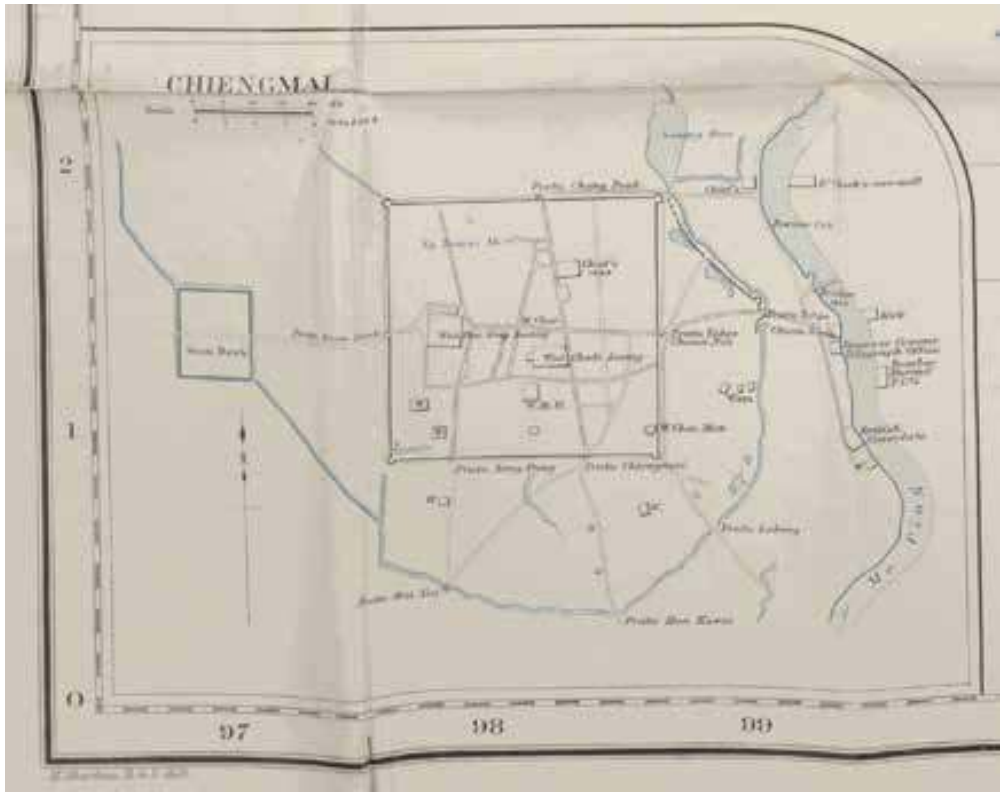

Figure 4.1 Inset Map of the Chiang Mai (Chiengmai), printed in 1900 as part of the "Map of the Kingdom of Siam and Its Dependencies."
(Source: James Fitzroy McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, [London: J. Murray, 1900], end matter. Available via Cornell University's *Southeast Asia Visions* collection, https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/sea108 [accessed June 24, 2021].)

simply indicates that the map passed through the Construction Division of the Ministry of the Interior—it nonetheless includes an impressive amount of detail related to the social, political, and economic landscape of the city at a key moment of transition. The specific date of the map is unknown, but several factors indicate that it originated in a survey conducted sometime between 1885 and 1886.[26] For example, the map includes, just north of the Siamese compound, the telegraph office, which reached Chiang Mai only in 1885, as noted in Chapter 3. Also, the individual listed as occupying

26 Some scholars incorrectly identify the date of printing as much later, such as one study that attempts to connect the map to the Pak Nam crisis by arguing that it was printed in 1893. See Worachat, *Yon adit Lanna*, 10–11. There are several flaws with this dating, however. For example, he argues that the wooden bridge that crosses the Ping River, built by Dr. Marion Cheek (see discussion below) is shown in the early stages of construction, which began in 1885. This is doubtful, since all that is marked is a thick line extending slightly into the Ping River, with no label. There are also other marks added after the original printing, which may easily account for this mark.

the residence of the second assistant Siamese commissioner, Phra Udon Phitsadan,[27] died in 1886, which suggests that the survey on which the map was based was carried out sometime shortly before that.

Some scholars have argued that the map was printed much later, perhaps in 1893, according to an updated survey.[28] Worachat Michubot, for example, speculates that the map was likely produced in the context of the Pak Nam crisis, when French gunboats forced the Siamese to agree to a treaty ceding control of several provinces east of the Mekong to the French. Amid this crisis, he reasons, information on the major city of the north, sandwiched between British and French colonies, would have been critical, and so Siamese officials made some corrections to the map and had it printed. He even points out that McCarthy spent four months in Chiang Mai during the 1891 rainy season, and during this time, he or members of his team might have updated the original survey.[29] However, McCarthy makes no mention of survey work done in the city at that time and in fact notes specifically that he spent his time completing calculations on the triangulation work they had completed thus far in the jungles and mountains of the region.[30] The dates of the original survey do correspond to the early days of cartographic training in Siam, led by James McCarthy and his team of Siamese surveyors, with whom he began working in 1881.[31] Thongchai mentions, for example, that McCarthy's team conducted surveys in Chiang Mai in 1886–87 "for military and administrative purposes," two purposes for which this map seems well suited.[32] However, the arguments for dating the publication of the map to 1893 are tenuous at best. If changes were made to the map before printing

27 The second, or assistant, Siamese commissioner, *Phra Udon Phitsadan*, was descended from a Sinhalese family and appears in several Western accounts, including Hallet and Cushing, of meetings with Siamese officials in Chang Mai. Cushing, for example, reported that he was "a man of Ceylonese extraction, and has been a resident of Zimmai for many years. [...] He has a smattering of English, which he uses with a most delightful coolness and lack of appropriateness." Cushing, "A Journey into Northern Siam – VII," 94.

28 Worachat, *Yon adit Lanna*, 10–11. Part of the argument for the 1893 printing date is quite involved and is based on the presence of Chao Sing Kham on the map in the center of the old city. Chao Sing Kham was the son of the chao ratchawong Noi Khatiya, who died in October 1892 and whose property Sing Kham would have inherited. When Noi Khatiya died, Noi Suriya, who had followed him at his last promotion, again replaced him as chao ratchawong in November 1893. Worachat reasons that this map was likely printed after Noi Khatiya died but before Noi Suriya assumed the position of chao ratchawong, ostensibly because Chao Sing Kham would have occupied the home of his father in the interim.

29 McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, 147–49.

30 McCarthy, *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, 147.

31 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 119.

32 Thongchai, , *Siam Mapped*, 124, citing "Royal Survey Department Siam: A Retrospect," 20–23.

in 1893, why was the name of the deceased assistant Siamese commissioner, Phra Udon Phitsadan, not changed? Therefore, rather than call this the "1893 map of Mueang Nakhon Chiang Mai" as Worachat does, it would be more proper to date the map roughly to late 1885 or 1886. I refer to it as the 1886 "Mahatthai Map" of Chiang Mai, since its only documented provenance is that it was originally held by the Ministry of the Interior (*Mahatthai*).

Even without much contextual information, the detail provided on the map is remarkable, such as the names of individual landowners, noble and royal compunds, and the shape of city walls, bastions, and gates. Moreover, the detail combined with the modern cartographic representation of the city and its features has made this map somewhat ubiquitous in historical representations of Chiang Mai, in both academic works and museum displays alike. This map undoubtedly reflects the processes that created a national geo-body at the urban scale, including the encoding of social and political space into a form that was legible to elite actors and agents of the state. Rather than provide an abstract image of military or sacred power as in the map from the early nineteenth century, surveyors in the 1880s instead outlined the precise locations of power that would become so crucial to the eventual integration of Chiang Mai into modern Siam. The new skills of cartography that gave spatial form to the nation through the modern map also produced this survey of urban Chiang Mai, giving us a picture of not only an "old city" based on the autonomous power of the chao chet ton kings but also a new, developing center of power that would eventually come to challenge the old.

"New" Chiang Mai

The development of a "new" Chiang Mai stems partly from the two Chiang Mai Treaties of 1874 and 1883, which were important milestones not only in the spatial transformation of the entire northern region but also specifically within Chiang Mai. The first treaty brought with it the first official and permanent Siamese presence in Chiang Mai. Bangkok appointed Phra Narinthararatchaseni to the newly created post of "Commissioner of the Three Regions."[33] However, he did not come alone as an (internally) colonial man-on-the-spot. Rather, he was accompanied by the assistant commissioner, Luang Seniphitak and "around seventy soldiers, clerks, lawyers, interpreters, and commoners."[34] They established their compound where the

33 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 180.

34 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 180.

main east-west road, running from the city center past the inner and outer Tha Phae gates, met the banks of the Ping River. After the second Chiang Mai Treaty in 1883, the first *kha luang phiset*, or special commissioner, was Krommun Phichitprichakon, an able administrator and a half-brother of King Chulalongkorn, sent to Chiang Mai in 1883 to enforce the terms of the new treaty. The residence of the special commissioner was, like those of the local lords, used for diplomatic visitations. Cushing visited in 1884 and found the commissioner in substantial, though relatively simple accommodations:

> The commissioner lives in a substantial two-story brick building, erected on the west bank of the Meh Ping, and therefore some distance outside the city walls. We were received in a spacious, airy upper room, whose only furniture was a round table with a number of chairs placed about it.[35]

Though sparsely furnished, the commissioner had decorated his residence with other important artifacts, some clearly intended to send a message. When Hallet visited with Cushing, he noted that his drawing room was "ornamented by a Gatling gun that he had brought with him for defence or to astonish the natives."[36] The Siamese compound consisted of a variety of government offices, including the residence of the Siamese commissioner, a military garrison, a telegraph and post office, a pier, and residences for the officials and clerks staffing these offices. The buildings were a mix of styles, including local architecture along with Thai and Western-style buildings.[37]

In addition to a renewed Siamese effort to restructure the government of Chiang Mai, the second Chiang Mai Treaty in 1883 brought with it the first permanent, official British presence in the city at the British Consulate. The British had flirted with the idea of sending an officer of their own from India to handle the surge of claims made by Shan and Burmese British subjects against the lords of Chiang Mai, but they abandoned the idea in favor of pressuring Bangkok to take direct responsibility for the conduct of what the British saw as *their* northern lords.[38] After the Second Chiang Mai Treaty, however, the British established a consulate in Chiang Mai. The establishment of this office reflected the position of Chiang Mai at the edge of different forces and jurisdictions. Not only was Chiang Mai in between Siam and British Burma, but the consulate existed in the diplomatic

35 Cushing, "A Journey into Northern Siam – VII," 94.

36 Hallett, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States*, 381.

37 NAT น.58/200 (101/790). Song Suradet to Damrong Rajanubhab, September 2, 1893.

38 TNA FO 69/60. Thomas George Knox to Foreign Affairs Office, London, September 11, 1872.

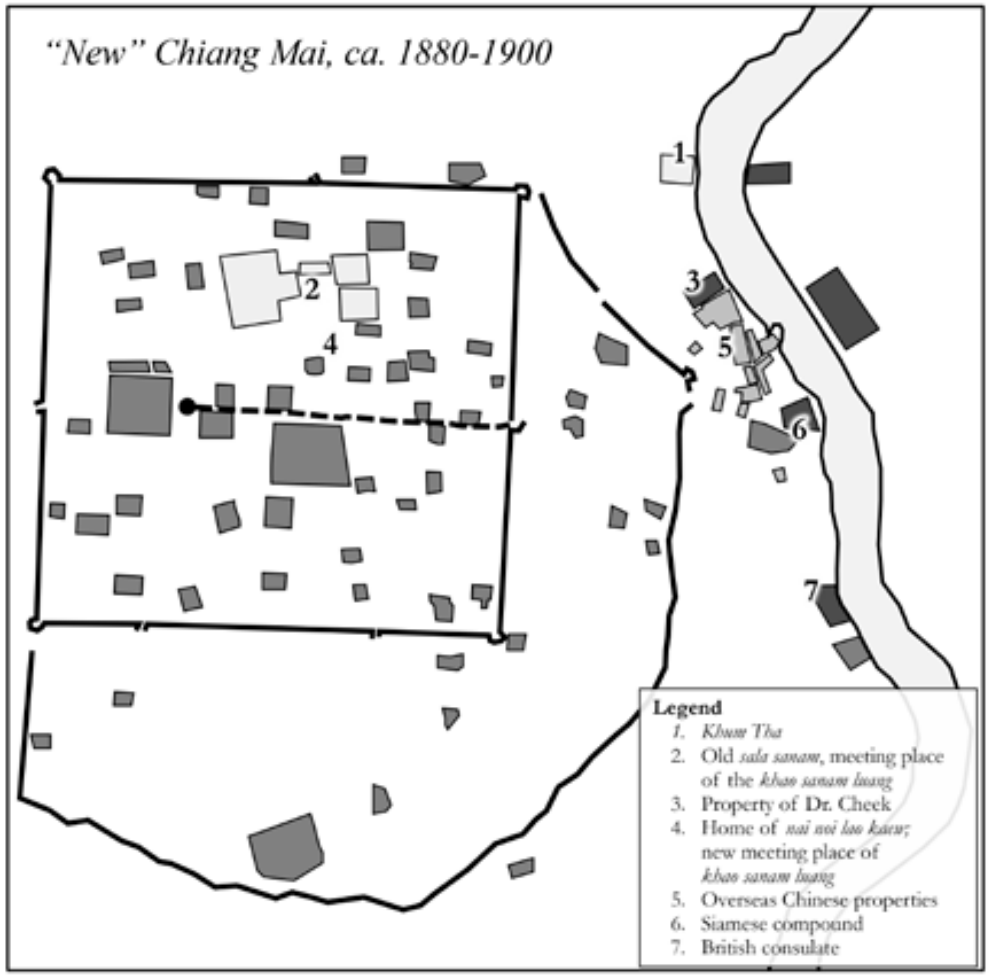

Figure 4.2 "New" Chiang Mai, ca. 1880–1900.
(Source: Produced by author based on 1886 Map of Chiang Mai [NAT ผ.มท.35] and other documents and maps held at the National Archives of Thailand and the Church of Christ in Thailand Archives in Chiang Mai.)

margin between British India and the Foreign Office. Thus, a complicated arrangement was put into effect, whereby the expenses for the consular official and compound were shared by both branches of British government. Initially, the consulate was under the direct supervision of the British Indian government, but in 1890 responsibility was transferred to the Foreign Office.[39]

The consulate became the center of British diplomatic influence in Chiang Mai and the surrounding region. The building itself started off rather modest and seems to have been appropriate for a single male official. Over time, consular officials petitioned the Foreign Office for funds to improve the consulate compound by adding a separate kitchen, additional bathrooms,

39 TNA WORKS 10/305 (B2158/89). Foreign Office to Treasury Secretary, India Office, June 18, 1889.

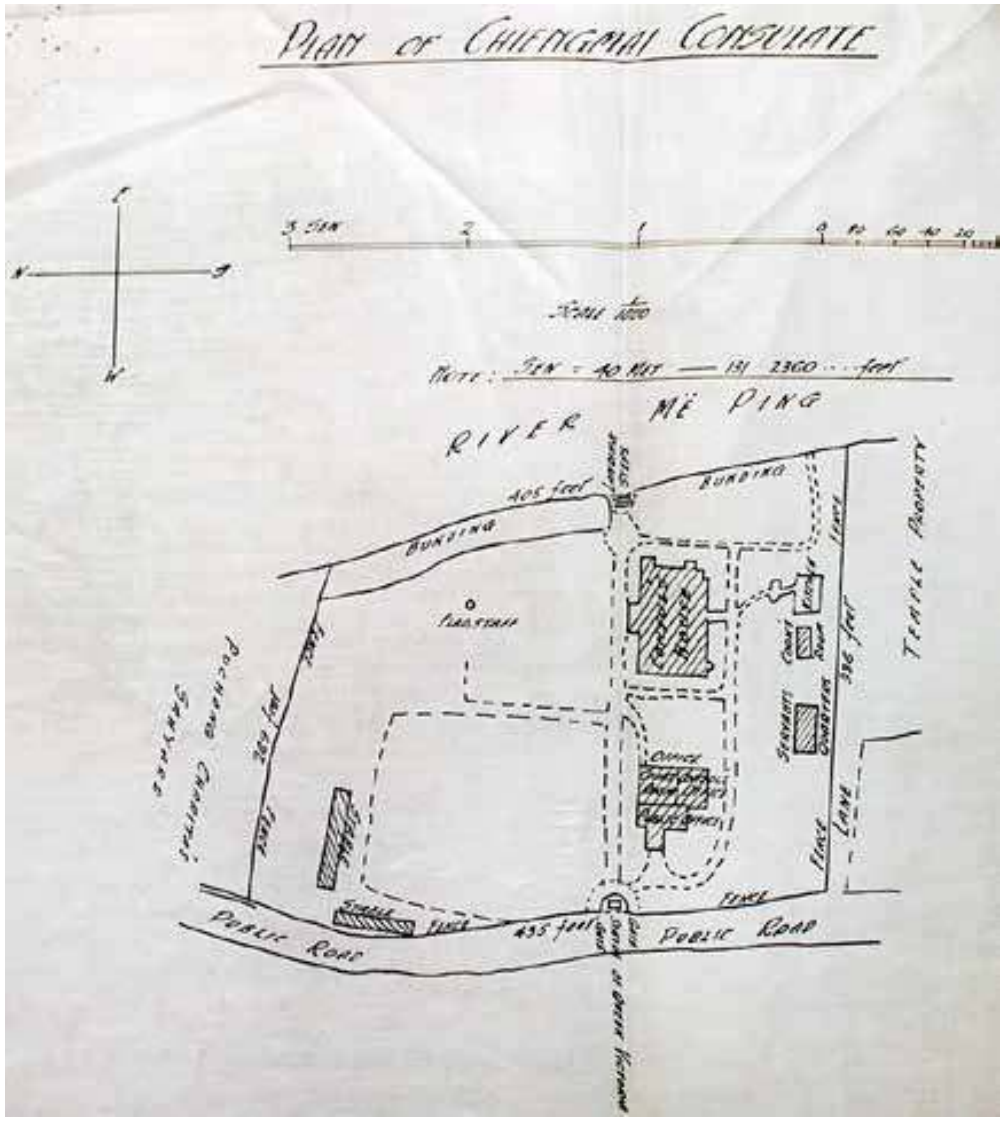

Figure 4.3 "Plan of the Chiengmai Consulate," 1904.
(Source: The National Archives, London [PRO WORKS 10/305].)
Note: Reprinted with permission of TNA

and a verandah on all sides. For British officers assigned to the tropics, the verandah was needed to control the climate of the building and to protect against the monsoon rains. The added kitchen space was needed because the vice-consul at the time had married and was starting a family.[40] In 1910 additional land was purchased to expand the consulate compound, and in 1911 a new residence for the vice-consul was completed. In justifying the expense for the land and two full-time groundskeepers, the British Consul argued that:

40 TNA WORKS 10/305 (B6940). William J. Archer to M. de Bunsen, July 17, 1896.

> Moderately large areas are essential to European dwellings in this Country [*sic*], if typhoid and malaria are to be avoided, for the conditions which result from the entire absence of sanitation amongst the surrounding native houses, would speedily render a European dwelling dangerous to life unless one's native neighbors were kept at a proper distance nor should I mention noises or other intolerable nuisances which would render a house most undesirable to live in.[41]

In 1914 the old consulate was demolished, and a new building erected in its place, completed the following year.[42]

Both the British Consulate and the Siamese compound were located on the west bank of the Ping River and were both frequently subject to significant flood damage. The British consulate was seemingly in constant need of repair, according to the archival record. In 1892 a portion of the consular compound was destroyed during a large flood—not only by the water but also by the teak logs that floated along the swollen river, crashing into the consular compound.[43] In 1893 disastrous flooding caused significant damage across the Siamese compound. Out of nineteen buildings, eight were seriously damaged.[44] Six of the buildings were so severely damaged that the Siamese commissioner recommended tearing them down completely and rebuilding.[45] He then built a new residence for the Siamese commissioner, most likely across the street just to the south of the compound, where the Governor's Mansion currently resides.

Though teak had played an important role in Chiang Mai's political status in both British and Siamese eyes, until the 1880s most of the foresters working the teak forests controlled by the Chiang Mai lords were small- to medium-sized outfits, often run by Burmese or Shan who enjoyed extraterritorial protection as British subjects. During the 1880s, however, large, well-financed teak companies began to move into Chiang Mai and push out smaller competition. The Borneo Company attempted to establish a presence in the region in the 1860s but failed. By 1889 they reestablished a presence in the north, assigning Louis T. Leonowens, son of the infamous

41 TNA FO 369/505 (19982/12). T. H. Lyle to H.B.M. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Bangkok, November 6, 1911.

42 See TNA FO 369/761 (46244), T. H. Lyle, "Proposed New Consular Residence at Chiengmai," September 4, 1914, and related documents in same file.

43 TNA WORKS 10/305 (B6550/92). Henry M. Jones to Office of Works, London, October 11, 1892.

44 NAT ม.58/200 (101/790). Song Suradet to Damrong Rajanubhab, September 2, 1893.

45 NAT ม.58/200 (101/790). Song Suradet to Damrong Rajanubhab, September 2, 1893.

English governess employed by King Mongkut and boyhood companion of the future King Chulalongkorn, as their agent in Chiang Mai.[46] Sometime before that, however, they assigned a former missionary doctor, Dr. Marian Alphonso Cheek, as their agent in Chiang Mai.

Cheek's story is worth some discussion given his unique role in Chiang Mai at the close of the nineteenth century; he is, after all, the only Westerner identified by name on the Mahatthai Map. McGilvary had high hopes for Cheek when he recruited him for the mission in Chiang Mai in 1874. Apparently, he was an able physician and attracted many locals to the work of the mission. Moreover, Cheek at least initially shared some of the same theological underpinnings as McGilvary, who viewed science and medicine as a corollary to evangelism. However, Cheek also left for long periods of time, leaving the mission station without a physician. Even when he was present in Chiang Mai, McGilvary complained that Cheek had "eliminated evangelism from his practice of medicine."[47] His evangelism-free practice of medicine seemed to work with the Chiang Mai *chao*, however. In August 1876 he saved the life of the wife of Inthawichayanon, who in return granted Cheek a sizable piece of land on the west bank of the Ping River and a female slave named *Nocha* (โนจา).[48] He later established a makeshift hospital on this land. But one of his chief complaints, and the eventual cause of his break from the mission, was the lack of a more permanent hospital in which to work. Cheek decided to circumvent McGilvary and the Board of Foreign Missions and solicited money to build the hospital himself from the Presbyterian Woman's Board. When he returned to Chiang Mai, however, the Central Board had overruled the Women's Board and left the decision on how to spend the money with the other missionaries in Chiang Mai, who decided instead to build a school. This was, for Cheek, the breaking point; he resigned from the mission completely.[49]

Beyond the hospital dispute, Cheek's attention had moved beyond medicine to business, especially teak. Cheek's activities were already more about building than about healing; he had already built the aforementioned hospital and a dispensary, and by 1885 he had built a boat-building yard at the same location.[50] He eventually entered into an arrangement with the Borneo Company beginning in 1884, where he leveraged his connections

46 D.F. MacFie, "Chiengmai Record," unpublished manuscript held at CCTA.

47 Swanson, "Prelude to Irony," 39.

48 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 70; Prakai, "Sieo nueng khong mo Chik haeng Chiang Mai," 123.

49 Bradley, "Mr. Kellett and Dr. Cheek," 231–36.

50 Bradley, "Mr. Kellett and Dr. Cheek," 236.

and knowledge of Chiang Mai society with large capital outlays from the Borneo Company to increase the latter's market share in Siam. His manager, C.S. Leckie, became suspicious of his spending habits, however, and tried to reign in his spending. Cheek responded to this about as well as he responded to orders from his fellow missionaries, and the relationship between Cheek and Leckie declined precipitously in 1888.[51] In 1889 Cheek broke from the Borneo Company and entered into a private agreement directly with the Siamese government. With considerable assets and extensive experience dating back to his earliest days as a missionary doctor, Cheek was well positioned to become a very wealthy and powerful teak merchant. He had previously established his own sawmill on the east bank, which he updated, at great expense, with the latest modern steam equipment from America (see Figure 4.2, no. 3).[52] For their part, the Siamese government likely thought that an alliance with Cheek would allow them to take control of the trade that had caused them so many headaches—and several treaties—and reap some of the financial benefits of a direct interest in the sale of teak rather than its taxation.

Cheek engaged in several projects that turned out poorly for him but that impacted the growth of the city in important ways. As the main source for teak and with his contacts among the Chiang Mai royalty, he was a natural candidate for large construction projects. He built a three-story palace for Inthawichayanon as well as a wooden bridge across the Ping River—the bridge that may or may not be marked in its early stages of construction on the Mahatthai Map of Chiang Mai. Known locally as *khua kula* or sometimes simply *saphan mo chik* (Dr. Cheek's Bridge), the bridge was completed in 1890 and was used by the royal procession of Prajadhipok (Rama VII) when he visited Chiang Mai in 1927.[53] The bridge stood until 1930, when a flood of teak logs, similar to that which damaged the Siamese and British compounds, damaged it beyond repair.[54] Today, in its place, there is a footbridge connecting the west bank and Wat Ket.

Cheek's fortunes were similarly damaged beyond repair after his venture with the Siamese government failed. The government accused him of failing to live up to his contract, while Cheek protested repeatedly that the rains had failed, leaving "thousands of logs lying in dry forest creeks."[55] His problems

51 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 73–74.

52 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 78.

53 See photograph in Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 262.

54 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 78.

55 Bristowe, *Louis and the King of Siam*, 79.

were not entirely due to climate; he had also been accused of pilfering funds for private use, an accusation he faced as his relationship with the Borneo Company began to turn sour in 1888. His case eventually made it to international arbitration.[56]

Cheek's failed joint venture with the Siamese government was not the only competitor to the Borneo Company, nor was it the only one to leave an imprint on Chiang Mai. In the wake of Cheek's failure, the British Burmah Trading Co. (BBTC) saw an opening and quickly established a presence on the east bank of the Ping River in 1891, just downstream from the Borneo Company office (see Figure 4.4). The Siamese were especially wary of the BBTC because it had played a key role in bringing about the British conquest of Mandalay in 1886.[57] By 1900 it had surpassed the Borneo Company as the largest teak company in Siam.[58] Both companies, along with several smaller ventures, dominated the teak industry in Chiang Mai, became centers of wealth and society, and remained important sources for many major construction projects in the city. The Borneo Company, for example, donated logs for the construction of a new mission hospital[59] and the construction of a new bridge in 1905, in honor of the company's fifty years of working in Siam.[60]

For most of the nineteenth century—indeed, most of its history—long-distance and retail trade in Chiang Mai had been in the hands of Shan or Yunnanese merchants. However, as a result of the presence of Siamese officials and the protection they represented, increasing numbers of overseas Chinese began to make the trip up to Chiang Mai from Bangkok, establishing a variety of businesses. This represented a major shift in the economic center of gravity in the city, both socially and spatially. The Chinese were involved in multiple aspects of trade and commerce, running gambling dens, opening retail shops, and collecting taxes, as with Noi Wong, who so angered Phya Phap and his followers over the collection of betel taxes in the districts surrounding Chiang Mai. The Chinese settlement in Chiang Mai centered on a concentrated area surrounding the Siamese compound around the Ping River, first in the Wat Ket area on the east bank and then to a concentrated area surrounding the Siamese compound on the west

56 For a detailed discussion of the diplomatic negotiations over this dispute, see Bradley, "Mr. Kellett and Dr. Cheek."

57 Barton and Bennet, "Gentleman Teak Merchants and State Foresters in Burma and Siam, 1827–1901," 325–27.

58 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 127.

59 PHS RG 84/1/19. McKean, "Report of J.W. McKean on Proposed Hospital in Chiengmai," n.d.

60 NAT ม.58/26. F. D. Thompson to Damrong Rajanuphab, September 8, 1905.

bank.[61] A major part of this Chinese area, lying just northwest of the Siamese compound, soon later developed into the main market area of the city, *kat luang*.[62] The tight concentration of Chinese property can be seen in Figure 4.2 (no. 5), which shows the area on the east bank of the Ping River based on the 1886 Mahatthai Map discussed above. By the late 1880s, most of the space between the Siamese compound (no. 6) and Dr. Cheek's compound (no. 3) was held by overseas Chinese.

Another influential landholder in the "new" Chiang Mai was the American Presbyterian Mission (APM). Before he arrived in 1867, McGilvary had been promised land and a house by Kawilorot; however, when he arrived, he was instead housed in an open *sala* in a market area outside the city walls.

> It was three years after the arrival of the pioneer missionaries in Chiengmai before any attempt was made towards the first permanent residence. Not for some time afterward did they begin to see the end of the inconveniences and anxieties of their makeshift temporary quarters. Indeed it was five years before the building became a home and the Mission to the Laos a fixture.[63]

Indeed, the question of how to make the Laos mission "a fixture" in Chiang Mai was a pressing one. Kawilorot did grant a plot of land to Wilson in June 1868, though he did not technically own the land, which remained the property of the king. The land itself was a perfect site, on the bank of the Ping River and with a clear view of the city. However, Kawilorot had simply taken the land away from the previous owner, who used to be a royal boatman, without compensation. This disgruntled neighbor caused several headaches for the missionaries. Swanson surmises that Kawilorot, who did not particularly want the missionaries to stay in his city, devised this scheme himself to scare off the missionaries.[64] However, after Inthawichayanon succeeded him as king of Chiang Mai, the missionaries were granted control over their land, if not outright ownership.

From this small beginning, the APM footprint in Chiang Mai grew. McGilvary contracted Dr. Cheek to build the first church of Chiang Mai

61 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 241.

62 Much of this Chinese settlement encroached on the former *khuang meru*, the cremation and interment grounds for the kings of Chiang Mai. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the implications of this transition for sacred space.

63 *North Siam News* XIV (1917): 89–97.

64 Swanson, "HeRD."

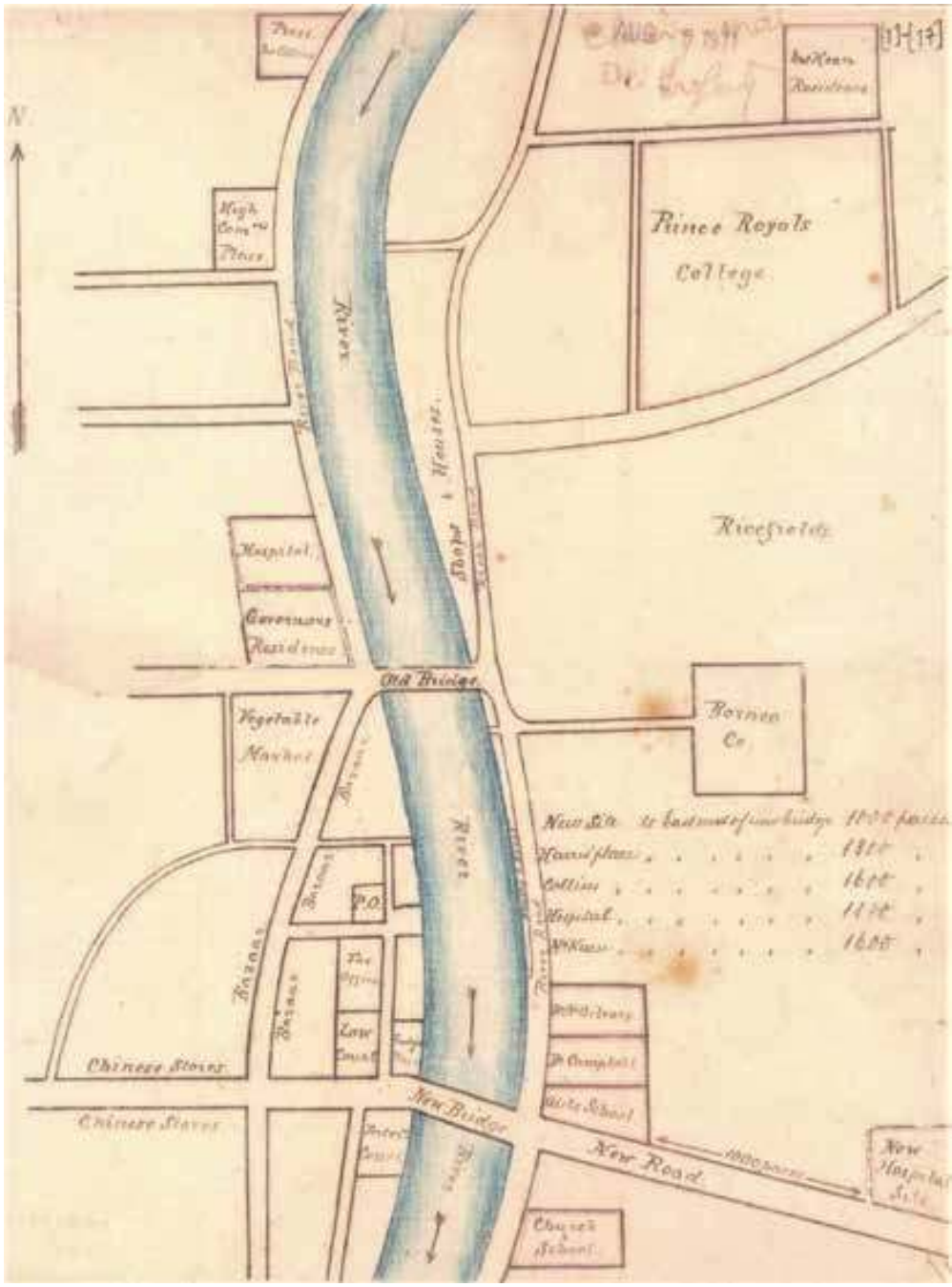

Figure 4.4 Ping River, ca. 1913, showing American mission property. Note the Borneo Co. in center right, the High Commissioner's Place at top left, and the Monthon offices of government—post office, telegraph, courts, and judges' residence—at bottom left.
(Source: Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University [RG 020/80 1/22].)
Note: Reprinted with permission of CCTA

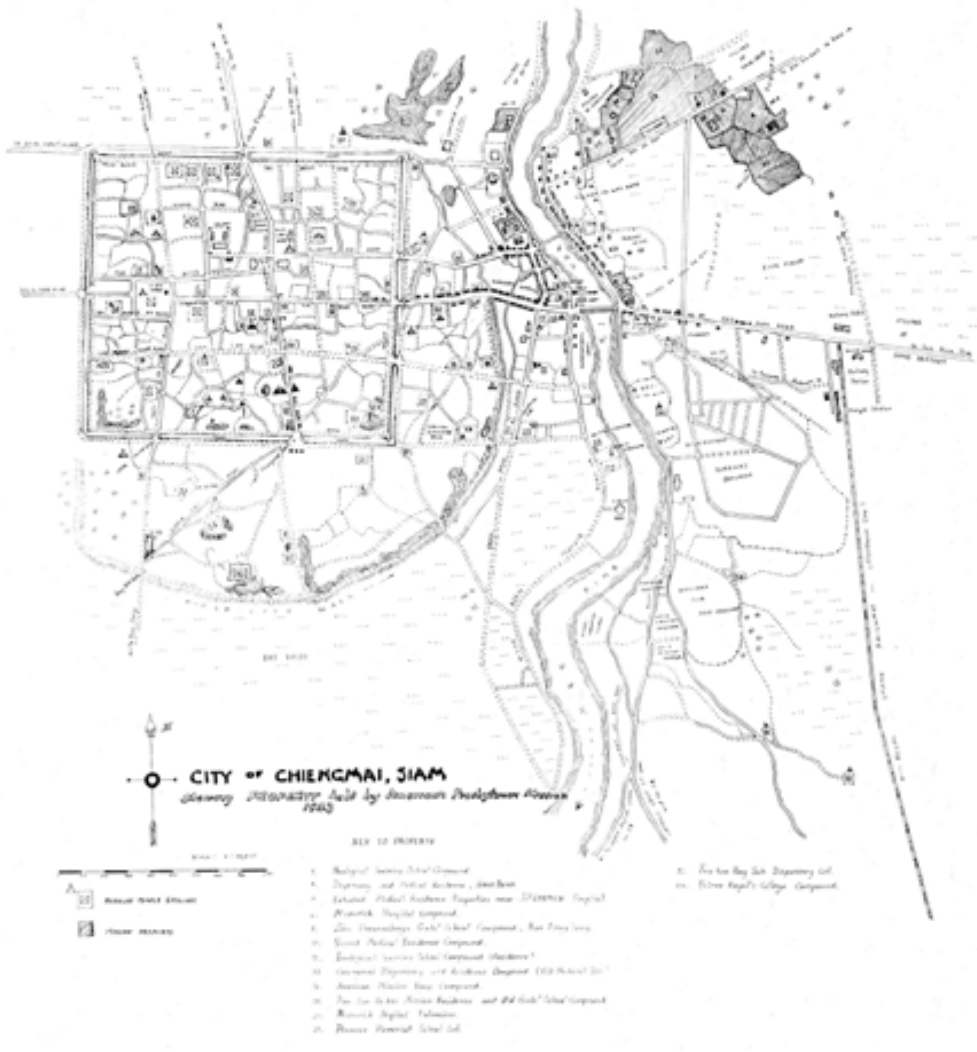

Figure 4.5 "City of Chiengmai, Siam, Showing Property owned by the American Presbyterian Mission, 1923." Note the large concentration of mission property in the upper right corner of the map.
(Source: Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University, Map Collection.)
Note: Reprinted with permission of CCTA

on a small lot south of the original compound overlooking the Ping River.[65] After Cheek left the mission, the small hospital he had built on his land served as the mission dispensary and hospital, and the land remained with the mission after his death. In 1887 Inthawichayanon granted another parcel of land to the mission, this time for the Mission Press.[66] The mission

65 CCTA RG 020/80 (2) 9/14. M. A. Cheek and Daniel McGilvary, "Contract for Building, Made This 27th Day of September, 1888, by and between the North Laos Mission, of the First Part, and Marion A. Cheek, of the Second Part," September 27, 1888.
66 CCTA RG 020/80 2/11. Property Report Chiengmai Station for Year 1925, 5.

continued to acquire land, often from British subjects or Chinese owners, and with two main purposes in mind: to build schools and hospitals. First, in 1901 the Mission purchased land to be used for a boy's school, now known as the Prince Royal's College (PRC). A girl's school had been established earlier on the original mission compound, but they quickly realized that a larger space would be needed, and so additional[67] land in that same area was purchased across the street from PRC in 1911 for another school, Dara Academy (then known as Phra Ratchaya's Girl's School). Just to the west, the mission built a theological school and seminary as well.[68] The dispensary was generally successful, though by the early twentieth century, many in the mission complained that a larger, more modern-looking hospital was needed. Between 1911 and 1920, the Mission acquired the land, and in 1920 the Mission built McCormick Hospital, named after the woman who had donated the bulk of funds for the hospital's construction. By the 1920s other small lots had been acquired, including the only APM property inside any city walls, the Hai Ya Gate dispensary.

In short, the APM controlled large amounts of land in the eastern "new city" of Chiang Mai. Their property concerned religious matters (church, theological school), medicine (McCormick hospital, several dispensaries), and education (PRC and Dara Academy). The APM represented all the trappings of colonial modernity in Chiang Mai. The extensive nature of APM property by the 1920s in Chiang Mai can be seen clearly in the maps above.

Some missionaries played a larger role in the development of urban space than others. As one missionary noted in a 1917 article summarizing half a century of APM activity in the north, "[a]lmost all of the older missionaries in the field have had the experience of erecting a home. Some possess practical experience bordering on the equal of technical training in the trade."[69] Indeed, some took that practical experience and applied it to more than just mission houses or buildings. Probably no one had as keen an impact on their surroundings as Dr. William Albert Briggs, who was stationed in Chiang Rai from 1900 to 1918. Originally assigned to Lampang in 1890, Briggs was later sent to open the mission station at Phrae and then worked in Lamphun. The bulk of his career, however, was spent in Chiang Rai.

67 For more detail on these properties, see the rest of the files held in CCTA RG 020/80.

68 CCTA RG 020/80 2/11. Property Report Chiengmai Station for Year 1925, 1–3.

69 *North Siam News* XIV (1917): 91.

> In addition to building the hospital Dr. Briggs paid great attention to the town of Chiangrai. He built the dormitory of Chiangrai Vidyakom School which is called the "black building" because of black paint and the "Kennedy" building which is now used for Pratom [primary school] class-rooms. He built the missionary residence which stands opposite the house of the manager of the tobacco farm, and also the church building at Sally Gate. Apart from these Dr. Briggs also built the provincial administration building, the governor's residence, the post-office and the prison.[70]

Briggs worked not only on mission projects but also on government buildings. However, his efforts extended to the broader field of town planning as well:

> Visitors to Chiangrai for the first time often ask about the city engineer who did the town planning because they like his work. Oldtimers who know Dr. Briggs intimately will explain that Dr. Briggs executed the town-planning work and built all the roads in the municipal area.[71]

The impetus for this planning and building work came from the government, at times resulting in a flurry of construction in preparation for the visit of crown prince Vajiravudh to the north in 1905:

> Dr. W. A. Briggs of Chieng Rai has, at the request of the government, overseen the laying out of Chieng Rai into streets, and the draining of a large part of the city which heretofore has been a malaria swamp and tiger jungle. Christian carpenters, under Dr. Briggs supervision were called upon to build a house for the Crown Prince. With hundreds of sawyers and coolies to help a fine building was finished in five weeks of six days each. That is "hustling the East" truly.[72]

Though the archival record is silent on Briggs's work in Chiang Rai, Penth has convincingly argued that, given the context of his work and the history of Chiang Rai's city wall, it is very likely that he "regarded the city wall as a public health hazard" and that he would have worked with the government to tear down part of the wall and make the city both sanitary and modern.[73] The Siamese government worked with and through the American missionaries,

70 Singkaew, *William A. Briggs M.D.: The Founder of Overbrook Hospital*, 3.
71 Singkaew, *William A. Briggs M.D.: The Founder of Overbrook Hospital*, 3.
72 *Laos News* 3, no. 1 (January 1906): 20.
73 Penth, "City Wall and City Navel of Chiang Rai," 20–21.

in this case to provide modern, clean, and orderly spaces within which its royal elites could circulate, signifying the integration of cities such as Chiang Rai into the modern Siamese state. Borders and maps may have created the geo-body of the nation, but railways and streets provided the means for internal integration at the urban level.

Another element of urban space in the "new city" was the Gymkhana Club, established in 1898 by a gathering of elite western men, including diplomats and teak men. All but one of the original fourteen founders were either connected to the British Consulate or to one of the major teak companies. The sole exception to this rule was Phraya Song Suradet, the Siamese High Commissioner at the time.[74] The land for this club was acquired through a somewhat contorted transaction similar to that which provided the APM with their first land. After some discussion, the founding members agreed that Song Suradet would purchase the land personally on behalf of the club. The reason was simple:

> Song Suradet being a Siamese subject, the committee thus thought to escape the difficulties that might arise if subjects of the Treaty Powers were to figure as the purchasers, seeing that apparently strictly speaking foreigners can purchase land only within treaty limits and that Chiang Mai is outside those limits.[75]

However, all did not go as planned. The land in question was in dispute, but a purchase price of 1500 rupees had been agreed on. A third party, Tao Prom, inserted himself into the transaction and took 1000 rupees as his fee for arranging the transaction. The western founders of the club were upset at this apparent fleecing, but Song Suradet insisted on carrying out the transaction with Tao Prom. In the end, the transaction was successful, and Song Suradet then ceded the property over to the club.[76]

The Gymkhana Club was not a center in the same sense as the Siamese compound or Chinese area of town; this was not a magnet drawing throngs of local people to the eastern side of town. Yet the club was an important social space for colonial elites, especially the British and the Siamese. In fact, Song Suradet's wavering in facilitating the purchase of the land might actually conceal an underlying tension. In internal debates over allowing these Western gentlemen to purchase the land, Song Suradet proposed the idea of

74 *Samoson Yimkhana Chiang Mai*, 12–14.
75 *Samoson Yimkhana Chiang Mai*, 21.
76 *Samoson Yimkhana Chiang Mai*, 27–28.

purchasing the land for the Siamese, who could establish their own club along lines similar to what the founding committee had planned.[77] In this case, the Siamese government passed on the idea, satisfied instead with having Song Suradet on the founding committee. Song Suradet apparently thought that the Siamese could just as easily open a modern club in Chiang Mai—who needs the British? Though there appears to have been some tension beneath the surface of overlapping colonial interests, whatever dispute there was quickly resolved itself, the club opened as planned, and it remains open today.

The establishment of foreign groups in the eastern half of the city, outside the city walls and surrounding the Ping River, in effect created a new center of gravity in Chiang Mai. American missionaries, Siamese officials, British diplomats, and Chinese merchants combined to give this new center a distinctly modern and active appearance. Western-style education and medicine were provided by the Americans, extra-territorial protection was provided (for Asian British subjects) by the consulate, and access to international markets via Bangkok was provided by the Chinese, with political control ultimately held by the Siamese.

Some contemporary observers saw things a bit differently. In 1884 a visiting Baptist missionary, for example, saw the city as divided into three, not two, sections:

> The city of Zimmai [...] consists of the "old" city, "new" city, and large suburbs now filling the area between the city walls and the west bank of the Meh Ping River, a space about half a mile wide. In 1870 this space was unoccupied except for a few zayats, and the walls of the city were easily seen from the river. Peace and prosperity have brought considerable increase in the population, and the extensive suburbs which have grown up entirely shut out all view of the city from the river.[78]

The "new" city in this quote refers to the area between the inner and outer walls, populated mostly by the descendants of former war captives, a distinction Cushing rightly identifies, yet the main action remained to the east. In terms of centers of power and authority, the development of what Cushing called the "suburbs" of Chiang Mai was in fact the development of an alternate center.

77 NAT ค.4.4.ก/8. *Phuak Samachik Khon Tang Prathet Kho Sue Thidin Nai Khwaeng Chiang Mai Tham Pen Sanamkhaengma* [Members of the foreign community request to purchase land in Chiang Mai district to build horserace track], 1899.

78 Cushing, "A Journey into Northern Siam – VI."

This raises the question: Can Chiang Mai be described as a dual city? This term is often used to describe the colonial cities and towns of South Asia and Africa, in which a "white town" develops adjacent to a "native town."[79] Some scholars have recently criticized this concept. Preeti Chopra, for example, rightly points out many of the shortcomings of the dual city model for understanding colonial cities in South Asia. Such a framework, she argues, forces relationships of power into a binary colonizer-versus-colonized model, which focuses on colonial fantasies and leaves out much of the story and urban landscape.[80] Instead she prefers to see the city as composed of fragments, diverse elements that intertwine and relate to each other in more complex ways. Her wariness over the conceptual framework of the dual city is warranted, especially for a field long dominated by colonial historiography. However, as argued in Chapter 3, the colonial question in the case of Siam has been effectively hidden from view. In treating Chiang Mai as a partially dual city, there is less risk of resorting to simple colonizer-versus-colonized binaries simply because there were several overlapping agents of colonial modernity and urban transformation, as the preceding discussion clearly shows. The duality of Chiang Mai during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is complicated by the overlapping forces that worked to transform and shape the urban space of the city. Thus, it is worthwhile to see the similarities between Chiang Mai and other colonial cities, spaces, and experiences, if for no other reason than to bring the power dynamics that gave shape to the modern city into sharp focus.

In some ways, these similarities were both noticed and ignored by contemporary observers. Reginald Campbell, a Scottish forest assistant working in the forests near Phrae in the years following World War I, related an interesting anecdote that speaks to the European perception of the coloniality of towns in the north. During a pleasant evening party among friends in Lampang,

> the wife of a missionary [...] said to us all: "There's an Australian up here who's down on his luck, and staying in the town." (Had she been in India, she would have said "the native quarter." Being in Siam, and Nakon [Lampang] in particular, where the whites owned nothing more than a few scattered bungalows, she didn't.)[81]

79 See, for example, Lari, *The Dual City: Karachi during the Raj*.

80 See Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*, xxi–xxii; and "The City and Its Fragments: Colonial Bombay, 1854–1918."

81 Campbell, *Teak-Wallah: A Record of Personal Experiences*, 184.

Campbell saw the duality of the city through the prism of British colonial experience. He had been a naval officer before seeking the land-based adventure of teak forestry and had some notion of the colonial cities and towns of the British Empire. What he saw in Lampang was *like* colonial cities in India, but only to a limited extent. What made the difference was the size and relative insignificance of the white population, which comprised mainly British teak merchants and diplomats and the American missionaries. Had he included, however, the Siamese, the Chinese, and the Asian subjects of British India, he would have perhaps come to a different conclusion.

Chiang Mai clearly had developed two centers of power: one based in the old walled city and the other in the new quarter flanking the river. The origin of municipal government in Chiang Mai underscores the divergent fortunes of both old and new Chiang Mai. The precursor to the modern municipality (*thesaban*) in Thailand was the sanitation district, or *sukhaphiban* (สุขาภิบาล). The first *sukhaphiban* district was established in Bangkok in 1897, at least in part in response to western complaints about unsanitary conditions in the city.[82] In 1905 the government launched a pilot project to extend the *sukhaphiban* system outside Bangkok. The main concern was whether the area within the *sukhaphiban* district would generate enough tax revenue to pay for the services it promised—in short, to be economically self-sufficient. The first *sukhaphiban* established outside Bangkok was in Samut Sakhon and was by all accounts a great success. Three years later, the government established *sukhaphiban* districts in thirty-five provincial centers around Siam.

Chiang Mai's *sukhaphiban* district was established in 1913, initially around the new commercial and administrative center flanking the Ping River (Figure 4.6).[83] Two years later, the area of the *sukhaphiban* was expanded to include several more districts.[84] A key concern of the central government was to ensure a large enough tax and population base to pay for the activities of the *sukhaphiban*. The expansion of the district mostly followed the tax base, which was based primarily on property taxes levied on shops and factories. Within this area, several entities were exempt from the tax: monasteries, churches, mosques, Chinese shrines, hospitals, schools of any

82 *Nayobai Kiaokap Kan Sukhaphiban* [Policies concerning sanitation districts], n.d. (NAT Reference Collection).

83 NAT ม.12/2. *Sukhaphiban Amphoe Mueang Chiang Mai* [Sanitation district in Chiang Mai], 1925.

84 NAT ม.12/2. These included Chang Moi, Wat Ket, Tha Sala, Fa Ham, Pa Tan, and Hai Ya.

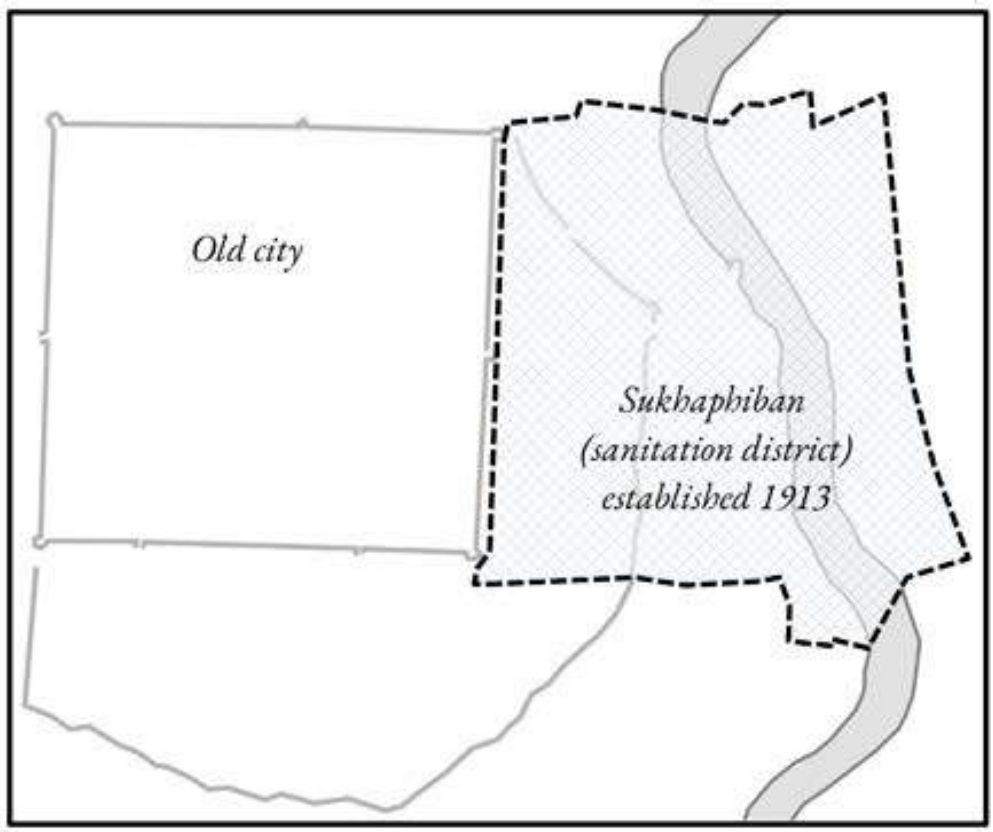

Figure 4.6 Boundaries of the Chiang Mai sanitation District in 1913.
(Source: Produced by author, based primarily on "Sukhaphiban Amphoe Mueang Chiang Mai" [Sanitation district in Chiang Mai] [NAT ม.12/2].)

language, consulates, and government administration buildings.[85] It was not until 1931 that the boundaries of the *sukhaphiban* were expanded to include the old city and what most residents and observers would today consider the core of Chiang Mai city.[86] These boundaries remained in effect after the *sukhaphiban* was upgraded to *thesaban* (municipality) in 1935[87] and did not change until 1984 when the *thesaban* was expanded to its present extent.

The discussion thus far has shown how Chiang Mai's economic center had moved eastward; since the new city contained the center of Siamese power and the extensive markets and shophouses dominated by overseas Chinese, it was logical that the *sukhaphiban* district be established here first. This is only half the story, however. The rise of the new city proceeded

85 NAT ม.12/2.

86 NAT ม.74/17. *Sukhaphiban Amphoe Mueang Chiang Mai* [Sanitation district in Chiang Mai], 1932.

87 "Phraratchabanyat chattang thesaban Nakhon Chiang Mai [Announcement establishing the Chiang Mai City Municipality]" (*Thai Royal Gazette*, March 29, 1935).

alongside the decline of the old center, which for centuries was the location of a major market, with close connections to the ruling kings of Chiang Mai (dashed line in Figure 4.2). When Song Suradet set out to reorganize the government and administration of Chiang Mai and the north in 1892, he moved the *klang wiang* market from the center of the city to a location outside Suan Prung Gate. Song Suradet "advised the Chao Upparat and Chao Ratchawong that the road in the city center [*thanon klang wiang*] was in a state of disorder [*mai riap roi*], [and therefore] the market should be moved to the Suan Prung Gate Road."[88] The *klang wiang* market, and thus much of the economic activity of the old city, was severely curtailed for a time. However, in 1899 the Chao Upparat and Chao Ratchawong decided to move the market back to the city center. Upon hearing of these plans, the Siamese commissioner at the time (1900–1902), Phraya Narison Ratchakit, ruled against the move, noting that a market in the city center would make it difficult for carriage traffic and cause the road to become dirty and unsanitary, maintaining Song Suradet's earlier logic. The stage was thus set for a confrontation between local *chao*, who wanted a market along the main street in the city center, and the Siamese commissioner, who wanted to keep city streets neat and orderly. This conflict over both market and street demonstrates Kostof's observation that "the fundamental reality of streets, as with all public space, is political."[89] Moreover, it reflects the micro-politics of power and legitimacy in a changing Chiang Mai. How Siamese and Western officials experienced the street (including, one presumes, the sights, smells, and sounds of the market) brought the mechanism of colonial control to bear on the physical space of the city, providing the friction, in Anna Tsing's sense of the word, between the global discourse of colonial modernity and the local spaces so meaningful to the rulers and residents of the city.

The Chao Ratchawong argued that the government was being too strict and that the renting of market stalls was "not a matter of government jurisdiction, but rather a traditionally local issue."[90] Furthermore, he argued, Song Suradet had promised him that the relocation of the market would only be temporary. Moreover, the Chao Upparat claimed that moving the market had angered the guardian spirits of the city and had caused drought in and around Chiang Mai. There are certainly examples of supernatural warnings against the moving of major markets:

88 NAT ม.58/126 (49/450). Damrong Rajanuphab to Royal Secretariat, April 24, 1900.

89 Kostof, *The City Assembled*, 194.

90 NAT ม.58/126 (49/450). Damrong Rajanuphab to Royal Secretariat, April 24, 1900.

> Cities and towns are good. If there is a city market long established, and later this market is abandoned, this is not good. This will halt the progress of the city, because of the many spirits living there, who have become used to the flavor of the food sold there, such as raw beef, raw fish. Once they cannot eat these, the spirits will create disorder for the city and its residents.[91]

Apparently surprised at the pushback, Narison decided that inflexibility might lead to even more problems, and so he provisionally allowed the market to be moved while he wrote to his superiors for clarification on what powers he and the local had in this matter.[92] Finally, Damrong instructed Phraya Si Sahathep to address the issue when he arrived in 1899 to implement the *thesaphiban* reforms. Si Sahathep's solution was simple: he found an open plot of land behind the western edge of the Wat Chedi Luang and offered the *chao* the rental profits if they put up the funds for building the market. The *chao* began collecting small donations for the market, which they named *kat thippanet*.[93]

The development of the *sukhaphiban* district and the turn-of-the-century conflict over the fate of the *klang wiang* market highlights the rising and falling fortunes of the old and new Chiang Mai. The *sukhaphiban* district began where economic activity and government control were strongest. Only later, with the integration of the old sacred center into the economic circles of the modern city, were the district boundaries expanded to cover what most observers would recognize today as the city of Chiang Mai. The conflict over the *klang wiang* market has continued up to the present in many ways, with the recent introduction of the Chiang Mai Walking Market, which follows the space of the original *klang wiang* market closely, though with some expansion into neighboring streets and alleys.

Spatial Transitions

The process of undermining the power of the traditional ruling elite began during the reign of Kawilorot, in events described in Chapter 3. The first

91 Khomnet, *Khuet: khoham nai Lanna*, 12.

92 NAT ม.58/126 (49/450). Damrong Rajanuphab to Royal Secretariat, April 24, 1900.

93 NAT ม.58/126 (49/450). Though the issue appeared to be settled by Phraya Si Sahathep, the present-day Thippanet Market is located south of the city, on the road that extends south from Suan Prung Gate, and has since become a center for Buddhist amulets.

major blow to the authority of the Chiang Mai king came in the form of Siamese protection for American missionaries in 1869–70. In 1878 the Edict of Religious Toleration, once again in defense of Christian missionary activity in the north, also undermined the authority of the northern lords. The treaties of 1874 and 1883 brought renewed scrutiny in Chiang Mai from Siamese officials, who transformed the system of forest leases and implemented major tax reforms that undercut the financial basis of royal power in Chiang Mai. Through the turn of the twentieth century, these transitions meant the creation of a muted form of the dual city in Chiang Mai, with a competing and eventually dominant center developing outside the old center of royal power in Chiang Mai. After the turn of the century, when the political fate of the north had been effectively decided, the process of displacing and later occupying the central spaces of power and authority in Chiang Mai began in earnest. However, this process was not independent of the existing logic of urban space in Chiang Mai, as the old influenced and shaped the development of the new. This section examines the spatial transition of urban space in Chiang Mai, especially in the spaces of power and authority, which in turn reflect upon the complex relationship between Chiang Mai and the agents of colonial modernity operating within the space of Siam's newly minted northern periphery.

Office Space

When Si Sahathep arrived in Chiang Mai to implement sweeping reform of the provincial administration, he confronted a number of problems, including the market dispute mentioned above. A related but much more serious challenge presented itself soon thereafter. When he arrived, he was struck by the extreme division between the *chao*, on one hand, and the Siamese, on the other. Si Sahathep saw a dual city in essence.[94] In Ramsay's words:

> The two camps were geographically separate: the Siamese lived on the bank of the Mae Ping River; and the chaos lived within the old walled central city. There was no verbal communication between the two groups, and the situation had degenerated to the point that at night members of

94 NAT ม.58/33 (10/1352). Si Sahathep to Damrong Rajanuphab, April 2, 1900; cited in Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 185; and Rujaya, "Changes in the Administrative System of Northern Siam, 1884-1933," 83.

> one camp were afraid to venture into the area occupied by the other for fear of attack.[95]

While this may have seemed a shock to him, and the result of the previous commissioner's heavy-handed tactics in dealing with the *chao*, what Si Sahathep saw was in fact a crystallization of a spatial logic long in place that had been pushed to its extreme by Siamese policy. At the turn of the century, the Siamese had no administrative presence within the old city walls, and the administrative offices and palaces of the *chao* were concentrated in the city center.

The major task set before Si Sahathep was to reorganize the administration and to implement the *thesaphiban* system of government in the north. He kept in place the basic structure of government arranged by Prince Phichit, who had organized the traditional *khao sanam luang* ruling council into a Council of Six Ministers (*khao sanam luang lae hok tamnaeng*). Si Sahathep reorganized this top level of prefectural government into an executive committee collectively called *khao sanam luang* and made up of three officials: the local *chao mueang* and two Siamese officials, the permanent commissioner (*kha luang pracham*) and his assistant.[96]

Upon his arrival, Si Sahathep found that the building where the *khao sanam luang* conducted its business, the old *sala sanam*, had fallen into a state of disrepair.[97] He sought a new home for the activities of the new *khao sanam luang*, eventually choosing the home of *nai noi lao kaew*, a son of Inthawarorot Suriyawong, Inthawichayanon's successor as king of Chiang Mai (see Figure 4.2, nos. 2 and 4). His house was located in the center of the city, facing the main road, where the *san khwaeng mueang chiang mai* is located today —an area marked by a conspicuously empty space on the 1886 Mahadthai Map of Chiang Mai. Si Sahathep convinced Inthawarorot and the owner to cede the house to the central government to be used as the new Khao Sanam Luang office. One might ask why they agreed to hand this building and land over to the Interior Ministry. The answer is a simple: in constructing the house, the building's owner had contracted steep debt to Louis T. Leonowens, the aforementioned friend of Dr. Cheek and successful teak merchant. Inthawarorot requested that the Interior Ministry pay off this debt, which they did in part. According to one source, the agreement was as follows:

95 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 185.

96 Ramsay, "The Development of a Bureaucratic Polity," 190.

97 NAT ม.58/130 (232/9500). Damrong Rajanuphab to Royal Secretariat, January 1, 1902.

> The square teak building had been built by Mr. Louis at a cost of 30,000 Rupees. The Chao Upparat had paid 20,000 Rupees, and he asked Phraya Si Sahathep to pay the additional 10,000 Rupees, and in return, he would donate the house to become the *thiwakan* [administrative office] of Chiang Mai from then on.[98]

The treasury handed much of the money to Chao Dara to handle payment rather than hand it over directly to the Chiang Mai lord.[99] Later, Chao Dara would donate a *khum* across from *lao kaew*'s house in repayment of Si Sahathep's 10,000 rupees.[100]

Si Sahathep attempted to achieve his goal of bringing the Chiang Mai *chao* and Siamese officials together in government both structurally and spatially. Prince Phichit had already modified the *khao sanam luang* in 1884. Fifteen years later Si Sahathep further modified the *khao sanam luang* to address the social and spatial divisions that had developed between local rulers and Siamese officials in the aftermath of Song Suradet's reforms after 1892. Still, the *khao sanam luang* remained on its surface a local administrative body modified to Siamese purposes and thus had to be located in the city center.

Siamese officials of the Monthon government remained in their compound near the Ping River. Si Sahathep, however, noted that the original residence of the Siamese commissioner in that compound had become crowded and was difficult to maintain. Thus, he sought to establish a new official residence. His search did not go far, and he soon focused on Inthawichayanon's *khum tha*, or riverside palace, located just upriver from the Siamese compound (see Figure 4.2, nos. 1 and 6). There was some internal discussion and debate regarding how best to proceed. Inthawarorot apparently was reluctant and wanted to use the site as his residence. Damrong thought he knew why:

> I believe that this is not because it is a good home, because the Chao Upparat [Inthawarorot] has good homes already, at present two of them, which is quite sufficient. His desire is mostly *political* in that this house used to be the residence of the former king *chao mueang* of Chiang Mai.

98 Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 25.

99 NAT ม.58/130 (232/9500).

100 Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 25–26.

> He feels that to give this house over to government use would cause a great loss for the Chiang Mai kings.[101]

Damrong agreed with Si Sahathep that this would be a suitable location, but in order to not cause difficulty with the local *chao*, he suggested the commissioner should consider purchasing the land through Chao Dara, Inthawichayaon's daughter and princess consort to King Chulalongkorn in Bangkok.[102] The Interior Ministry purchased the land and in 1900 established the *chuan samuhathesaphiban*, the official residence for the highest official in charge of Monthon administration (*samuhathesaphiban*), a position some officials saw as parallel to the Dutch colonial "Resident" in Java.[103] From this point on, Siamese officials sent to administer Chiang Mai and the north resided here, not at the old Commissioner's Residence built after the floods in 1893.

In both cases, these changes represented the gradual blurring of the line between "old" and "new" Chiang Mai. When Siamese officials needed to erect new buildings, whether due to damage, decay, or bureaucratic expansion, new land was found near the riverbank, though the process was mediated by the princess consort, Chao Dara, who occupied a unique political and social space between Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Likewise, when new offices had to be built for the *khao sanam luang*, the commissioner found a location just down the street. Though the space was occupied by a new version of the *khao sanam luang* designed to bring Siamese and local elites together, it remained located in the center of the old city.

Occupation

Things began to change after the turn of the century as the central state transplanted the various organs of the central state into the city center. This process, I argue, represents the colonization of urban space on the local scale, an aspect of micro-colonization as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The regional assumption of Siamese control over Chiang Mai took place in the final third of the nineteenth century, resulting in a bifurcated urban

101 NAT ค.4.1.จ/12. Damrong Rajanuphab, "Rueang Thi Ban Phrachao Nakhon Chiangmai Tambon Tha Chedi Kio Pen Thiwakan Kha Luang Mueang Chiangmai" [Using the residence of the Chiang Mai lord as the Siamese commissioner's office], 1899.

102 NAT ม.58/33. Damrong Rajanuphab, "Rueang Phraya Si Sahathep ok pai chat ratchakan thang Monthon tawantok chiang nuea" [Si Sahathep to administer the northeastern Monthon], April 1900; cited in Worachat, *Yon adit Lanna*, 103.

103 Thongchai, *Siam Mapped*, 103.

space dominated by the new Chiang Mai and the old sacro-royal center. The micro-colonization of Chiang Mai took place largely after the turn of the century, as the new effectively occupied, displaced, and transformed the old. In Chiang Mai this meant the development of several spaces of the modern state in the sacro-royal city center—primarily a police station, prison, administrative offices, and government schools. A process we often think of on a global scale (i.e., country A annexes country B) took place at the local scale, with the new side of town effectively occupying the old.

Sometime around 1901–2, the Siamese commissioner acquired land to upgrade the local prison and house the provincial gendarmerie, both of which were built partially on land donated to the state by the Chiang Mai king. As the *chao* had long been the arbiters of justice within their domain, it makes sense that several *chao* would have small jails or holding cells within the walls of their *khum* compounds. In an effort to improve security in the city and beyond, Si Sahathep's successor as Siamese commissioner, Phraya Narison Ratchakit, requested some of this land from the *chao* for a new provincial prison and police station. Inthawarorot granted part of the old Wiang Kaew property for the prison and all or part of the *khum* belonging to the Chao Ratchawong (Bunthawong) for the provincial police station (see items 9 and 13 in Table 4.1).[104] It is unclear exactly when the prison was first built, though whatever was there at the turn of the century was certainly a more modest construction than that which stands today. After the Shan revolt in 1902, however, substantial walls and buildings were erected.[105]

In 1905 several days of particularly damaging floods caused the walls of the Siamese compound to completely collapse in several sections, leading to considerable damage to many buildings. The Siamese commissioner, Phraya Surasi Wisutsak, began to look for a suitable location to relocate the Monthon offices.[106] After consulting with Inthawarorot, the Siamese commissioner decided that the only logical option was to move the central office of Monthon Phayap (*thiwakan monthon phayap*) to the *thiwakan khao sanam luang*, located inside the inner city (see Figure 4.2, nos. 6 and 4). Other offices remained near the river—the international court, post and telegraph office, and local administration offices (*khwaeng* and *amphoe* level). However, 1905 is significant in the history of Chiang Mai's urban

104 Somchot, "Khok nai khum – khum nai khok"; Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 31–33.

105 Somchot, "Khok nai khum – khum nai khok."

106 NAT ม.58/25 (1025/5535). Damrong Rajanuphab to Royal Secretariat, September 19, 1905.

space because, for the first time, there was a high-level official Siamese administrative presence located in the heart of the old city.

The next major moment in this micro-colonization of Chiang Mai's old center came in 1919, when the Siamese erected the central edifice of the Bangkok state in the north, the *sala ratthaban* (Government Hall), which still stands today as the Chiang Mai Arts and Culture Center. This imposing structure is located in almost the precise center of the city, partially on the site of an abandoned temple that once housed Chiang Mai's city pillar and partially on land donated by Chao Dara around 1900.[107] Part of the impetus for the construction of this new building, if earlier reports on the condition of administrative buildings and official residences are any guide, was to provide a stable, imposing, and dignified face of the modern state in its northern periphery. Song Suradet, Si Sahathep, Surasi Wisutsak, and many other Siamese commissioners noted repeatedly the damage and decay they saw in the buildings constructed out of bamboo or wood, and especially around the riverbank. The *sala ratthaban* was built on a much grander scale and of stronger materials, with an interior courtyard and an extensive plaza in front facing the main north-south road in the center of the city (see Figure 4.7). After it opened in 1919, many of the administrative functions were then moved into the new *sala ratthaban*. One year later, a Siamese official on his way to take up his post as governor of Mae Hong Son stopped over in Chiang Mai, where he had previously been stationed, and noticed the changes that had taken place in the city:

> On his approach to the city, he could not see the government offices as he remembered them. Instead, he could see oxcarts, and cattle, tied up and chewing on straw near a thatched-roof building where people buy the unhusked rice sold by the oxcarts. He asked the locals the way to the Monthon office [*sala ratthaban monthon* / ศาลารัฐบาลมณฑล]. They replied that he had to walk, since there was no other form of transportation available, and the walk was not that difficult. He then ordered his attendants to stay at the end of the rail line. When he walked to the Nawarat Bridge, still made entirely of wood at that time, he saw Phrathat Doi Suthep, which pleased him. To make sure he wouldn't get lost, he asked locals along the way until he made it to the city center intersection, where it was not difficult to find the Monthon office. When he arrived there, he went straight to find Phraya Phayap Phiriyakit, whom he had known

107 Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 24–27.

Figure 4.7 Chiang Mai city center, showing Government Hall (*sala ratthaban*), 1969. Aerial photograph taken by Bunserm Satrabhaya.
(Source: Northern Thai Information Center, Chiang Mai University, http://lannainfo.library.cmu.ac.th/en_picturelanna/pictures/BS-CM-GB016bg.jpg [accessed June 24, 2021].)
Note: Reprinted with permission from the NTIC at the CMU Library

before. He reported to him about his travels, and he then sent a clerk to meet him. He also sent a cart to take his belongings to the old Monthon office, which is located in the area of the Chiang Mai Provincial Office today. [The old building] has been mostly torn down, and all that is left is a long row of shophouses with many rooms. Most of the officials have gone to work in the new Monthon office. All that is left [at the old building] is the Treasury Office, which has a special room for holding money. So, they must wait until a new vault is built in the new Monthon office building. His attendants left behind at the railhead had secured a horse cart to take his family to their accommodations. As for the belongings he sent when he set out [from Bangkok], it would take another day for them to arrive. He finally arrived and settled in Chiang Mai on 24 November 1920, after taking five days to travel from Bangkok to Chiang Mai.[108]

108 Sangkhit, *Adit Kru Lanna*, 205–6.

The government school known today as Yupparat Withayalai also began with a royal donation of land. When crown prince Vajiravudh visited Chiang Mai in 1905, Inthawarorot donated the Theater Hall (*rong lakhon*) of Chao Inthawichayanon, which Inthawarorot had inherited upon Inthawichayanon's death.[109] Vajravudh's title at the time was "Prince Royal," or *somdet phra yupparat mongkutrachakuman* in Thai, and he lent his name to two of the most prominent schools in the region: the government-run Yupparat Withayalai and the Prince Royal's College, operated by the Presbyterian Mission. The land that formed the basis for Yupparat Witthayalai came from this surge in royal gifts of land and property to the central Siamese state.

Taken together, the move of the central state into the old sacro-royal center was clearly symbolic and placed the new, modern bureaucracy at the center of traditional sacro-spatial authority. The traditional logic of urban space in Chiang Mai continued to be transgressed and transformed; in later years, other government offices, public schools, a central library, and other state institutions occupied either former royal property or abandoned temple land, including—in an irony not unnoticed while conducting my research—the Chiang Mai branch of the National Archives. The boundaries between the sacred "old city" and the foreign "new city" had begun to break down. The traditional logic of urban space in Chiang Mai was gradually transgressed, until the Siamese administration effectively colonized, at the urban scale, the center of the old city.

Donations and Desires

What accounts for this transition? Was this simply a case of brute force on the part of the Siamese? What does this transition say about the development of the modern Siamese state? In short, the process of micro-colonization was more complicated than it might seem at first glance. The micro-colonization of Chiang Mai around and after the turn of the twentieth century was the result of two factors: first, the changing desires and role of the local elites, and second, the gradual decline of the old sacro-spatial logic that predominated throughout Chiang Mai's earlier history, up through the early nineteenth century.

One way to interpret these changes is as a callous imposition of Bangkok's authority in the urban space of Chiang Mai. The prison, for example, has been held up as an example of Bangkok's internal colonialism in the north, a

109 NAT ศธ.51.10/24 (10/1121). Phraya Yotmueangkhwang and Minister of Religious Affairs, October 4, 1906.

visible symbol of oppression and control. The cover of a compilation of issues from *Chiang Mai parithat* (Chiang Mai journal) in 2002 contained a picture of the Wiang Kaew of Chiang Mai with the following caption: "Photograph of the Ho Kham Wiang Kaew, taken in BE 2442 (AD 1899), before it was removed and [the space] became a prison. Now it is the Chiang Mai Women's Penitentiary."[110] However, the story behind the prison is more complicated than it might seem at first glance, as noted above. Though there was clearly a symbolic aspect to the choice of location for the physical manifestation of coercive and penal power in the north, local ruling elites participated in this process of micro-colonization, facilitating the Siamese presence in the city center. Moreover, the location of prisons and police stations was not entirely without precedent, as both locations contained a jail of their own at one time or another.[111]

These transitions would not have been possible without the mediation of key royal-noble elites in Chiang Mai. Much of this exchange, donation, or sale of royal property passed through the hands of Chao Dara, the Royal Consort to Chulalongkorn. When her father, Chao Inthawichayanon, died in 1897, some of his extensive property, which he had accumulated over a long reign as *chao mueang* of Chiang Mai from 1870 to 1897, passed to his successor, Inthawarorot, while much of it passed into Chao Dara's hands.[112] Inthawarorot and Lao Kaew helped to relocate the *khao sanam luang*, while Chao Dara aided in the sale of her father's *khum tha* to the government for use as an official residence. From the 1890s on, *chao* throughout the north increasingly began to donate, trade, or sell their land and property to the central government to establish the infrastructure of power, authority, and communications. As the narrative above and the following table shows, much of this land was parceled out for government use. Other royal holdings were sold to private parties or companies.

If this transition was not the result of brute Siamese force, what happened? In short, the Siamese state in effect co-opted the elites of Chiang Mai, who then acted as points of articulation between the center and the locality, enabling the transformation of the city. Some elites traded their land because of debts they had incurred to the state, either through judgments against them in the teak cases tried in the international court or from the construction of expensive homes, the maintenance of extravagant lifestyles, and gambling,

110 Thanet, "Kananurak phuenthi prawattisat chaiklang mueang Chiang Mai."

111 Somchot, "Khok nai khum – khum nai khok."

112 See Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 24–38 for a detailed inventory of the land and property inherited from Inthawichayanon by Dara.

which many of the *chao* were quite fond of.[113] Dara, on the other hand, is a more interesting case. Chao Dara's experience as daughter of the Chiang Mai king and consort to the Siamese king in Bangkok was crucial not only in maintaining the political links between Bangkok and Chiang Mai but also in cementing that political relationship in the urban space of Chiang Mai. She was able to use her unique position between center and locality to facilitate the transformation of the city, both in the numerous transfers of land just mentioned and in removing the remains of deceased Chiang Mai royalty from the *khuang meru* area to make way for the creation of the new market. The fate of royal lands at the turn of the century is markedly different from that of previous generations. It was considered traditional for succeeding elites to donate land and property inherited from deceased kings of the past to monastery compounds. When Inthawichayanon was appointed lord of Chiang Mai and took the throne, he had also inherited much of the property of previous kings. He dispensed with this property in what was then considered a traditional way. For example, Inthawichayanon donated the residence (*ho kham*) of Mahotaraprathet to Wat Phan Tao to be used as a worship hall (*wihan*).[114] He also donated the Throne Hall (*thong phra rong*) of Kawilorot to Wat Saen Fang, before building a new palace (*khum luang*) for himself on the vacated land. Donation was tradition, and it contributed to royal legitimacy by patronizing and developing sacred spaces. Juxtaposing these two moments, a stark contrast emerges: in 1870 royal property was donated to temples as a form of Buddhist merit, and in 1900 such property was bartered with the central government to aid in the expansion of the central administration. The desire of the *chao* in 1870 and 1900 were similar in one respect, as elites at both times wanted legitimacy and financial security. In 1870 donating royal property to important temples was a way to ensure the former, if less so the latter. By 1900 donating royal property to the central government helped to ensure both. That royal land went to the Monthon government rather than local temples foreshadows the general decline of sacred space in the city center, a point the next chapter discusses in detail.

Another factor that should not be discounted is the draw of the royal center for the Siamese. One might ask: Why did the Siamese feel the need

113 Chulathat Kittibutr, personal communication. Also, Bristowe reports that the Borneo Company provided Louis Leonowens with a budget for gambling with the Chiang Mai king: "A free hand from Leckie enabled him to woo the Chief with losses at the Borneo Company expense, and the occasional win at koo kee on judicious occasions was later to gain him the forest leases he needed so urgently." *Louis and the King of Siam*, 77.

114 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 217.

	Property	Lord/Noble	Year	Method of transfer	Present Use
1	Khum Chao Mae Busaba	Chao Mae Busaba		Sold	Private Residence
2	Khum Chao Ratchabut	Chao Ratchabut		Sold	Private Residence
3	Khum Luang	Chao Kaew Nawarat & Mae Chao Chamri		Sold	Nawarat Market
4	Khum Chao Ratchawong	Chao Ratchawong Lao Kaew		Sold	Khum Kaew Palace (hotel)
5	Khum Chao Burirat	Chao Renuwanna; Chao Burirat		Sold	Tobacco Monopoly Office
6	Khum Chedi Ngam	Chao Siriprakai		Sold	American Consulate
7	Khum Rin Kaew	Chao Phongin na Chiang Mai		--	Khum Chao Phong In
8	Khum Kamphaeng Daeng	Chao Ratchawong (old)		Sold	Kittibutr family home
9	Khum Wiang Kaew	Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong		Given by Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong	Chiang Mai Central Prison
10	Khum Klang Wiang	Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong	1899	Given by Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong	Government House (former)
11	Some portions of the Khum Klang Wiang	Chao Uparat Suriya	1899	Bought from Chao Ratchabut	Chiang Mai Provincial Court
12	Khum Tha	Chao Kawilorot Suriyawong	R.5	Given by Chao Dara Rasami	Chiang Mai Municipal Office Fire Station Public Welfare Office
13	Khum Chao Bunthawong	Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong		Given by Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong	Police Station
14	Rong Lakhon Chao Inthawichayanon	Chao Inthawichayanon	1905	Given by Chao Inthawarorot Suriyawong	Yupparat Withayalai School
15	Khum Chang Phueak	Chao Inthanon	1900		Thai Airways Office
16	Khum Ratchasamphanwong	Chao Ratchasamphanwong (Sing Kaew)			Chao Duangchan na Chiang Mai Chao Montha Amphaset Ms. Buaphat na Chiang Mai
17	Khum Chao Burirat (former)	Chao Burirat		Sold	Opposite Chiang Mai Gate Market
18	Khum Chao Ratchaphatikawong	Chao Noi Phrom (Elephant mahout for R.7)			
19	Khum Chao Ratchaphakhinai	Chao Ratchaphakhinai			Opposite Wat Khuang Sing
20	Khum Chao Upparat Suriyawong	Chao Uparat Suriyawong			USIS
21	Khum Chao Fa Chiang Tung	Chao Fa Phromlue			
22	Khum Wiang Bua	Chao Chailangka Suriyawong		Given [by] Chao Chuen Sirorot	Chiang Mai Teachers College

Table 4.1 The turnover of land formerly owned by the Northern royal-noble elite. Adapted, with minor corrections, from *Raingan Kanwichai Rueang Kanpliangplaeng Kanthuekhrong Thidin Boriwen Mueang Chiang Mai [The Changing of Land Holding Pattern Within Chiang Mai Urban Area]* (Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, 1987), 21. The information in this table comes from interviews conducted by the Social Research Institute (SRI) in 1986, and from Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*.

to move their offices into the center of the old city at all? With a vibrant market and all the trappings of a modern colonial state—schools, hospitals, telegraph and post office, etc.—what drew the Siamese officials to the old city? The archival record has surprisingly little to say on this question, which indicates that the desire to relocate into the city center was viewed as quite natural. There are, however, several factors to consider. First, the local elites that Siam had to deal with were located in the old city, and so it was, in one sense, logical that the Siamese would seek to control the space in which the sometimes-recalcitrant local *chao* operated. However, that does not explain why the central government felt the need to relocate its offices into the old city rather than let the old city decline into an appendage of the new center of power. A more likely explanation is that this was an area full of large tracts of royal land, which simply offered more space than the relatively cramped confines near the Ping River. This is certainly supported by much of the documentary record, which continually notes that the old Siamese compound had become cramped and damaged. Once again, although the land in the old city offered more space, this does not entirely explain why the inner city, the old royal center, remained the target of Siamese spatial desire.

One source describing Chao Dara's role in the spatial transition of Chiang Mai states simply that Dara thought that the land would be more "appropriate" (เหมาะ) for government use since it was located in the center of the old city.[115] But what does "appropriate" mean in this context? While the availability of land and connections to the northern royals surely mattered, another factor more fully explains the Siamese occupation of the city center. This process unfolded during the heyday of the absolute monarchy, with its emphasis on royal modernity, spectacle, and space.[116] The Siamese compound offered little opportunity for such pomp, whereas the core of the old city was steeped in the rituals of royal power. Thus, the third factor, which in many ways overrides the first two, is the draw of the sacro-royal center for a state run by an absolute monarchy that sought to display its modernity and *siwilai*, or civilized nature, to the rest of the world. Thus, the thick line between the sacred space of the premodern state, on one hand, and the secular space of modern Siam, on the other, was blurred as the spatial imprint of the modern state was drawn to the sacro-royal center.

115 See Saengdao, *Phra Prawat Phraratchaya Chao Dara Ratsami*, 27.

116 See Peleggi, *Lords of Things*.

Conclusion

Is Chiang Mai a colonial city? Both Chiang Mai's subject position within Siam and Siam's subject position within the colonial system of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seem to be hidden in a kind of crypto-colonial condition. Chiang Mai's urban history remains predominantly framed by national independence and unified Thai-ness rather than by comparisons with other colonial powers in Southeast Asia. And yet, evidence of the city's unique colonial-ness can be found. For example, the development of two centers of power and authority in some ways mirrors the "dual city" found in other colonial contexts. Thus, the first step in bringing Chiang Mai into this debate is simply to bring the colonial aspects of Chiang Mai into the light, to show that Chiang Mai was, in many important ways, subject to the same external pressures as many other colonial cities.

At the same time, however, the diverse and overlapping nature of the various agents working in and on the space of Chiang Mai has complicated the classical colonial model of colonizer-versus-colonized. Urban space was not simply the result of imperial impositions or native resistance. Rather, following Yeoh, the urban space of Chiang Mai was "embodied and expressed the tensions and negotiations, conflicts and compromises between different groups."[117] The local elites at times protested, as in the case of the *klang wiang* market. At other times they facilitated the government's desire to occupy and rewrite the meaning of the ancient sacro-royal center, as with the building of the *sala ratthaban*. Still, certain elites, such as Chao Dara, were in a unique position between the center and locality and used that status to facilitate and mediate the development of the city as part of the modern state. In other words, this was micro-colonial Chiang Mai, where the messy and sometimes awkward micro-politics of the city gave physical urban form to the larger global forces of colonial modernity.

Finally, following the argument put forth in Chapter 1, the long urban tradition of Chiang Mai matters. The power of the old elite had faded by the turn of the century, but after 1900 the central state began to transplant itself into the heart of old Chiang Mai. Why not build up the "new town" and let the old wither, perhaps to be later revived as a tourist destination or to become a sleepy backwater? Even in this turn-of-the-century transition, the ancient core of the city, as restored and renewed by Kawila and his successors,

117 Yeoh, *Contesting Space*, 18.

retained a measure of its royal, sacro-spatial legitimacy and charm. It was this remnant of the premodern state that attracted an expanding Siam, led by an absolute monarchy, to colonize the core of the old city.

While most of the transitions discussed in this chapter were facilitated by the transfer of royal landholdings, another type of land played an important role as well: abandoned temples. The *sala ratthaban* and part of Yupparat Witthayalai, for example, built on abandoned temple property, hint at the shifting fortunes of sacred space in Chiang Mai and beyond as the city turned away from the sacro-royal center toward the modern center to the east. The next chapter takes up this story—the fate of sacred space in Chiang Mai, and its role in providing a space, both literally and figuratively, for resistance to Siamese policies in the north.

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Abbreviations

NAT National Archives of Thailand
- ม Ministry of the Interior
- ยธ Ministry of Public Works
- ศธ Ministry of Education
- ศร Prime Minister's Office
- ค Treasury
- ผ Map Collection

CCTA Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University
- RG 020 Mission Property Records

TNA The National Archives of the United Kingdom
- PRO Public Record Office
- FO Foreign Office
- WORKS Works Department

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5 The New City and the New State

Chiang Mai's Sacred Space and Siam

Abstract
While Chiang Mai's economic and political spaces were co-opted by the modern Siamese state, sacred space was largely ignored and thus remained open to manipulation and mobilization. After a period of intense distress and crisis, these spaces were mobilized by a charismatic monk Khruba Siwichai. The sacred space of the cities of the north played an important role in shaping the relationship between Chiang Mai and Bangkok and set up anxieties that persist to the present. After this "last stand" of Chiang Mai autonomy, the new postwar Thai state began the task of fixing the meaning of the city's history through statuary monuments and public ritual in an attempt to ensure the city would remain durably linked to Bangkok.

Keywords: Sacred space, Buddhism, resistance, temple restoration

The transformation of the region and the city discussed in the previous two chapters seemed, for a time, to bring the north under Siamese control. One leading historian of northern Thailand concludes that by 1915, "the region was firmly under the control of Siam in all aspects, including government, economy, society, education, art, and culture."[1] However, this chapter argues that their control over sacred space in Chiang Mai was anything but firm, which left an opening for a sacro-spatial challenge to Bangkok's hold on the north. The construction, maintenance, and control of spaces such as Buddhist *wat* (temples/monasteries), reliquary monuments, and spirit shrines

1 Sarassawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 213. She cites 1915 here, as it marked the departure of Phraya Surasiwisutsak, a key Siamese official responsible for many administrative reforms in Chiang Mai and the north during his tenure.

Easum, Taylor. *Chiang Mai between Empire and Modern Thailand. A City in the Colonial Margins*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023
DOI: 10.5117/9789463726467_CH05

therefore formed a key point of articulation between Bangkok officials and local elites, as well as between premodern and modern state structures.

Sacred space in the early twentieth century meant different things to different people. For Siamese officials, temple lands and other ritually significant spaces seemed difficult to bring under a modern, centralized authority. For local royalty, patronage of these spaces represented both a link to their once glorious past and a chance to bolster their current position within local society. For the diverse groups that populated the cities, towns, and villages of the north, however, these were sites of cherished local practice. For many of the people who found themselves mapped into Siam's northern periphery, sacred space existed as a legacy of the premodern state and society and, as such, provided a real opportunity for the creation of alternate affinities and hierarchies that could challenge Siamese domination and improve their political position within the Siamese state. In short, for some, sacred space became the object of a modernizing, centralizing project. For others, these spaces represented the last stand of local autonomy in the north.

This chapter begins with the story of the decline of Chiang Mai's sacred spaces, both in number and political relevance, as sacred space was decoupled from the premodern systems of legitimacy in which they were once so deeply embedded. The discussion then turns to Khruba Sriwichai, a famous monk who started a movement that sought to preserve local religious practices by restoring, rebuilding, and renovating sacred sites and monuments throughout the region. Beginning in the margins of Siamese control, Khruba Siwichai's popularity spread into the towns and cities of the north before reaching a climax in the hills surrounding Chiang Mai in 1935–36.[2] With the exception of a few reactionary rebellions around the turn of the century, like Phya Phap and the Shan Revolt discussed in Chapter 3, this movement posed arguably the most serious threat to Siamese dominance in the region. Khruba Siwichai challenged the Siamese state not through armed rebellion but by staking a moral claim to sacred space in Chiang Mai and throughout the region. His movement shows, I argue, that resistance to the integration of what became Siam's "north" continued from the late nineteenth well into the twentieth century, albeit in a unique sacro-spatial form. Furthermore, it was the nature of Siam's incorporation of its northern periphery that created the space for this unique type of resistance.

2 Portions of this chapter are reprinted, with permission from the publisher, from Easum, "A Thorn in Bangkok's Side Khruba Sriwichai, Sacred Space and the Last Stand of the Pre-Modern Chiang Mai State," 211–36.

The Decline of Sacro-Spatial Legitimacy in the Chiang Mai State

For centuries, sacred space served an important function in Southeast Asian statecraft. From the founding of the city discussed in Chapter 1 to the Kawila restoration discussed in Chapter 2, sacred spaces such as monasteries, shrines, relics, images, and other holy sites were integral parts of an elaborate state system that linked kings, nobles, religious leaders, merchant elites, and—to varying degrees of success—the general population. Not only were sacred spaces such as *wat* a physical manifestation of the world beyond (such as the Hindu pantheon, the various lives of the Buddha, or the ubiquitous spirit world), but they were also sites that could be built, maintained, restored, occupied, and patronized by ruling elites. By managing and manipulating these spaces, rulers were able to provide a veneer of legitimacy for themselves and a sense of security for the urban community.[3] Thus, instead of a set of spaces set apart from the more obvious political or administrative elements of a city, sacred spaces served to demonstrate the power and bolster the charisma of the ruling elites—in short, they formed a system of sacro-spatial legitimacy.

Sacred space has always been political, but it was anything but static. On a basic level, Kawila's restoration of Chiang Mai's sacred spaces demonstrated his personal legitimacy in the same way that earlier kings had, by simply demonstrating to his overlords, fellow royals, competing nobles, and the general population that he had the necessary means, manpower, and moral authority to do so. However, as political alliances shifted, the legitimizing rationale of sacred space changed. On another level, then, a subtle change had occurred in the meaning of sacred space in Chiang Mai. For Kawila, sacred space was a key element of his ascension to power, even while sacred space gradually became less relevant to political legitimacy, which increasingly stemmed from his relationship with Bangkok. Meanwhile, sacred spaces grew in importance for an ethnically diverse urban community amid dislocation and war.

As the Bangkok state extended its power in the north in the late nineteenth century, as we have seen, a new center developed around the riverside area. During this period, sacred spaces were effectively divorced from their

3 The concept of sacred space here draws largely from Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*. For the links between sacred space and political power in Southeast Asia, see Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*. For an explication of these concepts in the specific context of the two northern Thai cities of Chiang Mai and Lamphun, see Swearer, "The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center."

legitimizing role, and monasteries lost their patrons and were increasingly abandoned or left to decay. But through this general decline, sacred spaces remained open to political manipulation toward divergent and competing ends—Siamese integration and local resistance.

Although this deterioration, writ on the landscape in the form of abandoned Buddhist chedi and shrines, seems in some ways akin to general secularization or even Weberian disenchantment, the situation in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chiang Mai was something different. Here Siamese officials shared the basic cultural grammar and vocabulary of Theravada Buddhism, but they nonetheless sought to "reform" the peculiarly local style of Buddhism and ritual practices in the north. Thus, Siamese officials were not trying to remove religion by making Chiang Mai secular; they were, however, keen on removing what they saw as irrational and inconsistent with the "true Buddhism" that originated with the Buddha, and which the Bangkok state believed it had recovered.[4] This policy had two interrelated aims: to impose a modern, rationalized religious order on the north, and, more importantly, to undermine the sacro-spatial foundations of the premodern Chiang Mai state. Thus, the Siamese approach to sacred space in Chiang Mai had direct political implications for the royal and noble elites in Chiang Mai but a more uneven effect, as we shall see, for the general population.

Although royal elites gave significant attention to the sacro-spatial aspects of the state in Bangkok,[5] the structures the central state extended within its newly bounded and defined periphery resulted in an uneven situation in Chiang Mai. As the power of the *chao* and the nobility eroded, the sacred spaces of the inner city lost their traditional patrons. By the early twentieth century, a general secularization of Chiang Mai could be observed, with a decline in the number of *wat* and a lack of new *wat* construction. According to Keyes, "it would appear that there have been no new wats built in the city [since the 1920s], that few abandoned wats have been restored, and that at least a half dozen wats have been abandoned or converted to non-religious uses."[6] This decline in the number of *wat* and their lay supporters reflects more than a loss of patronage and secularization; it also reflects the decoupling of sacred spaces from their political role in the traditional state.

This was not entirely accidental. The central state and its agents pursued policies that, intentionally or not, undermined the sacro-spatial foundations

4 McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves & Lifting Words*, 102.

5 For example, Mongkut's creation of *thewathirat* and erection of a second city pillar.

6 Keyes, "Buddhism in a Secular City," 64.

of the traditional state. The Kawilorot crisis discussed in Chapter 3, for example, represented a threat to the king because he saw Christian conversion as a threat to his legitimacy and power. This crisis and other conflicts between American missionaries and the ruling elite of Chiang Mai provided the central state with the opportunity to undermine local authority and take gradual control of the internal affairs of the kingdom away from the local *chao*, which Chambers and Pascal argue was the "proximate cause" of Siam's integration of the north.[7] Although many factors drew Bangkok's attention north, these crises were eventually resolved through the direct intervention of Bangkok and, importantly, the proclamation of the Edict of Religious Toleration. Although some scholars view this moment as an example of Siam's modernization and general tolerance of things foreign, from Bangkok's perspective, the edict conveniently undercut the authority of the prickly and stubborn vassal rulers of Chiang Mai. Even though the two shared a similar cultural and religious vocabulary of Theravada Buddhism, the policies of the Bangkok state toward its northern vassals worked to weaken the link between sacred spaces and state authority. Although missionaries in Bangkok ran up against the bulwark of state-organized Buddhism, those in Chiang Mai and the inland states were essentially agents of political de-legitimization and modernization. Missionaries helped, often indirectly, to undermine the authority and legitimacy of local ruling lords. As the political and moral authority of Chiang Mai royalty steadily declined, the schools, hospitals, and dispensaries of the American Presbyterian Mission in Chiang Mai were well positioned to fill the gap.[8]

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Siamese state gradually encroached upon and transgressed the traditional logic of sacred space and power in Chiang Mai: first after 1905, when some of the Siamese regional government (*monthon*) offices were relocated away from the riverside complex into the city center, and especially in 1919, with the erection of the *sala ratthaban monthon* in almost the precise center of the city, partially on the site of an abandoned temple that once housed Chiang Mai's city pillar. In short, the Siamese micro-colonization of the city center effectively undermined Chiang Mai's sacred space.

Another intriguing example of the declining significance of sacred space in Chiang Mai can be found in the story of the city's largest market, *kat luang*, discussed in Chapter 4. Before this vibrant market was established, the area was known as *khuang meru*, an open space between the outer walls

7 Pascal and Chambers, "Oblique Intervention," 29.

8 Ratanaporn, *Prawattisat Setthakit Watthanatham Aeng Chiang Mai-Lamphun*, 250.

and the river used for the cremation and internment of royal remains.[9] In 1859 Schomburgk commented on the *khuang meru*:

> I had observed at a short distance between our residence and the city wall, two monuments or resting-places of the dead, surrounded by a railing and kept in good order. It was entirely an accident that I addressed the Chao Ratcheput who was close to me in the Sala when the ceremony took place, asking him whose graves they were. "They are those of my parents," he said, "their ashes after cremation had taken place, were interred here. Twice a year I come to put up flowers over their graves, and have the railing restored.
>
> I thought that this care bestowed upon the resting place of his parents showed as deep an affection as the temples erected by the high nobility and opulent in Bangkok, over the graves of their nearest relations.[10]

The *khuang meru* was indeed a sacred space, but one that was infrequently used. After the second Chiang Mai Treaty (1883), overseas Chinese merchants began to establish themselves along the edges of this sacred space, eventually transforming the area into the main market center of Chiang Mai. An account of this transition from sacred space to market was provided in a 1923 application of Chao Dara Rasami to the royal treasury for a loan to refurbish the market:

> Talat Warorot used to be used as the cremation grounds for the kings and rulers of Chiang Mai, and the people called this place *khuang meru*. After the cremation of Chao Dara's mother, however, no further cremations were held there, and, after being neglected for a long while, people came to build houses in and around the area. Then, when it came time to hold the funeral for Phra Chao Inthawichayanon, Chao Kaew Nawarat, when he was the Chao Ratchawong, had to spend money to remove or purchase outright these houses, the total cost coming to 18,000 rupees. After the funeral, it was then made into a market, and later, Chao Inthawarorot bought it from Chao Kaew Nawarat, which is what gave it the name "Talat Warorot." At present, the market belongs to the Chao Ratchabut, who inherited it.[11]

9 Worachat, *Yon adit lanna*, 143–52.

10 Schomburgk, "A Visit to Xiengmai," 398.

11 NAT ร.6 ค.12.3/16. Chao Dara Rasami to Chao Phraya Yommarat, September 3, 1923.

But this transition was not always a smooth one. In 1908 Chao Dara moved the remains of the Chiang Mai kings—including Kawila, Kawilorot, and Inthawichayanon—from the *khuang meru* to Wat Suan Dok (which Khruba Siwichai later restored in 1931), where they remain to this day. When she moved the remains, however, she did so in a way that some viewed as a violation of the sacred proscriptions of the city. On July 29, 1908, a local monk in Chiang Mai noted in a temple calendar that "[Dara] moved bones from Ping River down Thapae Road and through city; out the Western Gate; this is a very bad thing."[12] Ironically, the market was later mortgaged to pay for yet another royal funeral.[13] While this might be best understood as criticism directed at Chao Dara, who had by then spent so many years in Bangkok, it also shows how the proscriptions around sacred space and the Chiang Mai royal family had begun to break down as Siam extended its control over the city.

The examples above show how the central Siamese state was able to integrate Chiang Mai by undermining the sacro-spatial foundations of the Chiang Mai kings. But what about resistance? A tempting possibility can be found in the *naksat pi* system of twelve Buddhist reliquaries (*phrathat*) corresponding to the twelve-month northern Thai calendar, which connects twelve *phrathat* from Lanna, Laos, Burma, northern India, and heaven. According to Charles Keyes, this system represents a "sacred topography, defined by the twelve shrines" that "[unites] people into successively larger moral communities."[14] The "moral community" at the center of this topography is Chiang Mai, and moving progressively outward, one finds the Chiang Mai-Lamphun valley, the Lanna Kingdom, the Lao world, mainland Southeast Asia, the entire Buddhist world, and finally, with the final reliquary in heaven, the entire Buddhist universe. While a key example of the importance of regional networks of sacred space amid Siamese encroachment, there are no shrines from central Thailand in this system. Instead, one level up from the Lao world, one finds the Shwedagon Pagoda in Burma, indicating that "in Buddhist terms, the northern Thai felt themselves more akin to the Buddhists of Burma than to those of traditional Siam."[15]

12 Castro-Woodhouse, *Woman between Two Kingdoms*, 104.

13 In 1923 Chao Dara Rasami requested a loan of 250,000 baht to purchase the market and thereby keep it within the noble "na Chiang Mai" family line. See NAT ร.6 ค.12.3/16. Chao Dara Rasami to Chao Phraya Yommarat, September 3, 1923.

14 Keyes, "Buddhist Pilgrimage Centers and the Twelve-Year Cycle," 71–89.

15 Keyes, "Buddhist Pilgrimage Centers and the Twelve-Year Cycle," 87.

Could this exclusion represent a conscious resistance to Siam? It is tempting to see it this way. The earliest physical evidence for this association of the twelve-year animal calendar and *phrathat* in northern Thailand is a silver-plate inscription dated 1889.[16] However, it is possible, even likely, that this system originated earlier, perhaps during the early years of Inthawichayanon's reign, when the First Chiang Mai Treaty in 1874 brought a direct Siamese administrative presence into the north. In this context, a monastic challenge to Siamese encroachment makes sense—in this case by excluding them from this extended moral community of the faithful that placed Chiang Mai firmly at its center.[17] Although it is tempting to view the creation and spread of the *naksat pi* network of temples as an act of resistance by Chiang Mai elites, there is little if any evidence to support this argument. Nevertheless, its existence and structure show the potency and potential of sacred space on a local *and* regional level as an alternative to Siamese or Western domination.

As the center of urban activity in Chiang Mai moved away from the royal center, sacred spaces declined in both number and political importance. At the same time, as Siam displaced the premodern state structures and elites of the north, sacred spaces remained potential sites of both conquest and resistance throughout the region. The reorientation of sacred space in Chiang Mai was aimed not at eliminating the sacred but specifically at undermining the sacro-spatial foundations of royal power in Chiang Mai. This effectively left the potential of sacred space to legitimize a moral and political community intact, while cutting the traditional recipient of that legitimacy—the ruling king of the *mueang*—out of the equation. The question then became who could serve as a locus of a distinctly local identity, based on sacred spaces and practices. Although in past centuries kings and nobles would have filled this role, by the turn of the century, the royal capacity to mobilize sacred space in opposition to external forces was clearly on the decline. The potential of sacred space as a focal point for resistance remained, however, in the cities, towns, and remote villages of the north, both locally and regionally. In the end, it was the monkhood that provided some of the most vocal and important opposition to Siamese policy. Previously discussed examples already hint at the role monks must

16 Thianchai, "Chuthat," 72.

17 Thianchai goes further, arguing that Inthawichayanon would have taken the opportunity to assert the moral authority of Chiang Mai and the Lanna states as the center of this great Buddhist network after seeing the Bangkok court being challenged by its confrontation with the west. See "Chuthat," 87–88.

have taken: monks would have studied and maintained the *naksat pi* temple network, and it was a monk who commented negatively on Princess Dara's actions in 1908. It is therefore no surprise that it was a monk who become the most famous figure to challenge the authority of the Bangkok state and its modernizing project, Khruba Siwichai, and that he did so through sacred space.

Khruba Siwichai, the State, and the Restoration of Sacred Space(s)

There are two basic themes in accounts of Khruba Siwichai's life: his prodigious restoration and renovation of religious monuments and his constant conflicts with the authorities of the Buddhist monkhood, or *sangha*.[18] These two themes are, I argue, related. Khruba Siwichai's conflicts with the central state show how sacred space, once divorced from its political role within the premodern state system, became a key point of articulation and contestation between center and periphery. The basic outline of his life story is as follows: As a young monk, Siwichai quickly developed a reputation for devout practice and magical power that earned him the appellation *khruba*, meaning "revered teacher" in the Yuan tradition. He first drew the ire of local Sangha officials in 1907 and remained a "thorn in the side of the Thai Sangha" for most of his life.[19] In 1920, after his first case was settled in Bangkok, he began his career of restoring and rebuilding Buddhist monuments throughout the northern provinces, staying on the right side of the Sangha administration until the completion of his largest and most famous project, the road up Doi Suthep, in 1935. It was at this point that the conflict between Khruba Siwichai and the Siamese state became a crisis, the resolution of which brought an effective end to the threat Khruba Siwichai posed to the Siamese state.

Siwichai's life can be understood in three parts, each with a distinct spatial theme. First, Siwichai's rapid rise in status and his initial following were made possible by moving along the margins of state control and between the civilized, inhabited space of the village and the wild, untamed forest (*pa*). Second, his early confrontations with the Thai state reflect the messy transition

18 Much of the information for this section is taken from *Prawat Khruba Siwichai Nakbun Haeng Lanna Thai: Prawat Kansang Thang Khuen Doi Suthep Lae Prawat Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep*, and Ronald Renard's translation, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai* (*The Buddhist Saint of Northern Thailand*), *The Story of Making the Road Up Doi Suthep, and A Historical Chronicle of Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep*.

19 Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," 558.

from a Tai-Yuan network of city-states and sacred spaces that connected Chiang Mai to Burma, Laos, and Yunnan to the newly centralized hierarchy of temple administration, centered in Bangkok. Third, the final phase of his career and his final confrontation with the Siamese state show that his greatest threat lay specifically in his power to mobilize both peasants and elites in a system that evoked a legacy of the premodern state—sacro-spatial legitimacy.

Early Years: From the Village to the Forest, from Khruba to Ton Bun

Khruba Siwichai was born in 1878 in the small village of Ban Pang, in the remote district of Li, Lamphun province. Originally known as *Fuean*,[20] he received the name "Siwichai" in 1896, when, at the comparatively late age of eighteen, he was ordained as a novice by Khruba Khatiya, the abbot of the local village temple.[21] Three years later, at the age of twenty-one, he was ordained as a full monk by Khruba Somana at Wat Ban Hong Luang and given the name Siri Wichayo Bhikkhu, though he remained popularly known by his earlier name, Siwichai.[22]

Like most youth of the time, Siwichai sought ordination as a novice in order to receive an education. Once a fully ordained monk, Siwichai began studying more intensely under his abbot, Khruba Khatiya, and several other *Khruba* in the area. He first studied magic (*saiyasat*) and incantations with Khruba Khatiya at Wat Ban Pang. He then went to Wat Doi Tae to study with Khruba Upala before moving again to Wat Doi Kham to study with another *Khruba*. Eventually, he returned to the temple of his ordination to study with Khruba Somana.

This intellectual itinerary is important for three reasons: First, in most accounts his interest in and devotion to Buddhist discipline (*vinaya*) is combined with clear references to magic, incantations, and "occult" practices, which would become both a source of popularity among his local followers and a target for his detractors among the central state and sangha officials.[23]

20 *Fuean* means "thunder" or "loud shaking" in northern Thai. He was so named because he was born in the middle of a violent thunderstorm. Some, however, called him simply *Fa Rong*, which has a similar meaning. Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 2.

21 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 3.

22 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 4. According to some sources, Khruba Siwichai preferred to call himself either "Phra Chaiya Bhikkhu" or "Phra Siwichai Chana Bhikkhu," names few northern Thai today are familiar with.

23 Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," 537. Singkha and Phra Sunthonphotchanakit, *Saraprawat Khruba Siwichai: nakbun haeng Lanna Thai*, 9, cited in Sopha, "Khruba Siwichai, 'Ton Bun' haeng Lanna," 27.

However, in another sense, Khruba Somana's decision to send Khruba Siwichai to study at Wat Doi Tae with Khruba Upala was a pivotal moment for Khruba Siwichai, because the development of his religious studies, especially his focus on meditation practice, caused Siwichai to cease his interest in attaining magical knowledge.[24] Whether or not Khruba Siwichai continued his interest in the supernatural and practice of magic, this formed an important part of his reputation among the people of the area.

Second, his early education as a monk highlights the structure of Yuan Buddhism in the north at the turn of the twentieth century. Khruba Siwichai emerged out of a loosely structured milieu in which authority and respect were held by particular monks popularly acknowledged to be "revered teachers," or *Khruba*. Clearly, this was not a religious organization with a defined hierarchy and governing structure; rather, this was a fluid religious environment where followers could gravitate around charismatic or especially learned monks and where elder monks passed their knowledge and moral authority down through the teaching of younger monks.[25] Monks such as Siwichai circulated within a set of sacred spaces connected by lineage, learning, and language.

Third, and most importantly, Siwichai's path to becoming a *Khruba* meant a spatial transition from the village to the forests and hills. Siwichai traveled to Wat Doi Tae and Wat Doi Kham for his studies—both forest monasteries located on or associated with important sacred mountains. Furthermore, after returning from his studies to Wat Ban Pang, he not only followed strict meditation practice; he also began to wander as a forest monk (*thudong*). After his experience in the forest, in the space of a few years, Siwichai attained the status of *Khruba*. Finally, his first major act as abbot of Wat Ban Pang (a position he inherited upon Khruba Khatiya's death) was to build a new temple, which both symbolizes this transition from village to the forest and foreshadows his later career as a builder of sacred spaces. His reason for moving the temple was that its proximity to the village was incompatible with proper Buddhist discipline and practice; for Khruba Siwichai, the pursuit of strict Buddhist practice meant a move

24 Sopha, "Khruba Siwichai, 'Ton Bun' haeng Lanna," 29–31. His abandonment of magic in favor of strict discipline and meditation was, Sopha argues, in part because of the intellectual lineage of Khruba Upala, which stretched back to the reformist Sri Lankan sect (*lankawong*) founded in the mid-1400s, which was somewhat hostile to non-Buddhist spiritualism and magic.

25 Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," 552–53; Aroonrut and Grabowsky, "Ethnic Groups in Chiang Mai by the Turn of the Twentieth Century."

away from the urban and toward the forest.[26] In essence, Khruba Siwichai not only moved himself but also his temple to the forest.

By combining strict Buddhist discipline with a detailed knowledge of magic, by establishing a forest temple (*arannyawat*) and wandering in the forest (*thudong*), and by virtue of his remote location at the margins of state control, Khruba Siwichai began to amass a devout following—initially not among the lowland *khon mueang* (northern Thai), but among the highland minorities spread throughout the region. It was these highland groups, especially the Karen, who first elevated Khruba Siwichai to the status of *ton bun*, often glossed as "Buddhist saint" or "man of merit," a position with *bodhisattva* qualities.[27]

Thus, Siwichai's career as a charismatic and influential *Khruba* began once he made the shift from the settled and civilized space of the *mueang* to the forest, where he built his reputation, gained his followers, and earned the status of *khruba*, and later *ton bun*. Conversely, as will be discussed in the following section, only once his reputation began to reach out of this marginal area into the urban areas (more or less under Siamese control by this time) did he begin to catch the attention of the central state.[28]

Khruba Siwichai and the State Sangha, 1907–20: All Roads Lead to Bangkok

Khruba Siwichai first ran afoul of local Sangha authorities in 1907, only five years after the Sangha Act of 1902 began a comprehensive reorganization of the Buddhist hierarchy throughout the kingdom.[29] The central accusation was that Khruba Siwichai had performed ordinations of novices and monks without official permission. One interpretation of the accusation is that this represented a threat to the Sangha hierarchy because, as Keyes points out, "the exercise of this right by monks not sanctioned by the Thai hierarchy could lead to the development or perpetuation of sects whose existence would pose a direct threat to the unity of the Thai church."[30] Therefore, in one sense this conflict can be understood in terms of the loose structure of Yuan Buddhism mentioned above. In Khruba Siwichai's world, temples and

26 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 5; Sommai, *Tamnan Khruba Siwichai Baep Phitsadan Lae Tamnan Wat Suan Dok*, 5.

27 For an excellent exploration of the concept of *ton bun*, see Sopha, "Khruba Siwichai, 'Ton Bun' haeng Lanna," ch. 2.

28 Sopha, "Khruba Siwichai, 'Ton Bun' haeng Lanna," 46.

29 McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves & Lifting Words*, 99–104.

30 Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," 557.

monks were divided into several *nikai*, loosely translated as "sect." Rather than reflecting serious differences in interpretation or practice, *nikai* usually reflected ethnic or cultural groups or simply a following that had developed from a particularly charismatic and influential monk. For example, most of the *nikai* in late nineteenth-century Chiang Mai were named after either the ethnic or geographic origins of their adherents, although some were named after a revered monk with a devout following.[31] In the case of Khruba Siwichai, then, the initial charges leveled against him arose out of a desire to strip him of his ability to ordain in order to prevent his creation of a mass following, and more specifically, the creation of a *nikai* centered around Siwichai himself. However, concern over the ecclesiastical hierarchy does not fully explain the threat posed to the Bangkok state. As Katherine Bowie points out, the implementation of the 1902 act came to the north only years later, and she argues that the main threat posed to the state by his efforts to ordain so many young men was less to the monastic order and more to the efforts of the state to expand conscription and control access to manpower.[32]

Siwichai's journey into the realm of monastic justice reflects the newly constructed urban hierarchy of power in Siam's north. The Sangha authorities responded to these accusations by summoning Khruba Siwichai into successively larger urban centers of monastic administration. After the ecclesiastical head of Li district accused Khruba Siwichai of performing unsanctioned ordinations in 1907, he was taken into custody at the main district temple, Wat Li Luang. However, the number of followers that came to visit and attend to the captive monk unnerved district officials, who decided to send him to Lamphun for fear of a riot breaking out. The provincial ecclesiastical head decided this first case in Khruba Siwichai's favor, but three years later, he once again ran afoul of Li district officials when he failed to show up for an official meeting. Khruba Siwichai's explanation was simply that he was meditating in the forest and had forgotten the date and time of the meeting. In statements such as this, he (or his biographers) constantly draw comparisons between the banality of Siamese administration and the sublime asceticism and devout practice of Khruba Siwichai. Following thirty days of deliberation, Khruba Siwichai was once again found innocent. After his next infraction, he was not so lucky; a committee decided his case by dismissing him as abbot of Wat Ban Pang and detaining him at Wat Phrathat Haripunchai for one year in order to study the royal

31 Interview with Sommai Premchit, cited in Kamala, *Forest Recollections*, 303, n. 13.

32 Bowie, "Of Buddhism and Militarism in Northern Thailand," 711–32.

Sangha Act. After one year in Lamphun, Khruba Siwichai returned home to Wat Ban Pang.[33]

Several years later, Khruba Siwichai continued to resist the ecclesiastical authorities. He refused to allow a census of monks in his temple, a refusal likely related to the state's efforts to control access to manpower, as previously mentioned.[34] Moreover, to add royal insult to conscription injury, he also refused to decorate his temple in honor of Rama VI's coronation. The conflict between Khruba Siwichai and the ecclesiastical head of Li district became quite heated. The vassal lord of Lamphun then summoned Khruba Siwichai and his followers to Lamphun to answer these charges and settle the conflict. After making a rousing speech to his followers, he set off for Lamphun with a procession of 300 monks, 500 novices, and approximately 1,000 lay followers—what some descriptions call "Khruba Siwichai's army of Dharma."[35] His followers carried him on a litter, played gongs and drums, and attracted more people as they proceeded to Lamphun. Included in this group were several highland minorities as well. By the time they arrived at Wat Phrathat Haripunchai, the numbers of his followers had swelled to about 2,000. This mass of followers is best understood in the context of the long history of Buddhist construction projects in the north, particularly in terms of *sattha*, or the community of the faithful. As Irwin points out, there is an overlap between the ability to marshal manpower for purposes of war or for religious construction. Both are a form of concentrating human and monetary capital. In the case of Khruba Siwichai, however, like monks that would follow, his *barami* (charisma) was able to attract a large *sattha*, a term often translated as "faith" but in this context referring to a sort of labor force of the faithful.[36]

This was all, of course, threatening to both monastic and civil officials. After two major revolts—Phya Phap in 1889 and the Shan Rebellion of 1902—the threat of armed rebellion had largely abated in the north, but Bangkok officials remained concerned that Khruba Siwichai's *sattha* had the potential to eventually develop into an armed revolt against the state. The situation indeed threatened to turn violent when regional officials decided to sequester Khruba Siwichai and his monks inside the temple, thus preventing his lay followers from entering. A crowd, led by a muscular Shan

33 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 7–9.

34 Bowie, "Of Buddhism and Militarism in Northern Thailand."

35 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 11; *Prawat Khruba Siwichai nakbun haeng Lanna Thai*, 17.

36 Irwin, "Partners in Power and Perfection," 95.

fellow, attempted to break into the temple to provide food for the monks.[37] The police decided to allow the crowd in, and after some calm words from Khruba Siwichai, the situation settled down. Nevertheless, it became clear to the Lamphun authorities that the situation could have easily spiralled out of control, and so they sent Khruba Siwichai to Chiang Mai.[38]

It was in Chiang Mai that Khruba Siwichai attracted many of his most influential followers. In addition to the faithful from the remote and mountainous districts of Lamphun, important local businessmen and political elites came to make merit with him, including Kaew Nawarat, the vassal king of Chiang Mai. At first, the Sangha authorities tried to discourage people from visiting Khruba Siwichai, eventually prohibiting access to him altogether.[39] Once again, the problem of handling many ethnically diverse and determined followers of this charismatic monk caused local officials to send Khruba Siwichai one more step up the hierarchy—to Prince Wachirayan, the Supreme Patriarch in Bangkok.

There was more to Khruba Siwichai's threat than his *sattha*, however. Included in the litany of charges leveled against him were accusations that evoke images of sacral kingship. Before sending Khruba Siwichai from Li to Lamphun, the district ecclesiastical head sent the following list to the governor of Lamphun:

- Phra Siwichai walks in rain without getting wet, while his guards do [get wet].
- Phra Siwichai has received the Sikanchai (Kayasit) sword offered by an angel.
- Phra Siwichai walks above the earth two *sok* [approx. 100 cm total].
- Phra Siwichai is a false preceptor, ordaining people without proper permission.
- Phra Siwichai has not behaved according to the instructions of the monkhood, for example, not ringing the bell, beating the drum, or lighting the lanterns on the great celebration day for the king's coronation.
- Phra Siwichai is not under the command/authority of [...] the ecclesiastical head of Li District.
- The ecclesiastical head of Li District called a meeting, which Phra Siwichai missed and did not attend.
- Phra Siwichai can walk on water.[40]

37 Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, *Prawat Yo Lae Phonngan Khong Khruba Siwichai*, 11; Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 13.

38 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 14.

39 Apparently, one method to deter potential merit-makers was to claim that Khruba Siwichai was "mad" (วิกลจริต / *wikon charit*). *Prawat Khruba Siwichai nakbun haeng Lanna Thai*, 22.

40 *Tamnan Khruba Siwichai*, 12–13.

The ecclesiastical head of Chiang Mai compiled his own list of charges, which he then sent to the Supreme Patriarch in Bangkok ahead of Khruba Siwichai, which included the final charge:

> Phra Siwichai claims he has magical power, was a divine being born on earth, and has a golden sword (Sri Kanchai) that fell from the sky onto his altar where he picked it up, that he walked in a rainstorm but did not get wet, and that he can walk on water. Many people have been fooled into believing these claims.[41]

More than simply "magical power," these charges also highlight what Cohen has called the "dimension of sacral kingship" attached to *ton bun* such as Khruba Siwichai.[42] The popular perception of Khruba Siwichai as a miraculous, semi-divine *ton bun* elevated him to a status similar, in many ways, to the great kings of Lanna.[43] The mention of sacred items such as the *sikanchai* sword clearly evokes royal regalia. For example, during his coronation ceremony in the mid-thirteenth century, Mangrai claimed the *sikanchai* dagger, thus claiming legitimate descent from the Lao Chong dynasty.[44] Indeed, Bowie argues that although the sword clearly "symbolizes the victory of righteousness over oppression," it represents more than just a rhetorical nod to popular will; rather, to accuse Khruba Siwichai of possessing such a sword is, in fact, a charge of treason.[45] This royal dimension of Khruba Siwichai's leadership was perceived by his followers as a sign of hope and by the state as a threat. Thus, these charges helped shape the central state's reaction to his growing popularity.

Khruba Siwichai departed Chiang Mai on May 18, 1920, and arrived three days later in Bangkok. The case was decided by a committee of three monks, who then sent their decision to the prince patriarch, Prince Wachirayan. Although Khruba Siwichai had acted incorrectly by ordaining without permission and disobeying official orders, Prince Wachirayan decided he had already been sufficiently punished by his detention in Lamphun and Chiang Mai. Regarding the charge of fooling his followers into believing

41 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 16–17.

42 Cohen, "Buddhism Unshackled: The Yuan Tradition and the Nation-State in the Tai World," 241.

43 Cohen, "Buddhism Unshackled: The Yuan Tradition and the Nation-State in the Tai World," 241; Sopha, "Khruba Siwichai, 'Ton Bun' haeng Lanna," 12; Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy and Politics*, 74.

44 Sarasawadee, *History of Lan Na*, 54.

45 Bowie, "The Saint with Indra's Sword," 684.

he had magical powers and the heavenly regalia of a divinely sanctioned ruler, the prince patriarch found Khruba Siwichai innocent because he had maintained that he was not a *phi bun*, had no special powers, and that these rumors had started on their own.[46]

The final judgment of the prince patriarch highlights the concerns that must have animated the discussions and correspondence between these high-ranking officials and monks:

> Everybody agreed that Phra Siwichai had been dealt with too harshly. In fact, it seems as if the decision was made because the government officials feared he was a *phi bun*. Since they could not pinpoint his guilt, they tried to find strong enough reasons to detain him.
>
> Because there were so many followers and Khruba Siwichai had not been found guilty of any civil or religious offense, his being punished, besides being unjust, caused many people to grow suspicious and come to revere him all the more. *In ancient times, an event such as this would have given, and actually sometimes did give, rise to a new religion.*[47]

The threat was clear—handling Khruba Siwichai incorrectly could lead to the disintegration of the Sangha hierarchy.

The irony is that the very structure of the Sangha hierarchy contributed directly to Khruba Siwichai's popularity. By confronting Khruba Siwichai and bringing him out of the periphery and into the centers of Sangha authority, his reputation began to spread among the *khon mueang* of Lamphun and Chiang Mai, beyond the highland minorities that formed his initial base of support and had first raised him to *khruba* and *ton bun* status. The conclusion of the first case against Khruba Siwichai thus occurred at a moment of transition between the fluid space of premodern Yuan Buddhism, on the one hand, and the strict hierarchical space of Siamese state Buddhism, on the other. Beginning his career in and among the sacred spaces at the margins of the Tai-Yuan world that included the formerly autonomous Lanna city-states, he developed a truly massive (and threatening) following when he was forcibly brought into the centralized sacred space of the Siamese state.

46 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 25.

47 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 26. *Prawat Khruba Siwichai nakbun haeng Lanna Thai*, 32–33, emphasis added; see also Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, *Prawat Yo Lae Phonngan Khong Khruba Siwichai*, 20.

If You Build It, They Will Come: Khruba Siwichai and Sacred Space, 1920–35

The most famous and revered works of Khruba Siwichai are undoubtedly his restoration of various Buddhist monuments in and around the provinces of present-day northern Thailand. A recent history of his life and work lists 33 construction projects in Chiang Mai, 24 in Lamphun, 24 in Lampang, 13 in Phayao, and 9 in Chiang Rai. Including two temples in the Pai district of Mae Hong Son and one in Tak, that makes a total of no less than 106 projects.[48] In addition to restoring or building projects in temples, he also organized the building of a bridge across the Ping River in Lamphun and, perhaps the most widely known of his accomplishments, the road up to Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep. It was the ability to marshal manpower to the cause of temple construction that made Khruba Siwichai a threat to Bangkok. His considerable charisma and sizable following created a powerful *sattha*, or community of the faithful, that could be put to work building or maintaining sacred spaces. This connection between charisma, labor, and power remains strong in the construction of religion in the north.[49]

This work began shortly after the disposition of his first case in 1920. He began with a reliquary in Lampang, and then, in what must have seemed to be ironic justice to his followers, he led the renovation of the temple in which he was detained in Lamphun. These projects were accomplished as a result of a large and ethnically diverse labor pool, the development of an effective organization to make good use of this resource, and a certain amount of protection provided by his more powerful patrons among the Chiang Mai merchant and ruling elites. Most descriptions of his projects highlight the ethnic diversity of those donating their time, money, and services. The following example shows the geographic and ethnic breadth of Khruba Siwichai's supporters:

> Because large numbers of people of diverse ethnic groups speaking many languages had come from throughout Lanna to help at Phrachao Ton Luang, this restoration can be considered to have been a major undertaking. There were people from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Chiang Saen, Chiang Rai, Chiang Khong, Muang Long, Muang Yong, Muang Len, Hua Pong, Muang Phong, Hong Loek, Chiang Tung [Kengtung], Wiang Kaeo, Chae Hom, Muang Ngao, Muang Phan, Mae Phrik, Mae Suai,

48 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 64–67.

49 For more on this topic, see Irwin, "Partners in Power and Perfection."

> Mae Khachan, [and] Wiang Pa Pao. These included Europeans, Pa-O, Burmese, Mon, Vietnamese, South Asians, Chinese, Lao, Khoen, Khmu, Lu, Khamae, Lua, Karen, Hmong, and Lahu.[50]

This paragraph ends by noting that such an assemblage was "miraculous." Miracle or not, as Kamala points out, Khruba Siwichai "was able to mobilize large numbers of local monks and laypeople to repair wats or stupas—something that the sangha administrators could not accomplish."[51]

How did he choose his projects? Once his reputation for these building projects reached a certain point, projects began to choose him, as he received requests from members of the northern nobility. Several temples on his itinerary were important sites formerly supported by the kings of Chiang Mai, for example, such as Wat Phra Sing and Wat Suan Dok. Monks also sent Khruba Siwichai requests. Whether by request or of his own design, many of the temples Khruba Siwichai restored had connections to the Buddha in the form of relics (i.e., Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, Wat Phrathat Cho Hae, Wat Phrathat Haripunchai, Wat Phrathat Doi Tung, and Wat Phrathat Doi Kham) or footprints, such as Wat Phra Buddha Bat Tak Pha.[52] Khruba Siwichai also restored six of the *phrathat* corresponding to the *naksat pi* calendar, previously described: Doi Tung, Doi Suthep, Phra Sing, Cho Hae, Haripunchai, and Chom Thong. However, the majority of Khruba Siwichai's construction projects remained in the "remote mountainous areas around which the Karen, Lua, and other cultural groups lived."[53] Throughout this period, Khruba Siwichai's reputation as a *ton bun* grew as his construction projects continued along three parallel lines: one among the ethnically diverse margins of the state, one among the networks of Buddhist geography and pilgrimage, and one among the mostly urban sacred spaces formerly supported by northern royalty. Khruba Siwichai therefore affirmed a northern, non-Siamese identity by creating and maintaining networks of sacred space throughout the region.

The political ramifications of his movement among sacred spaces came to the fore during his most famous project, the road up to Doi Suthep. All the hallmarks of a Khruba Siwichai project were present: an ethnically diverse and religiously devout pool of labor drawn from throughout the

50 Irwin, "Partners in Power and Perfection," 28–33.

51 Kamala, *Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth-Century Thailand*, 44.

52 Khwanchewan, "Khuba Movements and the Karen in Northern Thailand," 267.

53 Khwanchewan, "Khuba Movements and the Karen in Northern Thailand," 267.

region in the hopes of making merit, put to work through a sophisticated organization; a collection of local and national notables; and an auspicious day chosen by Khruba Siwichai himself for the beginning of the project.

Previous officials had considered building such a road, but the usual conclusion was that it was too large a project and too costly a proposition. How was such a tremendous task completed in 1934–35? The sheer number of people arriving to participate in the project—5,000 by one account—certainly helped.[54] But this was not entirely the result of word of mouth. the MP for Chiang Mai, Luang Sri Prakat, and the vassal king of the city, Kaew Nawarat, printed 50,000 fliers each for distribution throughout the north, announcing the project.[55] On the first day, few showed up; by the following week, however, hordes had begun to gather at the foot of Doi Suthep. Khruba Siwichai and his associates developed a sophisticated organization that made efficient use of this labor pool. The people were divided up into work gangs, some assigned to the actual road construction and others to supporting tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, building temporary housing, etc. Individual work groups were made responsible for short sections of road and thus worked simultaneously and in shifts covering all the daylight hours. Although most of the work was carried out with raw human effort, explosives were also used by both monks and laymen. At least twelve disciples of Khruba Siwichai are said to have known how to use explosives. There were also important elements of cooperation in this project. Before any of the actual work began, the government sent professional surveyors, at Khruba Siwichai's request, to assist in the project, and Siamese officials were quite pleased with the idea of this local monk completing this major undertaking at a far lower cost than a government-run project.[56]

The road was completed in April 1935. Fifteen days of celebrations were held at Wat Sri Soda, a new temple built at the base of the mountain where the construction of the road had begun. Khruba Siwichai's influence and fame had reached new—and threatening—heights. During the celebration, Khruba Siwichai was called to Bangkok to face his last, and most serious, round of accusations.

54 NAT (4) ศธ 2.2.3.1/11. Luang and Nang Sri Prakat, *Prawat thang khuen doi suthep* [History of the way up to Doi Suthep], May 1962.

55 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 36–38.

56 See various memos and reports in NAT สร.0201.66.5.2/46, *Phra Siwichai sang thanon khuen pai bon phrathat doi suthep chiang mai* [Khruba Siwichai building a road to phrathat Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai], 1933–35.

Khruba Siwichai and the State, 1935–36: The Final Confrontation

The central charge leveled against Khruba Siwichai was, once again, that he performed ordinations without official permission. In this case, he had re-ordained one of his disciples, Khruba Khao Pi, whom the Sangha authorities had twice expelled from the monkhood. This disciple had returned to Chiang Mai with a group of followers from Burma to assist in the building of the Doi Suthep road. Others who had participated in the construction also requested to be ordained as well, and so Khruba Siwichai held yet another ordination ceremony during the celebrations following the completion of the road.[57]

This time, however, unsanctioned ordinations were the least of Bangkok's concerns—the integrity of the Thai Sangha was directly challenged when several abbots effectively placed their temples under Khruba Siwichai, while other monks affixed a "tiger stamp" to their new government-issued monastic identification cards. All of this indicated an effective split from the central monastic hierarchy. In 1920 Siwichai's illicit ordinations only had the potential to develop a split within the Sangha; in 1935 this split was on its way to becoming a *fait accompli*.

The accusations against Khruba Siwichai coalesced into three major complaints: that he violated the authority of the Sangha as stipulated in the Royal Sangha Act, acted as the head of a group of temples and abbots, and restored and rebuilt various places without official permission.[58] The ecclesiastical head of Chiang Mai sent a report of the situation, describing the monastic defections, to the head of the northern region who was the abbot at Wat Benjamabophit in Bangkok. The Sangha authorities quickly decided to remove Khruba Siwichai from the north as soon as a reasonable excuse could be found. Two specific options were discussed. The first option was to leverage Khruba Siwichai's reputation as a restorer of sacred spaces by inviting him to restore an ancient royal temple in the central Thai province of Ayutthaya. The problem with this proposal, some reckoned, was that he could accept but then delay. In the eyes of the state Sangha, anything other than immediate action would result in the de facto legitimation of a new religious sect, which would in turn lead to the breakup of the national

57 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 43. According to official documents pertaining to the case, however, Khruba Siwichai ordered Phra Phuthima of Wat Pa Hok, one of the monks who had left the state Sangha, to join Khruba Siwichai, to perform the ordination. See NAT สร.0201.10/61, *Phra Siwichai mai prongdong kap khanasong* [Phra Siwichai in disagreement with the Sangha], 1935.

58 *Prawat Khruba Siwichai nakbun haeng Lanna Thai*, 53.

church. The second option was to invite him to Bangkok for routine "training" in the rules and regulations of the Royal Sangha Act. Internal memos explicitly stated, however, that Khruba Siwichai should not be told he would be punished; they would let him know that only after he arrived in Bangkok.[59] The seriousness of the situation was highlighted when the Ministry of the Interior hesitated to support this proposal, because, as they put it, removing Khruba Siwichai so abruptly could ignite outright rebellion.[60]

Khruba Siwichai was called to Bangkok and sequestered in Wat Benjamabophit. During this period his followers were intensely concerned for the safety and health of their leader. Khruba Khao Pi, whose ordination lay at the center of these charges against Khruba Siwichai, even sent a telegram to officials in Bangkok agreeing to disrobe in return for Khruba Siwichai's release, but only once he was returned to Chiang Mai.[61]

Unfortunately, evidence concerning the resolution of the case is scant, and there is no record of the actual conversations or negotiations between Khruba Siwichai and Siamese authorities. Nevertheless, Khruba Siwichai did seem to thwart the attempts of the state to bring the case to a simple resolution. By early 1936 an agreement between the monk and the state seemed close. However, in February he sent a letter to the ecclesiastical head of Chiang Mai stating clearly that he could not follow the Royal Sangha Act and its relevant resolutions. He later explained that he could not possibly know each and every aspect of the law and thus could only sign an oath if it outlined every rule and regulation he needed to follow.[62] From the perspective of the ecclesiastical head of the north, "this behavior was untrustworthy and could not be the basis for him being allowed to return to his temple."[63] It seems clear that Khruba Siwichai continued to seek a way out of this situation that would allow for some degree of religious autonomy in the north.

In the end, Khruba Siwichai relented, signing a pledge that satisfied the Sangha authorities. Khruba Siwichai promised to obey the Royal Sangha Act of 1902 by a) requesting permission for ordination and temple restoration, b) issuing proper identification for monks, and c) submitting regular financial reports.[64] Keyes has argued that Khruba Siwichai and the central state had

59 NAT สร.0201.10/61.

60 NAT สร.0201.10/61.

61 NAT สร.0201.10/61.

62 NAT สร.0201.10/61.

63 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 49.

64 A copy of the oath, with Khruba Siwichai's signature—in northern Thai—can be found in NAT สร.0201.10/61. For an English translation of the full oath, see Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 49–50.

reached a détente of sorts, one that allowed for cultural diversity within the northern Thai Sangha as long as structural integration was maintained.[65] In this sense, his movement helped to shape the form and content of northern Thai Buddhist practice; in another sense, the northern Thai monkhood was fully integrated into the central state Sangha hierarchy from this point on.

The concerns over the conduct and integration of the monastic order in the north, however, did not actually end with Khruba Siwichai's oath in 1936, nor his death two years later. In 1943 Prime Minister Phibun expressed concern that the religion in the north was in need of "improvement" (*prap prung*). His first complaint was that "the Buddhist religion in the north is becoming another religion."[66] He also complained about the sorry state of sacred spaces:

> There is no restoration of temples, because whoever builds a temple must also repair it; others cannot fix it. Also, at this time, there is no one to build new temples. In the end, there will be no temples left because old temples are falling apart and new ones are not being built.[67]

He urged the formation of a "committee for the improvement of Buddhism in the North," composed of "good monks," which would help to make things "more like Bangkok." Then, in reference to a disciple of Khruba Siwichai, he warned that this committee should not allow monks to have "such strong influence."[68] Thus, the practice of Buddhism in the north and the maintenance of its sacred spaces remained a problem for Bangkok well after the resolution of Khruba Siwichai's final case. The prime minister is saying, in effect, that temples and monuments need to be restored—just not in a politically dangerous way.

After the disposition of his third and final case, Khruba Siwichai returned to Lamphun, and, according to popular accounts, vowed never to return to Chiang Mai "as long as the Ping River does not flow upstream."[69] The reality was more complicated than that. Originally, Khruba Siwichai was to be returned to Chiang Mai after he signed his oath of loyalty to the state. However, after the confusion regarding the oath mentioned above, Bangkok decided to send

65 Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," 558–59.

66 NAT สร.0201.10/150. *Ruang kan prap prung satsana phut thang phak nuea* [Improving Buddhism in the north], 1943. His litany of complaints goes on to include more novices than monks and too much influence from foreign Christians, who are attracted to Chiang Mai because of its favorable climate.

67 NAT สร.0201.10/150.

68 NAT สร.0201.10/150.

69 Renard, *A History of Khruba Sriwichai*, 51.

him directly to his home village of Ban Pang. Moreover, Bangkok wanted him to stay there. His movement outside Li District was restricted. If he wanted to travel anywhere, in any province, he first had to obtain written permission from the ecclesiastical head of that province.[70] Upon his return to Lamphun, Khruba Siwichai continued restoring and rebuilding, though on a much smaller scale, and it was during these final years that he completed his most secular project, a bridge across the Ping River between San Pa Tong and Lamphun.

Conclusion

Chiang Mai had become a contested sacred space by the 1930s. The Siamese project aimed at decoupling sacred spaces from the Chiang Mai kings helped to lessen their authority in the north but left the legitimizing potential of those spaces open for future challenges to the state. Khruba Siwichai began his sacro-spatial movement among marginal peoples and in marginal space, but once his movement came to the city of Chiang Mai, which Bangkok by then thoroughly controlled, the confrontation was set. Nevertheless, until that final confrontation, Khruba Siwichai had amassed a following and a reputation by supporting and restoring sacred spaces throughout the north—many of which would have received royal patronage a century earlier.

He may not have possessed a sacred sword, but he occupied a position of leadership that could only come from maintaining the sacred spaces of the kingdom. Like Kawila and Mangrai, he showed that he had the means, manpower, and moral authority to maintain the sacred spaces of the realm. The attention paid by Khruba Siwichai to sacred space and the anxiety his activities produced among Siamese officials can only be understood, I argue, in terms of the relationship between sacred space and the state, and the changes that relationship saw as Chiang Mai and the northern states were incorporated into the modernizing Siamese state.

It is telling that the one and only secular building project on Khruba Siwichai's resume was undertaken after his confrontation with the Sangha. Whereas Siam had successfully integrated the economic and political spheres of the north by the early twentieth century, the confrontation with Khruba Siwichai marked the moment when the central state took control of the sacred spaces of Chiang Mai and, simultaneously, attempted to put Khruba Siwichai's movement to use in secular projects. Siwichai's disciples and other *khruba* after him continued to build movements based on a combination of charismatic

70 NAT สร.0201.10/61.

leadership, their status as *khruba* and *ton bun*, an ethnically diverse following, and the building and restoration of sacred spaces. Since Khruba Siwichai, however, these have mostly been restricted to the marginal and remote areas at the furthest reaches of the central state or, in some cases, across volatile border regions, and none have so directly challenged the authority of the state.[71]

Finally, what of Khruba Siwichai's legacy? Khruba Siwichai died in 1938. One year later, the ninth and final king of Chiang Mai, Kaew Nawarat, passed away. The contrast in the impact of these two figures cannot be clearer: while today pictures of Kaew Nawarat can be found mostly in museums, pictures of and shrines to Khruba Siwichai have been ubiquitous for decades. Kaew Nawarat was in fact an important supporter of Khruba Siwichai and probably hoped to bolster his position as the last king of a powerless dynasty by supporting the religion via Khruba Siwichai. There is no question, however, that the locus of northern identity and resistance to the intrusion of Bangkok was the monk and not the king. Although he never led peasants into battle, as Phya Phap did in 1889 or the Shan rebels in 1902, Khruba Siwichai led a serious challenge to Bangkok's authority in the north—the most serious since these two rebellions—which, in the confused moment of 1935 and early 1936, held the potential to radically alter not only the shape and structure of the Thai Sangha but also the nature of Chiang Mai's relationship with Bangkok.

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Abbreviations

NAT National Archives of Thailand
- ม Ministry of the Interior
- ยธ Ministry of Public Works
- ศธ Ministry of Education
- ศร Prime Minister's Office
- ค Treasury
- ผ Map Collection

CCTA Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University
- OHR Oral History Recordings

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NAT ร.6 ค.12.3/16. Dara Rasami. Letter to Chao Phraya Yommarat, September 3, 1923.

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Conclusion: Writing Urban Space in the Heart of the City

Abstract
The central state continued to leave an imprint on the urban space of the north well after the consolidation of its power. A particular narrative of the city's history was inscribed on the landscape in the form of statuary monuments that emphasized connections between Chiang Mai and Bangkok and at times prioritized national over local figures. In recent years, the city's application for UNESCO World Heritage status has also shown how the meaning of the city continues to be rewritten and contested.

Keywords: Urban heritage, monuments, collective memory

The transformation of a network of ancient city-states into Siam's north was a complicated process.[1] The argument of this book is that the spatial dynamics of power and urban space are central to this transition and that the view from the secondary or smaller city is crucial in understanding the complex dynamics of internal colonialism and informal empire. The history of Chiang Mai's incorporation within modern Siam highlights an important dimension of Siam's position relative to the colonial and imperial powers of the West. Through a regional or global lens, Bangkok seems to be the victim of semi-imperialism; from the view of Chiang Mai, the Siamese are the agents of semi-imperialism. The imposition of colonial modernity and the insertion of the city in the regional and global economy were carried out in large part by the Siamese state, but in cooperation rather than competition with the dominant force in the region, the British. This history demonstrates that an approach to the urban past that takes

1 Portions of the discussion below are taken, with permission from the *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, from my articles "Sculpting and Casting Memory and History in a Northern Thai City" and "Local Identity, National Politics, and World Heritage in Northern Thailand."

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seriously a diversity of experiences—from a megalopolis such as Bangkok, to an intermediate city such as Chiang Mai—can illuminate the complexity of the margins between nation and empire.

Urban scale is important, but what about urban space? Legitimacy and authority in the premodern state were based on sacred space, partly rooted in the city's earliest foundations and partly in the restoration of the city under Kawila and his successors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The arrival of Siamese influence initially followed the spatial logic of the premodern state, but by the turn of the century, both resistance to and cooperation with the Siamese state-building project was carried out through urban space and had begun to transform the city. The spatial form of the city by the end of the century resembled elements of the colonial cities of India, but the "dual city" of Chiang Mai was short-lived and based not in terms of a "black town-white town" dichotomy but in terms of a collaborative effort between the Siamese, British, and American forces present in Chiang Mai that nonetheless reinforced ethnic differences between the Siamese and northerners. Eventually, this divided urban space set the stage for Siam's occupation of the city center, a spatial transition that on the surface appears to be a case of simple colonial-style suppression but that in reality was the result of both central and local elite desires. Thus, rather than fall into the trap of nationalist narratives of Thai unity and cooperation or localist claims of colonial suppression, attention to the spatial history highlights the complexity of the relationship between center and periphery, which included conflict, cooperation, contestation, and a large dose of colonial modernity.

Moreover, Siam's project to incorporate Chiang Mai into the modern state did not end with the successful implementation of the *thesaphiban* system of government during the reign of Rama V. The north may have been mapped into modern Siam, but the spaces of power, legitimacy, and prestige at the urban level took much longer to deal with. Only after the turn of the century did Siam begin to effectively occupy the old royal center of Chiang Mai, and only after Khruba Siwichai's final case had been settled did the state take meaningful control of the sacred spaces of the state. During the early twentieth century, Chiang Mai indeed became a contested urban space.

Ironically, the occupation of Chiang Mai's old center did not last. After the 1932 revolution that ended the absolute monarchy, the new government eliminated the thesaphiban system of prefectural (monthon) administration, and Chiang Mai became a province of modern Siam, soon to be renamed Thailand. The *sala ratthaban*, once the center of prefectural government, then became the center of provincial administration. After World War II, the central government approved a plan to move the provincial

government offices out of the city center, ostensibly for reasons of safety and overcrowding in the old city.[2] Eventually the courts moved as well, and all that remained was the prison, which was converted to a women's penitentiary. The occupation of the city center had filled its initial purpose to demonstrate the power and authority of the central state. By 1939 the last king of Chiang Mai, Kaew Nawarat, was dead, and by World War II, the draw of the old city had dissipated.

While the central state eventually left the old city center, it has continued to spatially imprint itself on the city. Two efforts in particular provide clear examples of how this process of contested meaning-making continues, even to the present day: the design and construction of statuary monuments and the campaign for World Heritage status for the old walled city of Chiang Mai. These two examples demonstrate both how the history of Chiang Mai's urban transformation is remembered and represented in the present and how that history both shapes and limits responses to the challenges facing the city today. In short, erecting statues and seeking heritage status are both modern techniques of editing and revising the ever-changing text of the city.

The first statuary monument of a historical figure erected in Chiang Mai was not of Kawila or Mangrai but of Khruba Siwichai.[3] The push to construct a monument to Khruba Siwichai started locally, particularly with the first MP for Chiang Mai, Luang Sri Prakad. The archival record amply documents his enthusiasm for the monument and his efforts to promote it within the government and install it at the foot of Doi Suthep.[4] At first glance, it might seem surprising to find a monument to such a troublesome figure for Bangkok supported so strongly by the central state. At the time of his death in 1938, he remained a symbol of northern identity that was at best different and at worst in opposition to that of Bangkok-dominated Siamese/Thai national identity. Though it might be too simplistic to suggest that this statue is part of a broader move toward acknowledging provincial diversity,[5] the monument certainly has become a focal point for "locally or regionally

2 NAT (2) ศร.0201.36/23. Minister of the Interior to Secretariat of the Cabinet, *Yai sala klang changwat Chiang Mai lae Lampang* [Moving government offices in Chiang Mai and Lampang province] January 16, 1944.

3 Wong, *Visions of a Nation*, 120–21.

4 NAT (4) ศธ 2.2.3.1/11. *Kansang anusawari Phra Siwichai* [Building a monument to Siwichai]. Within this collection, see especially *Kansang anusawari Phra Siwichai phuea nampai praditsathan na boriwen senthang khuen su Doi Suthep changwat Chiang Mai* [Building a monument to Siwichai to be installed in the area of the road up to Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai province], 1956–63.

5 Wong, *Visions of a Nation*.

based discourses."[6] In responding to local initiative, Bangkok was attempting to incorporate the legacy of this charismatic and problematic monk into the royalist-nationalist narrative of history. By placing this monument at the start of the road that represented the inflection point of the crisis between the Thai Sangha and the northern followers of Siwichai, the state sought to re-make the space from one of rebellion and conflict to one of unity and loyalty.

This was not the first effort to shape the memory of Khruba Siwichai. In 1946 the Thai monarchy sponsored an official cremation, after which his remains were divided in six portions and spread throughout the north—to Lamphun, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Chiang Rai, and Phrae, and finally at his original temple, Wat Ban Pang. Even in death, Khruba Siwichai created sacred spaces and geographies—only this time, the central state could take some of the credit. When the monument was installed in 1956, only eighteen years later, personal memory was still salient to the creation and reception of this monument. The monument to Siwichai may have sought to "tame" the memory of the problematic monk by transferring some of his charisma to the central state, but it also remained open to local discourses of memory.

The hand of the Thai state in shaping this memory can also be seen through the work of the sculptor Corrado Feroci.[7] A naturalized Thai citizen originally from Florence, Italy, he adopted the name Silpa Bhirasri and was later considered the father of modern Thai art, as well as Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram's chief statuary propagandist. It was during the Phibun era that statuary monuments were "deployed as a vehicle of political propaganda."[8] Silpa produced notable statues in Bangkok, such as the Taksin equestrian monument, and he designed one of the most famous monuments in Bangkok, the Democracy Monument.[9] His work on the Khruba Siwichai statue came after the overtly fascist period of the 1930s but nevertheless reflected the need of the military-dominated state to impose national unity on the diversity within modern Thailand's borders. He also trained a number of influential Thai sculptors, including Khiem Yimsiri, who assisted him with sculpting and casting the Siwichai statue.

Another of Silpa's students, Khaimuk Chuto, went on to sculpt probably the most well-known monument in Chiang Mai twenty-seven years later: the Three Kings Monument. Located in the center of Chiang Mai,

6 Evans, "Immobile Memories: Statues in Thailand and Laos," 177.

7 Wibun, *Chiwit Lae Ngan Khong Achan Sin Phirasi*.

8 Peleggi, *Lords of Things*, 102, 194.

9 Malinee, *Anusawari Prachathippatai kap khwammai thi mong mai hen*.

this monument consists of three royal figures: Phya Mangrai, Phya Ngam Mueang, and Phya Ruang, more commonly known as Ramkhamhaeng, a thirteenth-century king from Sukhothai and the progenitor of the notion of benevolent kingship in Thai history.[10] The monument tells the story of the founding of the city in 1296, when these three met to determine the location, layout, and size of Mangrai's new city, which was to serve as the capital of his new kingdom of Lanna.

The monument had a complicated genesis and actually emerged from a local movement to erect a monument to Mangrai alone.[11] In 1969 the local committee formed to facilitate efforts to commemorate Mangrai contacted the Fine Arts Department (FAD) to arrange for the design of the monument and the minister of education, Sukit Nimmanhemin, to secure the land and the support of the FAD. In the summer of 1969, at the minister's suggestion, the FAD transformed the notion of a monument to Mangrai into a monument to three kings. Why? As the government explained one year later, the proliferation of statuary monuments had the potential to cause "confusion"—meaning create historical memory not approved by Bangkok. In March 1970 the government announced a new policy: any plans for monuments or memorials to important figures had to be submitted to the government for consideration.[12] The problem of provincial statuemania had become a concern at the highest levels of government. Nevertheless, the question of the change from one to three kings continued to gain interest. On June 5 the local newspaper asked: "Monument to Mangrai: Are one or three kings better?" The governor of Chiang Mai complained that inclusion of the other kings would lessen the importance of Mangrai and that it would require additional explanation, particularly for the younger generation.[13] The local descendants of the old Chiang Mai monarchy likely preferred a monument to Mangrai alone as well.[14]

Once Ngam Mueang and Ramkhamhaeng had been added to the monument, the question of the monument's composition produced more controversy. Mangrai stands at the center, but it is Ramkhamhaeng who is *authoritatively* centered as the one to whom the others are listening.[15]

10 Mukhom, *Intellectual Might and National Myth: A Forensic Investigation of the Ram Khamhaeng Controversy in Thai Society*; Terwiel, *The Ram Khamhaeng Inscription: The Fake That Did Not Come True*.

11 *Khon Mueang*, June 10, 1969.

12 *Khon Mueang*, March 25, 1970.

13 *Khon Mueang*, June 5, 1970.

14 Rhum, "The Future of the Past in Northern Thailand," 117–24.

15 Johnson, "Re-Centreing the City," 515.

While some locals expressed dissatisfaction with the narrative de-centering of Mangrai, others asked why Ramkhamhaeng was not more central, since, from a national perspective, he would naturally be considered more important.[16] Ramkhamhaeng and Mangrai competed for top billing in a variety of ways. For example, when commemorative amulets were issued in connection with the opening of the monument, Ramkhamhaeng's name was listed first, before Mangrai's.[17] The design of the figures is also telling. The sculptor, Khaimuk Chuto, a relative of the Thai queen, conceived of the facial expressions of the kings as reflections of their personalities: Mangrai is beautiful, Ramkhamhaeng is a ruler, and Ngam Mueang is "handsome and flirtatious."[18]

From Bangkok's perspective, perhaps the dual centering of Mangrai and Ramkhamhaeng represented a compromise. Or perhaps it reflected the dual centers of Siamese and Lanna power that had developed by the early twentieth century, discussed in Chapter 4. From the perspective of Chiang Mai, however, this was an imposition of *national* history over *local* memory. By expanding the tableau from one king to three, this monument recentered historical discourse according to the dictates of the Bangkok state, tethering the history of Chiang Mai to that of Bangkok. Again, a space connected to a history distinct from Bangkok and the modern Thai state was rewritten to tell the story of unity, an ancient connection between Chiang Mai and Bangkok that conveyed a sense of the north as always and already Thai. Despite centuries of Chiang Mai history as a distinct kingdom or as a vassal of Burma, the statue seemed to inextricably connect Bangkok and Chiang Mai at its foundations in the thirteenth century.

These statues exist not only as secular monuments but as objects of religious devotion and ritual as well. Indeed, the lines between secular and religious statues are blurred in much of Southeast Asia. Statuary monuments to Bangkok kings or other figures can easily become focal points of worship and ritual, and there are many realistic images of monks installed in local museums as well as temples.[19] After completion, the statues of the three kings entered Chiang Mai in the same manner as ancient kings, moving through Chang Phueak gate in the north of the city before proceeding to the sacred space in the city center. These statues moved as if they were

16 Khanakammakan chat tham nangsue, *Lanna Thai*, 59.

17 Rhum, "The Future of the Past in Northern Thailand."

18 Khanakammakan chat tham nangsue, *Lanna Thai*, 60.

19 Evans, "Immobile Memories: Statues in Thailand and Laos," 168–70; see also Johnson, "Re-Centreing the City," and Stengs, *Worshipping the Great Moderniser*.

kings and today are venerated as embodiments of ancestral royal power. The monument continues to be reinterpreted by competing groups laying claim to the magico-religious power of the city center in the face of Bangkok's dominance.[20]

Likewise, the Khruba Siwichai monument embodies both religious and secular memory. In 1972, for example, Wat Sri Soda, a temple located near the base of the road Siwichai and his followers built up the mountainside, asked for the statue to be relocated within temple grounds. In effect, they made a claim on the statue as a religious image, arguing that they would be better able to protect the statue and make rituals of merit-making more convenient. An op-ed published in the local *Khon Mueang* newspaper strongly countered the plan, arguing that it was simply a cash grab and that the original location was chosen so that the statue could be widely seen and thus help people to remember (*ramluekthueng*) the good deeds of this venerable monk.[21] Today, the monument remains at the original site as a focal point of both remembrance and veneration. Both monuments inscribe the meaning of the past at locations potent with historical memory of the city's urban space. Thus, at the base of Doi Suthep, the rebellious act of a monk is continuously rewritten as a simple act of merit-making, and at the city center, the foundation of the city as distinctly Tai-Yuan is rewritten as a chapter in the story of the Thai nation.

Urban space mattered in Chiang Mai's past, and it continues to matter today. If the city can be read as text, then that text is undergoing constant revisions. The city center remains a source of anxiety and conflict for its citizens, and the memory of Bangkok's domination over the north remains strong. After the last offices were moved out of the old *sala ratthaban*, it was converted into the Chiang Mai Arts and Cultural Center, a local museum both embodying and showcasing Chiang Mai's past. Such was the fate of many old royal centers in Southeast Asia. As Dumarçay and Smithies noted, the palaces of Southeast Asia have gone "from being political centres which sought to be universal" to "cultural centres expressing a nation and the tight links it maintains with the past."[22] The *sala ratthaban* has made a similar transition, but in order to "express the nation," the colonial element of the building and its history had to be effectively suppressed, if not removed altogether. The remains of the abandoned temple, on whose land the *sala ratthaban* was built, stand directly outside the window of one of the rooms,

20 Johnson, "Re-Centreing the City."

21 *Khon Mueang*, June 20, 1972.

22 Dumarçay and Smithies, *The Palaces of South-East Asia*, 134.

yet in 2010 it was only used as an example of Lanna architecture. There was little mention of the history of the building itself and the imposition of the central state in this sacro-royal center. In contrast, the courtyard in front of the building—the only remaining portion of the *khuang luang*—contains the Three Kings Monument described above. While the buildings in the city center stand as reminders, for some, of Bangkok's oppression of the north, the monument sends a different message, one of cooperation between Chiang Mai and Bangkok in the form of Chiang Mai's founding king, Mangrai, and the great king of Sukhothai, Ramkhamhaeng. The city center surely sends mixed messages: it is at once a micro-colonial space providing a spatial manifestation of Bangkok's control over Chiang Mai and the north and the space of a constructed narrative of national culture and unity.

The past is very much present in Chiang Mai, as different groups employ different tactics to mobilize the past to ensure the future success of the city. Spirit mediums, local architects and academics, state archaeologists, monks, and state officials all compete, in one way or another, for control over the space of the city.[23] Even innocuous archaeological excavations can be brought into the storm of political protest. In 2009 the Fine Arts Department launched an excavation at Chang Phueak gate, based in part on the Mahatthai Map and designed to determine the actual shape of the city gates throughout Chiang Mai's history. The excavation did not last long, however. At the time, the anti-Thaksin Democrat Party controlled the government, while various Red Shirt groups in support of Thaksin took to the streets in protest. Leaders of the local pro-Thaksin protest group approached the head of the project to ask precisely what the government was doing. The head of the project reportedly told the protesters that he was conducting an excavation and refused to give any details. The pro-Thaksin protesters then accused the government of using the excavations as a pretext to conduct some sort of black magic at this most auspicious city gate in order to stop Thaksin's return to Thailand, which some in mid-2009 felt was imminent. Protesters occupied the site, and the project was suspended. Clearly, the space of the city remains politically potent in occasionally surprising ways.

The most recent manifestation of the battle over the heart of the city and the meaning of Chiang Mai's urban history is the application to place Chiang Mai on UNESCO's World Heritage List. In February 2015 the Thailand National Committee for World Heritage submitted an application for the

23 Johnson, *Ghosts of the New City*.

city of Chiang Mai to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.[24] For most states across Southeast Asia, inscription on the World Heritage List is an attractive proposition, as it promises "international and national prestige, [...] monetary assistance, and [...] the potential benefits of heightened public awareness, tourism, and economic development."[25] Other Thai World Heritage sites are well known, such as the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya Historical Parks, which have mostly drawn on national identity and history.[26] Chiang Mai's application, however, reflects the challenge of translating the urban history of Chiang Mai for national and global elites.

The nomination includes a multitude of historically significant sites in and around the city of Chiang Mai, with an emphasis on the ancient history of the Mangrai dynasty and the "acceptable" parts of Chiang Mai's relationship with Siam, especially temples. Yet there are contested parts of the city center located within the project boundary but not named in the initial nomination. The two key museums in the city center that display the cultural identity of Lanna heritage are housed in historical buildings that were central to the power of the Bangkok state in the north—the government hall and the district court (Figure 4.7, center). The nomination is part of a larger process aimed at rewriting the colonial center of the city as a showcase of local history, all within the acceptable framework of nationalist historiography.

One of these contested spaces, ripe with historical meaning, is the former women's penitentiary, built partially on the grounds of the old royal palace (Figure 4.7, top left). In 2017 the Fine Arts Department began excavating key areas within the former prison grounds to find remnants of the old walls surrounding the royal residence. There was much excitement about the possibility of finding bricks dating back to the early period of Chiang Mai's history, perhaps to the era of Mangrai himself. Since then, the walls of the old palace have been uncovered, and plans are proceeding to redevelop the site as a historical park. The history of Chiang Mai's restoration under Kawila discussed in Chapter 2 and the micro-colonization under cooperative colonialism discussed in Chapter 4 are both clearly inscribed on this site. But are the walls of the old palace the only thing worth preserving? What about the history represented by the prison structure itself? While the prison walls might be less amenable to royalist-nationalist history than the palace walls,

24 The application, titled "Monuments, Sites and Cultural Landscape of Chiang Mai, Capital of Lanna," can be found at https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6003/.

25 Meskell, "UNESCO's World Heritage Convention at 40," 483.

26 King and Parnwell, "World Heritage Sites and Domestic Tourism in Thailand"; Peleggi, *The Politics of Ruins and the Business of Nostalgia.*

the urban history of Chiang Mai as a micro-colonized space demonstrates, I hope, that the walls of the prison are at least as important and worthy of protection and preservation as the ancient temples and palaces of Lanna.

World Heritage status may offer a way for local identity, culture, and history to be preserved and promoted, but in the Thai context this means working within the limits of the Bangkok-dominated state. The local push to achieve World Heritage status for Chiang Mai is just the latest instance of the influence of Bangkok on the meaning of urban space and history in the north. Consider, for example, the state's dual centering of the famous Three Kings Monument discussed in this chapter. While the hope of World Heritage status is that it might help address the pressures and threats facing the city today (unmanaged tourism, traffic, and overdevelopment), the problems facing Chiang Mai stem at least in part from government centralization and poor urban planning policies. Amid these pressures facing the city and the history of Chiang Mai's urban space, we can view the World Heritage proposal as an attempt to tackle the problems of an overdeveloped city within a context of an underdeveloped democracy.

Consider the following answer from the director of the Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Centre (housed in the colonial-style Government Hall) when asked why Chiang Mai is applying for World Heritage status now:

> I think one of the things that the people of Chiang Mai and the working group have perceived together is that our city is changing rapidly—physically, socially and economically. These changes are both beneficial and at times inappropriate. Personally, I believe the time is right to process our bid for many reasons.
>
> First, the people of Chiang Mai will have a chance to discuss and debate ways to preserve our city. Second, it is bringing about a change in public perception—a feeling that we can take responsibility, which I think is very important. *In the past, if something happened, local people would call for agencies or organizations to take responsibility in resolving the issue. Now we are seeing many people and various networks willing and trying heartily to solve problems by themselves.*[27]

In short, absent effective and responsive government, the community must act on its own. For Chiang Mai, the global discourse of world heritage offers a potential path for that action.

27 Emphasis added. See interview with Mrs. Suwaree Wongkongkaew on "Chiang Mai's Best Opportunity to Become a World Heritage City."

However, Bangkok continues to shape historical expressions of northernness or Lanna-ism. Inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List might motivate policy changes at the local level. However, the risk is that government officials would ignore the hard work of the local community and the concrete policy changes listing might bring and instead choose to see World Heritage as simply a "magic list of global status."[28] Chiang Mai's application for inscription is, of course, taking place in illiberal, undemocratic times, with pressures on northerners to demonstrate their loyalty to the state and new king. While elections of a sort returned to Thailand in May 2019, without effective local representation such as elected governors,[29] local control of local identity seems a distant hope. The appeal to global discourses of World Heritage, however, just might be an opportunity for some to challenge, even if slightly, the past and present of a hyper-centralized Thai state. This is yet another discourse of power over the urban space of the city, just like the restoration and repopulation under Kawila, the colonization of the city center under Siamese direction, and the sacro-spatial resistance of Khruba Siwichai.

The fight over the heart of the city will continue as different groups with competing interests try to write the text of the city and determine the story urban space will tell. The ongoing debates over the meaning of the city's space should take into account the complex history outlined in this book rather than rely on tired tropes such as a common national heritage or simple colonial suppression. The history, like the space of the city itself, is much more complex than that and all the better for it.

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Abbreviations

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Glossary

The following terms appear in the text and are defined here. Literal translations or meanings are indicated by "*lit.*" Terms that are specifically northern Thai (*kam meuang*) are indicated by "(N. Thai)."

arannyawat	Forest monastery
barami	Charisma; in the sense of power
boddhisatva	Buddha-to-be; *lit.* "one whose goal is awakening"
chaiyaphum	Auspicious location; *lit.* "victorious emplacement"
chang pheuak	Albino elephant
chao chet ton	Last ruling dynasty of Lanna; *lit.* "dynasty of the seven lords"
chao khan ha bai	Council of the five lords
chao	Lord
chiang	Walled, capital city
doi	Mountain (N. Thai)
ho kham	Royal palace; *lit.* "Golden Hall" (N. Thai)
Inthakhin	City pillar, *lit.* "Indra's Nail"
kamphaeng	Wall
kam meuang	Northern Thai language (N. Thai)
kat	Market (N. Thai)
kep phak sai sa, kep kha sai meuang	Resettlement of war captives; *lit.* "collect vegetables in baskets; people in cities"
kha luang	Governor, commissioner
khao sanam luang	Governing council
khon meuang	Northern Thai ethno-linguistic group; *lit.* "people of the meuang"
khruba	Revered teacher (N. Thai); title assigned to certain venerable monks
khua	Bridge (N. Thai)
khuang	Open space (N. Thai)
khum	Palace (N. Thai)
klang wiang	City center

kumphan	Guardian demons
lak meuang	City pillar
Lanna	Kingdom founded by Mangrai and incorporated into modern Siam, encompassing northern Thailand and surrounding areas; *lit.* "million fields"
Monthon	Administrative division below nation and above province; *lit.* "circle"
meuang	State; kingdom; community; city
nakhon	City
naksat pi	Twelve-year Buddhist calendrical system, centered on northern Thailand
pa thuean	Wild forest
phrathat	Buddhist reliquary
Phraya	High-ranking title; title placed before honorific name conferred by the king
Phya	King, chief, leader
pom	Bastion in fortified city wall
prathetsarat	Colony, dependency, vassal state
pratu	Gate
saiyasat	Magic; sorcery
sala rathaban	Government hall
sala sanam	Meeting or council hall
sattha	Faithful; followers
siwilai	*lit.* "civilized"
sukhaphiban	Sanitation district
thammachat	Nature
thesaban	Municipality
thesaphiban	Provincial administrative system instituted in 1890s under Prince Damrong; *lit.* "protection over territory"
thudong	Forest monk
ton bun	Buddhist saint; *lit.* "source of merit"
vinaya	Buddhist discipline
wat	Monastery, temple

wiang kaew	Royal residence and palace compound of the king in central Chiang Mai; *lit.* "city of crystal"
wiang	Walled settelement or city
yuan	Ethnonym sometimes applied to the northern Thai, i.e., *tai-yuan*

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- ยธ Ministry of Public Works
- ศธ Ministry of Education
- ศร Prime Minister's Office
- ค Treasury
- ผ Map Collection

CCTA Church of Christ in Thailand Archives at Payap University
- OHR Oral History Recordings
- RG 020 Mission Property Records
- MAPS Map Collection

TNA The National Archives of the United Kingdom
- PRO Public Record Office
- FO Foreign Office
- WORKS Works Department
- MFQ Maps and Plans (extracted)

RGS Royal Geographical Society
- JMS Journal Manuscript Collection
- MR Map Room

BL British Library
- WD India Office Prints and Drawings
- IOR/L/PS India Office Records – Political and Secret Files
- MAPS Map Collection

PHS Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS)
- RG 84 Secretaries' Files: Siam (Thailand) Mission, 1865-1973

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