

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY ON THAILAND
GOVERNMENT POLICIES

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Dr. Oliver Benson, Chairman of the Department of Government, University of Oklahoma, who directed my work and to Dr. Rufus Hall and Dr. John Eriksen, the other members of my committee for their forbearance during the extended preparation of the paper. Also the assistance of Dr. Percy Buchanan, Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Affairs, University of Oklahoma, during the initial stages of planning the paper, was very beneficial.

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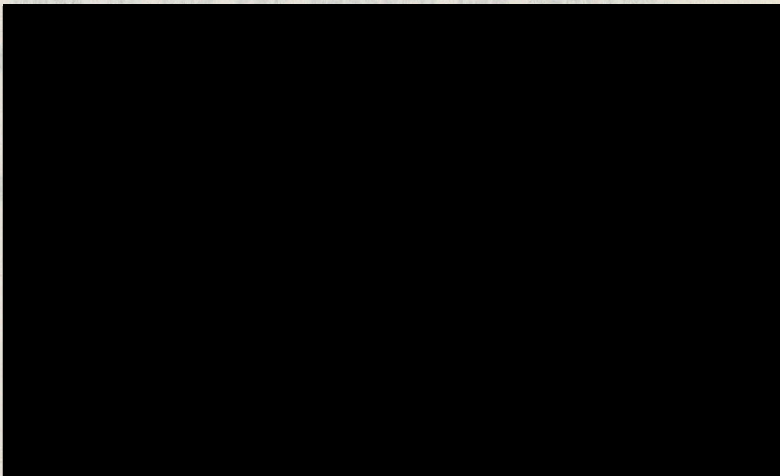


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THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION ON THAILAND

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 THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY ON THAILAND
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 CHAPTER I
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Within the past few years, following the inevitable readjustments of the Second World War period, the plight of the whole Asian situation has come to the forefront of world attention. The question of whether this increased interest is due primarily to the bipolarising of political views or whether world interest would have been stimulated by the withdrawal of colonialism from the area and the engrossing sweep of new founded nations does not detract from internal problems which would have manifested themselves regardless of the exterior happenings of the world at large.

Of the many difficulties which have beset the Asian countries, one which they have in common is the problem of coping with their Chinese minorities. There is a varying degree of importance both economic and political of the Chinese minorities within the various countries and each has attempted to solve the problem in a variety of ways. At
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present the whole Chinese question is still in a state of flux as the influences of external affairs would necessarily limit any immediate and permanent solution to the situation.

The approach of the Thai government is unique in several respects. First of all Thailand is the only Asian country which has remained independent from colonialization, and has instituted its own policies regarding the Chinese for a considerably longer period than its post-colonial neighbors. In addition, since the Thai have created their own policies, they have allowed the Chinese opportunities which were denied them under the colonial administrations. Similarly, with a heterogeneous racial background, the Chinese in Thailand have had more mobility as a minority group than their counterparts in other Asian countries. While other countries have a multi-racial aspect, with several dominant ethnic groups, Thailand minority group's essentially Chinese with lesser elements, mainly of Indian, other Asian, or Western extraction but the position of these groups in no way can compare with that of the Chinese.

The essential problems of the Chinese as a minority group are their relative economic position and the so-called "in-group solidarity" which they have achieved and are currently maintaining. The Chinese as a separate, distinct ethnic group have had little or no drive to express themselves politically as a solidified front. Their only means of presenting a united effort to defend themselves against government policies has been the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Much of the actual power

of the Chinese is concentrated in this group, since it is composed of the business leaders of the community. Given the basic commercial orientation of the Chinese as a whole, these men are the ruling elite of the predominant speech groups which make up the Chinese enclave.

This representation of the community by the Chamber of Commerce was the result of the initial absence of diplomatic relations between Thailand and China. The Chinese government had no instrument with which to protect its overseas citizens. This role of the Chamber has declined some with the recognition of China in 1946 and the subsequent establishment of an embassy. However the quick demise of the Kuomintang government and its move to Formosa has decreased the power it might have attained had it retained control of China proper. Here again the situation is further complicated by the current rise of Red China and its influence on the overseas communities.

Since Thailand chose to be aligned with the Western nations, it has refused recognition to Red China. This may be considered due to several reasons, partly because of her Western alignment and also because of apprehension of Red Chinese infiltration into the Chinese community on a rather overt scale if recognition were granted.

In the ten years of the Red Chinese control of the mainland, their policy concerning the overseas communities, especially since 1954, has been a basic attempt to allay the

persistent fears of the host nations, although events concerning the Red Chinese-Indonesian relationship do not bear this out.

Within this general framework of the continuing power play and relative positions and maneuverings are the most specific policies which these nations are pursuing.

In Thailand especially, the Chinese as a minority group have concerned the government vitally for the past forty years or so. Under the shifting of the government from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy and with the recurrent change through successive coup d'état, the government has been consistent in its concern with the position of the Chinese.

This persistence has ranged from varying degrees of harshness to a relative status quo arrangement, but the overall trend has made it quite clear that the Thai government is greatly concerned and will continue to attempt to make the Chinese element more cohesive in the development of Thailand.

The government policies have proceeded along several generalized patterns of control. These are the control and implementation of immigration policies and naturalization policies, the close surveillance and impediment of the Chinese community education system, the continual narrowing of opportunities for the laboring Chinese, and the efforts to curtail the commercial endeavors of the business elements of the Chinese community.

In successive chapters these various aspects will be dealt with, showing the historical development and current conditions of each with the purpose of following the government policy trends as a precursor to future development.

Of course, extenuating circumstances of an unforeseen nature can radically change the Asian picture; however, some background of the whole development of the Chinese problem as it has transpired and is being met, in one of the countries, will give some preparation for better understanding events as they occur.

Current trends are indicative of the necessity of an adequate grounding in the developmental structure of the relationship between the Thai government and the Chinese minority.

The most recent change in government followed the coup d'etat in the fall of 1958. Since that time some of the activities of the people have been suspended. The constitution itself has been set aside pending formulation of a new one; the new one has as yet not appeared nor are there indications of one for the immediate future.

In successive decrees all political parties were forbidden, as were political meetings of five or more people. This did not affect the Chinese to any great extent as they have never participated in these as an ethnic group. They were influenced by the decrees which followed, dissolving all labor unions. Although labor unions were not a dynamic force

on the Thai scene, they were in the process of gaining some momentum up to that time. The Chinese had been closely associated with union development, mostly as an extension of their own associations. Their initial efforts had been thwarted by the Thai government fearing communist infiltration in the late 1940's.

Subsequent government disapproval lessened in the mid-fifties, allowing the Chinese to cooperate with Thai labor elements in improving union organization. These later movements served as a bonding agent between the Thai and Chinese labor force in diminishing the friction between these two groups. The implementing of one set of policies worked to the detriment of other policies designed to achieve similar ends.

The Chinese position within Thai society does not materialize until the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. A knowledge of their position prior to this time is necessary to an understanding of their ready acceptance as a foreign element to be assimilated with the indigenous Thai.

Records of various visitors to Siam, dating back to the Seventeenth Century, give some of the earliest accounts of the country as it is known today. Chinese settlements were present as early as 1690.¹

¹Emmelbert Kaempfer, *The History of Japan, Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam, 1690-92*, trans. J. C. Schaeffer, Vol. 1 (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1906), pp. 30-35.

CHAPTER II

CHINESE IMMIGRATION

The Chinese have been migrating into Thailand for at least six centuries. There can be no accurate estimate of the specific period as there are no records other than what has been mentioned in the China Yearbooks. It is of little importance to trace this to definite dates. The importance lies in the progressive and continuous role these immigrants have assumed within the country. The real significance of the Chinese position within Thai society does not materialize until the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. A knowledge of their position prior to this time is necessary to an understanding of their ready acceptance as a foreign element to be assimilated with the indigenous Thai.

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Prior to the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries the Chinese who came to Siam were primarily merchants and traders. Growing in favor with the Siamese kings through their trading prowess and accessibility to Chinese ports, the Chinese trading element expanded, thus increasing the wealth of the kings who owned the trading concessions. This expansion in turn provided the impetus for increasing trading and exploiting of local products. Eventually, Chinese traders began settling in Thailand.

One of the factors in the success of the Chinese in Thailand has been their characteristic traits of hard work, diligence, shrewd maneuvering and thriftiness which have offset the disdain of the Thai elite for commerce and the apathy towards it by the peasantry. Between the two extremities of Thai society, there was no interest in the commercial aspects of the economy. The aristocracy was dedicated to a life of government or court service, and the peasantry was satisfied with its agricultural pursuits. This created a void, more or less, in the commercial and financial classes. As trade increased it created the need for various laborers such as factory workers, warehousemen, accountants and seamen. These positions were not sufficiently attractive to the Thai.

Coincident with this need for laborers were the conditions within China. This influence of the Manchu dynasty spread into South China after 1645. This invasion was opposed by the tribes in the Fukien and Kwangtung provinces, and many

refugees fled the country.²

Among the other factors influential in cementing the place of the Chinese within Thailand during these early periods was the high esteem with which the Thai held the Chinese because of the strength and position of China. There was also a possibility of a suzerainty status existing between them, but there is no proof of a definite permanent arrangement between the two countries.³

As the Chinese gained in importance in the Thai court they began marrying into Thai families. This was facilitated by the similarity of racial characteristics and religious background. Both countries had dominant elements of Bhuddism, which the Chinese modified with Taoism and Confucianism. Out of these early unions came the lukchin or "child of a Chinese" who combined the advantageous characteristics of both peoples. This early colony was very small. Various writers of the period listed the number of permanent Chinese residents as being between 2,000-3,000 during the latter part of the Seventeenth Century.⁴

Up to this time numbers were not important, as the

²Pyau Ling, "Causes of Chinese Immigration." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, XXXIX (1912), pp. 74-82.

³Yu Lin, "The Chinese Overseas," The Chinese Year Book, 1937, pp. 1245-1261.

⁴Jeremias van Vliet, "Description of the Kingdom of Siam," Journal of the Siam Society, trans. by L. F. Van Ravensway, VII (1912), pp. 1-108.

tendency toward intermarriage usually led to assimilation of the offspring into Thai society although retaining some of the customs and languages of their Chinese ancestors. Obviously it was an advantage to retain the Chinese languages for commercial reasons. The ambitious character of the Chinese soon led them into responsible positions within the government or the king's household. Eventually a lukchin became King of Thailand for a short period.

Following the Burmese War, which lasted from 1759 until 1767, a confused situation existed between various aspirants struggling to assume the throne. After the former capital city of Ayuthia had been destroyed and the former king died, Tak Sin (as he was variously called) succeeded in uniting the kingdom and in driving the Burmese out. He ruled from 1767 to 1782. Although only half Chinese he retained many of the Chinese practices, such as nepotism which led to his downfall. The Thai nobility eventually turned against him for using so many of his humble relatives in important positions. Exciting the populace against his excesses and his Chinese blood the nobility succeeded in dethroning him and replaced him with the first of the Chakri dynasty which is the reigning house today.⁵ This family is also supposed to have an admixture of Chinese blood.⁶

⁵W. A. Graham, Siam Vol. I (3rd. ed., London: Alexander Moring, 1924, p. 209.

⁶Kenneth P. Landon, The Chinese in Thailand (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), p. 8.

To better understand the contribution which the Chinese made prior to the Nineteenth Century, a look at the Chinese themselves may be beneficial. As stated before these early immigrants are thought to have come from the southern provinces. The earliest, of course, were the traders sent there on missions. These were followed by the peasants, artisans, sailors and fishermen who were fleeing from the ravaged existence in China during the fluctuating difficult periods. Those who were not coming in a trading or official capacity came to make a fortune any way they could. Most of them left families in China to whom they sent money once they had prospered. Their goal in many cases was to make enough to be able to return to China to live out their old age. In a way this was a commuting situation for some, but others came to stay. Despite families at home most of the Chinese took Thai wives and eventually assimilated completely into Thai society. Those who saw the status advantage of identifying themselves with the Thai did so and as mentioned previously many moved into positions of importance.

This intermarriage brought to succeeding generations the Chinese characteristics which were absent in the Thai. This combination of qualities would provide the basis for a merchant class which had not existed prior to this time. Both in commerce and government the strain of Chinese influence offset this perpetual "laziness" so indicative of the Thai people.

Although the Chinese did deprive the economy of a certain amount of money which they sent to China, the contributions they made in creating a more substantial nation cannot be denied.

Throughout the Nineteenth Century information on the Thai situation is more systematically recorded as many Western observers were traveling through Thailand. Also relations between the Western nations and Thailand were becoming more ameliorative whereas before the Thai had looked with disdain upon Western overtures in trading and had prohibited any commercial exchange. This denial of Western access served as a spring board for the Chinese immigration which grew from the Chinese trade.

Most of the Chinese migration into Thailand has been on ships or on junk traders as the border country was not conducive to overland travel. Although there were trade routes existing overland for many centuries they were considered hazardous and not adaptable to general travel. Since the great majority of the immigrants arrived by boat they entered the country at Bangkok, the thriving center of the country. Most of them would stay there however eventually they drifted into the outer regions where they congregated in the larger cities. Despite this concentration nearly all of the villages probably had some acquaintance with the travelling Chinese merchants and traders. As waves of immigration occurred to fill specific labor needs, Chinese communities were established in

the southern tin mining areas and much later in the rubber growing belt.

After being denied access to Thailand, the Western countries finally gained a foothold with the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855. The history of modern Siam may be thought of as beginning at this time. With the opening of the country the Western observers had an opportunity to see first hand the internal conditions. With so many of the Occidental countries interested in Siam and the numerous accounts of travel through the country there would quite logically be discrepancies in the descriptions of what was taking place, however nearly all of those who wrote about Thailand pointed out the prominent position which the Chinese held in the country. Bowring estimated in 1857 that Siam had around 1.5 million Chinese, 200,000 of whom were in the Bangkok area.⁷ Many of the estimates were rather exaggerated but they do illustrate the early influence and position which the Chinese community was assuming.

Immigration through the 1850's held no difficulties for the Chinese as the Thai were content to have them. Any hindrance on Chinese migration came from the Chinese government which frowned on it. There was a Chinese law which made immigration an offense punishable by death, however the number

⁷Sir John Bowring, The Kingdom and People of Siam, with a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855, Vol. I (London: John W. Parker and Sons, 1857), p. 85.

of Chinese departing from China negate any strong influence of the law on those desiring to leave.⁸ Among other things the corruptible Chinese officialdom allowed bribery to make the law relatively unenforceable.

Of the reasons given for immigration during this time the ones primarily mentioned are economic, either to improve ones economic status, fleeing from natural catastrophes such as floods or drouths which have perpetually beseiged China, or having previous connections abroad such as relatives who had already established themselves, or planning to expand specific enterprises. Incidental reasons included the undesirables.⁹

Immigration increased noticeably after the Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1842 which lessened the regulations which the Chinese had placed on the immigrants. In the 1840's it was estimated that approximately 15,000 were entering Thailand every year and by the turn of the century around 1,200 per month were entering at Bangkok. Even more were estimated to be entering overland in the south from the Malay States.¹⁰ These coming from the Malay States were primarily descendents of immigrants which the British had recruited to work in the mines and rubber plantations.

⁸Chun-po Chen, "Chinese Overseas," The Chinese Year Book 1935-36, pp. 428-455.

⁹Ta Chen, Emigrant Communities in South China (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1940), pp. 259-260.

¹⁰Virginia Thompson, Thailand, The New Siam (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 107.

As early as 1888 the Thai were discussing the restriction of immigration or establishing a Singapore type colony but it was discarded as being too expensive.¹¹ This seems to indicate that rather early some of the Thai were aware of Chinese opportunism. Yet nothing positive grew out of these suspicions until considerably later.

With the greatly increased demand for labor in Siam after the 1860's organized recruitment came into practice. Chinese immigrants arriving in the Nineteenth Century were often classified as "contract" or "indentured", or "credit ticket", or "free".¹² Of these, the "credit ticket" system was widely used by those going to Thailand. As the word implies the immigrant obtained his passage of credit, and the captain of the ship carrying the immigrant was reimbursed by a relative or employee for whom the immigrant worked until the debt was paid off. With a system like this offering such an opportunity for exploitation immigration firms and agencies materialized to recruit labor.

The full dimension of Chinese immigration throughout the Nineteenth Century cannot be expressed in a precise numerical value. However, a study of some of the figures which were compiled from available estimates shows that from 1830 the yearly immigration total increased from about 7,000 and

¹¹Ibid.

¹²G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 57.

doubling by about 1870, to reach around 16,000 a year by 1882 when the really large influx of Chinese began.¹³

Table 1, covering the arrivals and departures for the period from 1882 to 1917, discloses a total surplus of arrivals over departures of 451,000 China-born Chinese.

The fluctuations in the immigration rates as portrayed in this survey are essentially a response to specific changes in the prosperity of the emigrant areas and of conditions in Siam. The condition in China most affecting the emigration rates was the state of the crops and in Siam the demand of labor. This lends support to an appraisal of the immigrants during this time as being mainly peasants or agricultural workers coming to Siam as common laborers, motivated by a desire for economic improvement. They did not try to establish a copy of Chinese society, because their roots and families remained in China.

In an analysis of the effect of the migrating Chinese on the whole Chinese community as it existed up to the turn of the century perhaps the most significant factor contributing

¹³These figures derived from the following works:

John Crawford, Journal of an Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-Chinese (2nd ed.; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bently, 1830) Vol. II, pp. 162-163.

Captain H. Burney, The Burney Papers (Bangkok: Vauir-anana National Library, 1910) Vol. II, p. 79.

Reverend Howard Malcom, Travels in South-Eastern Asia, Embrassing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam, and China (London: Charles Tilt, 1839) Vol. I, p. 139.

D. E. Malloch, Siam, Some General Remarks on its Production (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1852), p. 68.

TABLE 1

ESTIMATED TOTAL ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES (IN THOUSANDS) OF ETHNIC CHINESE,
ALL THAILAND, ANNUALLY AND BY PERIODS, 1882-1917*

YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES	YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES	YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES
1882	17.3	9.3	1893	27.7	11.2	1906($\frac{1}{2}$ yr)	13.1	10.6
1883	18.0	9.9	1894	33.8	16.1	1906-07	68.0	38.9
1884	13.1	8.4	1895	29.0	17.3	1907-08	90.3	53.0
1885	13.9	7.8	1896	27.8	18.2	1908-09	61.6	49.2
1886	14.2	7.9	1897	31.0	18.6	1909-10	66.8	57.4
1887	15.0	9.2	1898	33.6	19.1	1910-11	80.8	73.0
1888	15.7	7.9	1899	33.7	20.7	1911-12	76.7	63.9
1889	18.3	10.1	1900	27.3	19.0	1912-13	72.8	60.5
1890	18.9	10.4	1901	30.4	19.3	1913-14	73.3	52.2
1891	16.0	9.1	1902	36.5	18.8	1914-15	60.1	56.8
1892	17.1	9.4	1903	54.5	29.9	1915-16	69.2	47.1
			1904	44.0	23.7	1916-17	53.4	40.3
			1905	45.8	30.0	1917($\frac{3}{4}$ yr)	29.6	27.6
Total	177.5	99.4	Total	455.1	261.9	Total	815.7	635.5

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

PERIOD	TOTAL ARRIVALS	TOTAL DEPARTURES	% DEPARTURES OF ARRIVALS	AVERAGE ANNUAL ARRIVALS	AVERAGE ANNUAL DEPARTURES	TOTAL SURPLUS OF ARRIVALS	AVG. ANNUAL SURPLUS OF ARRIVALS
1882-1892	177.5	99.4	56	16.1	9.0	78.1	7.1
1893-1905	455.1	261.9	58	35.0	20.1	193.2	14.9
1906-1917	815.7	635.5	78	68.0	53.0	180.2	15.0

* Based primarily on statistics given in the following serial publications: Amoy Consular Reports 1882-1893; China Trade Returns 1882-1917; Chinese Customs Decennial Reports 1892-1901; 1902-1911, 1912-1921; Kiugchow Consular Reports 1872-1914; Siam Consular Reports 1882-1913; Siam Trade Statistics 1899-1906; Swatow Consular Reports 1882-1914; Thai Customs Statements 1906-07 to 1917 to 18; Thailand Statistical Year Books 1916-1923, as cited by G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 61.

to the integration of the Chinese into the whole fabric of Thailand was the absence of Chinese women. Prior to 1893 women very rarely emigrated from China. Between 1882 and 1892, years of heavy emigration, the percentage of women could not have exceeded two or three percent.¹⁴ Chinese family councils would not send wives with their husbands as they feared losing the family entirely. It was unusual to send an unmarried girl abroad unless in the case of extreme poverty she was sold into prostitution. Even in the intervening time up to 1905 the proportion of women arrivals probably did not exceed more than five percent.

This absence of Chinese women resulted in either the male immigrants remaining single or marrying a local woman. Some sources indicate that a great majority of the mining and plantation workers did not marry as long as they remained in that status. Similarly an equal majority did not marry among the urban wage earners. Those that did marry were the farmers or plantation owners, the merchants, artisans, and to a lesser degree the lower shop assistants. The wealthy

¹⁴These figures represent a crosssection view of three sources:

Ta Chen, Chinese Migrations with Special Reference to Labour Conditions (Washington: U. S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 340, 1923), p. 84.

Great Britain. Foreign Office, Annual Diplomatic and Consular Reports on the Trade of Kiungchow 1892 (London: Harrison and Sons), p. 6.

H. Gottwaldt, Die Ueberseeische Auswanderung der Chinesen und ihre Einwirkung auf die weisse und gelbe Rasse (Bremen, 1903), pp. 44-49.

merchants usually had more than one wife and some brought their wives over from China. More directly the tendency to marry varied directly with the economic status of the individual, with the temporary working classes marrying less frequently and the more permanent merchant classes more frequently.¹⁵

With this growing intermarriage some attention should be addressed to the mixed parentage influence on the children. This concerns the whole relationship between the two peoples and must include a consideration of some of the immediate ramifications. First of all there was no racial barrier to conflict with a complete assimilation given sufficient time. The two people were similar in physical appearance and the lukchin children were never considered a distinct class separate from each group. Either they identified as Chinese or as Siamese. Usually the second generation was capable of speaking both languages.

It can be credited to the Siamese government that a Sino-Thai culture was never allowed to develop. The lukchin

¹⁵These sources include the following:

George B. Bacon, Siam, Land of the White Elephant (ref. ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1892), p. 162.

Crawford, op. cit., p. 221.

Bowring, op. cit., p. 395.

Jacob Tomlin, Missionary Journals and Letters, Written During Eleven Years Residence and Travels Among the Chinese, Japanese, Khassians, and Other Eastern Nations (London: J. Nisbett, 1844), p. 149.

Mrs. Noah A. McDonald, "The Chinese in Siam," Siam and Laos as Seen by Our American Missionaries. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), pp. 146-161.

either became Chinese or Thai. There was no middle ground. The government's policy made it necessary that all male Chinese descendents take either identity.

One reason that a lukchin might desire to remain Chinese was because of the traditional favorable position which the Chinese as a people held in Thailand up to this time. Chinese men were subject to the triennial tax but exempt from corvée and personal service while the Thai and other Asian nationalities had to be attached to a patron or government master. This relationship will be explained in more detail in the chapter on labor.

The actual identity preference of the first generation lukchin children would of course vary with the individual but as commonly thought the girls would tend to follow the mother and the boys the father. There is considerable variance among the interpreters of this period in actually pinpointing a specific movement of the second generation children in either national direction but most of them concur in stating that third generation children were generally Thai in culture and identification.¹⁶ This comparatively rapid assimilation seems to indicate that without the continued immigration of Chinese bringing in the stimulation of the Chinese culture and with no great desire to maintain their Chinese-ness, the Chinese community would have become an integral part of Thailand.

¹⁶Victor Purcell, The Chinese in Southeast Asia (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 147.

The Twentieth Century ushered in a whole new series of problems concerning the Chinese community. This is a new era in the Chinese position in Thailand. The transition was the culmination of a series of events none of which showed the Chinese in a favorable light to the Thai.

The nationalism of the Chinese was aroused by the success of China in defeating Japan in 1895. The overseas communities became imbued with the revolutionary movement in China. Close behind them were the Thai who were beginning to experience the spark of nationalist feeling. The presence of Western nations in Thailand since the mid 1800's had brought many new ideas to the Siamese. The results of a Western style education and the broadening influence of travel opened the eyes of many Siamese to what was happening in their country.

The "Chinese problem" became a vividly recognizable situation to the Siamese especially after the incidents of 1910. This was more or less a turning point in their relationship. Within the government there was a definite coolness toward the Chinese after the death of King Julalongkorn that year. He had consistently been friendly toward the Chinese and recognized them as a component part of the country. His view was publicly stated as this:

It has always been my policy that the Chinese in Siam should have the same opportunities for labor and for profits as are possessed by my own countrymen. I regard them not as foreigners but

as one of the component parts of the Kingdom and sharing in its prosperity and advancement.¹⁷

King Wachirawat, his son, had been educated abroad and was very much attune to the observations of Westerners. Such statements as "One day will see the Siamese race no longer in existence and the Menan valley peopled by Chinese,"¹⁸ and that the Chinese "are more likely before many years to be the dominating people of Siam...and either to swamp the indolent and lethargic natives, or transform them by fusion and intermarriage till they are past recognition,"¹⁹ could not help but influence the newly educated impressionistic Thai.

The developing nationalism of the Chinese increased their apartness and magnified their ethnic differences from the Thai, fomenting a new awareness of their Chinese character. This was manifest in their strengthening of ties with the homeland, establishing their own schools and newspapers, an increase of Chinese political activity in the country, and in their bridging local differences in the community in the interest of a purely Chinese cause.²⁰

One of the first inflammatory actions, the strike of

¹⁷Thompson, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁸Francis Mury, "Bangkok", Revue de Geographie LII (January, 1903), p. 58.

¹⁹J. G. D. Cambell, Siam in the Twentieth Century (London: Edward Arnold, 1902), pp. 12-13.

²⁰Skinner, op. cit., p. 159.

1910, brought home to the Thai, only too well, that they were virtually at the mercy of the Chinese. One of the last reforms of King Julalongkorn had been in 1899 to replace the corvée conscriptive work system with an annual head tax. The Thai and other Asians in the country had to pay four to six baht per year while the Chinese paid only 4.25 baht triennially. In 1909 a decree ended the favorable tax position of the Chinese and made them susceptible to the same annual tax as the rest of the population.

Actually the tax was fair to all but the Chinese were rebellious and decided on a general strike among themselves. The Chinese merchants were warned that if they did not comply there would be retaliation on their businesses such as arson or pillaging. Although the Thai police had offered protection for those who would stay open, all of the Chinese shops closed and the strike lasted for three days. Rice and other food became scarce and expensive and business and shipping were paralyzed. The Thai people were greatly inconvenienced and their prejudice was intensified against the Chinese. The strike was a failure and a disastrous mistake for the Chinese and demonstrated that they were in Thailand to gain what they could and were not willing to contribute their share.

Prior to the strike, in the spring of 1909, the Chinese government issued a nationality law which adopted the jus sanguinis principle that all persons with a Chinese father were regarded as Chinese, irrespective of where they were born.

From this action arose the problem of dual nationality. This new law foreshadowed a possibility of interference by the Chinese in countries abroad, in behalf of so-called Chinese citizens. This did not effect Thailand immediately as there were no diplomatic relations existing between the two countries. To complicate the issue, the laws and regulations governing the Chinese National Assembly in 1912 allowed six of the 274 Chinese senators to be elected by the electoral college of Chinese abroad.²¹

In 1913 the Thai government decreed their first Nationality Act which like the Chinese act affirmed the principle of jus sanguinis. It stated that every person born of a Thai father on Thai or foreign territory was a Thai, and also claimed as Thai every person born on Thai territory.²² This would create a dispute on dual nationality for several hundred thousand persons, subject to rival claims and divided allegiance.

Indicative of the attitude possessed by King Wachirawut and others who were anti-Sinitic, was an article allegedly

²¹Harley F. MacNair, The Chinese Abroad. Their Position and Protection: A Study in International Law and Relations (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), p. 25.

²²Thai Nationality Act B. E. 2456, Thailand Government Gazette Vol XXIX, p. 279.

Thai laws are designated by attaching the Bhuddist Year number to them. Additional law references will follow this method. Thus number is made by adding 543 to the Christian calendar year. (1913 + 543 = 2456).

written by him called "The Jews of the East" which was published in 1914.²³ In this rather severe indictment of the Chinese, the determination of the Thai to be supreme and sovereign in his own land is fully germinated.

With this background the whole immigration picture assumes a new slant. Table 2 presents a clearer picture of the actual expansion of immigration for the period 1918-1955.

These immigrations are divided into three major cycles. The first period covering the years 1918-1931 is especially important as one of very high arrivals, low departures and because of the increased immigration of Chinese women. As compared with the estimated total surplus of arrivals of 451,500 in the 1882-1917 period, this boom period of thirteen years had a surplus total of 499,700. This total is also nearly twice as much as that of the subsequent twenty-four year period of 1932-1955 which had a surplus of 252,400.

This tremendous influx resulted from the favorable economic conditions in Siam and in the unfavorable conditions in China. After the First World War there was a boom in South Siam in the tin and rubber industries, an expansion in the rice milling and sawmilling industries, an increase in foreign

²³London, op. cit., p. 34.

TABLE 2

ESTIMATED TOTAL ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES (IN THOUSANDS) OF ETHNIC CHINESE,
ALL THAILAND, ANNUALLY AND BY PERIODS, 1918-1955*

YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES	YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES	YEAR	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES
1918($\frac{1}{2}$ yr)	9.8	9.1	1932($\frac{1}{2}$ yr)	18.7	14.1	1946	86.0	5.8
1918-19	67.9	37.0	1932-33	59.5	44.1	1947	83.8	23.4
1919-20	65.7	43.4	1933-34	25.7	32.6	1948	28.5	22.3
1920-21	70.4	36.8	1934-35	27.0	31.1	1949	20.0	15.8
1921-22	76.5	46.9	1935-36	45.2	36.5	1950	7.6	7.4
1922-23	95.4	65.2	1936-37	48.9	28.0	1951	17.9	13.7
1923-24	115.0	66.4	1937-38	60.0	22.0	1952	9.8	7.3
1924-25	92.7	66.1	1938-39	33.5	30.0	1953	6.4	2.8
1925-26	95.5	60.6	1939-40	25.1	18.8	1954	4.0	4.5
1926-27	106.4	73.7	1940-41	23.6	19.8	1955	3.8	4.8
1927-28	154.6	76.9	1941	44.8	36.7			
1928-29	101.1	72.8	1942	11.1	17.8			
1929-30	134.1	68.2	1943	20.1	20.7			
1930-31	86.4	62.4	1944	18.1	17.9			
1931($\frac{3}{4}$ yr)	56.1	42.4	1945	12.4	11.2			
Total	1,327.6	827.9	Total	473.7	381.3	Total	267.8	107.8

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

PERIODS	TOTAL ARRIVALS	TOTAL DEPARTURES	% DEPARTURES OF ARRIVALS	AVERAGE ANNUAL ARRIVALS	AVERAGE ANNUAL DEPARTURES	TOTAL SURPLUS OF ARRIVALS	AVG. ANN. SURPLUS OF ARRIVALS
1918-31	1,327.6	827.9	62.4	94.8	59.1	499.7	35.7
1932-45	473.7	381.3	80.5	33.8	27.2	92.4	6.6
1946-55	267.8	107.8	40.3	26.8	10.8	160.0	16.0

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*Based on statistics supplied by the Immigration Division and the Customs Department in Bangkok and given in the following Serial Publications: China Trade Returns 1918-1929; Chinese Customs Decennial Reports 1912-1921, 1922-1931; Reports on China Trade 1930-1948; Thai Customs Statements 1917-18 to 1946; and Thailand Statistical Year Books 1924-25 through 1953; as cited in G. William Skinner, China Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 173.

trade, and a resumption of construction all of which created a heightened demand for labor both skilled and unskilled. With this boom Siam was paying the highest wages in Asia.

At the same time in South China, the predominant immigrating area, social conditions and crop yields were low. Typhoons and droughts had blighted some of the area and decreased agriculture production resulted from the unstable conditions of political unrest, fighting and banditry. Considering the many pressures being exerted on the Chinese and the depressed living conditions it is understandable that many fled the region, particularly knowing of the economic possibilities, which existed in other parts of Asia and especially in Siam.

The sharp decline in immigration in the early thirties is commensurate with the depression which was engulfing the whole world, and the policies of the new constitutional regime which came into power in 1932. The collapse of tin and rubber markets, decrease in rice milling, and large drops in the volume of imports and exports led to rapidly deteriorating economic conditions within Thailand. Wages dropped and the demand for labor was not sufficient to warrant any increased immigration. All these and various other factors influenced the fluctuating immigration until the beginning of the Second World War.

Other than the general economic depression which decreased immigration from 1932 to 1937 the increase in 1937-1938

which broke into the general trend of decreasing immigration would appear to be the result of the Sino-Japanese War. There was a considerable amount of evacuation from South China ports which swelled the flow of immigration into Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

As the figures indicate the number of arrivals noticeably decreased the following year and there was a trend toward less and less immigration up through 1945. Naturally the 1941-1945 period would be affected by the war situation. Comparing the number of arrivals and departures returning to China this period of 1932-1945 indicates that the actual number of Chinese remaining in Thailand is greatly decreased. Departures actually exceeded the number of arrivals during the crucial years 1933-1935, and 1942-1943. With the physical restrictions which accompanied the war years, most of the immigration from 1942-1945 was overland from Malaya and of rather static proportions.

Before continuing with the general immigration trend a more specific appraisal of the role which women immigrants played and the population figures for the present century up through 1955 will give some idea of the cause for much of the consternation which shocked the Thai people into the awareness of what was becoming of their homeland.

As mentioned previously the percentage of women immigrants was indeed negligible until the early 1900's. Prior to the immigration wave which followed this First World

War the proportion of women probably never exceeded ten percent.²⁴ It is rather difficult to obtain exaction of figures pertaining to Chinese because of their evasiveness to a census and other forms of questioning; however, the general trend of increased immigration by the Chinese women is revealing of the change induced on the intermarriage ratio.

In table 3 Skinner has summarized the most reliable data available in showing the increased ratio of women from 1921 to 1949.

By the late 1920's most of the male immigrants were married and approximately a third of them were bringing their wives with them. It was even more common for whole families to immigrate in comparison with the previous predominance of males alone. Of the marriage potential in Thailand it was noted by Landon that in the 1930's the price of a bride was 50 to 200 baht for a Thai peasant girl, 100 to 300 baht for a lukchin girl, and 300 to 500 for a Chinese girl.²⁵

Evidently Chinese girls were more expensive because of being more rare. In practice a Chinese man would prefer to marry a Chinese woman, but if none were available or too expensive, he would have to resort to a lukchin or Thai wife.

²⁴Skinner, op. cit., p. 190.

²⁵Landon, op. cit., p. 55.

TABLE 3

CHINESE MIGRATION BY SEX, THAILAND, 1921-1941, 1945-1949*

A. By Sea only, Port of Bangkok, April 1, 1921 to December 31, 1931

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% FEMALE OF TOTAL
Arrivals	765,265	201,842	967,107	20.87
Departures	489,617	116,586	606,203	
Surplus	275,648	85,256	360,904	23.62

B. By All Means of Travel, All Thailand, 1932-1941 Inclusive

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% FEMALE OF TOTAL
Arrivals	300,799	108,997	409,796	26.60
Departures	232,573	77,432	310,005	
Surplus	68,226	31,565	99,791	31.63

C. By All Means of Travel, All Thailand, 1945-1949 Inclusive

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% FEMALE OF TOTAL
Arrivals	132,337	60,704	193,041	31.45
Departures	36,417	11,031	47,449	
Surplus	95,920	49,673	145,593	34.12

*The Original source for A was the Customs Department. Data compiled from Thailand Statistical Year Book 1933-34 to 1934-35 (No. 18), p. 98. Data for B and C were compiled from statistics supplied by the Immigration Division. The war years, 1942-1945, have been omitted. This table cited from G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 191.

Later in the 1930's more Chinese men were bringing China-born wives. With more Chinese and lukchin girls available the unmarried Chinese would marry them in deference to marrying a Thai girl. Thus not only were all Chinese homes becoming more prevalent, the Chinese men were marrying the lukchin girls who would more likely tend toward establishing a Chinese home than a Thai girl. With the Chinese usually concentrating in a specific area of a city or community the tendency to retain a Chinese attitude was increased. Intermarriage was becoming less common and since the Second World War and in recent years intermarriage has become rare.

As might be feared these all-Chinese homes were no assistance in assimilating the Chinese as an integral part of the nation. The reviving and continuing of a separate culture could not in any way enhance the plans of the government.

In presenting any figures on the ethnic Chinese, great difficulty arises in determining when a Chinese stops being Chinese and becomes Thai. According to the Thai Nationality Act, any Chinese born in Thailand are Thai nationals, but ethnically they are still Chinese. Merely being classed as Thai of course does not make them Thai and a certain number of them will consider themselves more identifiable with China as the center of their allegiance and their interest are directed toward their original homeland.

The most recent census report of 1947 listed by race

835,931 Chinese of a total population of 17.45 million.²⁶ Later figures of 1951 indicate there were 1,147,084 alien Chinese registered.²⁷ This does not even include the number of ethnic Chinese with Thai citizenship, all of which shows that the Chinese population seemed to be increasing on an equal basis as the Thai population increased.

Since there has been no census since 1947 there are no complete figures of the relative proportion today, but recent evaluations suggest the possible number of ethnic Chinese as approximately three million of the total twenty million population.²⁸

Skinner has formulated a probable model of growth of the Chinese population for the period 1917-1955 which is of considerable interest in showing that the relative percentage of Chinese has remained fairly constant throughout this period.

Undoubtedly with a cessation of immigration the percentage of ethnic Chinese of the total population will decline although the Chinese population will increase. Only if the

²⁶THAILAND STATISTICAL OFFICE, Statistical Year Book, Thailand 1953, p. 68. Further references to this series will only indicate title and specified year.

²⁷Ibid., p. 135.

²⁸Wendell Blanchard (ed.), Thailand its People its Society, its Culture (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1958), p. 137.

TABLE 4

A PROBABLE MODEL OF THE GROWTH OF THE CHINESE POPULATION IN
THAILAND, 1917-1955 (Estimates as of December 31 in Thousands) *

YEAR	Est. total of China- Born Chinese	5-Yr Rate of Change Since Previous Date	Est. Total of Local-Born Chinese	5-Year Rate of Increase	Est. Total of All Chinese	5-Year Rate of Increase	Est. Total Population of Siam	% China- Born Chinese of Total	% All Chinese of Total
1917	349	%	557	%	906	%	9,232	3.78	9.8
1922	445	35.3	634	13.8	1,079	19.1	10,202	4.36	10.5
1927	600	34.8	733	15.6	1,333	23.5	11,419	5.25	11.7
1932	728	21.3	864	19.2	1,592	19.4	13,087	5.56	12.2
1937	714	-1.9	1,020	18.1	1,734	8.9	14,721	4.85	11.8
1942	689	-3.5	1,187	16.4	1,876	8.2	16,066	4.29	11.7
1947	765	11.0	1,359	14.5	2,124	13.2	17,643	4.34	12.0
1952	727	-5.0	1,524	12.1	2,251	6.0	19,384	3.75	11.5
1955	696	-7.1	1,619	10.4	2,315	4.7	20,480	3.40	11.3

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*As cited in A. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 183.

assimilation of the Chinese were to end could they possibly retain such a high percentage of the total, and there is no indication that assimilation is not still in progress although it has been retarded from time to time.

Although really significant restriction on immigration did not come until after World War Two, the Thai government did pass its first immigration law in 1927. The act though not of a very stringent nature was a beginning and served as a basis for a series of measures which followed aimed at curtailing the number of immigrants though not rejecting them completely. 1931-32 the Immigration Amendment Act was passed.

The following excerpt gives some idea of the scope of the law:

Section 6. The following aliens are prohibited from entering Siam:

- (1) Persons not possessed of proper passports or certificates of nationality issued by a Government recognized by His Majesty's government.
- (2) Persons suffering from any of such diseases as shall be specified and announced by the Ministry in the Government Gazette for the purpose of this section.
- (3) Persons who have not been vaccinated against smallpox and refuse to be vaccinated as provided by law.
- (4) Persons who have no independent income or support and who are certified by the medical inspector to have a physical or mental defect or disease that renders them unable to earn their living.
- (5) Persons who are of a bad character or are likely to create disturbances or to endanger the safety of the public or the Kingdom of Siam.

Section 7. The Ministry, with the concurrence of the Minister of Commerce and Communications is empowered to make an order fixing the number of aliens of any nationality or of category of such aliens that may be admitted into the Kingdom each year.

Section 14. Any alien who enters the Kingdom by concealing himself or his identity in order to evade the

provisions of this Act, or contrary to the order of the official, shall be punished with fine not to exceed one thousand baht.

Section 15. Whoever wilfully brings an alien into Siam in contravention of this Act, or assists an alien to evade the provisions of this Act shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding six months or with a fine not exceeding two hundred baht or both.²⁹

This act was followed shortly by a Ministerial regulation, designed to expedite the law, which allowed an immigrant not having a passport to buy an identification paper for a fee of four baht. A later regulation in 1928-29 set the fee at ten baht.

In 1931-32 the Immigration Amendment Act was passed in an effort to deter some of the immigration. This action coincides with the creation of the new constitutional monarchy. As a hypernationalistic effort to reduce the continued inflow, the charge for a certificate of residence was raised to thirty baht. Since most of the immigrants were coming from economically depressed areas, few of them had much money.

The aliens whose passports were in order only paid this fee, but those without a proper one had to pay ten baht for the identification paper in addition to the thirty baht. Increasingly monetary obstacles were being created to thwart the immigrants. An alien who made his home in Thailand and wanted to cross the border had to pay a fee of five baht for a

²⁹Immigration Law B. E. 2470, Thailand Government Gazette, Vol. XLIV, p. 79.

return permit. Restrictions were thought to be useful tools

The new act held the following stipulations as means of prohibiting entry into the country by aliens:

Section 3, Clause 5: Persons who are of bad character or are likely to create a disturbance or to endanger the safety of the public or the Kingdom of Siam.

Clause: Persons who are unable to pay such fees as may be charged according to this act or to any regulation issued in pursuance of this Act.³⁰

As these restrictions still did not materially retard the continued flow of immigration as much as would have been desired, two additional Notifications amending the Ministerial Regulations were published. The residence fee was raised to 100 baht and the reentry fee was raised to twenty baht. Those who had paid the residence fee and then left the country for more than one year were liable to the fee again. Several restrictions were included which excluded anyone under the age of twenty who was not accompanied by either parent or had not received permission from the Ministry of the Interior, and any person of twelve or over who could not read or write. Siamese or their own language. Also included in the Notification was the power of the immigration authorities to appoint someone to check on the reading and writing ability of the more youthful immigrants.³¹

³⁰Immigration Amendment Act B. E. 2475, Thailand Government Gazette, Vol. XLVIII, p. 177.

³¹Directory for Bangkok and Siam 1936-37, p. 87.

These restrictions were thought to be useful tools in helping the immigration officers to reduce Chinese immigration. One advantage was that since the majority of the immigrants were peasants, illiteracy was high particularly among the women which was definitely to the advantage of the Thai who were not too enthusiastic at having such a high percentage of women immigrants.

As seen in the immigration table of 1918-1955, these limitations did not hinder the Chinese if they wanted to come bad enough as the year 1937-38 showed a big increase over the previous year. As explained earlier, conditions in China were primarily responsible for the exodus taking place that year as the Sino-Japanese War was taking shape. Alternative measures were resorted to if legal means were not satisfactory. Back door immigration cropped up to escape payment of the increased fees.

There is no way of knowing how many entered secretly but the practice continued for sure as late as 1939. The government's answer to this illicit entry took the form of the Registration of Aliens Act. It was passed in 1937 and required all aliens to have a certificate provided by the government, which had a photograph supplied by the alien. Then photographs were to be changed every five years. The Act was made retroactive, therefore including all aliens. This certificate, like a passport, was required to be in possession of an alien at all times ready to show a responsible

official. The fine for failure to produce the certificate was 200 baht, so in effect it was cheaper to pay the entry fee of 100 baht.³²

Still not satisfied with the progress in decreasing Chinese immigration another Immigration Act was passed in 1937-38. The new act raised the residence fee to 200 baht a year. In addition immigrants allowed to enter the country had to have an independent income or some means of support. Naturally this would hit directly at the Chinese although they were never mentioned specifically. Further leeway was given to the Minister of the Interior by empowering him to fix the amount of money which an alien must have and if necessary he could establish a quota for aliens of any particular nationality or for any category of a nationality.³³ In interpretation these powers would allow him to prohibit Chinese women if such a move would have ever been contemplated.

As might be expected the Chinese soon realized that the once favorable position which they held had crumbled and the slogan of the government "Thailand is pro Thai; it is not anti-anything," was a propaganda screen to conceal the real sentiments of the government. The pre-war immigration was beginning to level off, and during the war years as soon in

³²Alien Registration Act B. E. 2493, Annual Collection of Thai Law Vol. LXIII; p. 846.

³³Immigration Act B. E. 2480, Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LIV, p. 1101.

the immigration table there was a rather static situation with arrivals and departures being practically equal.

The government having seized control of the situation tried to use the most effective means and did not lessen their reign to any great extent even after the tremendous rush of immigrants into Thailand in 1946 when the doors were opened wide for a brief time.

After the war the 200 baht residence fee was still in effect but the inflated currency made the value about equal to the twenty baht fee of 1932. The war itself can be considered a primary reason for the large number of immigrants. Thailand's economy had not suffered as China's had and was on the way to a period of prosperity, this relatively unscathed condition was very attractive to the war weary Chinese.

Seeing this enormous increase the Thai government could not ignore the future ramifications of allowing such an unleashed overflow of Chinese to continue. In 1947 the first quota system was put into effect fixing the limit at 10,000 per year.³⁴ This quota lasted until 1949 when the Chinese quota was set at the same levels as that for all other nationalities.³⁵ The Immigration Act of 1950 fixed the upper

³⁴Immigration Act B. E. 2490, International Translation of Thai Laws, 1952, p. 222.

³⁵Thailand, Ministry of the Interior: Notification concerning the fixing of number of alien Nationalities entering the Kingdom of Siam, B. E. 2494. International Translation of Thai Laws, 1952, p. 471.

limit on the quota of all nationalities at 200, set the residence fee at 1,000 baht and provided severe restrictions and control on immigration.³⁶ To lessen these allowable entries, the government permitted the Chinese already in the country on temporary permits to apply for the permanent admission quota. In this way very few new immigrants were allowed to enter as the quota was being filled by those living in Thailand.

Today in order for Chinese to enter Thailand they must have a visa issued by the Thai consul in addition to the passport. In the early fifties new Chinese arrivals had to register with the Chinese embassy accompanied by two relatives who would sign as guarantors. Those who left the country had to reenter within the time limit affixed on their passports or else forfeit their reentry privilege. It is important to note that since there is no diplomatic relationship existing between Communist China and Thailand all the Chinese entering Thailand must do so through the Koumintang government or through outlets in Hong Kong.

In 1950 the Thai Parliament passed the Alien Registration Ordinance which required all foreigners to carry a more complete identity card than ones previously used. The yearly renewal fee was increased and aliens had to notify the police

³⁶Immigration Act B. E. 2495, Annual Collection of Thai Law Vol. LXIII, p. 964.

if they left their place of residence for more than two weeks.³⁷ Quite without warning the registration fee was raised in 1952 from twenty baht to 400 baht.³⁸ This applied to all aliens, but since the Chinese constituted the largest alien group they were the ones most concerned. These fees had for some time been a convenient source of revenue for the government. Presumably these were raised to finance salary increases in the government.³⁹

Slowly other restrictions were imposed, continually pressing the Chinese. Despite these limitations it was evident that many aliens were not registering and that illegal entries were continuing. In 1954 only 700,000 aliens registered which prompted the Thai to execute increased control over aliens.⁴⁰ Those under eighteen and over sixty who had previously been exempt were now required to pay it. Many could not pay the high fee and defaulted, consequently there was a constant clamor to reduce the fee.

Until 1955 the immigration policies were exemplary of a strong containment policy. In 1955 the ice begins to thaw and the changes which have occurred are indicative of the more

³⁸ Alien Registration Act B. E. 2495 (No. 2), International Translations of Thai Laws, 1952, p. 541.

³⁹ Richard Coughlin, "Status of the Chinese Minority in Thailand," Pacific Affairs XXV (December, 1952), pp. 378-389.

⁴⁰ Virginia Thompson and Richard Adlaff, Minority Problems in South East Asia (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 45.

lenient approach the government is taking in attempting to draw the Chinese community close to the Thai way of life.

In September of that year it was announced that the government would lower the immigration fee in 1956.⁴¹ Later, regulations were outlined whereby six broadly defined classes of aliens could apply for exemptions from paying the fee.⁴² In 1956 decrees officially reduced the alien registration fee to 200 baht from the previous 400 baht and waived the paying of back fees under certain more liberal conditions.⁴³

Some of this leniency may have resulted from the changing international scene. The Thai had had no compunction about initiating policies which were displeasing to the Taiwan government after 1950, however with the Bandung Conference and the increased position of Communist China the picture changed. With China possibly becoming a great power in Asia, its potential could not be overlooked and Thai policies of severe containment of the Chinese minorities would not be an asset in possible future dealings with China.

With the virtual end of immigration the real question facing the Thai is how to make the Chinese a valuable, loyal force working for the good of Thailand. If this is possible it can be done through the proper administration of the

⁴¹Bangkok Post, September 30, 1955.

⁴²Royal Thai Government Gazette, October 11, 1955.

⁴³Ministerial Regulation No. 4 B. E. 2498 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXXIII. (December 31, 1955).

regulations affecting the Chinese and the appropriate utilization of the educational and economic potential of the Chinese and by facilitating by whatever means the continued integration and assimilation of the Chinese, barring of course any undue external influence.

CHINESE EDUCATION

The influence of education on a country's direction is obvious and even more so when minority elements within a country pursue a course separate and distinct from that which the country itself follows. This trend is especially evident in the independent development of schools and schooling which took place within the Chinese community as related to the whole educational structure in Thailand.

Prior to the Twentieth Century the education of the Chinese in Thailand was of a very simple nature, being provided in a temple or other informal meeting place.¹ Up to this time education had been identified with Buddhism and was primarily used as a religious influence with the teaching being provided by the Buddhist monks. There is little adequate information before this time on the extent of Chinese education among the overseas community; however, it is important to note that there had been no radical change in Chinese elementary education for centuries, so any literate person could pass on to the next

¹Walter F. Veeh, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 180.

generation the standardized knowledge of the Chinese classics.

Among the wealthier Chinese, there was a tendency to send the children to school in China. A limitation on Chinese education during this period was the absence of Chinese women in Thailand. This caused the Chinese men to take Thai wives. It was less likely that the parents of these children would send them to school in China.

CHAPTER III

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Among the wealthier Chinese, there was a tendency to send the children to school in China. A limitation on Chinese education during this period was the absence of Chinese women in Thailand. This caused the Chinese men to take Thai wives. It was less likely that after several generations the parents of these Sino-Thai or lukchin children would send them to China to school or to raise them in the Chinese educational tradition. Also the presence of so many dialects in the immigrant Chinese community allowed coordination for educational purposes mainly along dialectic groupings. The teaching of Mandarin was not yet practiced so there was no single language in which all of the Chinese could be taught.²

Yet another factor during these earlier years was the lack of importance attached to education as a determinant of social position by the Chinese community as a whole. It should be recalled that the waves of immigration up to this time were largely illiterate Chinese from the agrarian communities. Whatever importance was placed on education in China at this time was not evident in the overseas community as in 1838 it was observed that education was held in low esteem within the community.

Scholarship was a luxury indulged in after high status was attained through the accumulation of

²Virginia Thompson, Thailand, the New Siam (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p.109.

wealth; it was not a path to upward mobility. Wealthy merchants hired Chinese teachers to give a classical education to their children, and for the rest there were a few small private schools to which other well-off tradesmen sent their children for a few years, at most.³

The very nature of a transient immigrant society was not a strong basis for providing a stable educational system particularly considering the diverse facets of the Chinese community.

The impetus for the promulgation of the Chinese identity through education did not come until the nationalistic tendencies were awakened in the overseas community during the revolutionary period in China in the early 1900's and the relative percentage of Chinese women immigrants increased considerably, creating Chinese households which would tend toward retention of the Chinese identity.⁴

Even considering the lack of an exerted move on the part of the Chinese to retain their own culture through education, their traditional chauvinism was still apparent throughout the Nineteenth Century. The Thai government accepted the expansion of schooling by the alien minorities, considering it as a disciplinary influence on the children and not that the alien schools were creating a foreign influence on the school children.

The school movement in Thailand was essentially a

³"Second Annual Report of the Morrison Education Society," Chinese Repository, VII, (October, 1838), pp. 308-309.

⁴Yu Lin, "Chinese Overseas," The Chinese Yearbook (1937), p. 1252.

Western innovation brought in by the mission workers. Around 1845 practical education was introduced into Thailand. Most education previously was oriented toward carrying on temple worship. No science, law or medicine was taught up to that time. In this year Prince Mongkut, who later became the king, began a study of scientific subjects.⁵ After assuming the throne he brought teachers into the royal household.

In 1850 a boarding school for Chinese boys was opened in conjunction with other mission schools for Thai boys. The first year a total of twenty-seven Chinese were listed. Several years later a new precedent was started as Chinese girls were admitted to the school.⁶ These first modest schools were of some importance, but the impact of the mission schools on the Chinese community became important only towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. This school established solely by the Chinese for the sons of Chinese and conducted in the Chinese language was later to become Bangkok Christian College.⁷ It was opened in 1901 under the new auspices and became popular with Chinese boys hoping to enter Western business houses and banks.

The overall effect of the old Chinese classical education

⁵Kenneth P. Landon, The Chinese in Thailand (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), p. 261.

⁶M. L. Manich Jumsai, Compulsory Education in Thailand UNESCO Studies on Compulsory Education VIII (Paris, UNESCO, 1951), p. 17.

⁷Landon, op. cit., p. 267.

was small in relation to the number of Chinese and was of little practical value, however, it was a beginning and the introduction of Western style education was opening new avenues for the eager Chinese.

As Western influence brought advanced ideas into Thailand, the possibility of a national education program crystallized and by 1898 a plan for it was originated.⁸ Where previously education was solely for the privileged now a program to reach throughout the country for all classes was being established. This advancement was an outgrowth of a trip by one of King Mongkuk's sons, Prince Damrong, to Europe in 1891 to inspect the schools and school systems. After returning to Thailand he opened a government Department of Education which became the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1908. As the emphasis of education increased the Chinese were in the forefront of the movement. Among the Thai there still existed a native apathy to education, so much so that it was necessary to pay Thai families to send children to school.⁹

The Chinese in Thailand were quicker in understanding the value of education and preceded the Thai by several years in the stress they put on it. This was brought about for several reasons. Although the immigrants had been downgrading

⁸Jumsai, op. cit., p. 25.

⁹Purcell, op. cit., p. 181.

education, they still maintained their historic veneration of scholarship and the revolution in China became an uniting factor for the overseas communities. Without common background of purpose and with the many dialect groups represented among them, there had been little ground for a concerted nationalistic movement. As the revolution was fought for the creation of an united China, the effect on the overseas communities was to bring them closer together in a common cause. The feeling of superiority which the Chinese felt traditionally as a peoples of advanced culture could be manifest in the revolutionary ideas which were sweeping over China.

The prelude to the revolution itself was a revolution taking place in the emigrant areas of South China. This was an educational revolution. Here also mission schools were flourishing and Western style Chinese schools were increasing in number and were stressing practical knowledge in lieu of the traditional approach.¹⁰

The new type of Chinese education, a continuation of the rote memorization of the classical school, though modern in content, was now available to the Chinese in the Thai mission schools, as well as the old home districts of China.

¹⁰China, Inspector General of Customs, Decennial Reports on the Trade, Navigation, Industries, etc., of the Ports Open to Foreign Commerce in China, CCXLVI, 1902-1911 (Shanghai, 1912), pp. 127-128.

The need for greater literacy among the Chinese in Thailand arose from the increasing complexity of business life. Such things as the usefulness of efficient bookkeeping and filing in the large firms, the introduction of banking, the new reliance on correspondence with the Chinese firms in Singapore and Hong Kong created more of an appeal to the commercially oriented community than to the traditional classical background.¹¹

The first of the Chinese community supported schools was originally sponsored by all of the five major speech groups. Due to the strength and position of the Teochiu speech group, the institution used this language and attracted mostly students and teachers of that language group. This was disconcerting to the other four groups, and subsequently they formed their own schools with instruction in their dialects. These schools were established over a period of years. In addition to the Teochiu school, others were established by the Hakka group in 1913, the Cantonese in 1914, the Hakkien in 1916, and the Hainanese school in 1921. This order virtually parallels the power and resources of each speech group.¹² As the educational organization became more concrete within the Chinese community the whole Thai educational system was undergoing a similar consolidation.

¹¹G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 169.

¹²Ibid.

Under the educational system of Thailand there are four types of schools; government, local, municipal and private. The government school is one set up and operated as a model by the Ministry of Public Instruction. The local school is organized and supported by the voluntary effort of a community, sometimes with a subsidy from the Primary Education Fund. Municipal schools were a new type first introduced in 1936-37. They were operated in newly created municipalities on a similar pattern as the local school and subsidized by municipal funds. A private school was one maintained as a private enterprise, dependent on philanthropy or a tuition fee. These included the mission and Chinese schools.¹³

In 1919 the Private Schools Law was passed bringing them under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Instruction. The principles of the private schools had to be registered with the government and had to be adapted to the standard set by the Ministry of the second year of secondary school. Further stipulations included that all alien teachers must study Thai and pass language examinations within six months or one year after beginning to teach, and that Thai language must be taught three hours a week.¹⁴ These regulations

¹³Statistical Yearbook, Thailand, 1939-44, pp. 118-119.

¹⁴Private Schools Law B. E. 2462 Collection of Education Laws, Thailand. In the Thai language, (Bangkok, 1959).

were not singled out as being specifically against the Chinese as all of the mission schools were effected. None the less, it shocked the Chinese conservatism into protesting through their newspapers. The initial opposition by the Chinese, assisted by the lax enforcement due to the impracticability of the laws, was sufficient to restrain the Chinese from more overt action until later laws were passed.¹⁵

The first Primary Education Act was passed in 1921 making it compulsory for all children seven through fourteen to attend school at least four years. They could meet these requirements only by attending a government or a private school which followed the regular Thai course of study and used books approved by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶ This law was put into effect gradually, and the emphasis was not in the Bangkok area, so most of the Chinese schools were not particularly effected. Under the absolute monarchy a strong enforcement policy was not followed, and what enforcement there was, was exercised in the outlying regions of the country.

This period of grace for the Chinese schools was to end abruptly when the nationalistic minded constitutional regime came into power in 1932. Although these initial laws did not impose too much upon the Chinese schools, the schools

¹⁵Yu Lin, "Twin Loyalties in Siam," Pacific Affairs, IX (June, 1936), pp. 191-200.

¹⁶Primary Education Act B. E. 2464 Collection of Education Laws, Thailand. in the Thai language, (Bangkok, 1959).

were brought under the control of the government and would be subject to whatever policies the government might adopt in the future.

With the revolution of 1911 in China causing the great zeal for education, many Chinese schools were being started in Thailand. Chinese education was given further momentum by the success of the Koumintang drive in 1926 and 1927 and the adoption of the Three Principles of Sun Yat Sen as the foundation of Chinese education.¹⁷

Before 1928 the rise of the schools had excited and degree of interest and attention to them by the Siamese, and it seems that the administration was expecting them to be a source of tension. Writing in 1924, W. A. Graham said:

These schools, which date from shortly after the Chinese revolution, were at first looked upon by the Siamese with suspicion, as it was thought that they unculcated revolutionary principles, and checked the free mixing of Chinese with Siamese blood which has been so much to the advantage of Siam. The suspicion which seemed at one time likely to lead to interference and suppression, though not unreasonable, had apparently faded away, a measure of purely nominal control had been accepted, and the schools in question flourished and increased. They are certainly creating a class with aspirations and ideals largely foreign to, and seemingly incompatible with those of Siam.¹⁸

The decisive incident in restraining the expanding Chinese educational program was the visit in 1928 of the Siamese king, Prachathnipok, to the Chinese schools in Bangkok

¹⁷Purcell, op. cit., p. 182.

¹⁸W. A. Graham, Siam, Vol. I (London: Alexander Moring, 1924), pp. 256-257.

and in the Southern Provinces. He was impressed with the problem of devising a more adequate control over the Chinese schools. His trip was followed by that of the Minister of Public Instruction, and further restrictions were placed on the Chinese schools. The old law of Thai language examinations for alien teachers after six months residency was rescinded to immediate examination before having teaching privileges. The teachers in the Chinese schools usually came direct from China, but with the restriction, any large scale importation of teachers was no longer feasible since a teacher would have to spend a year learning the Thai language. Under the original law, the lax enforcement had allowed three or four years of teaching without having to take language exams. On the basis of the new decree several Chinese schools were closed in 1930 and 1931.¹⁹

The really serious difficulties with the Chinese schools came after the 1932 coup d'etat. The promotion of education was one of the main platforms of the revolutionary party. It was their aim to have fifty percent literacy within a ten year period of their proposed administration. The existence of such a strong alien education system was not consistent with the nationalistic interests of the new regime. Dr. Landon speaking of the extent of the Chinese school said:

These Chinese schools were alien in purpose and character. From the beginning they were founded

¹⁹Landon, op. cit., p. 268.

to preserve the foreign culture of a minority population, to perpetuate the Chinese language and Chinese nationalism. Whenever the law conflicted with their purpose, they got around it if they could --and disobeyed if they could not. The problem of enforcement of the Primary Education Law with its strict provisions about the teaching of the Thai language was therefore enormous.²⁰

To give some indication of the degree of Chinese influence in the schools, in 1931-32 there were 6,375 schools of which 1,150 were private schools. Of the 667,726 pupils in school that year 52,809 were in private schools. Five years later in 1936-37 there were 9,344 schools of which 1,235 were private. Also the private schools had 85,978 of the total student body of 1,227,227.²¹ During this five year period then there was a total school increase of around 3,000 schools which is approximately a fifty percent increase and with the students almost doubling in number. Similarly the private schools only increased by about 100 baht with over a fifty percent increase in students.

Of course the Chinese were only a part of the private school system, but they were also participants in the mission school segment, and therefore, played a significant role in the private school position.

In 1931-32 of the 545 teachers of alien birth in the private schools 326 were Chinese.²² This is not particularly

²⁰Ibid., 269.

²¹Statistical Yearbook, Thailand, 1938.

²²Purcell, op. cit., p. 183.

impressive considering there were 15,005 teachers, but as the representation of a powerful minority group it was significant.

With the drive of the new regime the emphasis on the national values had a direct bearing on Chinese education. The National Educational Policy of 1933 did not alter the existing law but merely put teeth into the enforcement, particularly in the Bangkok area. The real purpose was to make education in Thailand Thai in character as well as name.

The Chinese schools were set up so the mornings were devoted to Chinese studies in the Chinese language, and the afternoons were devoted to Siamese. This meant less emphasis on the afternoon Thai study sessions. Government inspectors found that many Chinese children could not read the Thai language, although they were supposed to have been studying it approximately three hours a day over a three year period. The results of these impromptu inspections revealed rather clearly that the Thai studies were being neglected in favor of Chinese.

In retaliation the twenty-eight hour school week was arranged to allow twenty-one hours in Thai studies. Foreign languages, which included Chinese could only be taught in the afternoon and only a maximum of the remaining seven hours of the school week. School schedules were closely scrutinized and it became an offence to deviate from them once they were set up.²³

²³Skinner, op. cit., pp. 227-234.

The Chinese community was sufficiently aroused to circulate a petition, which was signed by some six thousand parents and more than three hundred business firms, protesting the laws and asking for more time to teach the Chinese language and also to allow Chinese teachers permission to teach without first having to pass the Thai language examination. The government refused to make any concessions and the regulations remained, affecting the missionary teachers as well as the Chinese.

The Chinese, not to be outdone, resorted to several devious methods of getting around the restrictions. Local Chinese who could pass the language examination did so and turned their permits over to new teachers arriving from China. The government retaliated by requiring photographs and fingerprints. Another trick was to reduce each hour of Thai studies ten minutes and devote it to Chinese. One of the extreme measures taken was the installment of a burglar alarm system which rang when inspectors were sighted. The unqualified teachers would hide and be replaced by qualified ones during the inspection tours. In the long run the inspectors were not fooled, and between 1933 and 1935 some 79 schools were closed for infractions of the law.²⁴ The sharp reduction and gradual increase can be seen in the following list of Chinese schools.

²⁴Chun-po Chen, "Chinese Overseas," The Chinese Yearbook, 1935-36, pp. 428-455.

Year	Schools	Teachers	Students
1933-34	271	-	8000
1934-35	193	291	4742
1935-36	191	311	7562
1936-37	224	482	9124
1937-38	233	492	16711 ²⁵

Other ways of escaping the Thai educational restrictions were to send the children back to China to school or to one of the neighboring countries, such as Laos, Cambodia, or Burma, which had good Chinese schools relatively free from obstruction by the local government. In southern Thailand the Chinese sent their children to Singapore or Hong Kong. Those receiving an education abroad naturally came from the wealthier Chinese families as this opportunity was not available to the majority of Chinese children in Siam. The other alternatives which the Chinese could consider were the Thai and other private schools and the government schools. The disadvantage of these were the lack of Chinese courses offered in the curriculum. The Western mission schools were popular because of the opportunity of learning Western languages, the excellence of the institutions and the commerce courses. The government schools were never adequate in facilities for the Thai themselves, much less for the additional Chinese children.

²⁵These figures provided by the Statistical Yearbook, Thailand, 1934-35, page 418 and by the Siam Gazetteer, (Bangkok, 1949), p. 229.

Considering the whole Chinese population in Thailand between 1900 and the mid-40's, only a minority of the Chinese children attended school or obtained a formal education of any kind; however, this group would be the most likely to assume the leadership of the community eventually, and the scope of their education is important for this reason.

Skinner depicts the Chinese school system up to this time as this:

The tragedy of education for the Chinese in Thailand ...lay simply in the inability of the Thai government to affect its not unworthy ends. The government aim was to educate Chinese children as Thai--to encourage assimilation. The logical way to do this would have been to supply attractive, useful and inexpensive alternatives to education in the Chinese schools, that is, a sufficient number of government schools offering instruction in Chinese language and history as well as the usual Thai curriculum. This course was rendered unthinkable, however, by the limited financial resources made available for education, the lack of trained personnel, and a hypernationalistic temper in government circles. Instead the Ministry of Education tried to remake the schools into agencies of forced assimilation. The net result was a strong intensification of ill feeling and suspicion between the Thai elite and the Chinese, a strengthening of Chinese in group sentiment which retarded assimilation, and an emasculated education of limited value or no education at all for the children of Chinese parentage. There was more than just a grain of truth in the widespread feeling during the 1930's that the Chinese children schooled in Siam learned to be good citizens neither of China nor of Thailand.²⁶

As the Sino Japanese War broke out in the latter part of the 1930's the effect on the Thai government was to execute more completely the present restrictions on the Chinese in

²⁶Skinner, op. cit., p. 234.

every phase of their life and the educational restrictions were no exception. The number of Chinese teachers decreased as the Thai teachers became more predominant. The period of 1936-38, which had seen a lessening of the stringency of the restrictions, was followed by a period of intensified inspection. In April 1939 new restrictions were placed on the Chinese schools. These students of the compulsory ages seven through fourteen were further limited to only two hours of Chinese language instruction a week and all other subjects must be taught in Thai. By July of that year twenty-five Chinese schools were closed.²⁷

The grand climax of government containment of the Chinese followed in the ensuing months as not only schools but printing presses, newspaper offices and association headquarters were searched for evidence of suspected work of undercover societies in league with activities going on in China, and to forestall any possible acts of sedition or unrest. Seven more schools were closed, all among the larger important Chinese schools.

As part of the whole restraining attitude of Premier Phibun's administration, the line was held firmly on the Chinese education program although there was a tendency to use more of a liberal policy. A few of the schools closed in 1939 were allowed to reopen as compulsory private schools, with instruction entirely in Thai, and just a few hours a week

of Chinese. Many of the larger Chinese schools in Bangkok were refused registration as Chinese schools so they changed their names to become Thai schools, teaching no Chinese whatever. By 1940 additional restrictions, such as requiring all Thai nationals to know and use the Thai language, were aimed at locally born Chinese and to some extent Malaysians, who had never learned or did not use Thai. By the end of 1940 there were no Chinese schools, as such, in operation outside of Bangkok, as the new restrictions caused a mass closure of them throughout the country. In Bangkok, the number was reduced to two by 1941.²⁸ Until the coming of the Japanese the offensive against the Chinese was rigorously maintained.

Through the initial years of the Second World War there was little change in the attitude toward the Chinese by the Thai government. During the alliance with the Japanese it was suspected that the Japanese at first might seek some suppressive action against the overseas Chinese, however as the war period ended it was generally thought that they treated them better than the Thai did except for the forced labor in Burma. The Japanese had visions of an Empire in Asia and there was no reason to alienate the commercially important minority group of Chinese. The upheaval of the war years with the Chinese losing to the Japanese in China made these bleak years of containment and repression for the Thai Chinese as far as the Thai government policy was concerned. The nationalistic

²⁸Statistical Year Book, Thailand 1939-44, p. 127.

attitude of the Phibun administration of Thai-ifying the whole economy and community, did much to alienate the Chinese. As the war years progressed, the apparent approaching victory of the Western Allies created turmoil in the internal politics of Thailand which brought a new government into power, since the Phibun administration was thought to have been too closely associated with the Japanese.

A whole new outlook was brought about as the new power position of the Nationalist Chinese government required recognition by the Thai. One of the immediate startling changes of the post war period was the complete reversal of policy toward the Chinese. For the first time diplomatic relations were established with China and an Embassy and four consulates were opened. The immediate effect on the school system was a free rein of action as the number of Chinese schools increased to over 400 by the end of 1948.²⁹ This did not mean, however, that their curriculum was allowed to be decided upon by the Chinese themselves and uncontrolled by the Thai government.

In the Treaty of Amity the Thai signed with the Chinese in January, 1946, the only provision for education was that "the nationals of each of the High Contracting Parties shall have...the liberty to establish schools for the education of their children...in accordance with the laws and regulations

²⁹Wendell Blanchard, Thailand, its People, its Society, its Culture (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1958), p. 457.

of the country." (Article VI).³⁰ In the agreement between the two countries, the wording of the treaty did not permit the Chinese to follow whatever course they desired concerning education. By placing the education of the children, in accord with the law and regulation of the country, the Thai assured that they still controlled the essential nature of the educational program.

To make the position of the Thai government more clear, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. R. Seni, stated:

Chinese schools in Siam will likewise receive treatment not less favorable than that given to schools of any nationality. In schools for primary education, which is compulsory in Siam, all children have to learn the Siamese language, it is, however, the intention of his Majesty's Government to afford appropriate opportunity and the necessary number of hours for the teaching of a foreign language in such schools. His Majesty's Government have no intention of improving restrictions in the teaching of foreign languages in Secondary Schools.³¹

After so many years of suppression with the new sense of freedom the Chinese identity grew as the Chinese Embassy sought to expand Chinese education and to organize a school system under the control of the Embassy's cultural officer. The Chinese were hoping to have the primary school regulations revised so they might reinstate a more Chinese oriented education, but the Thai government was insistent on enforcing

³⁰Thailand. Treaty of Amity between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of China. B. E. 2489 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXIII, part 20.

³¹As cited in Skinner, op. cit., p. 284.

private school regulations, particularly those provisions limiting the hours of Chinese taught and the registration required with the Ministry of Education. When the Chinese became too obstinate and refused registration or held student strikes or hinted at closing their stores, the Thai government would close the Chinese schools.

In 1947 the Chinese Ambassador secured some concessions from the Thai, concerning the examinations for Chinese teachers, the selection of textbooks, and the use of the Chinese language in teaching some subjects such as geography and history. Despite these few concessions the government adhered to the principles of compulsory education for everyone and fixed qualifications for private school teachers.

Like the swing of the pendulum going from one extreme to the other, 1948 brought former Premier Phibun into power again, a result of the November 1947 Coup d'etat. With a rebirth of the anti-Chinese sentiment similar to the mid-thirties, the Chinese middle schools were closed and the primary schools brought under strict control.³² Visibly these limitations on the Chinese were to the advantage of the Thai as this was a period of drastic changes in China and the Overseas Community was affected by these internal conditions in China. Between 1948-50 the communist elements in

³²Lamiston Sharp (ed.) Area Handbook on Thailand HRAF Subcontractor's Monograph (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1956).

the Thai-Chinese Community were experiencing a steady increase in power and prestige as the Communist Army was overwhelming the Nationalists. The Chinese teachers, in general, constituted a vanguard in the acceptance and propagation of the New Democracy.³³

Premier Phibun was considered an extremely Nationalist as was seen by the restricted education of the Chinese school system in the late thirties. His return assured no laxity of control over the Chinese. Where there had been 17,000 Chinese students during the years of 1937-38 there were now over 175,000.³⁴

For an administration which was noted for its nationalistic tendencies, this revelation was rather disquieting, and as might be expected, more drastic steps were to follow to reverse the trend.

To begin with, Chinese schools which had failed to register according to the law were not allowed to open the following academic year. All Chinese secondary schools applications for registration were rejected. Since 1948, Chinese secondary education has been limited to elective courses in Thai middle schools or to a few Chinese evening schools in Bangkok.³⁵ This marked the end of Chinese secondary schools.

³³Skinner, op. cit., p. 323.

³⁴Statistical Year Book Thailand 1937-38, p. 201 and Statistical Year Book Thailand 1950, p. 245.

³⁵Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff Minority Problems in South East Asia (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 45.

Even the Chinese school which could register, were required for the first time since the war, to follow every provision of the private school regulations. This created a chaotic situation in the administration of the schools. Limitations on the curriculum followed as Chinese instruction was reduced to two hours per day.

Perhaps the most formidable plan which stunned the Chinese was that of reducing the total number of Chinese schools allowable to 152. The ratio of distribution of the schools was set up to give eight schools to the Bangkok district (or jongwat), three schools to the four outlying districts of heavy Chinese population and two schools for the remaining districts. This reduction was to be accomplished over a period of years by closing schools for infraction of the regulations and not permitting new ones to open. The impact of this ultimatum had a sobering influence on the Chinese educators and they complied with the letter of the regulations.

This struggle between Chinese schools and the Ministry of Education continued until 1955. During this seven year period the Ministry of Education was intransigent in its effort to bring the Chinese into line. The government policies were correlated in several areas, designed to rid the Chinese schools of any political influence, to bring the curriculum and school staffs into Thai sphere of influence and to limit the financial base of the schools, further causing them to

rely more on the Thai system.

The communist tendencies in the Chinese Community can be held partly responsible for the invoking of the more stringent policies. The fear of internal subversion necessitated some action by the Thai government to check any activities which could be harmful to the country.

In mid-June 1948 police raids began on the Chinese schools, aimed at eliminating their use for political purposes and instruction. By 1950 fourteen Chinese schools had been irrevocably closed on charges of political activity.³⁶ In raids that followed, in some of the largest Chinese schools in Bangkok, Communist propaganda was found and letters showing connections with the Chinese Communist Party were uncovered.³⁷ The government's action is somewhat vindicated of unnecessary accusations and suppression since the raids did uncover some covert action on the part of some Chinese.

Another implementation of the Thai control over the Chinese schools was through the school principal. By the private schools law all private schools had to employ a Thai principal.³⁸ In 1951 the government began making use of the principal for thought control within the schools. The

³⁶ Bangkok Post, April 10, 1950.

³⁷ Liberty, May 22, 1950.

³⁸ Private Schools Law B. E. 2462 Collection of Education Laws, Thailand (Bangkok, 1959).

Chinese school principals were called together and given a list of twenty two banned Chinese books and instructed to keep close observation on the political ideology and activity of the Chinese faculty and students. The following month the Chinese schools were prohibited from possessing or allowing the students to read the banned books. Varied restrictions were continually increased in the next few years. In 1952, the Thai principals were held responsible for all student assemblies and no gathering of students could be held without the principal being present. In engaging Chinese teachers, the principals were informed that the "thought" of the teachers must be investigated and if any leftist tendencies were found, the hiring principal would be held responsible.

Throughout the next few years these restrictions intensified. Some schools were closed because of communist activity. With the passing of the Anti Communist Activity Act,³⁹ the school system came under closer surveillance. The Private Schools Division of the Ministry of Education increased its staff of inspectors so that every Chinese school in Bangkok could be visited at least once a month. Simultaneously the inspection of the Chinese schools by the police began. The small tutorial Chinese schools of less than seven students, which had existed since the beginning of Chinese education in Thailand and which had not fallen

³⁹Anti Communist Activities Act B. E. 2495 International Translation of Thai Law 1952, p. 295.

into the private school category because of the smallness of the group, came for the first time under the inspection of educational authorities. The Thai were not leaving any loop hole for the Chinese to evade the inspections of the educational system.

In 1954, a regulation made it mandatory to have an intensive screening of all the non-Thai teachers in private schools. An educational supervisor was appointed to all Chinese schools to prevent any Communist subversive activities. During the same year 152 teachers of the Bangkok Chinese schools were discharged for alleged communist sympathies. The supervisors who had been appointed previously, were mostly retired police officers and in January 1955 the duties of the Thai principals were transferred to the supervisor with the principal becoming assistant to the supervisor. In effect the Chinese schools were virtually under a modified police control. Later, however, these supervisors were dispensed with.

In conjunction with these policies of thought control and political purification, a series of measures were forced through, designed to bring the curriculum and the administration of the Chinese school closer to the norm desired by the Thai government. The existing regulations of only 10 hours per week in Chinese instruction and the requirement of a fourth grade Thai language proficiency for Chinese teachers were enforced up through 1950. Between 1948-50 some thirty

Chinese schools were closed for not complying with these regulations.⁴⁰ These restrictions were added to again in 1951 as a stepped up program of Thai-ification continued. As a means of assuring an equal knowledge of Thai as well as Chinese, a grade system was required to be followed in that at whatever level of instruction a student was in his Chinese studies, the same level would be maintained in Thai studies. This was to provide an equal proficiency in both studies. Initially this requirement was limited to first and second grades, but later became necessary for all grades.

To reduce the number of hours taught in or devoted to Chinese, a new regulation provided for subsidies to go only to the schools teaching less than six hours of Chinese a week. Since many Chinese schools relied on the subsidy to keep in operation, they had to change their curriculum to qualify.

To control the books used in the Chinese school system a committee from ten of the Bangkok Chinese schools were given the responsibility of writing new text books which would uniformly be used throughout the Chinese school system. The purpose of the new books was to stress orientation and loyalty to Thailand. As a minor badgering technique, it became necessary to sing the Thai National Anthem every

⁴⁰Bangkok Post, April 10, 1950.

morning at the flag raising ceremony, which galled the Chinese somewhat at first, but they had no alternative.⁴¹

In 1953, the Private Schools Division of the Ministry of Education announced a plan to require a third year secondary school level language proficiency for all foreign language teachers, but with the critical shortage of teachers this was relaxed in 1954. The allowable hours of Chinese language instruction were reduced again to five and a half hours a week for first grade pupils in June 1955.

Under this steady barrage of restrictions, the influence and responsibility of the Chinese School Boards diminished to nothing and the Chinese Associations which financed the private schools were stripped of any authority of running the schools. Those who had contributed freely to the support of the schools previously, now saw no use of supporting schools which were Chinese in name only. No new teachers were coming from China and those in Thailand were leaving the profession because of the heavy restrictions. As the salaries of the Chinese teachers increased due to their scarcity, the schools could not afford to pay them. It is likely that many of the schools which closed by 1955 did so for financial reasons as much as being closed by the government for political activities or failure to comply with the regulations.

⁴¹Thompson and Adloff, loc. cit.

The net result of the government's policies was rather damaging to say the least to the cause of Chinese education. Between 1948 and 1955 the number of Chinese schools was reduced from around 430 to 195.⁴² As mentioned previously the general plan was to set a minimum allowable number at 152. The plan called for a reduction to 141 schools outside the Bangkok area and by 1956 this was exceeded as there were only about 130. In addition to fewer schools, the enrollment dropped in the remaining schools to between one half to one third of the peak 1947 levels. Of the allowable enrollment of 2,056 students in North Siam in 1955 of eight schools in operation, there were only 1,400 students. In 1955-56 there were only 22,000 Chinese students outside the Bangkok area.⁴³

In Bangkok the decrease in Chinese educational facilities was not so drastic, but still very significant. From 1948 to 1956 the number of schools fell from 100 to 63. In early 1956 the total enrollment in the Bangkok area was about 27,000. Considering the total change, a drop from 175,000 to 50,000 students in eight years gives some idea of how effectively Chinese education is being diminished.⁴⁴

Adding together all of the changes which have taken

⁴²Richard J. Coughlin, "The Chinese in Bangkok," American Sociological Review, XX No. 3 (June, 1955), pp. 311-316.

⁴³Skinner, op. cit., p. 370.

⁴⁴Ibid.

place within the Chinese educational system to the present time, it is rather apparent that barring any unforeseen incidents there is little possibility that the Chinese community can provide sufficient Chinese education to draw the ethnic Chinese closer to the Chinese culture. Of those who finish four years in a Chinese school only a fraction have acquired a speaking knowledge of Chinese, much less a solid foundation in written Chinese. Even when the full ten hours per week has been devoted to Chinese, it was not sufficient to provide an usable background and the shrinking number of Chinese teachers further lessens possibilities of learning Chinese adequately. The absence of any formal secondary schooling for the Chinese creates such a great lapse of time between primary schooling and maturity, since all intervening education must be Thai, mission schools or possibly abroad, that those who did learn Chinese in primary school upon reaching maturity have little awareness of the traditional Chinese culture.

Taking this small segment of the ethnic Chinese who do receive an adequate Chinese education, it is only an extremely small portion of the total ethnic Chinese population which is even exposed to any Chinese education. In contrast to previous periods there is virtually no opportunity for study in China under present conditions. Alleviating the whole educational picture in Thailand has been the rapid growth of Thai schools and educational facilities since the

war. This increase has grown more quickly than the Thai population itself, which has allowed Chinese to send their children to Thai primary schools. The great majority of third generation Chinese children are today being educated in Thai schools and among the second generation Chinese about half are attending. Among the elite, there is a marked preference for mission and foreign schools.⁴⁵

Since 1955 the sharpness of the Thai government's policy toward Chinese education has lost its edge, however, the government has maintained its vigilance in keeping the Chinese educational program within limits suitable to the government.

The intensity of the government's containment has possibly had both positive and negative results. By denying the Chinese a reasonable access to their cultural heritage the government may have driven them to retain their Chinese identity more tenaciously than if a suitable degree of Chinese education had been allowed. On the other hand considering the long run shape of events, the absence of adequate Chinese education now may draw the Chinese closer to Thai and Western educational traditions more quickly than if they had been allowed to follow their own programs.

For the present, those Chinese with an extensive

⁴⁵G. William Skinner, Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958).

Chinese education will most likely lean toward their Chinese-ness, but the younger generation without a strong Chinese education should eventually draw away from their Chinese-ness. This eventuality is governed by the disadvantages of being considered a dyed-in-the-wool Chinese, the advantages of being a Thai legally, and that the opportunity of returning to China are presently slim.

Whether one agrees or not with the procedure which the Thai government has taken, the result is apparently taking shape of giving the Chinese no alternative but to assimilate to an eventual Thai identity.

Not only was the majority of the people involved in agriculture, but the availability of good soil in the under populated country offered an adequate living, so that few Thai were interested in pursuing other forms of work.

Throughout the history of pre-twentieth century Thailand there existed the sharp dichotomy of peasantry and aristocracy. Before the increased trading activities of the mid-nineteenth century, there had been no need for a very large merchant class or a working commercial class. The aristocracy, complacent in its own position, had no desire to enter into any form of work other than government service; the peasantry, content in agriculture, could not be lured away from the farming community to seek work in the cities.

As the new world market for rice developed, the incentive for increased production further encouraged the

Thai to remain in agriculture. With the demand accelerated, more and more land was put under cultivation, thus keeping the Thai more closely bound to the land, which he actually preferred.

CHAPTER IV

CHINESE IN THE THAI LABOR FORCE

The development of the labor force in Thailand is best understood through an awareness of the attitudes toward labor of the Thai people themselves when industrialization first came to the country. As in other less advanced countries of that time, the economy was primarily agrarian. Not only was the majority of the people involved in agriculture, but the availability of good soil in the under populated country offered an adequate living, so that few Thai were interested in pursuing other forms of work.

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In the psychology of the Thai there existed a basic attitude which might explain further his lack of desire to leave agriculture, as other forms of labor were associated with compulsory service. For centuries nearly all of the population was subject to forced labor in one form or another. This was either corvee¹ service or slavery. These institutions remained a part of the Thai scene until the Twentieth Century.¹ The people were divided into two classes: freemen who performed corvee¹ service unless they substituted payment in some commodity, and slaves who worked for the king unless a substitute payment was made by their owner.

Corvee¹ service in essence was a system of taxation on the people and the most direct contact which the majority of the people had with the government. Under this system every man over seventeen was required to give part of the year---usually three months---to the service of the government. This work, usually determined by local officials, consisted of construction of roads, canals, temples, fortresses, and other installations. There were only two ways for the freedman to avoid this: either through education which might

¹Wendell Blanchard, Thailand its People its Society its Culture (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1958), p. 287.

lead to government service, or by making payments in a commodity such as rice, ivory, or timber. Naturally many preferred to make a payment in goods rather than services. Craftsmen fulfilled this obligation by working for a "patron" which freed them from paying for the corvee¹. Since working in agriculture allowed the Thai to replace corvee¹ service with a payment of rice, for example, it was expedient that he not enter into other forms of work.

Compulsory labor was reduced by successive royal decrees, especially during the reign of King Mongkut, who desired to use wage labor in public works wherever possible. The Chinese, eager to be wage earners, were available for the work but there was still a scarcity of labor. Corvee¹ service as such was abolished in 1899 and was replaced by a capitation tax.²

The crux of the whole corvee¹ system was the fact that the historically favored position of the Chinese made them exempt from corvee¹ service. Even after the instituting of the capitation tax their tax was lower than that for the Thai nationals.

Considering this prelude to the expanding economy, as the extractive industries got under way, the best available labor was Chinese. The industriousness of the immigrant Chinese labor stems from the purpose of their immigration.

²G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 97.

The Chinese immigrated for several reasons. Primarily they came to make money. This was either to send back to China to help the family at home or to enable the worker to save enough to go into business for himself. These were great incentives for the Chinese, and the available work opportunities were very suitable to their purposes.³

The scarcity of labor in all fields but rice farming created an ideal situation for the Chinese. During the Nineteenth Century there was no restriction on the Chinese acquiring uncultivated land, so if they were interested in rice cultivation they could enter that field. However, as there was more money to be made in specialized commercial agriculture and in wage labor, they were content to leave the lower paying rice farming to the Thai.

Among the first industries into which the Chinese were drawn in fairly large numbers were the tin mines. Tin had been extracted for centuries and sent to Sumatra.⁴ As early as 1623 the Dutch established factories in South Siam, the center of the tin deposit, to smelt the ore. The influence of other foreigners came and went as royal policy kept nationals of other countries out of Thailand, but the Chinese always remained in their favored position, and the role they

³Ta Chen, "Chinese Migrations with Special Reference to Labor Conditions," U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 340, 1923.

⁴Virginia Thompson, Thailand, the New Siam (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 454.

played as traders for the king assured their continued access into Thailand. The Chinese have maintained a veritable monopoly of mine labor. Prior to the introduction of more modern techniques, mining was done with hammers, chipping away the crystals. In the Nineteenth Century the earth washing technique was employed which made use of pumps and other devices which required some more skill. These Chinese workings were generally small but still the Chinese monopolized the labor, as a mine owner would usually hire members of his own speech group. The mining interests fluctuated during the first half of the Nineteenth Century because of unstable conditions with neighboring Burma, which bordered the tin mining regions.

The big push in mining came during the reign of King Mongkut. Immigration was encouraged and between 1870 to 1884 on the tin island of Phuket off the west coast of Siam there was an increase in the Chinese population⁵ from 28,000 to 40,000, the great majority of whom labored in the mines.⁶

Labor conditions in the mines were very bad, with long hours, and very arduous work. Consistent with bad conditions were high wages, which attracted the money hungry Chinese. Like most booms, this one gave out for one reason or another, primarily because of the low price of tin and

⁵Daniel B. Bradley, "Paket," Journal of the Siam Society III (1906), pp. 44-47.

⁶Warington H. Smith, Five Years in Siam Vol. I (London: John Murray, 1898), pp. 317-319.

the demand for manual labor in lower Siam, which provided better working conditions and a higher wage. By 1897 the Chinese population on this island had declined to less than twelve thousand.⁷

In Southeast Siam, the other main mining area, conditions were worse. The mine owners took no safety or health precautions to safeguard their coolies, and the high death rate because of fever and dysentery dampened the enthusiasm for any increased immigration. Without a labor source, most of the mining operations in this area were abandoned, but the Chinese continued mining on a very reduced scale.

In 1907 basket dredging was introduced by the Australians and it was so successful the other Western companies quickly incorporated it into their operations.⁸ The Chinese mine owners were still content to hire coolie labor instead of buying the dredging equipment. By 1937 there were thirty nine dredges in operation. Although the Chinese could not afford the new equipment, and retained the old method of open cut and gravel pumping, they maintained and expanded their output. Around 1929 the production of Western firms surpassed that of the small Chinese mines and continued to surpass that of the obsolete Chinese mines. However, the majority of the labor force for all the mines remained

⁷G. E. Gerini, "Historical Retrospect of Junkceylon Island," Journal of the Siam Society II (1905), p. 52.

⁸Thompson, op. cit., p. 435.

predominantly Chinese. The 1937 census listed 7,551 Chinese nationalists and 8,966 Thai nationals engaged in mining. The great majority of the latter were almost certainly ethnic Chinese with Thai citizenship.⁹

In the post war period the operation of the Chinese in tin mining has declined, not only in investment and ownership, but in the labor force also. The Chinese still pursue the old methods of ore recovery and the dredging companies' output is about seventy percent above the Chinese.¹⁰

In 1950 there was 324 tin mines, employing about 13,500. Of the mines fifteen carried on dredging operations and the majority of the rest were small mines owned by the Chinese. Of the 13,500 mine workers 10,600 are listed as Thai and 3,000 as Chinese.¹¹ Again statistics are deceiving, in that ethnic Chinese with Thai citizenship are considered as Thai and counted as such. Nevertheless the proportion of ethnic Thai is increasing in mine workers. The more skilled labor used in large dredge operations is still mainly provided by Chinese.

As the government policies change and with a loss of any immigration potential to refurbish the labor supply, it is expected that more Thai will enter this industry as

⁹Statistical Year Book, Thailand 1939/40-44, p. 75.

¹⁰Thailand. Bulletin of Statistics October/December 1954, p. 37.

¹¹International Tin Study Group, Statistical Bulletin IV (October, 1951), p. 42.

they invade others also. The full significance of the Chinese in tin mining, which supplies one of the three largest exports of Thailand, is not dealt with here. Only the part labor plays is considered. The whole commercial aspect of mining will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent chapter.

As mentioned previously, the Chinese did not take a direct interest in rice farming, but were interested in more specialized agriculture. The Chinese agricultural labor on Chinese plantations during most of the Nineteenth Century was of considerable commercial importance. They became aware of the economic advantage of specialization, producing seri leaf and vegetables for local markets and pepper and sugar for Western markets, cotton for the Chinese market and tobacco for local and Malayan use. The plantations were most prosperous between 1840 and 1880.¹² Their decline resulted from the competition of the European owned plantations in the Colonial countries of Asia and the rising cost of labor stemming from the great demand for labor in Bangkok. Many Chinese still carry on specialized farming for local markets, but the large scale enterprises have died out except for the rubber industry which was to be created in the Twentieth Century.

The draining of the labor force from the plantations

¹²Skinner, op. cit., pp. 111-113.

began around the 1870's and increased rapidly as this was the start of the construction boom which absorbed more and more of the immigrants up through the First World War. Construction work consisted of every type imaginable, from temples to roads and canals. The Chinese were not new to this type of work as they had done much of the Nineteenth Century construction up to that time. The wage labor of the Chinese proved to be more efficient than the conscripted Thai labor. It can be accredited to the prescience of King Julalongkon that the use of Chinese coolie labor contributed greatly to the improvement of Thailand, combined with the skill of Western engineers. This same combination was responsible for a railway system, begun in 1892 and completed by 1900, which radiated from Bangkok.

The heaviest demand for Chinese labor after 1870 came from private enterprises in Bangkok. The growing city required an increased number of workers in the construction and building trades, the booming port absorbed more and more dock workers, and especially the rice mills and sawmills needed both skilled and unskilled labor. By the early Twentieth Century it was estimated the rice and sawmills in Bangkok employed about 10,000 Chinese laborers.¹³

Before the introduction of the Western Streamers, the Chinese junks and the Thai square rigged vessels handled

¹³Cecil A. Carter (ed.) The Kingdom of Siam (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), p. 264.

the bulk of the trading activities. The Chinese labor which had operated these ships was thrown out of work as these were displaced by the new steamships. This group became the dock workers and they operated the small craft called "lighters" which covered routes the larger ships could not travel. The Chinese became so strong in the dock area that they virtually controlled the ports. Coupled with this was a Chinese labor shortage between 1880 and the early nineteen hundreds. In 1990 a Siam counselor report stated,

The coolies seem to consider the present a suitable opportunity to agitate for higher pay. The cost of labor has been steadily going up of recent years, but latterly the men's demands have become more excessive. Difficulty is now being felt in securing lighter's crews and considerable inconvenience and loss has been caused to some of these firms.¹⁴

In the dock areas the Chinese took advantage of their position and were able to keep wages high and conditions close to their liking: Otherwise they would strike or cause a disturbance.

Until after the Second World War, Chinese labor dominated every aspect of the rice industry except the actual farming. The major changes in the composition of the mill work force are true of the whole country but less extensively so in Bangkok. Although unskilled machine tenders are now predominantly Thai. The prevalence of Chinese in

¹⁴Great Britain. Foreign Office, Annual Diplomatic and Consular Reports on the Trade of Siam, 1910 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1911), p. 10.

Bangkok in the unskilled work force is largely a result of the immigrant wave of 1946-48, but outside of the city, in the upcountry region, the Thai are providing the unskilled labor. Even in the more skilled mill positions of engineers, mechanics, iron workers and carpenters, the upcountry positions are being filled by the Thai. In the more responsible positions, the Chinese are still dominant; office staffs at almost all rice mills still consist of first or second generation Chinese.¹⁵

There are several explanations for this shift of personnel. Mainly, however, the Government's attitudes of Thai-ifying the economy has brought about replacement by Thai workers. In addition to this, in the upcountry regions, Thai labor can be hired for much less than Chinese. Although the Chinese are considered more industrious and efficient, they will not work for less than 400 baht per month, whereas the Thai labor wage begins at 200 baht. With the immigrant labor force no longer available to draw from, the labor force must come from the Thai themselves. For the country as a whole a substantial majority of the rice mill workers are no longer ethnic Chinese.¹⁶

With regard to timber, the upsurge of the Chinese into this field started in the mills. There has been little

¹⁵Skinner, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁶Statistical Year Book, Thailand 1953, p. 400.

Chinese labor in the forest operations of the industry. As in the case of the rice mills, the sawmills were predominantly using Chinese labor. One reason for this was the high percent of mills owned by Chinese. The same necessities in the upcountry regions which had increased Thai labor in other areas is also true of the sawmills. The shortage of Chinese labor and the higher wages they ask are squeezing them out of the upcountry labor market. In Bangkok, the smaller mills hire mostly Chinese, about half of whom are locally born. The larger mills employ about fifty one percent Thai. In the European and Thai owned sawmills, less than a third of the unskilled are Chinese, and most of them are locally born. The skilled laborers are a minority in the highly paid positions in the plants. Nevertheless, the Chinese still predominate all over the country among skilled laborers, foremen and office workers of the sawmills.¹⁷

The rubber industry is a completely Twentieth Century enterprise, resulting from the First World War. Rubber prices soared, inducing increased production. Later, prices dropped, creating unsatisfactory labor conditions in the Asian Colonies. To relieve the unemployment which existed, immigration of Chinese to these areas was restricted and many of them were repatriated. This condition continued on through 1931 and the unemployment was becoming particularly serious in Malaya. Chinese poured into Thailand from Malaya during this period, especially after 1927. Using the knowledge

¹⁷Skinner, op. cit., pp. 351-352.

which they had attained on the Malayan rubber plantations, the Chinese were very adept at putting it to work. The bulk of the rubber supply in the 1930's came from the Chinese small holders. There were only two plantations owned by Western companies. Most of the planters and tappers, estimated at 70,000, were Chinese. More recent figures show another decrease evident in the percentage of Chinese labor in this industry. Of the approximately 70,000 tappers listed in 1954 the majority is ethnic Chinese but the proportion of the total number has decreased.¹⁸ This decrease began during the Korean War boom. With Chinese immigration negligible, the high wages offered attracted many of the Thai off the farm.¹⁹

Aside from this encroachment in its tapping labor force, the Chinese are still numerically strong in the processing operations of the crepe factories and smoke houses, and of course the Chinese still dominate the exporting of the product. According to Skinner the Chinese supply now a slight majority of the labor force producing rubber and well over half of the labor engaged in processing it.²⁰

The imprint of Chinese labor was felt not only in

¹⁸James C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1955) p. 104.

¹⁹Blanchard, op. cit., p. 276.

²⁰Skinner, op. cit., p. 353.

the major industries of the country, but they became indispensable in various skilled trades as well as unskilled labor. One of the early authors on Thailand, John Crawford, wrote in 1830 that "The useful arts practiced in Siam are commonly in the hands of the Chinese."²¹ The earliest Nineteenth Century reports indicated specifically that Chinese were dominant among the boat builders, the blacksmiths, tinsmiths, tailors, leather workers and shoemakers. The Siamese maintained a majority position in brick baking, pottery making, cabinet making, masonry, tanning, dyeing, coppersmithing, and rope manufacturing trades. By the 1880's, the Chinese had invaded the carpenter, cabinet making, carriage manufacturing, and goldsmith and silversmith trades. The steady advance by the Chinese can be attributed, in addition to their skill and industriousness, to the guild organization which was brought from China. The young men coming to Thailand were put into apprentice positions in the craft shops, just as they would have been in South China. The tight guild system froze out any non-Chinese and also hardened the guilds along Chinese speech group lines. Friedrich Natzel, a German author, writing in 1876, appraised the situation like this:

While elsewhere they made their living mainly as merchants and only secondary as miners and fishermen, in Siam they controlled the entire economic life and leave to the natives only the cruder

²¹ John Crawford, Journal of An Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China 2nd ed. Vol. II (London: Henry Calburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), pp. 28-29.

aspects of agriculture.²²

Almost fifty years later another account reveals the further extension of the Chinese industriousness and ingenuity in the Thai economy. Reginald Le May, advisor to the Ministry of Commerce and Communication gave this appraisal in 1930:

The rice grower has always remained Siamese, and the Chinese have not as yet made any attempt to oust him from that basic position. But the rice dealer is Chinese. So are the miller and all his coolies, so is the boat builder, an important handicraft in a country where rivers and canals form the highroads. So is the pawnbroker, the tailor, the boat maker, the dyer of cloth, the furniture maker, the iron smith, the market gardener, the fish dealer, the old tin collector, and the banker. One could go on adding to the list almost ad infinitum, but I have no wish to weary the reader with a recitation of almost every craft known to man. Suffice it to say that in practically every form of manual labor, the Chinese hold the field, and the Siamese sit by, watching all the requisite services of life being performed by the uniformly impersonal, very vociferous, but intensely industrial celestial.²³

Over the past hundred years the percentage of Chinese in the non-agricultural labor force has varied, and there are no adequate figures to show definitely their exact position, but various authors have said from seventy to ninety percent of the non-agricultural workers were ethnic Chinese.²⁴ Most recent calculations indicate that the ethnic Chinese

²²Friedrich Ratzel, Die Chinesische Auswanderung (Breslau: I. V. Kern's, 1876), p. 168.

²³Reginald S. Le May, Siamese Tales Old and New (London: Noel Douglas, 1930), p. 165.

²⁴Thompson, op. cit., p. 599.

constitute only from sixty to seventy percent of non-agricultural labor.²⁵

In the industrial labor force, according to the latest figures (1947), about ten percent of the workers can be called skilled and these are predominantly Chinese.²⁶ This decline is the result of several factors. The position of the Chinese in the labor market increased as the industrialization of Thailand commenced. It was not until the 1932 coup d'etat brought to the Government an awareness of the plight of Thailand regarding the whole Chinese problem that any real significant action was taken to solve the problem. Since the 1930's the policies which were successively to restrict and contain the Chinese community were commenced and these regulations increased or decreased as political influences created changes in attitudes.

To draw a clear cut line between labor and the entrepreneurial capacities of the Chinese, a discussion of the positions in the minor industries or small merchant class is included with the general labor situation instead of in the commerce and trade chapter. This is done because the nature of the work is more in keeping with the labor movement and the individual operators are ordinarily considered as in the laboring class.

²⁵U. N. Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, Economic Survey of Siam, 1947 (ECAFE Secretariat, 1948), p. 42.

²⁶Statistical Year Book, Thailand 1952, p. 235.

The really intense government activities pertaining to labor began about 1939. In January of that year, the birds' nest concessions which had always been given to a Chinese firm, became reserved for development by the government.²⁷ The trade in birds' nests had been almost entirely among the Chinese, as they used them in various celebrations. Even after the many centuries that the Chinese had lived in Thailand the Thai had never eaten birds' nests and the consumption had remained entirely Chinese. Later that year a Thai company was organized to sell the nests. Objectively this was a very blatant attempt to squeeze the Chinese out of a traditional Chinese occupation. As a means of Thai-ifying the economic endeavors of the Chinese, it was a rather ludicrous start. However, the Thai persisted and numerous other acts followed quickly.

Of more consequence was the order which the Ministry of Education issued prohibiting Chinese food hawkers from selling their goods around the building of the Ministry of Education and on the grounds of the government schools in Bangkok.²⁸ This was quite a blow, since the Chinese had always provided the source for the mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks of the Thai around the schools and offices and even in the homes. The purpose, as it was carefully explained, was

²⁷Birds Nest Act B. E. 2482, Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 1353.

²⁸Ministry of Education Regulation B. E. 2482 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 1660.

to stimulate the sale and consumption of Thai food, and to encourage some Thai to enter into this lucrative business of food vending. This edict came suddenly and caught both the Chinese seller and the Thai buyer by surprise. Great alarm seized the Chinese as a large number of people were thrown out of work, and a market of over 2,000,000 employees, students and teachers was lost to the Chinese hawkers. Within a few months most of the other government agencies had received similar orders.

This discrimination eventually extended over the whole kingdom and thousands of Chinese were deprived of their means of livelihood and forced to seek new employment. The most serious effect on the Chinese was the far reaching discrimination against Chinese trade and the shutting off of an important avenue of advancement which many Chinese business men had followed. Many of the prosperous Chinese merchants had started as hawkers and food venders.²⁹

An extended period of legislation followed which put the Chinese more and more on the defensive. In April of 1939, the Salt and Tobacco Acts were passed. These minor industries were put under government control. The production of salt fell under firm control and a heavy tax was levied on the commodity.³⁰ Most of the salt producers

²⁹Kenneth P. Landon, The Chinese in Thailand (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), p. 223.

³⁰Salt Act B. E. 2481 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LV, p. 1081. This act was subsequently cancelled in 1946, Salt Act B. E. 2489 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 563.

were Chinese as were the five leading salt exporters. The suddenness of the law forced many firms into bankruptcy. The Tobacco Act establishes similar control and excise duties on production and manufacture.³¹ The uncertainty of the situation caused some of the manufacturers, most of whom were Chinese, to sell out and as they did the government bought the business.

A few days after the passage of these two acts came the Act for the Slaughter of Animals for Food, which was aimed specifically at replacing the Chinese by Thai as pig slaughterers and pork wholesalers. The government was to supervise the slaughter of all cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and buffalo and the permit for butchering was to be issued only to persons approved by the government.³² According to Buddhist tradition against taking life, the Thai had never been in the slaughtering business before. In essence the government was assuming complete control of the meat industry without any experienced Thai personnel to assist in the operation of it.

Concurrent with this Act was the Signboard Act which taxed signs according to area.³³ To catch the Chinese the tax rates were ten times as high for boards more than

³¹Tobacco Act B. E. 2481 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LV, p. 1089.

³²Act for the Slaughtering of Animals B. E. 2482 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 337.

³³Sign Board Act. Revenue Code, Title V. B. E. 2481 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 48.

half of which were devoted to non-Thai lettering. The large Chinese signboards which for years had been a prominent feature of commercial sections of the cities were replaced overnight by small placques lettered in Thai and Chinese.³⁴

The next move in the Thai-ification campaign was aimed at the Chinese taxi drivers. This took the form of an amendment to the Vehicle Act, Motor Car Act and Land Traffic Act. According to the amendments, a person of non-Thai nationality was no longer eligible to secure license to operate taxicabs.³⁵ These laws were designed carefully to not mention the Chinese specifically, but the intent was too evident to deny.

On the heels of this act, followed another which involved an even larger number of Chinese. This was the Thai Vessels Act which required all fishing and trading vessels over a specified gross tonnage operating in Thai territorial waters to be registered by the following October as the property of Thai nationals, or of corporations seventy percent of whose capital must be owned by shareholders of Thai nationality and further required crews manning the ships most be seventy five percent Siamese.³⁶ Although

³⁴Landon, op. cit., p. 230.

³⁵Amendment to the Vehicle Act, Motor Car Act, and Land Traffic Act B. E. 2483 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVII, p. 487.

³⁶Siamese Vessels Act B. E. 2481 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 420.

appearing very harsh on the surface, there was sufficient grounds for making such an arrangement in addition to the desire to make shipping a more Thai controlled industry. This was a rather tenuous period considering the instability which warlike conditions create. There was almost no Thai shipping interests. Not only international shipping but all domestic shipping was in foreign hands; either Chinese or Western companies. Editorials began appearing showing the reliance Thailand had on aliens in a very vital source of communication and freight shipments, particularly with the nearness of war. By limiting foreign control the Thai government hoped to induce Thai nationals to enter the shipping trades and eventually to acquire control of companies itself and develop a merchant marine of its own.³⁷

As far as injecting a 75% Thai crew on the shipping interests, this was reminiscent of an earlier labor restriction of fifty percent Thai minimum in rice mills following the strikes of 1934-35. The results initially were similar in that there was not an adequate Thai work force to assume the positions which would be vacated by the Chinese. Lax enforcement allowed some of the Chinese to keep their jobs. However, the meaning was clear that the Thai government intended to put their own people into industry one way or another.

³⁷Sayam Nixorn (Thai Newspaper) January 20, 1940.

Yet another law followed in August of 1939 called the Act of Fishery Rights in Thai Territorial Waters. All rights to fish in Thailand's territorial waters were closed to foreigners by this act.³⁸ This was the final blow in practically destroying Chinese participation in the fishing industry. In the past the Chinese fish merchants had owned the vessels and had hired Malayan or Thai crews, but the marketing and selling of fish, fresh and dried, both locally and abroad, had been carried on by Chinese.

In 1940 the government began developing a program of Thai fisheries. The plan as outlined called for a cooperative society which would purchase modern fishing equipment. The government would buy the whole catch and sell it either home or abroad. This is another example of the government pushing the aliens out to create a Thai monopoly.³⁹

The last really significant Thai-ification law of this impromptu series was the Liquid Fuels Act, which indirectly was one of the most disastrous for the Chinese. This law provided for the distillation, distribution and importing of liquid fuel to be brought under strict government control.⁴⁰ The government at this time was already building a refinery with a capacity for gas production much larger than normal

³⁸ Act of Fishery Rights in Thai Territorial Fishery Waters B. E. 2482 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 941.

³⁹ Landon, op. cit., p. 237.

⁴⁰ Liquid Fuels Act B. E. 2481 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LVI, p. 327.

requirements.⁴¹ The two Western firms which had previously supplied all of the oil, Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Vacuum, were not willing to accept the new terms and decided to withdraw business from Thailand. This was a blow to the Chinese as they were the employees who were thrown out of work. Not only these employees but the entire distributive network of agents were Chinese, and they became jobless as the petroleum industry passed into Thai hands.

Of singular importance in 1939 were additional regulations which required both private and public industry to employ at least 75 percent Thai national labor. In addition to this a cultural mandate was issued calling on the Thai to eat only food derived from Thai sources, to wear clothing of Thai origin and material, and to assist each other in entering into trade and industry.

Needless to say, the intensity of these nationalistic policies stunned the Chinese, but their only solution was to try and get along as best they could. The great majority of local born Chinese were not effected by the laws as the restrictions were based on nationality, not race, therefore the Chinese-born were the ones who received the greatest impact.

These restrictions could only be partially effective as there was no large influx of Thai into restricted occupations, and many of the laws were not enforced, for to do so

⁴¹Skinner, op. cit., p. 263.

would have resulted in many shortages in labor. Even when the government set up industries to compete with the Chinese, there was not an adequate Thai labor force and Chinese had to be employed.⁴²

In 1942 the restrictions were extended to cover twenty seven occupations and trades in which Chinese were to be excluded. Aliens were given three months to stop manufacturing lacquer, nielloware, dolls and toys, bricks, fireworks, charcoal and torches. The alien hairdressers and lawyers were given a year to cease practicing, and aliens were prohibited from selling or manufacturing Buddhas or to work as typesetters with Thai letters.⁴³

Later in 1942 there was passed an Occupational and Professional Assistance Act, which provided that by royal decree factories could be required to employ a minimum percentage of Thai citizens.⁴⁴ Again, this order like previous ones, could not be enforced to any degree unless Thai were available to go into these positions.

In 1949 this previous act was superceded by another Occupational Restriction Act barring Chinese from ten

⁴²Blanchard, op. cit., p. 275.

⁴³Act for the Preservation of Occupations and Professions (No. 1) B. E. 2484 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LX, p. 1152.

⁴⁴Amendment Act for the Preservation of Occupations and Professions B. E. 2485. Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXI, p. 1436.

occupations. Among these were rice cultivation, saltmaking, forestry, making and selling charcoal, icemaking, soft drink concessions, taxi driving, barbering, making of lacquer and neillware and Siamese type-setting.⁴⁵

In 1951 six more occupations were closed to aliens. The following year by simply refusing to renew licenses, aliens were barred from operating private wharves and commercial fishing.⁴⁶ Also in 1952 the restrictions on alien dressmakers and women's hair cutters and dressers were starting to be enforced with the eventual elimination of aliens from this field.⁴⁷ This was followed by Fresh Fish Jetty Act which would exclude aliens from marketing fresh fish.⁴⁸ The restrictions were implementation of the previous rash of laws which had never been fully enforced.

Not only openly, but more subtly through internal policy has the government sought to restrict aliens in its regulations and directives which receive less attention. Anti-Chinese sentiment is evident in the government's personnel policies, and because of this, Chinese are no longer chosen as retail agents of tobacco, wine, sugar or

⁴⁵Occupational Restriction Act B. E. 2492. Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXXI, p. 1221.

⁴⁶Port Authority of Thailand Act B. E. 2494. Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXXIII, p. 987.

⁴⁷Royal Decree Reserving Certain Occupations for Thai Nationals (No. 2) B. E. 2495. International Translations of Thai Law 1952, p. 603.

⁴⁸Fresh Fish Jetty Act B. E. 2496 Thailand Government Gazette Vol. LXXV, p. 120.

canned goods produced in government factories. It was even considered by a few of the anti-Chinese radicals to attempt to prohibit aliens from such Chinese labor strongholds as rice milling and wholesaling, sawmilling, rubber production, mining, pig slaughtering, pork marketing and the ownership of barber shops which would have been a death blow to a great number of Chinese, but the government has been stable enough through its collective thinking to stave off such drastic action.

No Chinese alien could be secure in thinking his livelihood would not be effected during this period of containment policies. Because of resentment growing out of his feeling of persecution the Chinese reacted either to become more solidly entrenched in his Chinese community or he would seek to become a Thai national and avoid restrictive measures. Feeling persecuted as he did, there was more of a tendency to withdraw into his Chinese community and by doing this defeated the designs the government had to assimilate or integrate him into the whole Thai nationalistic picture and draw his loyalty away from the mother country or countries depending on which Chinese government he would recognize.

Since 1955, government pressure has continued consistently but not in a radical sense. In a more pro assimilationist attitude the government has lessened the vindictiveness of their policies, but the intent is still the same.

The eventual Thai-ification of labor can only come about through an extended period of time, and with favorable conditions some success will be possible. By making the Chinese feel a part of the country, and barring any exerted influence from the Chinese abroad, it is possible that the Thai can ostensibly achieve their goals, to a degree at least which will allay some of their fears of the Chinese menace.

The prominence of the Chinese in the Thai trade and commercial foundation was the outgrowth of their acute business acumen. Without going too far back into history it is easy to see that practically all they needed was desire, which they had. Hard work and diligence did the rest. The concessions which they had received from the monarchy prior to the introduction of large scale Western influence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave them an advantageous position which allowed them to hold their own with the Western traders.

The changes in the Thai monarchy which occurred between 1810 and 1910 almost completely destroyed the Chinese entrepreneurs directly or indirectly. Until the Bowring Treaty in 1825 which put the Westerners on a competitive basis, the Chinese had firm control of the foreign shipping trade. Having served the interests of the Thai kings in expanding trade they were given special commercial privileges.¹ Duties which were applied to the Western commodities were much higher than those

¹ Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 132-133.

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CHAPTER V

CHINESE IN COMMERCE AND FINANCE

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In general their familiarity with the whole Asian trading system and their innate prowess at making deals, plus their many connections with the local markets made them almost uncompetitive with the Western merchants. Other advantages which they held were the ability to travel over the country and to buy real estate, both of which were restricted to the Occidentals.

With the coming of the square-rigged vessels used by both the Thai and Western traders, the era of the Chinese junk subsided, as the junks could not compete. Although virtually driven from their predominance in shipping interests, the Chinese were able to hold their own in the competition for the expanding foreign trade of Siam. From a study made by the British Consul in 1890 the trade representation showed the Chinese held sixty two percent, British twenty six percent, Indian eight percent, and others held four percent.² This indicates that over the thirty-five year period of free trading in competition with the Western companies, the Chinese still retained a substantial majority of the foreign trade accounts. The flexible Chinese had adjusted to the competition of free trade.

²Great Britain, Foreign Office, Annual Diplomatic and Consular Reports on the Trade of Siam 1890 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1891), pp. 32-33. Further references to this series will indicate only the report and specific year.

One advantage which the Western interests never could compete with was the knowledge of the market and the connections which the Chinese had with the retailers and distributors. As a means of counter balancing this deficiency the Western companies resorted to the "compradore" system of hiring a Chinese merchant with some Western training to act as the firm's contact man. In the capacity of a middle-man for the Western mercantile houses, the Chinese assumed control of the retail and internal trade affairs of these firms. The assets of Western commerce, capital, large scale efficiency and international connections which increased the volume and value of foreign trade, worked hand in glove with the capabilities of the Chinese. Thus the Chinese further penetrated the commercial structure of Thailand.

In the game of competition the development of the mechanization of rice milling is an excellent example of the dominant economic position which the Chinese held. Rice had been a common item of export prior to 1855, with most of the export commodity coming almost entirely from Chinese mills.³ The rapid growth in rice exports after the Bowring Treaty was a great opportunity for the Chinese, but the introduction of Western mechanization presented a challenge to them, all

³James C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1955), pp. 22-24.

Western owned.⁴ To fight fire with fire the Chinese bought and erected their own steam mills and by 1879 there was an equal distribution between them and the West. Since then the Chinese outstripped their competition and the number of Chinese mills surpassed Western mills. In Bangkok alone they increased from seventeen in 1889,⁵ to twenty-three in 1895,⁶ to over fifty in 1912.⁷ Western interests had declined until there were only three in operation in 1912.⁸

The success came about for several reasons. Primarily it can be found in the eagerness among the Chinese to learn the new methods and in their keen business sense. Equally important was the structure of the rice business. The buying of paddy, milling, and exporting was all one piece. The Chinese had easy access to the paddy since the Chinese middleman was the collector from the Thai farmers. By making arrangements with these middlemen, the millers could have access to all of the internal sources of rice which were not available to the Western firms.

At this time the major foreign markets for rice were Singapore, Hong Kong and South China, where the importing

⁴Siam Consular Report, 1867, p. 318.

⁵Siam Consular Report, 1889, p. 3.

⁶Siam Consular Report, 1895, p. 2.

⁷Thailand, Directory for Bangkok and Siam 1912, pp. 280-

⁸Ibid.

firms were Chinese. Quite easily the import-export arrangements between the Chinese worked to exclude the Western companies. The final deposing of European rice interests came after 1909 when a Sino-Thai firm began selling rice to European markets directly through London. This maneuver drove the European firms out of business which had previously held the European market.⁹ Other factors entered into the Chinese success, especially the financial aspect.

Usually not being able to compete with the Europeans in the formation of capital, the Chinese resorted to interesting wealthy members of the Thai elite into backing their ventures.¹⁰ Combining these assets with the money they received from the revenue from farms received as royal grants, the Chinese were able to match capital with the West. In the intense competition the Chinese ran their mills around the clock to make them pay, and in the end their diligence paid off as they gained the biggest commercial prize of all Siam.

Success in one enterprize did not mean dominance in all enterprizes. Before the 1880's whatever sawmilling that existed was done by hand in Chinese sheds. With the introduction of Western steam mills, the greater facility of this method made the Chinese handsaw mills more obsolete. By

⁹Siam Consular Report 1909, p. 13.

¹⁰Charles S. Leckie, "Commerce of Siam in Relation to the Trade of the British Empire," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, XLII (June 8, 1894), pp. 651-652.

1894 there were three European and one Chinese steam mill,¹¹ and in 1908 seven European and four Chinese steam mills.¹²

The advantage for the Europeans was their extensive forest concessions which they received from the government. The Chinese could not afford to purchase both the concessions and steam milling equipment, and because of this shortage of Chinese capital, the Europeans surged ahead in commanding the saw milling interests. This did not, however, exclude the Chinese from having a significant portion of the industry.

In the retail trade of Siam the Chinese had dominated the scene both before and after the impact of Western economic influence. Before the introduction of a road network, the Chinese junks and lighter craft roamed the inland waterways acting as floating shops, retailing both local and imported goods. What roads existed were lined with Chinese stores. With the first major streets being constructed and the extensive road building program underway in the 1880's outside of Bangkok, those Chinese who had formerly operated the floating shops came ashore and built the two-story shop houses which lined the new streets.¹³ Throughout this expansion period the commercial position of the Chinese was strengthened. Not only in the thriving Bangkok area, but in

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear (eds.) Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources (London: Lloyd's, 1908), pp. 171-181.

¹³ Siam Consular Report. 1885, p. 5.

all of the important gulf and port cities the Chinese were dominant in retailing. With the opening of the interior after the changes brought about by the Bowring Treaty in 1855, the Chinese extended their influence into other areas and activities. Particularly they flourished in the increased capacity of middlemen. Following the increase in foreign trade and the development of an exchange economy a contact was needed between the farmers and the markets for their produce. The middleman would buy the produce, ship it to the markets in the seaports and then buy consumer goods to sell to the farmers.¹⁴ This type of trader thrived especially as the rice industry expanded.

With the end of royal trading and the three percent ceiling on import duties, (a stipulation in the Bowring Treaty) the government had to seek revenue through new sources, so introduced new taxes. As a facility to collect these taxes, the collections were farmed out to the Chinese traders.¹⁵

When the corvee work system was replaced by wage labor, the funds to pay for this service were needed. While the corvee system was still in force the alternative in lieu of working was to make a cash payment. The rice farmers therefore needed money to pay the new taxes, pay for his corvee service, to buy the new goods being introduced into

¹⁴Ingram, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁵H. E. Quaritch Wales, Ancient Siamese Government and Administration (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1934), p. 206.

his markets and to buy rice seed. In other words, he needed credit or cash and the obliging Chinese trader became a money lender. This rapid increase in internal trade made it worthwhile for Chinese retailers to move out into the outlying towns and villages. By the turn of the century, the Chinese middleman was then the buyer of paddy and other local produce, advanced credit and supplies, lent money, collected taxes, sold imported goods and transported merchandise in all directions.¹⁶ It can easily be seen how the Chinese began interwoven in the economic fabric of Thailand.

The growth of European business in Siam led to the establishment of several banks. By 1897 there were three banks operating as branches of larger concerns.¹⁷ Like most Western businesses they found it necessary to employ Chinese compradores to handle their business with the Chinese compradores of the commercial houses. Actually much of the Chinese business was handled through these Western banks. The successful operation of a Chinese bank in Singapore eventually led to the establishment of Chinese banks in Thailand. At least three were formed in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹⁸

Tin mining in south Siam was almost a monopoly of the

¹⁶G. William Skinner, Chinese Society in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University press, 1957), p. 108.

¹⁷Wright and Breakspear, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

¹⁸Ibid.

Chinese throughout the Nineteenth Century. It was not until Western firms introduced improved dredging methods that Chinese control was eclipsed.

Other areas of Chinese importance were the various plantations which they owned. Pepper and sugar were especially big products. Cotton to a lesser extent was also grown, but all of these plantation industries subsided as the labor force left to work for higher wages in other fields, and the Western-operated plantations in the colonial sections of Southeast Asia provided too much competition.

Without further minute detail it is readily apparent that up to 1910 the Chinese did indeed control most phases of the Thai economy and showed no sign of lessening their advantageous position in it.

Of special importance was the role the Chinese played during the Nineteenth Century as the operators of various monopolies and farms under the authority of the Thai government. The royal trading monopolies were either export or import and until the mid 1800's the export monopolies were the most important. The Crown farmed out several of the export commodities to Chinese merchants. This meant that the merchant paid a lump sum to the king and held the sole right to export that commodity.

These monopolies took other forms also, such as tax collections as previously mentioned and rights to perform

certain services and to manufacture and sell locally specified goods. Included among the monopolies were lottery operations, gambling establishments, manufacturing and selling of intoxicants and playing cards. The most consequential form was the opium concession granted in 1852 and affirmed later in the Bowring Treaty.

The Chinese lost most of these monopolies through the Bowring Treaty, but still retained those pertaining to vices. These vices: opium, spirits, gambling and lottery were completely Chinese in every phase from operation to participation. It is rather ironical that not only were the Chinese instrumental in expanding the commerce and industry, they also provided nearly fifty percent of the total state revenues through their affinity to vice.¹⁹

Disposed as the Chinese were to send money home it is interesting to note that not nearly as much reached home as might have otherwise, as the temptations to folly were too strong for them to turn down. This does not intimate that the remittances to China were not sizeable, in fact they were increasing, but it does show that the Thai government did not act too quickly in holding gambling and other vices down since it was a large source of revenue.

From 1910 until the Second World War the fortunes of the Chinese fluctuated as new influences and ideas were exerted

¹⁹Statistical Yearbook Thailand 1944, p. 385.

on the whole country changing many of the old ideas and injecting new pressures on the economy. The four major products which constitute about ninety percent of the countries total export are rice, timber, tin and rubber. These will be examined to show how the relative Chinese position fluctuated under changing conditions.

In the rice milling industry the position of the Chinese is strengthened. Of the sixty six large rice mills in the country in 1919, only ten were not owned by the Chinese and these were operated by them.²⁰ As the number of large mills increased to seventy one within the next ten years, a more significant development was taking place outside of Bangkok in the rice producing areas.²¹ The construction of railways and roads allowed overland travel from the more remote regions which had no major commercial waterways. Since the cost of overland transportation was higher it was more economically advantageous to build small mills to process the rice and reduce the bulk weight. These small mills sprang up consistantly until the depression. From 1919 to 1929 a total of 593 mills were erected outside of Bangkok.²² Approximately eighty percent of these were owned by the Chinese.

²⁰Harley F. MacNair, The Chinese Abroad, their Rosition and Protection: A Study in International Law and Relations (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), p. 48.

²¹Thailand, Department of Commercial Intelligence, Commercial Directory of Thailand (Bangkok, 1929), pp. 90-115.

²²Ibid.

The Chinese eminence in the rice industry had not gone unnoticed. Since the constitutional government was formed in 1932 there was talk of making the Thai people take a more active part in the economy. Eventually this resulted in the formation of the Thai Rice Company in 1939. It would not be easy to displace the Chinese short of complete nationalization of industry which the government was not yet ready to do, however, the plan they submitted was rather comprehensive. To control rice, it was necessary to control every phase of the operation. As a means of freeing the farmer from the Chinese middleman and his credit potential, the government suggested establishing credit cooperatives societies among the farmers. The function of the Thai Rice Company as one of the first such societies was to buy the rice from the grower and then export it. In this way the government hoped eventually to free the rice growers from the hold of the middleman.²³

To create markets for their rice the government urged its various institutions such as prisons, hospitals, military units and other agencies to buy from the Thai Rice Company. Initially the company consisted of several mills which the government bought to start the company. Fifty one percent of the stock was owned by the government and the rest by Thai citizens. The company received preferential rates

²³Prajamitra (Thai language newspaper), March 10, 1939.

from the state owned railways. As the company picked up momentum it received several large orders from abroad. By 1940 the company was operating eight large rice mills.²⁴

This certainly constituted an inroad into the position of the Chinese, but any successful solution of the problem of Chinese control could only result from a long range policy of gradual transition. The implementing of the program lay in the development of the cooperative movement among the rice farmers. As stated by the Minister of Economic Affairs the purpose of the Thai Rice Company was to deliver the Thai from the Chinese middleman and the cooperative societies were to deliver them from the Chinese moneylenders.²⁵

In the opinion of Landon the program of the Thai government as it pursued these policies up through 1940, can be stated as this:

The spread of rice-growing and rice marketing cooperatives, the building of granaries and Thai-controlled rice mills, the growth of the Thai Rice Company, and the completion of the port will undoubtedly drive the Chinese out of their dominant position in this major enterprise of the nation.²⁶

Exactly how true this is subsequent developments will illustrate.

In the timber industry the Chinese position remained practically the same between 1910 and 1938. Of the nine

²⁵ Prajamitra, March 9, 1939.

²⁶ Landon, op. cit., p. 253.

modern sawmills in Bangkok in 1924, three were Chinese, however, by 1940 one Chinese and one European mill had gone out of business.²⁷ The numerous small mills were operated by the Chinese and the retailing of timber was controlled by them. The teak trade was still in the hands of the European firms.

In the tin mining industry with the introductions of dredges the position of the Chinese was seriously impaired. Not having the capital to purchase the dredging equipment, the Chinese mine owners continued using their obsolete methods. With modernization the European mine production soon outstripped that of the Chinese. The smaller mine holdings, however, remained in the hands of the Chinese and were continuously backed by Chinese capital.²⁸ Despite this decreased position in mining production, the Chinese still were the ore buyers and exporters.

Rubber which had not been an important product in Thailand came into prominence after the First World War. Chinese, crossing over from Malaya began production and as the industry developed, it was predominantly Chinese at all levels.²⁹ Rubber increased to boom proportions and became

²⁷Helmut G. Callis, Foreign Capital in Southeast Asia (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942), p. 66.

²⁸Ingram, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁹Thailand. Department of Commercial Intelligence, Siam, Nature and Industry (Bangkok, 1930).

the third largest export in a relatively short time. A few of the really large rubber estates were controlled by European companies, but the smaller holdings were mostly Chinese. Other than the actual production, the Chinese were also instrumental in the financing and exporting of the product. Chinese merchants bought the raw rubber sheets from the plantation owners and smoked them, then sorted, graded, packed and exported them.³⁰

By the late 1930's then, Chinese capital and entrepreneurial skill were dominant in the transporting, processing, retailing and exporting of rice and in the production, processing and exporting of rubber, and were important in the processing, retailing and exporting of timber and in the production and export of tin.

Government activity was just beginning in trying ways to remove the Chinese from their economic pedestal without a complete alienation of the minority group. In 1938 the ardent nationalist, Premier Phibun, controlled the government and the intense program to Thai-ify the economy commenced.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the year 1939 saw many acts passed which indicate what the future might hold for the Chinese. A steady increase of legislation fermenting into almost every phase of the economy was designed to

³⁰Wendell Blanchard (ed.). Thailand, its People, its Society, its Culture (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1958), p. 325.

keep Thailand Thai. As was seen, the laboring class and certain other groups received the brunt of this legislation which although not entirely enforceable was still enacted and could be enforced if the situation warranted. In the big industries, the post war period brought changes which would alter the previous position of the Chinese.

Since the post war period, the number of rice mills has rapidly increased. By 1955 it was estimated that there were around 960.³¹ In Bangkok there were about fifty rice mills of which only one was independently owned by an ethnic Thai, in addition to the seven owned by the Thai Rice Company. In the country less than fifteen percent of the rice mills are owned by ethnic Thai. In nearly all of the rice mills the managers and operators are Chinese. The whole expanded rice facilities are still largely owned and operated by ethnic Chinese, although the Thai are making some inroads. Using the term ethnic Chinese can be confusing in that it conveys the idea that they are not citizens or Thai nationals. Many of them are. The distinction must be drawn between the Chinese with Thai citizenship and those who are aliens.

Actually the proportion of China-born mill owners and managers has been decreasing steadily for many years. In Bangkok, less than three-fifths of the Chinese mill owners

³¹Skinner, op. cit., p. 345.

are China-born, and upcountry the proportion is probably less than half.³² With the immigration being eliminated, there is little opportunity for the newer immigrants to move so quickly into positions of ownership. Although post war immigrations brought some wealthy Chinese, the majority of the immigrants have been laborers. The opportunity of advancing quickly for the Chinese is gone. In the future most of the capital expansion programs started by the ethnic Chinese should come from the local born Chinese or the older China-born.

Under these conditions the significance of this trend in the type of Chinese ownership indicates the lessening of influence of the mother country on the Chinese particularly considering the declining influx of immigrants into positions of importance within the commercial community.

With the continued efforts of the government to place endless licenses and permits on the Chinese, to hamper their business, the Chinese have compensated for this by seeking out cooperative arrangements with Thai government officials. This trend started in 1951 with two Bangkok rice firms. To offset the governmental pressures these firms whose capital and management were both Chinese, had the chairman and several board members who were Thai police or army officers.³³

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 349.

Further integration of the two forces came about with the organization of the Thailand Rice Exporters Association. Organized in 1955 the Association brought three Chinese associations together with three Thai organizations. The chief officers of the organization were prominent Chinese merchants with influential Thai acting as advisors. The continued success of such a combination can only be proven in time, however, these associations are illustrative of the tactics of the Chinese to preserve their position through cooperation with the Thai instead of opposing them.

In the rubber industry production has expanded in the post war period. Of the total production the Chinese share has decreased. The lucrativeness of the business has encouraged many Thai and Malaysians into it as smallholders. Chinese holdings have remained around 7,618, but the increase in the number of holdings of the Thai have decreased the Chinese share to just 7.5 percent of the total rubber holdings.³⁴ Area wise, Chinese ownership is down to twenty percent of the total rubber growing area, but the Chinese still control over fifty percent of the larger holdings, those over twenty acres.³⁵ Although diminishing somewhat in influence in the production of rubber, the Chinese still dominate the processing and exporting of the commodity.

³⁴Statistics provided by the Rubber Division of the Department of Agriculture in Bangkok.

³⁵Ibid.

Similarly in the tin industry, the Chinese position has declined in the past fifteen years. Over half the capital invested in tin mining is European. The Chinese as yet have not utilized dredging equipment and of the approximate 300 mines operating by non-dredging means in 1950 the great majority were Chinese.³⁶ The Thai have broken into the dredge mining business on a small but growing scale as they owned three of the twenty-five dredging companies in 1950.

For some time there has been no tin smelting done in Thailand. To introduce new industry into the country the government proposed in 1954 to construct a smelter which would exclude any Chinese participation.³⁷ As yet this smelter has not materialized, but if it does it would be operated solely on a Thai basis. Chinese capitalists are increasingly unable to compete with the resources of foreign investors and the semi governmental Thai enterprises in the industry. With the continued pressure of the government and the internal competition of the foreign firms and modern methods, the Chinese must inevitably claim an even lesser position in the mining interests.

With Western competition strong in many fields, the Chinese have still succeeded in holding their own in the sawmilling industry. In 1956, of the thirteen largest teak

³⁶Thailand, Department of Mines, Mining Statistics of Thailand for the Months March, April, May 1951.

³⁷Bangkok Post, March 3, 1954.

producing mills, only three were not Chinese. The three largest, two European and one Thai government owned, combined in production do not equal the production of the ten Chinese mills. In addition to these large mills there are around sixty smaller teak mills in Bangkok which are Chinese. In total output the Chinese surpass other teak producers combined.³⁸

Considering all types of timber processing, there are about 900 sawmills of which some 130 are located in Bangkok and of these the great majority are still owned by ethnic Chinese, although exact figures are not available.³⁹

Aside from sawmilling, there have been few changes within the timber industry. The forest operations are still carried out by European and Thai firms, but the domestic distribution, retailing and exporting are still within the bailiwick of the Chinese.

In summary then, the Chinese today command the following capital and entrepreneurial position within the four major industries; in the production of rice paddy they have no role at all; only a minor role in the production of timber logs; and an important but minor role in the production of tin ore, and a major role in raw rubber production. In the processing phase they hold a majority position in rice

³⁸Skinner, op. cit., p. 352.

³⁹Statistical Year Book, Thailand, 1950.

milling, sawmilling, and rubber processing in that order of importance. In the marketing of the products, the Chinese predominate in domestic distribution of rice and timber and play a major role in exporting all four products.

Surveying the general economic developments which have taken place since 1948, from the point of view of the government's role, the stress of economic nationalism is one of the major themes of the administration. As a follow through of ideas that grew out of the revolution of the thirties, the period since then has shown an increased awareness and will to action by the Thai government to inject their own people into the economic mainstream of the country.

As a simple question of supply and demand, to replace any of the Chinese, there must be capable ethnic Thai to fill the vacancies, and to allow competition, the Thai must have resources available. To meet these needs, the government has had to assist the Thai people because they have been apparently unwilling or incapable of doing it themselves.

To fill any created vacancies, the Thai had to have the know-how necessary to compete with the Chinese. With emphasis on vocational education, the government has succeeded in increasing the number of students in their schools from 7,286 to 40,093 between 1946 and 1954.⁴⁰ These developments

⁴⁰Thailand, National Economic Council, Bulletin of Statistics October-December, 1954, p. 10.

are comparatively recent, but with a continued effort of this scope, Thailand should be able to provide a competitively increasing number of people with skills who can win jobs from the Chinese in the artisan, industrial and commercial enterprises.

The plan of reducing the dependence of the Thai on the Chinese middleman which was stated earlier as a system of cooperatives was further implemented in 1952 when the Department of Cooperatives received full Ministry status and an expanded budget. The number of credit societies among the Thai people increased to 8,856 with a total of 166,200 members.⁴¹ With additional funds and more participation by the people themselves, the role of the Chinese middleman should continue to decrease.

In addition to organizing the Thai people, it will be recalled that after 1949 the government began passing restrictive measures on the occupations which aliens could hold. By pushing the Thai into work and pushing the Chinese out of work, an eventual replacement of Chinese predominance may take place. Of course, this is a long range view and considering that with favorable conditions the Chinese may become better integrated into Thai society, it is possible that the government may achieve its goal satisfactorily in the transition.

⁴¹Statistical Year Book, Thailand (new series) 1953, pp. 326-329.

Not only through encouraging the people through education and financial assistance, but also the government has sought participation in industry and transportation as a means of controlling the movement of the economy. The railway and telecommunications systems had been long government owned, and in 1950 the government acquired the Bangkok Electric Works which included the cities major power plants and tramways.⁴² Government agencies and government owned companies also monopolized the cigarette importing and manufacture, the opium concessions, alcoholic beverages and playing card manufacture. Using only Thai personnel in all of their activities, the government can eventually provide numerous positions for a Thai work force in areas previously dominated by the Chinese.

The establishment of the Ministry of Industry activated another government agency which operated specifically to put the Thai people into business. In 1953 this Ministry operated sixteen distilleries, six sugar refineries throughout the country, a weaving mill, a tannery and two paper mills.⁴³ Since then, other Thai enterprises have been formulated, such as guny-sack factories, chemical works, pottery plants, a rope factory, margarine plants and numerous more.⁴⁴

⁴²"Business Information on Thailand," Far Eastern Economic Review IX (August 31, 1950), p. 261.

⁴³Statistical Year Book, Thailand (new series) 1953, pp. 388-391.

⁴⁴Bangkok Tribune, May 16, 1954.

The lack of capital retarded any quick realization of these plans but a huge industrial corporation capitalized at fifty million baht was organized. This company, the Thai Economic Development Company, obtained a government secured loan of two hundred million baht from the Bank of America and has started building a big gunny-sack factory and sugar factory and has plans to make other projects a reality.⁴⁵

With the government entering more consistently into the industrial expansion and controlling the other possible avenues of growth, more and more the Chinese will be limited to their present holdings and these holdings are not completely secure.

Further government control in the transport business followed as the government agency, the Express Transport Bureau, in 1953 took over all of the trucking at the Port of Bangkok and the major bus routes of the city. In doing so it excluded any alien participation which hit directly at the Chinese.⁴⁶

In other attempts to monopolize some of the commercial and financial segments of the economy the government formed and gave special privileges to semi-governmental financial and trading corporations. The Government Purchasing Bureau

⁴⁵Bangkok Post, December 29, 1954.

⁴⁶Bangkok Post, June 1, 1953.

which had access to foreign exchange could presumably distribute less expensive products through its trading companies scattered through the interior and therefore compete with the Chinese merchants.⁴⁷ These trading companies, under supervision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, have been increasing in number, but as yet the real value of their operation cannot be fully ascertained.

In addition to these various activities, a series of syndicates were organized under the auspices of the government in 1952. The first was the Thai Financial Syndicate which was a combination of government and semi-government banks. This was followed by the Thai Gold Syndicate, the Pork Syndicate and the Remittance Syndicate. In other fields the government opened two pawn shops to break this previous Chinese monopoly.⁴⁸

Outwardly it would appear that all of this government activity would indicate increased participation by the Thai in commercial endeavors. However, no amount of inducement can, within a relatively short time, change the intrinsic attitude toward this kind of business life which has been such an important component of the Thai frame of mind. Also among the various factors contributing to the difficulty of an accelerated increase in Thai commercial ventures has been the activities of the Chinese themselves.

⁴⁷Bangkok Post, April 3, 1953.

⁴⁸Bangkok Post, May 3, 1955.

The Chinese have not been complacently sitting by waiting for the growing Thai to devour them. The continued assertion of government pressure has forced them to seek security wherever it may be found, and this has taken the form of protection by government, police, or army officials.

Instrumental in this wedding of antagonists was the coup of November 29, 1951. The militarists and politicians who had come to power with Phibun in 1948, and especially those in the 1951 coup d'etat, lacked any economic base to bolster their power and enable them to seek higher prestige. Being inexperienced in economics, they realized that they could not appropriate the economic structure without it falling apart.

As a result of this, Skinner suggests three developments as taking place:

(1) Chinese merchants reorganized their major commercial and financial corporations to include on the boards of directors top government officials and other members of the Thai elite with "good connections".

(2) Most of the major new corporations in Thailand since the coup d'etat of 1951 have been co-operative Sino-Thai ventures with Chinese supplying the capital and entrepreneurial skill and Thai officials supplying "protection" for the Chinese, official prestige, and in some cases government contracts.

(3) The semigovernmental business and financial organizations utilized the managerial skill and commercial acumen of local-born and naturalized Chinese by bringing them into their boards and staffs.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Skinner, op. cit., pp. 360-361.

To corroborate these claims numerous examples can be cited to show how effectively the Chinese have cemented their position in the big business interests. In twenty of the thirty three major insurance companies in Bangkok the boards of directors include members of the Thai elite as well as Chinese businessmen. As similar situations exist in eight out of the ten major non-Western banks and trust companies. In the import-export and shipping firms, seventeen of the twenty seven major firms have this cooperative arrangement. Also all of the big cinema theaters are Sino-Thai ventures.

Rather ironical is the inclusion of Chinese in the semi-governmental "Thai enterprises." The boards of the new gunny-sack factories, the Rice Mill Syndicate, Thai Financial Syndicate and the Thai Economic Development Company, all include prominent Chinese businessmen as members. Particularly of interest is that prior to 1955, General Sarit, the present head of the government was also a director or connected with each of these firms.

Equally significant is the predominance of the Chinese in the organization of the various syndicates which the government helped found. Among these were the Thai Gold Syndicate, the Pork Syndicate and the Remittance Syndicate. Perhaps the most ironical development is the Chinese management of Thai veterans corporations which were organized originally on an extremely nationalistic basis.

Of the new important corporations established during 1951-1953 practically all of them were Sino-Thai co-operative ventures involving government and Chinese leaders. Such firms as the Siam Life Assurance Company, the Thai Nawa Shipping Company founded in 1951, the Thai Rice Supply Company in 1952, and the Kings Cinema and the T'ai-hua Insurance Company in 1953 are examples of interethnic cooperation.⁵⁰

From this trend it would appear that the Chinese elite have aligned themselves with the Thai ruling class in such a way as to insure their own economic position. In essence this is a case of business power seeking out political protection, and of political power in search of legitimate sources of wealth and business control. It is difficult to say which is the winner, perhaps both. Basically the drive of the government to "Thai-ify" the economy is being achieved in a way as these combinations are bringing the Thai elite more into the commercial world, and the Chinese who would stand to lose everything have kept their business and reasonably insured their future. However, the Chinese interests will be continually vulnerable to possible future changes in the government elite if they align themselves too strongly with one faction, considering the pattern of frequent shifts of the power groups.

⁵⁰G. William Skinner, Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community in Thailand (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 193-194.

The Chinese businessman is more or less caught in a quandary of becoming too immeshed with the current Thai hierarchy considering all of the advantages accrued from this relationship and retaining a more concerted Chinese attitude with all the disadvantages accompanying it in terms of lost business contacts and the inaccessability to contrive government approval of projected business interests.

In the long run the Chinese businessman will most likely conform to business expediency which will draw him closer to the Thai as a matter of survival and, with his influence over the Chinese community as a whole, will draw them closer into the attitudes which the Thai government policies have set out to accomplish. Time and world conditions are important contributing factors, as such assimilation of a strong minority element cannot be accomplished in a few years. All of which points up the vulnerableness of the situation to the whole changing pattern of South East Asia and the possible power shifts with all of the concomitant reverberations they suggest.

Industrial regions of South Thailand, with only a sprinkling in the northern hinterlands. Concentrated to such an extent, their essential relationship with the Thai people is found within the commercial life of the cities. Having limited themselves to the close knit sections of the cities, as they have done in nearly every country to which they have migrated.

they tend to have less intermixing with the Thai people. This is especially true since the influx of Chinese women retarded the assimilation of the Chinese as a group, into the overall Thai society structure.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This examination of the major facets of Thai government policies toward the Chinese community may serve as a basis for general ideas in assessing possible future trends, in addition to the conclusions drawn in each chapter.

Although the Government's reactions have been presented from a rather legalistic view, it is necessary to include in any valid judgment of the situation the other influences of a socio-cultural nature which have a bearing on the situation in addition to the political-economic aspects.

One arresting condition is the demographic distribution of the Chinese. As has been brought out, they are concentrated mainly in the urban areas of Bangkok and the industrial regions of South Thailand, with only a sprinkling in the northern hinterlands. Concentrated to such an extent, their essential relationship with the Thai people is found within the commercial life of the cities. Having limited themselves to the close knit sections of the cities, as they have done in nearly every country to which they have migrated,

they tend to have less intermixing with the Thai people. This is especially true since the influx of Chinese women retarded the assimilation of the Chinese as a group, into the overall Thai society structure.

With the immigration quota limited to the present level, the community cannot experience the stimulus of continued waves of periodic immigration which has been an important factor in the maintaining of the Chinese-ness of the community. The small influx will come primarily from Taiwan or from other overseas areas since legal immigration has been cut off from the mainland. This does not, however, preclude possible illegal overland entry. Those migrants who trickle in will come from a very selective group. The unskilled laborer as such will find difficulty in entering.

This reduction in immigration will allow the minority to begin to be absorbed, for the first time since the big inflow began some fifty years ago. Current figures estimate the alien Chinese at approximately one million, the cultural Chinese at another two million. This three million is about one-sixth of the total population. This percentage should be the peak for the Chinese, barring increased quotas, since immigration is virtually nullified, limiting the growth of the Chinese segment to the potential birth rate. Also it should be recalled that the future Chinese will be second or third generation, a development which should decrease some of the basic Chinese orientation.

Contributing to the lessening of the numerical position of the Chinese will be the increased birth rate of the Thai, which has come from the generally improved living conditions, and the limiting of family size by the Chinese due to their basic interests being centered in commerce. Commerce does not foster the large family as the agrarian life does.

A contentious point barring a more harmonious relationship between the Chinese minority and the Thai government is the curtailment of Chinese education. The dispatch with which the government has limited Chinese education has left little chance that the Chinese can improve their separate school system. Skirting the law by creating small classes of less than seven, or opening night schools which would not fall within the limits of the regulations, the Chinese would still have a very deficient educational program. At most they should for the present abide by the current regulations and hope for a breakthrough in the secondary school level.

Meanwhile other forces are at work which made it difficult for the Chinese community to improve their position. The proficiency of the Chinese school product has never been up to the standards of the Thai or mission schools. This is perhaps due to the divided cultural emphasis, the problem of obtaining adequate staffs, insufficient materials, and

the continual restrictive attitude of the Government.

Also without secondary schools, the Chinese students who wish to continue in school must enter a Thai or mission high school, and without sufficient knowledge of the Thai language are unable to do so. Their only other alternative is to seek schooling outside the country.

Under strong pressure to learn Thai or English for commercial reasons the Chinese youth will necessarily want an adequate education to allow him mobility within the commercial set up of the country.

There are few alternatives for the Chinese. With the strong motivation to attain business success, they must be able to speak the languages of commerce and have access to the commercial training available in the non-Chinese schools. Although there will still be an interest in promulgating the Chinese culture within the community, the facts of life seem to indicate that the Chinese will acquiesce in a more commercial basis for schooling until and unless there is an opportunity to provide secondary education.

With the Government's continual chipping away at the foundation of the Chinese economic position, some changes will naturally evolve. The growth of the economy itself will naturally exert some influence. Continued need for labor will draw an increasing number of Thai out of agriculture.

As the competition develops, the Chinese will have

one source of strength which the Thai will be unable to draw on. This is the self sufficiency of the Chinese community. The historic organization within the Chinese community will provide assistance to the Chinese; if eventually the Thai have the capability of competing with the Chinese but are unable to because of the exclusive nature of the Chinese community, the Government must inevitably resort to further restrictive measures against the Chinese.

Since immigration was the former source of the low paid labor, the increased need for labor will have to be met by the Thai peasants who are beginning to migrate into the cities. In conjunction with this unskilled labor, the expansion of the technical schools and accelerated stimulus to provide more training for skilled workers will add competition in the skilled fields of labor.

Occupationally therefore Thai workers will eventually assume a larger share of the unskilled, semi-skilled, and trained worker segments of the economy. With the general prospect that the Chinese will progress up the economic scale, the Thai will most likely fill the vacancies which occur as the Chinese move from labor into small shops.

Of course the Government can at any time ban aliens from certain occupations, but this power in the past has been utilized in the fringe occupations of the Chinese rather than in large concentrated areas of Chinese dominance. Moreover, restrictive alien laws do not affect Chinese with Thai

citizenship.

Actually the position of the Chinese, when viewed realistically, does not assume the proportions which their apologists present. In the field of large money concentrations, there are numerous Thai and Western sources of capital. It is true that the Chinese have considerable capability in this field, as witnessed by their participation in banks, insurance firms, and other activities, but this does not signify a monopoly. Influencing this continued use of Chinese capital will naturally be the position which the Government assumes. As mentioned previously, there is considerable cooperation among the power and commercial elites and this will most likely continue as long as the current Government is in power.

Perhaps the most influential factor in the future, and one whose extent is naturally yet unknown, will be the role of the Chinese menace to the north.

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