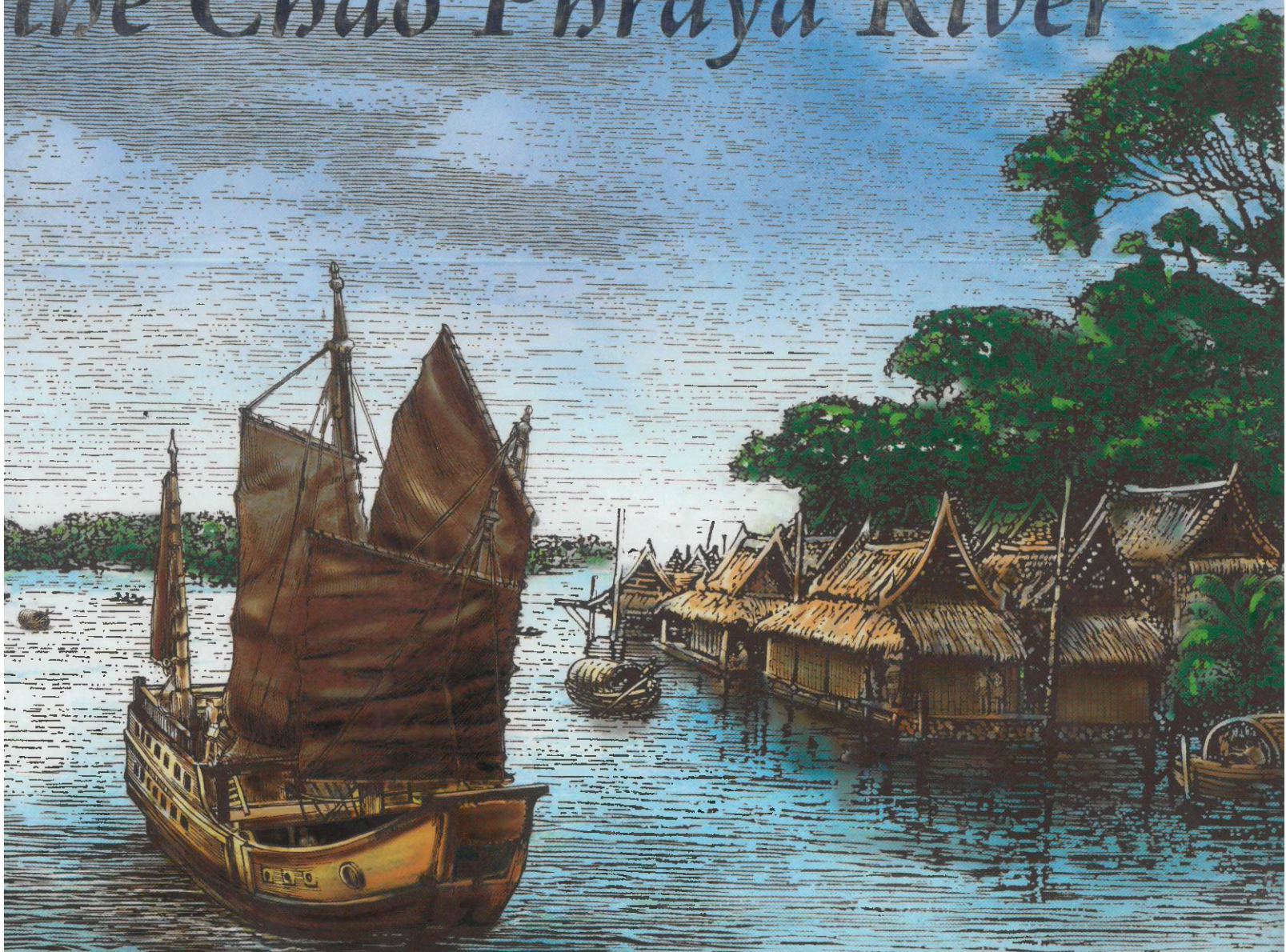


From the Yellow River to the Chao Phraya River





H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's lyrical composition

"Picking Flowers"
Variations in the Style of a Chinese Air

*"Spring" slept a good sleep till early morn;
And rain whistled through the night.*

*Pity that they reach the ground and useless lie.
Pick them up and enjoy their fragrance.*

*A good time we all have, happy friends we all are,
Flowers of all shapes and colors,*

*Chinese or Thai, to one another no strangers are we.
Pick the flowers to say your mind.*

*High up birds are singing here and there;
How many a flower in thick showers fall?*

*O dear friend with a beautiful mind,
Tokens of friendship these flowers are,*

*For a prosperous future and honor are we bound.
Of unrivalled beauty they truly are.*

*Always cherish your friendly ties,
At home they shine, of our sharing they will remind.*

ສິນທິພົນ.





In Celebration of

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
Patron of Thai-Chinese Relations

on the auspicious occasion of her 50th birthday anniversary

April 2, 2005

*From the Yellow River
to the Chao Phraya River*

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Foreword

It was in mid 2003 that Kasikornbank initiated the project “From the Yellow River to the Chao Phraya River”. With the cooperation of a team of authorities on the Thai-Chinese relations, data and information were collected from books, research papers and other reference sources, as well as actual field studies in Thailand and China. The source materials compiled covered the development of relations between Thai and Chinese from their beginnings, portraying the ways of life, arts, culture, traditions, ideas and beliefs, all of which have played a role in the successful coexistence of the Thai and Chinese.

The “From the Yellow River to the Chao Phraya River” project comprises two sub-projects. One is the book, for which Mr. Prapassorn Sevikul was entrusted to write the text. The other is the production of a television documentary of the same title, by JSL Company. All the proceeds from the sales of the books will be presented to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on the auspicious occasion of her 50th birthday anniversary, while the copyrights of the book and television documentary DVDs will be given to the Thai Red Cross Society.

Data concerning Thai-Chinese relations for the text of this book was contributed by Professor Emeritus Pranee Kullavanijaya, Associate Professor Prapin Manomaivibool, Professor Amara Pongsapich, Professor Santi Leksukhum, Associate Professor Sompob Manarungsan, Associate Professor Surangsri Tonsiengsom, and Assistant Professor Pornchai Trakulwaranont. As the purpose of the book is for easy understanding and enjoyment of the general reader, Mr. Prapassorn Sevikul wrote the text without referring to source materials in the chapters. However, the works cited or used as references are listed in the bibliography. Professor Emeritus Vilaswongse Pongsabutra and Associate Professor Prapin Manomaivibool kindly edited the manuscript for accuracy and completeness of its content.

Kasikornbank hereby wishes to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the book *From the Yellow River to the Chao Phraya River*.

a project initiated and undertaken by



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From a Drifting Stream Rises a Glorious
Vandeur That Defies the Test of Time.





A river can be likened to an artery that nourishes all living things from mankind to fauna and flora. This in turn brings about the settlement of people in communities, societies and nations, whereby civilization is handed down over time. At the same time a river is an important means of communication linking people of various localities, thus facilitating two-way trade and cultural exchange to such a degree that some nationalities intermingle in much the same way as various tributaries merge to form a single river.

Bangkok, nourished by the Chao Phraya River, was established in 1782 by King Rama I, the first monarch of the present Chakri Dynasty when he moved the Siamese capital from Thonburi to Bangkok on the eastern bank. He ordered the construction of the Grand Palace between Wat Pho (the Temple of the Reclining Buddha) and Wat Salak (Maha That Temple) on an area where Phraya Ratchasethi (Tang Liang) and the Chinese community once lived. The King ordered Phraya Ratchasethi and his people to move southwest, outside the city wall, in a stretch of orchards from Wat Sampluem (Chakkrawat Temple) Canal to Wat Sampheng (Pathum Khongkha Temple) Canal, thus turning the whole area into a large Chinese community popularly known as Sampheng. The quarter is considered one of the oldest overseas Chinese communities in the world, which developed along with the city of Bangkok and eventually became a thriving commercial and business area of Thai people of Chinese descent that still exists today.

Pimprapai Pisalbutra believes that the Chinese who first migrated to Bangkok came from the Chaozhou (Taechiew) community on the Bang Pakong plain and outer eastern towns such as Chanthaburi and Trat in light of the fact that during the Ayutthaya Period, excepting the Chinese in Bangkok, there were numerous Chaozhou communities in eastern Siam such as in Chachoengsao and Bang Plasoi, on the Bang Pakong River, Bang Lamung along the Chanthaburi River and Kong Island, an important port located in Chanthaburi. Following the second fall of Ayutthaya in 1737 Phraya Tak (who later became King Taksin) managed to escape through the besieging Burmese troops to gain a foothold in Chanthaburi with the assistance of merchants and junk owners until he successfully led a fleet back to reclaim Siamese independence within a mere eight months.

Bangkok was predominantly inhabited by Chaozhou people for a long time. During his reign King Taksin, being himself half Chaozhou, was naturally pleased to encourage these people to migrate to Siam. As a result, Sampheng was both the first Chinese community in Bangkok and the most important Chaozhou hub in the country.

There is no conclusive evidence as to the number of Chinese when Bangkok was first founded. However, Jacob Tomlin's records claim that in 1827, 45 years after Bangkok was founded, that is in the reign of King Rama III, Bangkok had a population of 77,300, of which 31,000 were Chinese and 5,000 were Thai born Chinese. In other words, Chinese and Thai born Chinese in Bangkok accounted for 47% of the population.

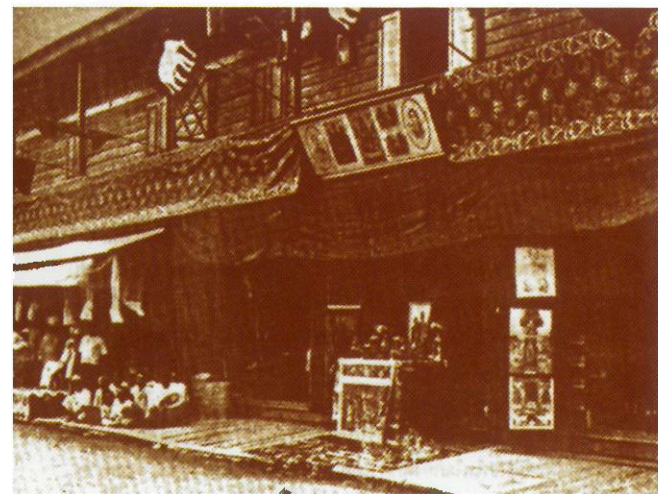
Chinese and Thai lived in a friendly and harmonious modus vivendi. The monarchs of the present Chakri Dynasty invariably demonstrated gracious generosity towards the Chinese who migrated to Siam, as evidenced by King Rama V's remarks before the management of Tianhua Yiyuan hospital (which was renamed Thian Fah Foundation Hospital in 1936) when he came to inaugurate the hospital on September 24, 1905: "Every Siamese king deems that all Chinese who come to reside in Siam should joyously bring prosperity. As such, they are treated on the same footing as Siamese people. It is my earnest wish that all Chinese should let the whole of my subjects foster generosity and friendship on a reciprocal basis and be united as one."

Likewise Chinese in Siam showed allegiance towards the royal family and the kingdom. As always when King Rama V proceeded in a royal procession past Sampheng to present annual kathin offerings to monks at Wat Pathum Khongkha,

the Chinese in Sampheng would join hands in decorating their houses, arranging traditional altar tables, and bedecking the whole road with a canopy of white drapes and red cloth pennants from Saphan Han all the way to Wat Pathum Khongkha.

At the beginning of the 1940's, the government of the time was engaged in a very close relationship with Japan as Japanese troops were considered useful as the bargaining power to reclaim lost territories from the United Kingdom and France. As a result, when the Second World War broke out Siam allied with Japan and declared war against the Allies and, for that matter, became belligerent against China. When the war ended with the defeat of Japan and the Axis, China, as one of the Allied forces and as one of the five members of the U.N. permanent Security Council, negotiated a peace treaty with Thailand and sent an ambassador to Thailand. This marked the first time that the two countries had established official diplomatic relations, prompting some Chinese groups to claim certain rights from the Thai government. This created in turn, grievances between Chinese and Thai as well as among the Chinese themselves, leading to full blown violence in the Sampheng, Yaowarat and Charoen Krung areas that justified the government's decision to send in forces to quell the disturbance. However, grudges and grievances still smoldered.

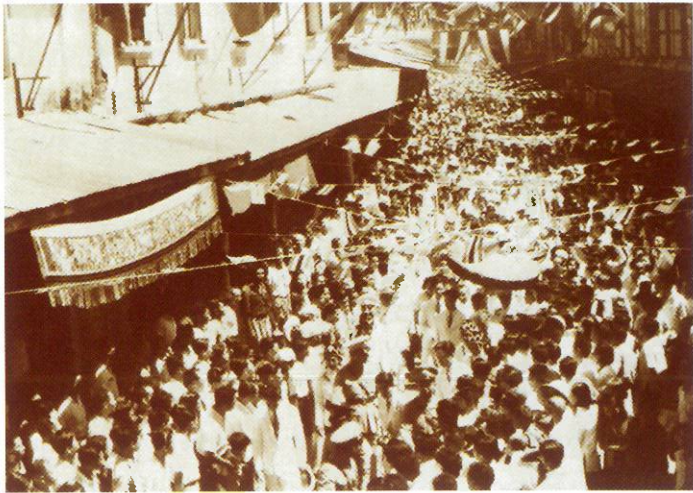
A shower of refreshing rain quenched the fire as a balm to the hearts and souls of Chinese and Thai, whose spirits were reunited anew. This description befits the visit of King Ananda Mahidol and his younger brother (who later became King Bhumibol Adulyadej), who during their studies in Switzerland came home on a visit on December 5, 1945. Upon hearing of





the conflict among the people, King Ananda Mahidol decided to make an official visit to Sampheng before returning to continue his studies.

June 3, 1946 marked a momentous day in the relationship between the King and the Chinese community in Thailand. On the eve of the royal visit, the Chinese people in Sampheng were overjoyed. Spontaneously, they made arrangements as one man



and donated money in order to embellish Sampheng for the royal visit by erecting a floral arch and decorating the area with huge Chinese dragons along the path of the royal visitors.

Gold shops, the fabric market and retail shops were closed for 3 days to make preparations for the royal visit. The whole district was grandly festooned with colorful pennants, drapery and silk, which were common commodities on sale there. In front of large stores stood mother-of-pearl inlaid altar tables with old objects of worship, and crystal ware to welcome the royal visit.

Starting from the entrance of the Saphan Han alley, both sides of Sampheng Road were over-laid with fine carpets, not to mention gifts arranged by several Chinese and Indian shop owners for the King. King Ananda Mahidol together with his brother proceeded slowly through the floral arch and greeted the crowd which sat on the ground to pay him loyal respect. The two

es stopped in some of the stores, thus offering an opportunity
Chinese people to have a close audience with them during the
ing. Afterwards they had lunch at the Thai-Chinese Chamber
ommerce on Sathon Road where they watched sports events
cultural attractions before returning to the Grand Palace.

His gracious visit to Sampheng helped significantly to bridge
ift between Thai and Chinese, thus bringing their relationship
k to normal as evidenced by quite a few memorable happenings.
instance, one wealthy Chinese elderly man in Sampheng
ught some sand and sprinkled it on the carpet unrolled in front
his store. He then humbly asked the King to step on the carpet.
er his wish was granted he meticulously placed the fine sand
o a huge blue and white China pot and put it immediately on
e altar.

King Ananda Mahidol was very pleased with his visit to
mpheng. He recalled appreciatively the elderly man who had an
dience with him, and the allegiance of Chinese people toward
m. Once he recounted, "I was walking distractedly and was
ught unaware when a Chinese man rushed to my feet. Startled,
turned to look at him. He was scooping the fine sand which I
ad just stepped on and wrapping it in his handkerchief. I queried
im and learned that he wished to worship it." In his account of
he visit the King said, "They did everything wholeheartedly. The
east they offered me alone was too much for me. As far as I can
remember one meal seemed as if it consisted of 53 dishes. All their
gifts came in piles and I could not carry them all alone."

After the visit of King Ananda Mahidol to Sampheng in

1946, no member of the royal family visited it until 1982, marking
the bicentenary of Bangkok, when a committee appointed for
the project, "Peaceful and happy life in the warm embrace of
Royal Patronage," extended an invitation to Her Royal Highness
Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn requesting her to pay an
official visit to Sampheng on June 20, 1982. On this occasion
the Princess unveiled the Center for Youth Development at Wat
Chakkrawat and anointed a wholesale shop selling Thai fabrics
from the Support Foundation under Her Majesty the Queen's
Patronage, which is affiliated to the Chitralada Shops. She walked
about amidst a large crowd of Thai and Chinese who gathered to
welcome her.



Subsequently on April 11, 1982 His Royal Highness the
Crown Prince went to preside over a religious ceremony to pay



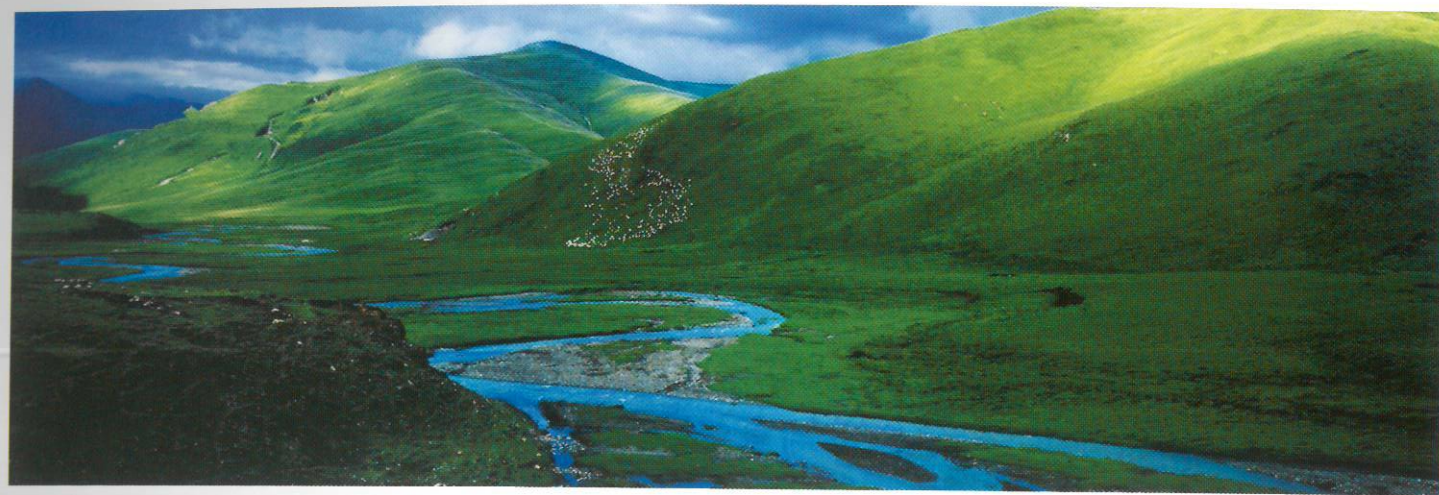
them with a warm and happy haven. They may now live far from the Yellow River but they are intimately related to the Chao Phraya River. Most important of all is the fact that both Thai and Chinese benefit alike from continued royal generosity.



homage to the former kings of the Chakri Dynasty in Yaowarat (the Chinese district) as a sign of gratitude to those who from King Rama I down to the present King have ruled the country in peace and happiness. On this occasion, a colorful procession to welcome and pay respect to the Crown Prince was staged in both traditional Chinese and Thai styles.

On the sixth-cycle anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen, Chinese Thai, in a unanimous show of gratitude for her generosity, cooperated in holding an event entitled "Homage to Her Majesty the Queen on the auspicious occasion of her seventy-second anniversary" in Yaowarat. On January 23, 2004, the Queen presided over the opening ceremony of this event and took part in the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Her presence was a source of immense gratification to all the people.

Although the Chinese in Thailand braved a long voyage from their homeland, Thailand has become their new home, providing

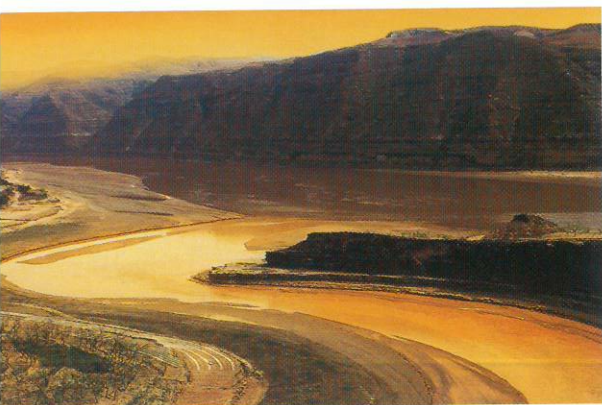


The Yellow River, whose Chinese name is Huang He, or Huang Ho in Thai, is the second longest river in China. It originates in Bayankala Shan Mountain on the Qingzang plateau and flows through nine Chinese provinces, namely Qinghai, Sichuan, Kansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan, Shandong and into the Bo Hai Sea in the province of Shandong. Its total length is 5,464 kilometers. It was popularly called “the Great River of a Thousand Li” like a protective water dragon, alongside the Great Wall, which was regarded as a land dragon.

The headwaters of the Yellow River are a small stream which first flows slowly but which, once it merges with forty other rivers and hundreds of thousand of streams, turns itself into gigantic swift-flowing river.

On both banks stretch fertile plains with beautiful scenery, abundant with important Chinese natural resources and cultivated land covering over two hundred million rai and yielding enough crops to feed 110 million people a year.

Although the Yellow River is beneficial to China, it can sometimes bring havoc in terms of human casualties and property damages for those living along its banks. Efforts have been undertaken to harness the Yellow River since the Zhanguo Period (476–221 B.C.). Thus huge dams were built to stem the flow of water in Qi, Zhao and Wei states but without coordination until Emperor Qinshi Huangdi reunited China into a cohesive empire. It was then that construction was ordered to link all these dams in a system of irrigation and subsequently further work was undertaken. The present government has built several dams and hydroelectric plants along the Yellow River.



“Yellow River” earns its name from the fact that it flows from the Longzhong, Shanbei and Shanxi plateaus and the Yuxi forested mountains, where there was the largest deposit of yellow earth in the world, covering an area of over 100,000 square meters. This earth resulted from sand and dust blown by storms from deserts and a semi-desert zone on the Gobi plateau. Such natural phenomena occurred often in the past. The sand dust was deposited layer on layer over time and formed the yellow earth which was carried down by the Yellow River into the Bo Hai Sea where it formed an immense delta at the mouth of this river. The whole region was richly endowed with abundant natural resources, ranging from grasslands to forests and abundant aquatic life and fauna and also became a prime reserve of timber and natural gas in China.

Like other major rivers the Yellow River gave rise to many legends that were passed on from generation to generation. For example, one legend of a river nymph who filled the sea with earth is in the *Shan Hai Jing*, an ancient scroll which recounts the

birth of the delta at the mouth of the Yellow River. Another has it that Princess Nüwa, a daughter of King Yandi, traveled to the Dong Hai Sea where she drowned and her spirit then became the custodian of these waters. She carried wood and rocks from Xi Shan Mountain to fill the Dong Hai Sea, forming a stretch of new land. According to another story, there was a kind of fish native to the mouth of the Yellow River which buried themselves in the mud on a clear day with high air pressure. However, when the pressure was low and it was going to rain the fish, finding it hard to breathe, had to go to the surface or, worse still, when there was a rain storm or heavy rain, they would turn themselves over on the surface of the river like dead fish.

It was along the Yellow River that ancient Chinese civilization first arose. Archeologists have uncovered skeletons of men from several prehistoric ages along with stone utensils and various animal fossils. Chinese legends of men of the New Stone Age are legion. Early prehistoric men made their dwellings in trees to protect themselves from the attack of wild animals. Their leader was Youchao Shi, which means “tree dweller”. Later, when they learned to use fire, their leader was Suiwen Shi meaning “fire man”. Then when they learned how to hunt and tame beasts their leader was Fuxi Shi, which means “man who defeats wild animals”.

Ancient Chinese revered three leaders, namely Shennong, Fuxi and Huangdi, as the fathers of culture as they introduced them to agriculture, fishing and communal life in villages unlike the days when, wandering as nomads they lived by hunting. The three leaders are known collectively as San Huang, or the



three kings with superhuman virtues. Shennong was the god of agriculture. Legend also attributes a colossal strength to him because he selected five cereals as food for mankind, namely rice, millet, maize, wheat and various legumes. He also taught men to cultivate, sow and plow the earth. It has been said that Shennong was the Emperor Yandi himself who lived around 3,000–4,000 years ago. He was an expert in agriculture, irrigation and herbal medicine. As for Fuxi, legend has it that he was the son of Huaxu and the God of Thunder. He taught man to hunt, fish and raise animals, and invented “Bagua” (the diagram of the eight identities, used for warding off evils). Fuxi was supposedly an emperor in ancient times. Yuan Ke wrote in his book of Chinese mythology that the god of thunder was called Leishen in Chinese. He had a head of a man and the body of a dragon. Therefore, some legends took Fuxi for the son of the celestial dragon, and Chinese who venerated him as an ancestor considered themselves descendants of the dragon.

Of these three kings Huangdi was the strongest and projects an image of being half god, half human more than Shennong and Fuxi. He was reputed to have led an army to fight with various tribes and expanded his power over the plateau of yellow earth and far beyond in all directions. Huangdi invented the ship, the ox-cart, pottery, armor, medicine, and mathematics. He is exalted as the father of the Chinese nation, and Chinese from ancient times to the present day are proud to call themselves the sons of Huangdi.

Formerly the Chinese called themselves “Huaxia” under the Xia Dynasty (2141–1712 B.C.), the Shang Dynasty (1712–1067

B.C.) and the Zhou Dynasty (1067–256 B.C.). In addition, they also called themselves either Hua or Xia for short. Huangdi's tribe living in the middle and lower regions of the Yellow River is still generally called the Hua tribe and the land “Zhonghua”, which means the center of the Hua culture. After bringing several tribes under its rule, the Hua culture spread far and wide. “Zhonghua” was used to refer to China. The word “Zhongguo” or the “central clan” referred in ancient times specifically to the central region, or the dynasty established by the Han people, but no dynasty or state used it as the country's name until after the revolution in 1911, when Zhongguo was used as an official name for China.

However, the word Zhongguo also means the “centre of the world's civilization”. China was the only cradle of civilization in the world which has thrived uninterruptedly for a period of 5,000 years. It was a cradle of eastern civilization and wisdom, with great philosophers spreading wisdom and teachings which have had a profound influence over a wide area.

China is an immense country covering an area of 9,600,000 square kilometers, almost the size of all Europe. In addition, its geography divides its population into



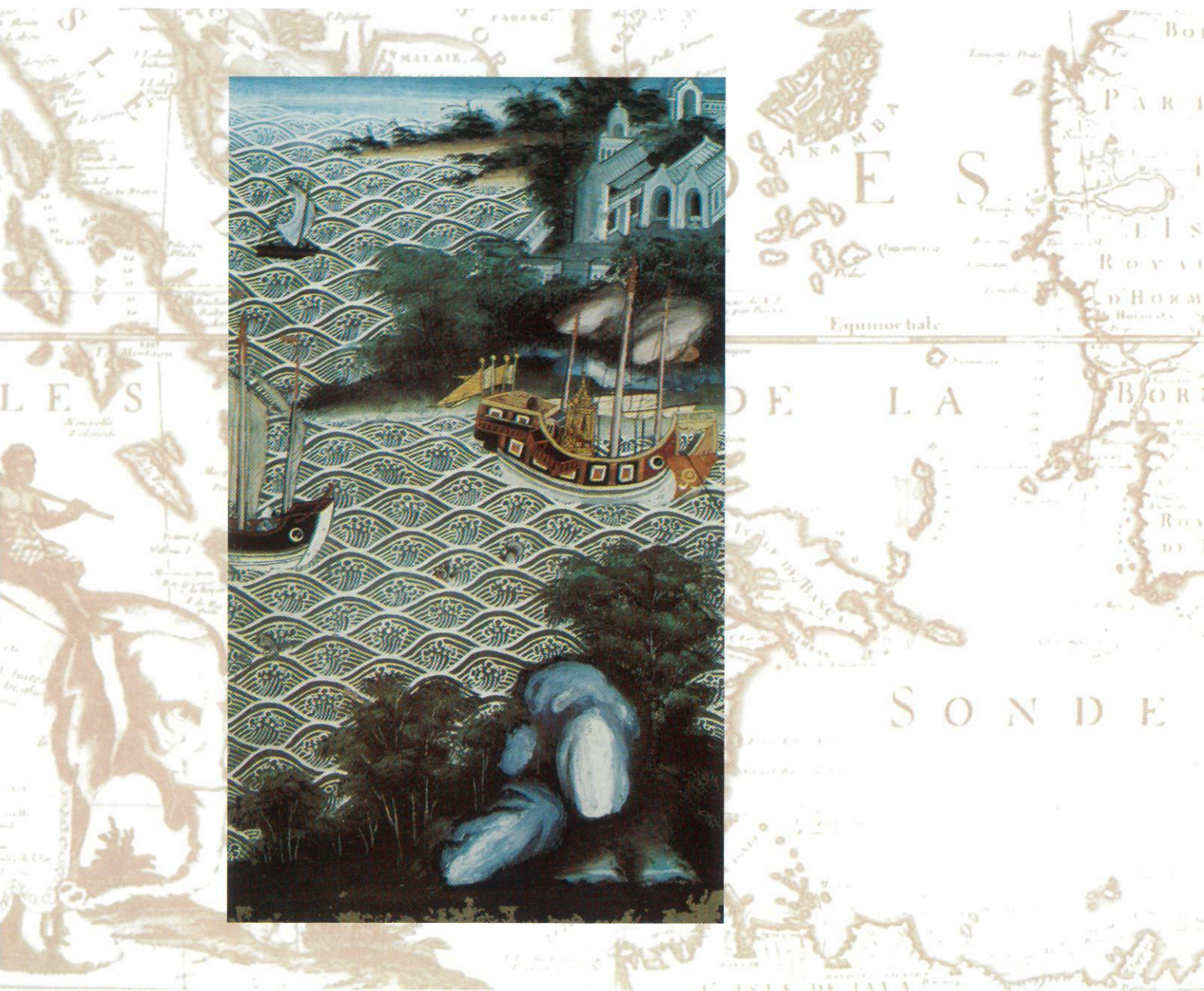
t areas, hindering them from communicating easily. Yet it
e of the same language, resulting from an edict of Qinshi
li, the founder of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.), that
all Chinese across the country. After successfully annexing
states to form a single empire for the first time in Chinese
Qinshi Huangdi ordered that all Chinese regardless of
te must use the same script, though there were differences
spoken languages. Thawip Woradilok believes that over
ng history, Chinese have remained culturally related not
cause of race but also, more importantly, because of their
n written script.

Charles O. Hucker has stated, “Chinese characters are an
t cultural vector which also serves as a driving force
a unity of the Chinese civilization. In addition, they have
ly aesthetic potential in several aspects, a characteristic
s lacking in the alphabet of other nations...”

Chinese who traveled from the Yellow River region brought
with them not only their physical labor but also their
traditions, customs, virtues and morality, dating back
ousands of years, which they successfully blended with the
ng culture of the Chao Phraya valley.



Towards the Golden Land



The “golden land” was used as the name of the regions on the Malay Peninsula and the western part of the Chao Phraya basin, thus covering the Thachin and Maeklong basins.

Dr. Sak Vallibhotama believes that the Thachin and Maeklong basins were the hub of the “golden land” during the life of Lord Buddha where indigenous people met and traded with those from the west, which was India, and those from the east, which was China. The people in the “golden land” adopted the Indian civilization and adapted it to their local cultures, thus bringing about Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions as well as development in Indian-style artistic works and crafts.

Whatever the case, the lands in this region witnessed considerable urban development under leaders and rulers. Indians came in to contact indigenous people without any feeling that their culture was inferior to theirs. Instead, they deemed that this was a land of wealth, a worthy destination as evidenced by the story of King Ashoka in the Jataka.

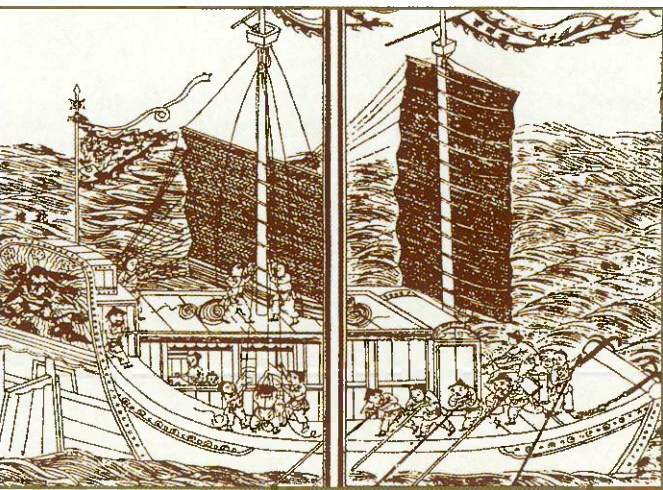
Remains in this “golden land” which date back to the time of Lord Buddha were the Thachin and Maeklong basins where trading sites were probably located in the U Thong District of Nakhon Phanom, bordering on the Phanom Thuan District of Nakhon Phanom, in view of substantial evidence of contacts with Indian traders in ancient times. Quite possibly Sonak and Uttarak, the Buddhist envoys by King Asoka the Great to propagate Buddhism in the “golden land,” disembarked here.

In ancient times, there were two trade routes between Europe and the Middle East and other countries in Asia. The land route was called the Silk Route while the sea route was called the Spice Route. The Silk Route started in Xi'an, which was the Chinese capital at that time, and ran through the Gobi Desert via Iran and Iraq and continued its course to Europe by sea. This route was used from 143 B.C. to A.D. 1457.

The Spice Route was a seaborne route which started in Guangdong (Canton) and continued its way via Oc-cho near the mouth of the Mekong River in Vietnam to Sumatra. It then went through the Straits of Malacca to the Indian Ocean and to Pondicherry, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea and by land through Iraq and Iran, where it continued by sea to terminate in Europe.

Southeast Asia was a transit point for European and Indian traders heading for China by land or by sea. The land route cut through north Burma to Yunnan in China while the sea route continued from India through the Andaman and Nicobar archipelagos, and the Straits of Malacca or the Sunda Strait, then cut through the Gulf of Siam to the mouth of the Mekong River where it continued to China. In the course of this voyage, ships had to call at ports to replenish their fresh water and victuals or to repair their vessels, thus bringing growth and prosperity to several ports along the coastline.





The Chinese started to migrate to the “golden land” during Han Dynasty. Before that time they were not yet engaged in seafaring activities and even in their early trade, Chinese merchants relied on ships of other nationals in Southeast Asia and used ports along the coast of upper Vietnam as their depots. Their arrival resulted in a shift in the trade centers or in the trade destinations in Southeast Asia with a new transit point on the sea route between India in the west and China in the east. This development led to the expansion of trade, transport and settlements in the Thachin and MaeKlong river basins which were the center of the “golden land”. Because of this, U Thong emerged as a new port where junks could sail up an ancient river to the city gate, passing another two ports along the route, namely Nuan Luk Pad in Krabi and Oc-eo or Oc-Keo near the mouth of the Mekong River in Vietnam. The latter was believed to be a trading port in Funan.

According to Professor George Coedès, the Chinese called the kingdom in this area Funan, which is derived from Panom in Khmer meaning “mountain”. The first account of this kingdom appears in the records of the Chinese diplomatic envoys Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, who came to Funan in the third century. However, these records were not in good condition and their interpretation has to depend on relevant documents in Sanskrit. These shed light on the history of Funan, the general aspects of its capital and its inhabitants, as well as an Indian named Kondanya who traveled by sea to occupy an area at the mouth of the Mekong River and married an indigenous woman ruler named Liu Ye. Several years later, Fan Man came to power in Funan from which he expanded his kingdom far and wide.

The convenient geographical location of Oc-eo at the mouth of the Mekong River on the sea route where Chinese junks stopped for the transshipment of their goods overshadowed the “golden land” as a center of trade and communication, which as a result came under the rule of Isanapura of Funan and Chenla. After the fall of Funan in the fifth century it was occupied by another ethnic group whose influence stretched from Petchaburi and Ratchaburi up to Lamphun. The records of the monk Xuan Zang or Tang Sanzang on a land journey from China to India around A.D. 629–645, and later of the monk Yi Jing on his sea voyage to India, called this Duolopodi or Dvaravati, after the name used by indigenous Indians, which was another important kingdom in the “golden land”.



Junks Unfurl Their Sails





Chinese traveled to and from Southeast Asia over a thousand years. Chronicles during the Northern Qi Dynasty (A.D.479–502) and others during the Liang Dynasty (502–552) give accounts of diplomatic missions sent to the Celestial Court by Chandrayavarman in 484 and 503. Those during the Sui Dynasty (581–618) describe the urban settings and ways of life in the Chenla Empire and also provide important historical evidence about the Khmer Kingdom. Likewise, what is present-day Thailand was in contact with China over a long period of time.

Chinese traders traveled to southern Thailand and the Malay Peninsula, which together were called “Nanyang” or the land of the South Sea. The interest in this land was in the fact that it was abundant in herbs and spices used as ingredients in Chinese medicine and cooking. The oldest piece of Chinese evidence about the land of the South Sea appeared in chronicles during the Liang Dynasty.

In the Sukhothai period, a record during the Western Han Dynasty mentioned a sea route used by Han diplomatic envoys in Guangdong past Vietnam and Cambodia to the Thai Peninsula on the eastern coast where they landed to continue their journey across the Kra Isthmus to embark on the western coast.

In the late Tang period (618–907) increasingly more people moved to the south to flee political turmoil and war, and there

was rapid development of the ports in Southern China and a rapid increase in sea trade in the process.

Apart from political factors, the geographical location and the climate of Siam and the Malay Peninsula contributed a great deal to the Chinese sea trade. Chinese merchants benefited from the northeastern trade winds to sail to southern Siam and from the southwestern trade winds to return to China. Moreover, the Malay Peninsula was a suitable location for their trade stations, serving as a meeting place between Chinese and Indian merchants, who used the monsoon to travel to meet each other half way. The ship building techniques at that time did not allow them to make a single sea journey from China to India, and geographically speaking the area above the equator is not far from where the northeastern and the southwestern trade winds originate, resulting in the doldrums and unreliable directions of the wind which were not strong enough to power a junk's sails. As a result, the junks had to go around this zone to reach the central portion of the Malay Peninsula.

During the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), Kublai Khan and Genghis Khan built up a strong army but they also took an interest in creating a naval force and sea trade by sending a naval armada to invade Japan, Korea, Champa and Java, but without the same success as their armies. Besides, the Yuan Dynasty was keen to secure tribute and once sent an envoy to the Sukhothai Kingdom.

After expelling the Mongols, Zhu Yuanzhang established the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) to rule China. It was then that

Chinese naval force was developed in earnest. This coincided with the invention of the compass, making it possible for China to control a trade with different ports in the South China Sea.

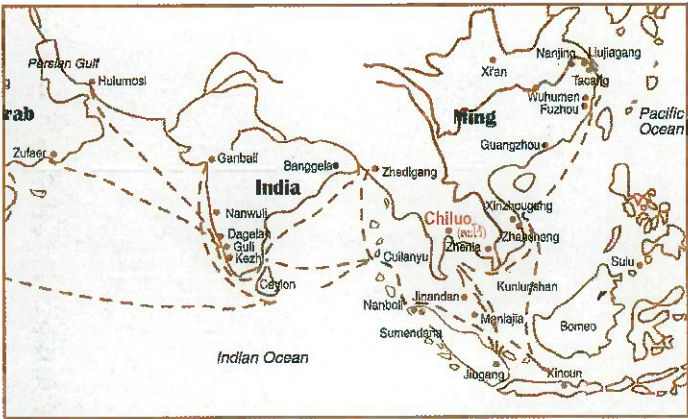
Emperor Yongle was keenly interested in developing sea trade and expanding the power of the Chinese naval force in the South China Sea. From 1405 to 1433 he sent armadas seven times to the South China Sea and the



Indian Ocean under the command of the navy admiral Zheng He, a Muslim eunuch, in order to end trouble in Malacca, which was struggling to free itself from the sway of Ayutthaya, and to restore order in this region, thus maintaining Chinese influence in this region. In view of the important nature of his mission, Zheng He was appointed Sanbao Taijian. Overseas Chinese and local people in Southeast Asia referred to him with respect as Sanbao Gong for short.

On his first voyage in 1405,

Sanbao Gong led an armada of 62 ships and 27,000 men. They landed in Malacca and assumed protection of the land and the Straits of Malacca. He then continued his journey to quell an uprising in Sumatra, where he appointed a Chinese as king. His



second expedition in 1407 was aimed principally at putting up a show of force to prevent Ayutthaya from invading Malacca and other protectorates in the Malay Peninsula. On this occasion he brought with him 37,000 men and a proclamation from the Chinese emperor recognizing the king of Ayutthaya.

In the early seventeenth century a Manchu (Manzu) leader overthrew the Ming Dynasty and established the Qing Dynasty, giving rise to vehement animosity among Chinese who resented being under the yoke of foreign rulers. Consequently, an opposition movement was formed by nationalists in different provinces in southeastern China with a coastline on the China Sea to rise against the Manchu. Uprisings by several groups prompted the government's mistrust of mariners, who were



suspected of assisting rioters by smuggling and harboring arms and dissidents. The Manchu government enacted a law in 1104 banning commercial seafaring or cultivation on islands. Later, in 1117, a new law required all Chinese living on the coastline from Guangdong to Fujian to move 18–29 kilometers from the coast. However, after Emperor Kangxi had quashed all the rebels, these stringent restrictions were relaxed, bringing about a revival of trade between China and Siam with rice being the main commodity as Siam was the main rice producer and sold this crop at a very competitive price. Guangdong and Fujian provinces, on the other hand, suffered from a shortage of rice so severe that Emperor Qianlong had to decree that a reward would be offered to those who imported rice into China from Siam.

However, in the early Qing Dynasty, Chinese from southeast China fled the country in large numbers. Emperor Kangxi then signed a decree calling for the execution of any Chinese returnee but later on relaxed it and eventually abolished it. Under Emperor Qianlong, the policy towards overseas Chinese became more lenient, leading to an increase in the number of Chinese migrants overseas. In the wake of the second opium war in 1860, Western powers forced the Manchu government to lift the ban on Chinese going overseas and to legalize the recruitment of Chinese labor to work overseas.

The most seafaring territories were Hainan Island, and Fujian and Guangdong provinces; these were located in southeastern China on the South China Sea, all far removed from the control of the central government. Life there was fraught with hardships caused by natural disasters coupled with overpopulation on

limited arable land. Given the massive migration overseas, the government was obliged to try to stem the tide. One of the measures taken required all Fujianese junks to paint their bows green or cover them with green cloth while the bows of Chaozhou junks were painted red or covered with red cloth. The latter were a little smaller than the former.

Between the end of World War I and the Pacific War, fighting raged across China, prompting more Chinese to migrate overseas to flee famine and the scourge of war. Their main countries of destination were in Southeast Asia. Most of those who came to Thailand were Chaozhou from Shantou, Chaozhou, Chao'an, Raoping, Huilai, Puning, etc. not to mention Hakka from Mei Xian. These Chinese sailed from Shantou and eventually landed at Ratchawong Pier. During this period, 2 million Chinese came to Thailand.

Supang Chantavanich says that Chaozhou who came here on board red-bowed junks were humorously referred to as being San Shan, or "three Shans". The first was Zuo Shan which means "tycoons". The second, Gui Shan, means a return to one's home in China, while the third, Yi Shan, means being buried far from their kin.

Nobody knew for sure what the future held for each of them.



At the Dawn of Thai History: the Sukhothai Period





Sukhothai, a kingdom of Thai people, was founded in the eleventh century, on the upper reach of the Yom River basin. In the beginning it was a state within the sphere of Khmer influence, but eventually it succeeded in establishing independent rule.

At that time, in addition to Sukhothai, there also existed other important states such as Lawo and Suphannaphum. In Chinese records, Sukhothai was known as Xian, or Siam, and Lawo as Luohu when the latter and Suphannaphum were united through marriage in the thirteenth century and Ayutthaya was founded. Ancient Chinese records refer to these two united kingdoms, as Xianluo.

In official Chinese records during the Qing Dynasty, it was reported that “Xianluo Guo (Ayutthaya) lay west of Guangnan. Formerly there were two clans: Xian (Siam, that is, Sukhothai) and the other Luohu (Lawo).”

The Sukhothai period corresponds to the Yuan Dynasty in China. The Yuan were Mongols. Sukhothai and China were related, both politically and commercially. Politically China wanted Sukhothai to be a tributary state, as evidenced by a report in official chronicles during the Yuan Dynasty that under



his reign Emperor Kublai Khan sought advice from high-ranking officials on a possible expedition to attack Xian (Siam), Luohu (Lawo), and other states. He was then told by a certain noble that these were all small states. Once conquered, they would not be of great interest. Furthermore, the expedition would be an undue waste of human lives. Instead, a diplomatic envoy should be dispatched to make these states see reason and persuade them to show respect. The emperor then concurred and accordingly appointed envoys to these states. As it turned out, the 20-odd states agreed to comply and show respect.

In 1282 China sent General He Zizhi as an ambassador to Sukhothai and in 1293 another ambassador was sent to persuade Sukhothai to rethink its position once again. In 1294 Kamoranteng (the name given by a Khmer king to King Pha Muang and used by Sukhothai to call its own kings, a practice which continued until Ramkhamhaeng the Great) sent a royal emissary from Petchaburi to pay tribute to China but the emperor insisted that Kamoranteng journey to have an audience with him. If hindered by circumstances beyond control, he could send his son, or younger brother or a senior court official as a pledge of good will. In 1295, Siam sent a message to the emperor soliciting him to send a diplomatic envoy to the kingdom, but the emperor had already sent one. Consequently, the Siamese envoy was obliged to rush back before the arrival of the Chinese envoy. The tribute system symbolized the relationship between China and other countries due to the Chinese vision of itself as the Middle Kingdom and its belief that peripheral states were inferior to it in their development. Evidence shows that China had adopted this tribute system in ancient times, and developed