



# CHINESE SOCIETY IN THAILAND:

## *An Analytical History*

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Thailand, showing regions and major towns

## *Preface*

WITH the demise of Western colonialism in Southeast Asia, the overseas Chinese have assumed greater importance for the future of that region. China's recent emergence as a major Communist power, too, has added a new dimension to their potential influence. Centuries before these developments, however, overseas Chinese were already playing an important role in the economic development and social evolution of the major Southeast Asian countries. It is no exaggeration to say that the central current of Thai history in recent centuries cannot be properly understood or analyzed apart from the changing position of the overseas Chinese. Yet Western and Thai historians alike have paid them scant attention. It is hoped that the present volume will help rectify the comparative disregard of the overseas Chinese characteristic in historical works on Thailand and provide background necessary for an understanding of the Chinese role at the present time.

In fact, it was the need for historical depth in analyzing field data on contemporary Chinese society in Thailand that prompted me to undertake a diachronic inquiry. What began as an investigation into the genesis of the "Chinese problem" in Thailand developed into a more extensive study as I became increasingly interested in the subject matter and more convinced of its importance. The major emphasis of the present work, however, reflects the initial interest in societal development. As a history, therefore, it is somewhat untraditional, both in organization and in treatment of the subject matter. The approach is analytical rather than narrative, and it is oriented more to the objectives of the social sciences than to those of the humanities. It

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should also be noted that the later chapters are based as much on material collected by methods traditional to anthropological field work as on that found in bibliographical records. Finally, because no adequate survey of the current position of the Chinese in Thailand is available in the published literature, the final chapter includes a general description of contemporary Chinese society in Thailand.

### *The Transcription of Chinese and Thai*

Chinese names and other terms have been transcribed according to the simplified Wade-Giles system used in C. H. Fenn's *Five Thousand Dictionary*, except for the omission of tone numerals. Items for which character identification appeared to be useful are indicated in the text by a number preceded by C in parentheses, e.g., (C 107). These C numbers refer to the character list beginning on page 439. Chinese characters for place names in south China are not included in the character list but instead are shown on Maps 2, 3, and 4. The names of Chinese provinces and of the better known cities are spelled in the usual form established in the *Postal Atlas of China*, e.g., Kwangtung, Fukien, Swatow, Canton, Amoy.

For Thai names and terms, I have used a phonetic system of romanization based on that recommended by the Royal Institute of Thailand in 1939 and outlined in the *Journal of the Thailand Research Society* of March 1941. Since several changes have been made in order to eliminate special letters and diacritical marks, the orthography followed will be briefly described here. The voiced stops, occurring only in initial position, are written *b* and *d*; the voiceless, unaspirated stops are written *p*, *t*, *j* (palatal stop), and *k*; while the voiceless aspirated stops are written *ph*, *th*, *ch*, and *kh*. The glottal stop is not transcribed. The voiceless spirants are written *f*, *s*, and *h*, and the voiced nasals, *m*, *n*, and *ng*. The nine vowels are written as follows: front unrounded, *i*, *e*, *ae*; central unrounded, *ue*, *oe*, *a*; back rounded, *u*, *o*, *ɔ* [ɔ]. Homophonous vowel clusters (long vowels) are not distinguished from unlengthened or short vowels, but the three heterophonous vowel clusters which occur are, of course, indicated: *ia*, *uea*, *ua*. In initial position, the voiced semivowels are written *y* and *w*. In final position, the former is written *i* and the latter *o* when following *a* or *ae*, but *w* when following *i*.

The use of a phonetic romanization for Thai, while increasingly preferred by scholars and laymen alike, is by no means universal. Many writers on Thailand employ with more or less consistency systems based

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on a transliteration of the Thai spelling, whereby, for instance, "Phahon" becomes "Bahol" or "Suratthani" becomes "Surashtra Dhani"—forms which are of little assistance in approximating the Thai pronunciation of the names in question. The most common variant transcriptions of Thai proper names will be found in the index.

## *Chinese and Thai Territorial Units*

During the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties in China, the *fu* or prefecture was a large and important administrative area embracing one or more dependent *chou* or departments. There were also independent *chou* under the direct jurisdiction of the provincial governments. A *chou*, in turn, embraced several *hsien* or counties. Shortly after the Chinese revolution, both *chou* and *fu* were abolished as administrative units, but the former groupings of *hsien* under their old *chou* and *fu* names are still current in the popular mind. The word *hsiang*, when used to refer to an administrative unit, signifies a rural township, usually containing at least one market town and several villages. There are ordinarily several tens of *hsiang* in a *hsien*. The unitalicized forms, *fu*, *chou*, *hsien*, and *hsiang*, are used in the text to mean Chinese prefectures, departments, counties, and rural townships, respectively.

Between 1894 and 1932, Thailand was divided into between ten and eighteen *monthon* or circles, each made up of several *jangwat* or provinces. In 1932, *monthon* administrations were abolished. (In 1952, the various *jangwat* were regrouped under nine *phak* or regions, but these groupings are not referred to in this volume.) Each *jangwat*, of which there are seventy-one at present, is subdivided into *amphoe* or districts, each in turn made up of several *tambon* or communes. In rural areas the *tambon* ordinarily comprises several villages. The unitalicized forms, *monthon*, *jangwat*, *amphoe*, and *tambon*, are used in the text to mean the Thai circles, provinces, districts, and communes, respectively.

A word should also be said about the name of the country itself. For centuries the Thai have called their kingdom Mueang Thai, i.e., Thailand. Westerners, however, have until recently referred to the country as Siam. In modern times, the official name was Siam up to 1939 and again between 1945 and 1948. The present official name, Thailand, is now generally used by serious scholars, British writers aside, when referring to contemporary affairs. In discussing the recent period I have ordinarily used Thailand, but for the rest both names have been employed indiscriminately for the sake of variety.



## *Regions of Thailand*

For the purposes of this study, Thailand has been divided into seven regions: North Siam, Middle Siam, Northeast Siam, Southeast Siam, Lower Siam, Southwest Siam, and South Siam. The regional boundaries used were chosen to coincide with administrative boundaries which have not been appreciably changed during the present century. In other words, certain boundaries of the former monthons which coincide with present-day jangwat boundaries have been taken to define the seven regions used. This procedure allows historical comparison of Thai statistics for the various administrative areas when these are grouped according to the seven regions here defined. The disadvantage inherent in this definition of regions is that in many cases the precise placement of the boundaries is arbitrary in terms of "natural" geography.

The seventy-one jangwats are given below in the orthography used here, alphabetically arranged under their respective regions. This list is meant to serve both as a reference and to define the seven regions used in the present study (see also the frontispiece map).

<i>North Siam</i>	Surin	Prathumthani
Chiangmai	Ubonratchathani	Saraburi
Chiangrai	Udonthani	Singburi
Lampang		Samutprakan
Lamphun	<i>Middle Siam</i>	Samutsakhon
Maehongson	Chainat	Suphanburi
Nan	Kamphaengphet	Thonburi
Phrae	Nakhonsawan	
	Phijit	<i>Southeast Siam</i>
	Phitsanulok	Chachoengsao
<i>Northeast Siam</i>	Phetchabun	Chonburi
Buriram	Sukhothai	Janthaburi
Chaiyaphum	Tak	Nakhonnayok
Kanlasin	Uthaithani	Prajinburi
Khonkaen	Uttaradit	Rayong
Loei		Trat
Maharakham	<i>Lower Siam</i>	
Nakhonphanom	Angthong	<i>Southwest Siam</i>
Nakhonratchasima	Ayutthaya	Kanjanaburi
Nongkhai	Lopburi	Prajuapkhirikhan
Roi-et	Nakhonpathom	Phetchaburi
Sakonnakhon	Nonthaburi	Ratchaburi
Sisaket	Phranakhon	Samutsongkham

<i>South Siam</i>	Pattani	Satun
Chumphon	Phangnga	Songkhla
Krabi	Phatthalung	Suratthani
Nakhonsithammarat	Phuket	Trang
Narathiwat	Ranong	Yala

### *Reign Periods of Thai Kings*

The reign periods of the Chinese emperors mentioned in the text are available in numerous standard reference works, but those for Thai kings are not equally accessible or well known. Accordingly, a reference list of the early Thai kings mentioned in the text and of all kings since 1767 is given below:

#### SUKHOTHAI PERIOD (Incomplete)

Ramkamhaeng . . . . .	1275?-1317?
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#### AYUTTHAYAN PERIOD (Incomplete)

Baromarat II . . . . .	1424-1448
Ekathotsarot . . . . .	1605-1620
Sisaowaphak . . . . .	1620-1620
Songtham . . . . .	1620-1628
Prasat Thong . . . . .	1629-1656
Narai . . . . .	1657-1688
Thaisa . . . . .	1709-1733
Baromakot . . . . .	1733-1758

#### THONBURI PERIOD

Taksin . . . . .	1767-1782
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#### BANGKOK PERIOD (Jakkri Dynasty)

Rama I	Yotfa . . . . .	1782-1809
Rama II	Loetla . . . . .	1809-1824
Rama III	Nangklao . . . . .	1824-1851
Rama IV	Mongkut . . . . .	1851-1868
Rama V	Julalongkorn . . . . .	1868-1910
Rama VI	Wachirawut . . . . .	1910-1925
Rama VII	Prachathipok . . . . .	1925-1935
Rama VIII	Ananda Mahidon . . . . .	1935-1946
Rama IX	Phumiphon Adunladet . . . . .	1946-

With regard to the reign dates of the early seventeenth-century kings, attention should be called to corrections of the usual chronology which were suggested by Giles (1938, 167) and have been accepted here.

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### *Thai Dates*

The Buddhist era (B.E.), as used in Thailand, starts 543 years earlier than the Christian era. Prior to 1940, the Thai year officially began on April 1 rather than January 1. By royal decree, the year B.E. 2483 (1940) was only nine months long (April 1 to December 31), thus making the Thai year coincide with our own. In order to avoid confusion, all Thai dates in this book have been converted into Christian era dates by subtracting 543 years. It is customary in the case of dates prior to 1940 to indicate B.E. years with the use of a slash. Thus B.E. 2480 would be written 1937/38, by which is meant the Buddhist year which began April 1, 1937, and ended March 31, 1938.

Certain Thai statistics around the turn of the century were compiled according to the Western year beginning January 1, presumably because of the influence of foreign advisors. Annual statistics in these series were changed to accord with the Thai year in 1906. In tables and charts, the precise period covered by "annual" statistics is indicated.

### *Thai Currency*

The unit of Thai currency is the *baht*, often called *tical* by Westerners. The conventional English spelling of the Thai word, *baht*, is used here rather than either the romanization according to the orthography otherwise adhered to in this study, *bat*, or the word *tical*. The baht is divided into 100 *satang*. Prior to World War II, the exchange rate of the baht was fairly steady at about 2.0 to 2.5 to the U.S. dollar, but wartime inflation drastically altered the rate. Since 1949, free market rates have fluctuated between 17 and 23 baht to the U.S. dollar, with an average of about 20.

### *References and Bibliography*

In order to minimize the space devoted to notes, references are given in brief form according to a standardized system. Reference notes are of three types: (1) Works by known authors are cited by the last name of the author and the date of completion or publication of the book or article. Different authors of the same surname are distinguished by the initial(s) of their given names. (2) Unsigned articles are cited by the title of the article in quotation marks and the date of publication. (3) Serials (newspapers, journals, yearbooks, annual reports, and so on) and all other works are cited by italicized title, often abbreviated,

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and the date. In the case of annual reports and yearbooks, the date given is that of the year to which the report of the book pertains, even when it differs from the date of publication. The Reference Bibliography gives the full bibliographical citation of all publications mentioned in the text and notes. Entries in the Bibliography for Chinese-language works include C numbers, which refer to the list of Chinese characters mentioned above.

## *Acknowledgments*

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