



Ethnic Identities of Muslims in Thailand: A Tapestry of Faith and Heritage



Edited Book by

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Mapping the Mosaic: An Introduction to the Ethnic Diversity of Muslims in Thailand

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Chapter One

Mapping the Mosaic: An Introduction to the Ethnic Diversity of Muslims in Thailand

Shekh Mohammad Altafur Rahman

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Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive study of the ethnic diversity of Muslims in Thailand, challenging the most common narrative that focuses solely on the Malay-Muslim population in the south. It outlines the diverse backgrounds of Thai Muslims as well as historical migration patterns that brought various communities—including Persians, Arabs, Cham, Chinese Hui, and South Asians—to Thailand. It also presents socio-cultural profiles of these groups, along with available demographic figures. It employs theoretical frameworks such as primordialism, instrumentalism, and intersectionality to analyze their identities and explores their complex relationship with the Thai state. Ultimately, the chapter argues that recognizing and appreciating this ethnic mosaic is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and harmonious national discourse, which is potential to benefit the greater Thai nation.

1. Introduction: Approach to the Book

This book is not merely a descriptive academic exercise but a proactive effort to contribute to a more harmonious and progressive society. The core approach of this book is to promote ethnic harmony and inter-religious coexistence by foregrounding the shared experiences, mutual respect, and collaborative spirit that define these diverse communities. The analysis will consistently seek to challenge stereotypes and move beyond conflict-centric narratives by highlighting how Thai Muslims, in all their ethnic diversity, have been and continue to be integral contributors to the nation's progress and cultural richness. By doing so, this book aims to foster a greater sense of national unity, built on the recognition and appreciation of Thailand's rich multi-ethnic and multi-religious fabric.

1.1 The Unveiling of a Complex Mosaic

The study of Thailand's Muslim population has, for decades, been overwhelmingly and perhaps myopically focused on the Malay-Muslim majority in the southernmost border provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. While this focus is undeniably crucial given the ongoing insurgency and its historical roots, it has inadvertently presented a monolithic and incomplete picture of a community far more ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse than is commonly acknowledged. The prevailing narrative in both academic discourse and popular media often overlooks a rich tapestry of identities woven from centuries of migration and settlement from across the globe, including Persia, the Indian Subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula, China, and the Malay Archipelago. This paper seeks to dismantle this singular view and provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted exploration of the various ethnic communities that constitute the Thai Muslim population.

The existing scholarship on Islam in Thailand can be broadly categorized into several phases. Early colonial and diplomatic writings, often from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were descriptive, documenting the presence of foreign merchants and their communities in Bangkok and major ports (Trocki, 2007). These were followed by anthropological and historical studies, particularly from the mid-20th century, which often focused on the assimilation of Chinese and other immigrant groups into Thai society, but rarely with a specific focus on their religious identity. The scholarship from the late 20th century onwards has been dominated by a significant and necessary focus on the southern conflict. Works by scholars such as Joseph Chinyong Liow (2009), Duncan McCargo (2008), and Michael K. Jerryson (2011) have provided critical insights into the politics, education, and social dynamics of the Malay-Muslim insurgency, but by their very nature, they have centered the "Malay-Muslim" experience as the quintessential Thai Muslim experience. This dominant narrative, while academically rigorous in its own right, has led to a critical lacuna—the near-total academic and public invisibility of other, equally significant, Muslim ethnic groups.

This chapter positions itself within this scholarly landscape by moving beyond the dominant "Malay-Muslim conflict" narrative. By broadening the scope, it allows for a more nuanced understanding of identity formation at the intersection of religious faith and ethnic heritage. From a comparative perspective, this study situates Thailand's Muslim communities within the broader context of Southeast Asian Islam, where religious identity often exists in a complex relationship with ethnicity (Hefner, 2011). This comparative approach allows us to pose a fundamental set of questions: What does it mean to be Muslim and Thai at once, and how do ethnic roots intersect with Islamic faith and Thai nationality?

The significance of this study is twofold. Firstly, from a scholarly perspective, it addresses a critical gap in the existing literature, offering a nuanced understanding of how multiple identities are negotiated. Secondly, from a socio-political standpoint, a more accurate representation of this diversity is essential for fostering a more inclusive national discourse. By highlighting the distinct histories, cultural practices, and

contemporary challenges of these diverse groups, we can move beyond simplistic narratives and promote a greater understanding of religious and cultural pluralism within the Thai nation-state. This chapter serves as the foundational "map," tracing the historical paths that led to the formation of this complex mosaic, outlining a theoretical framework for its analysis, and exploring the multifaceted politics of these identities in contemporary Thailand.

2. Historical Foundations: A Confluence of Migrations

The presence of Muslims in the region that is now Thailand predates the establishment of the modern nation-state. Muslim traders, diplomats, and scholars have been active in Southeast Asia for over a millennium, establishing coastal trading posts and cultural enclaves along ancient maritime and terrestrial trade routes. The migration of various Muslim ethnic groups into Thailand can be understood as occurring in several distinct waves, each with its own impetus and lasting legacy (Jory, 2011).

2.1 Pre-modern Networks: The Maritime Silk Road and the Siamese Court

The earliest and most influential waves of migration were driven by the vibrant trade networks of the pre-modern era. The Maritime Silk Road brought Muslim merchants, particularly from Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, to the Siamese kingdoms. By the 16th and 17th centuries, these groups had established prominent merchant guilds and were highly influential at the Siamese court, particularly in the bustling capital of Ayutthaya. Their integration was often formalized through high-level appointments and intermarriage. The most famous example is Sheikh Ahmad Qomi, a Persian trader who arrived in Ayutthaya in 1602 (Jory, 2011). His exceptional business acumen and diplomatic skills led him to be appointed Chao Khun Chittaraksa, a high-ranking court official.

He later became Chularatchamontri, the head of the royal Department of Muslims, a title his descendants would hold for centuries. His lineage founded the powerful Bunnagfamily, whose members would go on to hold high office well into the Rattanakosin period, including being instrumental in the Chakri Dynasty's rise to power. This history illustrates an early model of successful, top-down integration where foreign Muslims became an integral part of the Siamese nobility and administrative elite.

2.2 Malay-Muslim Incorporation: From Independent Sultanates to a National Minority

The largest and most politically significant group of Muslims in Thailand are the Malays of the southern provinces. Their history is not one of migration but of political incorporation. For centuries, the Malay-speaking Pattani Sultanate was an independent entity, a vassal state of Siam but with its own distinct political, cultural, and linguistic identity. The Sultanate was a center of Islamic scholarship and trade, culturally and politically aligned with the broader Malay world, including modern-day Malaysia. The definitive

moment of their incorporation into the Thai nation-state was the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, which formalized the border between British Malaya and Siam. This act placed the former Pattani Sultanate and its territories squarely under Siamese control (McCargo, 2008).

This political action created a distinct Malay-Muslim population within the Thai nation, whose historical and cultural ties to the Malay-speaking world would later become a source of both unique identity and political friction. The subsequent "Thaification" policies of the central government, which included the imposition of Thai language in schools and the standardization of administration, were perceived as a direct threat to their cultural and religious identity. This has contributed to a deep-seated sense of historical grievance and is a primary driver of the ongoing insurgency (Liow, 2009).

2.3 Indian Ocean Connections: A Diverse Spectrum of Arrivals

The Indian Ocean has long been a conduit for migration to Thailand, bringing a diverse spectrum of Muslim communities from South Asia. From the 19th century onwards, merchants from Gujarat and Punjab established communities in urban centers like Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket. Their presence was largely driven by colonial-era trade and labor movements under the British Empire. These groups often specialized in textiles, leather goods, and small businesses, becoming a vital part of the economic fabric of these cities (Ampalavanar-Brown, 2012).

More recently, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st, new waves of migration have occurred. Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar have sought refuge in Thailand, often living in precarious conditions along the border. There are also smaller communities of Bengali and Pakistani Muslims, many of whom arrived as laborers or students. These groups often maintain strong transnational ties with their ancestral homelands, using modern communication to sustain cultural and familial bonds.

2.4 Cham Diasporas: Waves of Displacement and Resilience

The Cham people of Thailand represent a fascinating and often overlooked community. Their ancestors were part of the Champa kingdom in what is now Vietnam and Cambodia. Following the decline and eventual dissolution of their kingdom, large numbers sought refuge in various parts of mainland Southeast Asia. There were major migration waves following the Vietnamese conquest of the Champa kingdom in the 15th century, and again during the Vietnam War and the Khmer Rouge genocide in the 20th century. A substantial population settled along the Chao Phraya River and in coastal areas of Thailand. Their expertise in fishing, boat-making, and trade allowed them to integrate economically while maintaining a strong sense of their distinct culture and language. Their small, tightly-knit communities, often centered on a mosque, have

allowed them to preserve cultural practices and, in some cases, the Cham language. However, their numbers have dwindled, and their language is now considered endangered in Thailand (Hassan, 2011).

2.5 Chinese Hui Migration: A Fusion of Faith and Heritage

The Chinese Hui Muslims represent a unique hybrid identity in Thailand. They are descendants of Muslim communities from Yunnan province in China who migrated to Northern Thailand during two distinct waves. The first wave occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as a result of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and internal conflicts in China. The second, larger wave of migration took place in the 1950s, when remnants of the Kuomintang (KMT) forces, including many Hui Muslims, fled from the Chinese Communist Revolution (Surin, 2007).

These communities established settlements in the mountainous regions of Northern Thailand, particularly in Chiang Rai and Mae Sai. They brought with them a unique identity that blended Han Chinese cultural practices with Sunni Islam. Their community structures are often closely-knit, and their distinct identity is expressed through traditional dress, a unique food culture (e.g., khao soi and beef noodles), and a strong sense of shared history.

3. A Mosaic in Detail: Socio-Cultural Profiles of Key Communities

The diversity of Thai Muslims is a living reality. The Muslim population of Thailand is estimated at approximately 4.5 million, representing around 6.5% of the total population (National Statistical Office, 2020). While the Malay-Muslims of the south are the largest group, representing over 80% of the total Muslim population, a significant and vibrant 20% comprises diverse smaller ethnic communities, primarily concentrated in urban areas of Central and Northern Thailand.

3.1 Malay-Muslims (Southern Border Provinces)

The Malay-Muslim community of the southern provinces is the most distinct and numerically significant group. Their identity is deeply rooted in their history as a separate political entity, the Pattani Sultanate. Their culture is a rich blend of Malay traditions and Islamic practices. The primary language is Patani Malay (Yawi), which is written in a modified Arabic script (Jawi) and serves as a powerful marker of their identity. The community's social structure is centered around religious institutions, particularly the pondok schools, which have historically served as both educational centers and cultural repositories, often in opposition to the state's formal school system (Liow, 2009).

Women in the Malay-Muslim community play a vital role, often running small businesses, engaging in cross-border trade, and acting as cultural and religious guardians within the family and community. The oral

traditions, including folk tales, poetry, and religious epics, are a rich part of their cultural heritage, actively negotiated and expressed through language, religious observance, and a shared sense of historical grievance.

3.2 Cham Muslims (The Forgotten People)

The Cham people of Thailand, estimated at over 100,000, represent a fascinating and often overlooked community. With significant communities in urban Bangkok, especially in the Nong Chok and Min Buri districts, they are highly integrated into mainstream Thai society linguistically and culturally. Cham mosques in Bangkok, such as the Talat Plu Mosque, serve as vital cultural nodes where community events are held and language revival projects are occasionally attempted. Many are known for their skills in fishing, boat-making, and small businesses. Their case highlights a successful model of cultural coexistence, where ethnic identity is maintained within the framework of a shared national identity (Hassan, 2011).

3.3 Persian and Arab Descendants: Assimilation and Heritage

The descendants of Persian and Arab traders form a long-established and highly assimilated community, particularly in Bangkok and Ayutthaya. Their historical narrative is one of successful assimilation and upward social mobility, demonstrating how foreign Islamic communities became an integral part of the Siamese elite. Many are fully integrated into Thai society, speaking fluent Thai. However, they maintain a strong sense of their religious identity and often hold prominent roles in business and religious institutions. Historical mosques like the Ton Son Mosque in Bangkok serve as powerful symbols of this deep historical lineage.

3.4 Chinese Hui Muslims: A Unique Hybrid Identity

The Chinese Hui Muslims in Northern Thailand are a community defined by a fascinating cultural fusion. Their identity is a blend of Han Chinese culture and Sunni Islam, often expressed through distinctive culinary traditions. For example, their version of the famous Northern Thai dish khao soi is often made with beef instead of pork, reflecting their religious dietary restrictions. Their mosques, with their unique Chinese-style architecture, are central to their community life. Their story is one of maintaining a distinct religious identity while simultaneously integrating into the broader Thai-Chinese commercial and social fabric, allowing them to prosper as a niche community.

3.5 The "Tad" (Central Thai Muslims)

The "Tad," or Central Thai Muslims, are perhaps the most complex group to define ethnically, as they are a diverse, urban community with roots from various regions who have intermarried and assimilated into central

Thai culture over generations. The term "Tad" is often used to describe those who are Thai-speaking and culturally integrated, as opposed to the more distinct Malay-Muslims of the south. Their identity is a complex hybrid: they are Thai by nationality and culture, and Muslim by faith. Their lived experience challenges the notion that ethnicity is a static category, demonstrating its fluid and adaptable nature. Their contributions to the burgeoning halal industry, from restaurants to certified products, are a testament to their successful integration.

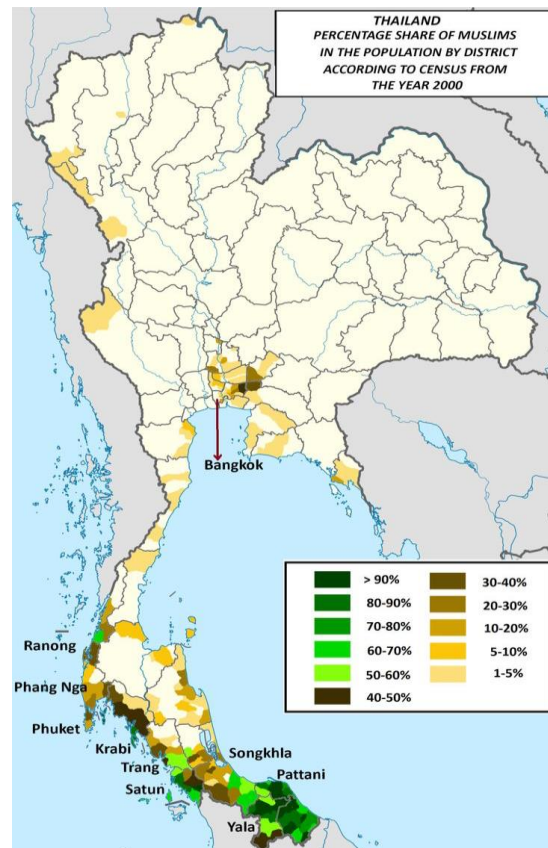


Figure 1.1: Map of Muslim Population Distribution in Thailand According to Census 2000¹

Deep South: Heavy concentration of Malay-Muslims in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.

Central Plains: Significant presence of Cham, Persian, and "Tad" Muslims in Bangkok, Ayutthaya, and coastal provinces.

Northern Region: Clusters of Chinese Hui Muslims in Mae Sai and Chiang Rai.

Islands/Coastal Regions: Pockets of Cham and South Asian Muslims in Phuket and other coastal areas.

¹ Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/812477589034872644/>

Table 1.1: Comparative Summary of Ethnic Muslim Groups in Thailand

Ethnic Group	Estimated Population	Geographical Concentration	Primary Livelihood	Integration Status
Malay-Muslims	3.6 million	Southern Border Provinces (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat)	Rubber farming, fishing, agriculture	Culturally distinct, political friction
Cham	100,000+	Bangkok, Central & Coastal Provinces	Fishing, small business, crafts	Largely integrated, cultural preservation
Persian/Arab	Tens of thousands	Bangkok, Ayutthaya	Business, administration, religious leadership	Highly assimilated, historical elite
Chinese Hui	Under 50,000	Northern Provinces (Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai)	Trade, tourism, food services	Culturally distinct, economically integrated
South Asian	Tens of thousands	Urban Centers (Bangkok, Chiang Mai)	Textiles, trade, hospitality	Economically integrated, strong community networks
"Tad"	>500,000	Urban Centers (Bangkok, Central)	Diverse (halal industry, services)	Fully assimilated, hybrid identity

4. Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Muslim Ethnic Identities

To understand the complex mosaic of Thai Muslim identities, it is essential to employ a robust theoretical framework that moves beyond simple categories. This chapter utilizes a multi-dimensional approach that draws from established theories of ethnicity, identity formation, and diaspora studies.

Firstly, we can apply the classic distinction between primordialism and instrumentalism. Primordialism, as a theory of ethnicity, posits that ethnic identity is an innate, enduring, and inherited bond based on shared ancestry, culture, and history. The Malay-Muslims of the southern provinces are a prime example of this, where their ethnic identity is deeply rooted in their historical past and serves as a fundamental marker of their selfhood, as theorized by Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolism. In contrast, instrumentalism views ethnicity as a flexible and strategic tool used by individuals and groups to achieve political, economic, or social ends. The urban "Tad" Muslims, who have successfully integrated into mainstream Thai society, can be seen as an example of instrumentalism, where their religious identity is a primary marker of community, while their ethnic origins have been fluidly adapted to fit their social context.

The concept of intersectionality is crucial. In the Thai Muslim context, identity is not simply about being "Muslim" or "Cham" but about how these two identities intersect with other social categories, such as class, gender, and national identity. As the late Stuart Hall (1996) argued, identity is a process of "becoming" rather than a fixed state of "being." The experience of a wealthy Thai-speaking Muslim businessman of Persian descent in Bangkok is vastly different from that of a poor Cham Muslim fisherman in a rural

community. The intersection of these identities shapes their lived experience, their relationship with the state, and their position in society.

Furthermore, we must consider Benedict Anderson's (1983) theory of "imagined communities" when discussing the Thai state's national identity. The state's project of creating a unified Thai nation-state through the promotion of a singular language. . has often marginalized those who do not fit this mold. The Thaification policies of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram in the mid-20th century, which mandated Thai names and dress, were a direct challenge to the distinct identities of both Chinese and Muslim minorities (Chaiwat, 2001). This framework helps us understand why some groups, like the Malay-Muslims, have resisted assimilation, seeing it as a threat to their core identity.

Finally, we use the lens of transnationalism theory to understand the complexities of the non-Malay communities. A diaspora is a community that lives outside its country of origin but maintains a strong sense of connection and identification with its ancestral homeland. This is particularly relevant for the Chinese Hui and South Asian Muslims. Connections to the global Ummah are sustained through pilgrimages to Mecca (Hajj), participation in international madrasa networks, and the rise of digital Islam. These transnational ties complicate the state's efforts at national integration and introduce a global dimension to local identity politics.

5. Ethnic Politics and the State: A Symbiotic and Sometimes Strained Relationship

The relationship between Thailand's diverse Muslim communities and the Thai state is a complex and multi-faceted one, marked by both periods of peaceful coexistence and moments of intense conflict. This relationship has been a defining feature of the Thai nation-state's journey towards national unity.

5.1 The Southern Conflict: Assimilation, Militarization, and Peace-Building

The insurgency in the southernmost provinces is the most visible and violent manifestation of ethnic politics in Thailand. At its core, the conflict is a clash between the Thai state's assimilationist policies and the Malay-Muslim community's desire to preserve its distinct identity. The state's push for centralized education has led to ongoing debates over bilingual education and the role of pondok schools. The militarization of the region has created a climate of mistrust and has often been seen as a heavy-handed approach to a political and cultural problem. Over the last two decades, the conflict has claimed over 7,000 lives (Deep South Watch, 2017), with a significant economic and social cost. While the government has pursued various peace-building initiatives, the core issues of cultural identity and historical grievance remain largely unaddressed.

5.2 The Invisibility of Non-Malay Minorities

In contrast to the high-profile conflict in the south, the other Muslim ethnic minorities are largely invisible in national policy debates. Their integration, while often successful, has come at the cost of their recognition as distinct groups. The lack of official statistics on ethnic diversity within the Muslim community effectively erases the distinct identities of groups like the Cham, Persians, and Chinese Hui. This can lead to a lack of targeted policies and support for these communities, despite their unique needs and contributions. Their crucial economic and cultural roles are often overlooked in the national narrative.

5.3 Multiculturalism vs. Thaification: A Policy Debate

The Thai state's approach to ethnic minorities has historically leaned toward Thaification, a policy of cultural and linguistic homogenization. This approach stands in contrast to the official multicultural policies of neighbors like Malaysia, which recognizes the distinct identities of its Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities. While Thailand's policy has been less rigid than in some other nations, it has nonetheless created tensions. The central policy debate in contemporary Thailand is whether to move from a singular, assimilationist approach towards a policy of managed multiculturalism. Recognizing and celebrating the diversity of its Muslim population, rather than seeking to homogenize it, could foster greater social cohesion and national unity.

5.4 Economic Contributions: A Hidden Driver of the Economy

The diverse Muslim communities of Thailand are crucial to the nation's economic vitality. Their diverse origins make them a natural bridge to other nations in the Muslim world, and their business networks facilitate trade. The halal industry is a significant growth area for the Thai economy, with an estimated value of over \$5.6 billion in 2021 (The Islamic Bank of Thailand, 2022). The diverse Muslim communities, with their unique culinary and business traditions, are at the forefront of this sector. The Cham Muslims' expertise in fishing, the Chinese Muslims' role in trade, and the Central Thai Muslims' contributions to urban commerce all highlight how this ethnic diversity contributes to the nation's economic vitality.

5.5 Identity Politics in the Digital Age

The rise of social media and digital technology has added a new layer of complexity to identity politics. Youth activism, both in the south and in urban centers, uses digital platforms to express grievances and assert their identity. The digital realm also facilitates cross-border linkages, allowing Thai Muslims to connect directly with the global Ummah, share cultural practices, and engage with global Islamic movements. This can be both a challenge and an opportunity, as it can foster both greater religious understanding and, in some cases, the adoption of more conservative or even extremist ideologies.

6. Conclusion: Beyond the Monolith

This chapter has argued against a monolithic understanding of Thailand's Muslim population and has instead presented a rich mosaic of identities shaped by distinct migration histories, cultural practices, and contemporary social dynamics. From the politically complex and culturally distinct Malay-Muslims of the south to the integrated urban "Tad" and the diasporic communities of Persian and Chinese descent, the Thai Muslim experience is a testament to the fluidity and resilience of identity.

The central thesis is that the pluralism of Thai Muslim identities should be seen as a strength rather than a problem. It challenges the academic and public narrative that has long been dominated by a singular focus on the southern conflict. This volume, through the coming chapters, will continue to foreground these pluralistic narratives, providing a much-needed counterbalance to the existing literature.

Rethinking national narratives is a crucial next step. Muslims should not be viewed simply as "southerners in conflict," but as diverse contributors to Thai society, each with a unique history and heritage. This requires policy and academic implications, including the need for ethnic-sensitive policies that protect and preserve minority languages, inclusive educational curricula that reflect the nation's true diversity, and a greater commitment to civil society efforts that bridge inter-ethnic divides. This study serves as a call for more nuanced scholarship on ethnic Muslims in Thailand, an area that is ripe for further exploration. The ongoing relationship between the state and its diverse Muslim communities will be a defining feature of Thailand's future, and a genuine appreciation of this rich ethnic tapestry is the first step towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

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Chapter Two

The Muslims in Thailand: A Review

Omar Farouk Bajunid¹

Abstract

The tendency to portray Thailand as being overwhelmingly Buddhist in character and composition has tended to overshadow the role of its non-Buddhist minorities. Historically, politically and culturally the Muslims have been an integral part of Thailand for centuries. Islam is not only the second largest religion in the kingdom but also enjoys royal and official patronage. But yet, a review of existing works would reveal serious gaps in the academic treatment of the subject. The main corpus of literature on the Muslims tends to view them as a marginalized border minority rather than a well integrated national minority. Invariably it is the role of the Malay-Muslim segment of the Muslim population that is highlighted rather than the others. In contrast to this dominant trend this article offers a description of the national position of the Muslims in the modern Thai polity. It begins with a literature review and then proceeds to trace the history of the Muslims in the Thai kingdom. Their contemporary sociological profile and political role is subsequently described. The article concludes with suggestions on ways in which further research and documentation on the Muslims in Thailand could be undertaken to promote a comprehensive understanding of their actual role in Thailand.

1. Introduction

One of the most common mistakes many people make when looking at Thailand is to imagine that it is a homogeneous Thai-Buddhist state, pure and simple. Thailand has been invariably portrayed in academic as well as popular literature as a Thai-Buddhist country. The state religion in Thailand is Buddhism but that does not necessarily mean that all Thais are Buddhists. Although it is true that compared to most of Southeast Asia, the degree of cultural and ethnic homogeneity appears more pronounced in Thailand, like the rest of the region, Thailand too is a multi-ethnic state and has its own share of ethno-cultural and religious pluralism.

In principle, the people of Thailand enjoy religious freedom. Notwithstanding the frequent constitutional modifications and revisions that have occurred since the coup of 1932, every new Thai constitution has

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consistently upheld the principle of freedom of conscience. Even military governments which often put aside the constitution rarely departed from the spirit of the constitution in respect of the question of the freedom of worship. This consistent Thai official attitude towards religious freedom sanctions and legalises the existence of Thai citizens of the Islamic and other faiths. The king, although required by law and tradition to be a Buddhist, also assumes the role of the upholder of all religions. The Department of Religious Affairs of the Interior Ministry, which is fundamentally Buddhist in organisation, outlook and aspiration, also undertakes the patronage and protection of other religions in Thailand as well. The high level of religious tolerance in Thai society has also played an important part in promoting a relatively harmonious co-existence between the followers of all the major religions of the kingdom.

Islam is accorded official patronage in Thailand and is the kingdom's second largest religion. The Thai Muslims consider Thailand as their homeland and feel no less committed to their country than their Thai Buddhist counterparts. They can easily accept the dominant role of Buddhism in the kingdom without forfeiting Islam's claim for space and recognition within their own private and public life. After all, Islam has coexisted harmoniously with Buddhism in the traditional Thai polities for centuries. It is therefore not surprising that the Thai Muslims generally do not see any contradiction between their love for their religion and their loyalty to their nation. In essence, Islam has already become an integral part of the modern Thai state.

This article broadly aims to undertake a review of the place and position of the Muslims in the modern Thai polity. It is basically organised into four parts. In the first part, the state of current research and writing on the Muslims in Thailand will be evaluated. In the second part the historical background of the Muslims in the kingdom will be traced. Their contemporary sociological profile and political role will then be examined in the third part. In the concluding part of the article, some suggestions on sources and potential topics for future research will be offered.

2. Review of Current Research and Writing

A casual look at the existing literature on the Muslims in Thailand might indicate that quite a lot of work appears to have been done on the theme but a closer analysis would reveal glaring gaps in the area of research and publication on the subject. This particular review selectively incorporates works in English, Malay and Thai with some minor references to works in other languages. By necessity, the review has to be selective because of the limitation of space and the problem of access to the complete corpus of literature on the subject.

It is obvious that the most appropriate place to begin our own review is probably to look at existing reviews. In this connection Chaiwat Satha-Anand's illuminating article entitled "Pattani in the 1980s: Academic

Literature and Political Stories" Chaiwat 1994\ is easily the most comprehensive evaluation that has been undertaken on the subject.² The focus of the article is on "the ways in which the issue of Muslims in southern Thailand is re-presented to the international academic community" in doctoral dissertations, monographs and journal articles Zbid.: 45\ Chaiwat provides a critical evaluation of five major doctoral dissertations and one Masters thesis on the subject namely, Surin's Ph. D. dissertation on "Islam and Malay Nationalism" which was subsequently published in a book form; Wan Kadir's Ph. D. work comparing the Muslims of southern Thailand with the Moros of the Philippines, which has also been published as a book ZWan Kadir 1990J; Chavivun's Ph. D. thesis on the role of women in maintaining ethnic identity and boundaries ZChavivun 1980J; Panomporn's Ph. D. work on the political integration policy toward the Malay Muslim minority ZPanomporn 1984J; Uthai's Ph. D. dissertation on education and ethnic nationalism among the Muslim Malays ZJthai 1981J; and, Wan Kadir's Master's thesis on Muslim elites and politics in southern Thailand ZWan Kadir 1983\ Chaiwat notes that most of these works focus on the analysis of the reasons for the ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand except for Wan Kadir's contribution in both his Master's thesis and doctoral dissertation (and book) which gives greater emphasis to the background as well as the nature of Malay-Muslim separatism that had evolved in that part of Thailand. It is pertinent to observe here that all the above theses seem to be primarily concerned with the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand and the problems that the Thai state has had to countenance from that quarter.

In respect of research monographs, Chaiwat identifies four for analysis including Ibrahim Syukri's Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani and his own work on Islam and Violence ZChaiwat 1987\ Although Ibrahim's work is extremely useful for anyone wanting to understand the history of Pattani and should be considered compulsory text because it gives an indigenous Malay-Muslim perspective of the history of that part of Thailand it should be read with caution considering the fact that its pro-Malay-Muslim biases are so self-evident. Chaiwat suggests that his own work is not a study of the Malay-Muslims but rather represents "an attempt to understand the relationship between Islam and violence using events which took place in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand from 1976 to 1981" Zbid.: 58J. The two other monographs Chaiwat reviewed ZHaveewan et al. 1986; Bougas 1988\ respectively discuss the problem of the social integration between the Thai Buddhists and the Thai Muslims and the subject of Muslim cemeteries. A lot more has been written in the form of articles and book reviews in academic journals and Chaiwat has done an excellent job in highlighting and analysing these. The Table that he provides in outlining all these works is extremely helpful in giving an immediate introduction to the trend that has evolved on the subject in the decade of the 1980s. Unlike the first two categories of works, the journal articles and reviews highlighted by Chaiwat do not only focus on the Malay-Muslims but attempt to evaluate the role of the Muslims in Thailand in a

² The article was originally published in SOJOURN 7 (1), February 1992 and subsequently reprinted in Omar Farouk Bajunid, ed. Muslim Social Science in ASEAN (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Penataran Ilmu) with the kind permission of the original publisher, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

broader national perspective. Chaiwat's overall conclusion that the issue of subjectivity cannot be disregarded when writing about Pattani is extremely frank although provocative.

Seni Mudmarn has also tried to evaluate the state of research and writing in English on the Muslim Minority in Thailand by Thai Muslim scholars (Seni 1994). In the introduction to his article he points out that most of the works published in Thai seek to emphasise the threat coming from the Muslims in the south with the exception of two objective pieces, one by Khacaphai Burutphat, who reviews the problem from the bureaucrat's point of view (Khacaphai 1976) and the other by Arong Suthasasna, a Thai Muslim scholar whose work emerged as a direct consequence of the long anti government demonstrations in Pattani (Arong 1976). Nantawan's historical treatment of the Malay-Muslim problem, Uthai's analysis of the government's policies of modernisation and integration of the Muslims and Chavivun's anthropological study on the role of women in the maintenance of Malay ethnic identity are mentioned in passing but it is the works of Surin (1985), Chaiwat (1987) and Seni himself (1988) that have been selected for analysis. His conclusion that all the three works analysed point to the prospect of continuing problems in the Malay-Muslim provinces of the south unless the Thai State recognises the right of the Malay-Muslims to practice their separate culture and to cherish their unique Islamic identity, to say the least, is telling.

In both Chaiwat's and Seni's reviews it is obvious that in the main corpus of works on the Muslims, it is the problems in the Malay-Muslim south that have attracted overwhelming attention. Probably for that reason too; the two books by Surin (1985) and Wan Kadir (1990) respectively have received repeated reviews in many leading journals. I have myself reviewed both these works. I consider Surin's contribution to be the best ever written and the most authoritative so far on the subject (Gmar 1989: 180-181). It attempts not only to look at the relationship between Islam and the religious-cultural identity of the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand as expressed in political protests but also seeks to analyse the nation-building imperatives of the Thai State and the Malay Muslim responses to these. The ability of the author to couch the discussion within a theoretical framework has also considerably helped to elevate the presentation to an impressively erudite level. Although this is a major contribution by Surin, it is obvious that, as the primary focus of the book is on the problem of the Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand the full story of the role of the Muslims as a national minority has yet to be fully told. My own view of Wan Kadir's work is that it is the first major comparative study of the unresolved problem of Moro separatism in southern Philippines and Malay separatism in southern Thailand (Gmar 1992b: 145-147). It is a useful and absorbing study which is rich in information which the author has been able to collect and collate from a wide range and variety of sources. However, it cannot be ignored that the work is essentially periphery-centric, almost deliberately disregarding the role or even the existence of the wider polity. There seems to be very little contextual information given on the kinds of problems that both Thailand and the Philippines have been encountering in their respective endeavors to create and sustain a viable nationhood, not for selected segments of their own population, but for all. Needless to say, like Surin's work, Wan Kadir's contribution still raises a lot of

questions as to the kind of role Muslims play on the national scene rather than just in the provinces where they predominate.

Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud's monograph entitled *The Malay Unrest in South Thailand: An Issue in Malay-Thai Border Relations* (Nik Anuar 1994a) and article on the "Malay Separatist Movement in Southern Siam and the British, 1945-1949" (Nik Anuar 1994b) both examine the Malay-Muslim problem in Thailand and its transnational implications. Although the former deals with the immediate post Second World War period and the latter traces the situation in more recent times, both the two pieces underline the unresolved problems of Malay-Muslim disaffection with the Thai state highlighting what must be a perennial dilemma for the Thais.

Ahmad Omar Chapakia's recently completed Ph. D. thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Malaya, tries to examine the impact of Thai politics on the Muslims of southern Thailand in the post-1932 period until around 1994 (Ahmad 1997). Although the focus of this work is still on the south it is refreshing in at least two ways. First, it slightly departs from conventional treatment of the subject by addressing the situation in the 14 southern provinces rather than just those Muslim-dominated ones. Second, it uses the framework of democratic development in the region to assess the changing role of the Muslims. The suggestion that Muslim politicians have already recognised the fact that they can protect and promote their interests effectively through democratic channels indicates a healthy trend toward their greater political integration within Thailand.

Suria Saniwa bin Wan Mahmood's Masters thesis submitted to the Science University of Malaysia, Penang, also focuses on the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand (Suria 1998). Like Ahmad Omar Chapakia, Suria Saniwa bin Wan Mahmood highlights the positive aspects of the role of the Malay-Muslims in Thailand in the recent years. His basic argument is that the development of democracy in Thailand, better living standards and greater cultural interactions have all contributed to the de-radicalization of the Malay-Muslim movements. Apparently, positive political changes within Thailand itself have helped nurture conciliation rather than confrontation from its Malay-Muslim minority.

Apierat Samail's Master of Art's thesis recently submitted to the Department of History, University of Malaya, also attempts to look at the relationship between Islam and politics in the Malay-Muslim south (Apierat 1999). The work basically examines the political activities of the Malay-Muslims and the reaction of the Thai authorities towards these activities. However, unlike Ahmad Omar Chapakia's work this thesis is much narrower in focus singling out just one province and using the time-frame of only one decade. This is also a study of a volatile and violent period in the political history of Thailand. The unstable circumstances of the decade, particularly in Narathiwat, had created major problems for the state as well as the local population. It was a different scenario altogether from that of subsequent decades which saw a consolidation

of democracy in Thailand. Although this work is useful in portraying the uncertain years of the 1970s in Narathiwat, its perspective is very much local.

A commendable effort to depart slightly from the Malay-Muslim centered approach has been earlier attempted by Andrew Forbes when he edited and published two separate volumes on the Muslims of Thailand based on the contributions of more than a dozen scholars who have been doing work on the subject for a long while (Forbes 1988a; 1988b). The first volume particularly merits particular mention as it represents a major effort to provide an extensive overview of the various Muslim groups among the Thai-speaking Muslims all over Thailand as well as the Malay-speaking Muslims of the southern provinces. However, the second volume focuses on the problems of the Malay-speaking south and does not really provide any new national perspective on the subject. Most of the articles that appear in both these volumes are also not really new, but what makes Forbes' contribution useful is that he has managed to put them together in one volume. It should also be considered compulsory reading for anyone wanting to understand the complete Muslim perspective in Thailand and not just the Malay-Muslim south.

Notwithstanding the positive aspect of Forbes's contribution it is obvious from the above discussion that the major emphasis in existing works on the Muslims is still very much confined to the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand. This approach, unfortunately, continues to give the impression that the Muslim community in Thailand is basically made up of the Malay-Muslims.

The attempt to look at the broader context of Islam in Thailand rather than just the extreme south has also been commendably attempted by Raymond Scupin in his several stimulating pieces. Apart from his two articles in Forbes' first volume, Scupin has also made other valuable contributions on this wider Islamic theme. His two articles on Islamic reformism, namely, "Islamic Reformism in Thailand" (Scupin 1980a) and "The Politics of Islamic Reformism" (Scupin 1980b) though overlapping for the most part, are indeed refreshing as they introduce a new issue in the Islamic discourse in Thailand. His various other articles on such topics as "Cham Muslims of Thailand: A Haven of Security in Mainland Southeast Asia," "Islam in Thailand before the Bangkok Period," "The Socio-Economic Status of Muslims in Central and North Thailand," "Interpreting Islamic Movements in Thailand (I)," "Language, Hierarchy and Hegemony: Thai Muslim Discourse Strategies," and "The Social Significance of the Hajj for Thai Muslims," to name some, underline, in no uncertain terms the presence of Muslims outside of the Malay - Muslim provinces of the extreme south and the existence of other issues apart from just the political problems of the south which have been over-emphasised. Scupin's latest contribution entitled "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society" (Scupin 1998: 229-258) is one of the most comprehensive current discussions on the overall role of the Muslims in Thailand and should be considered a vital reference material for anyone interested in the history and politics of modern Thailand.

Suthep's study on the Muslim minority in Chiangmai, which is one of the earliest ethnographic studies undertaken on the Muslims outside of the Malay-Muslim provinces also represents an important contribution. Although this work was undertaken more than two decades ago and a lot of changes has taken place not just in Chiangmai but also nationally, this doctoral dissertation gives a different perspective on the Muslim discourse in Thailand.

In this connection what Imanaga has attempted with regard to his work on the Chinese Muslims in Thailand is also highly commendable (Imanaga 1990). His survey on the Chinese Muslim society in northern Thailand which also incorporates, for comparative purposes, Thai-Muslim society in central Thailand and Malay-Muslim society in southern Thailand, which has been documented in a book form indeed constitutes an invaluable contribution to scholarship on Islam in Thailand. The data that he has made available is extremely useful for anyone who wants to pursue the investigation further. His Japanese article on the Thai Islam (Tai no Isuramu Shakai) also constitutes a balanced though brief introduction to the broader perspective of Islam in Thailand (Imanaga 1998). Nishii, another Japanese scholar who has done a systematic field study in a "Sam Sam" village has also been able to shift the usual emphasis given to the Malay-speaking Muslims of the southernmost provinces to the Thai-speaking Muslims of Satun. In her article on the interplay between religion and politics in that rural village she argues that religious differences between the Muslims and the Buddhists do not necessarily lead to political antagonism although the potential to exploit the situation is there (Nishii 1991). This piece is very useful in providing us with good empirical data on the dynamics of politics and religious relations at the grassroots level.

In my own doctoral thesis on the Muslims in Thailand I have tried to balance the usual emphasis on the Muslim provinces in the south with a perspective on the Muslim role at the national level in Thailand (Omar 1980). In one particular work I have tried to locate the presence of Islam in Bangkok to demonstrate that the connection between the Muslims and the Thai polity is deep-rooted and pervasive (Omar 1992a). Most of my articles on the subject too do not depart from this fundamental line. I think much more needs to be done in this direction.

There are other works which have not been cited or analysed here. Partly this is because of the problem of access. I know for sure that in the last ten years or so there has been an increasing amount of work done on the different aspects of Islam and the Muslims in Thailand in Thai and Malaysian universities. I have seen the list of many of these Thai theses and graduation exercises. This is an invaluable source of scholarship on Islam in Thailand which has yet to be systematically collected and collated. I am also aware of at least one Masters thesis on Islam in Thailand written in Turkish and submitted to a Turkish university (Muhammed Roflee Weahama 1997). It is not conceivable that there are other works available on Islam in Thailand in other languages in many other universities around the world.

Notwithstanding this, what is obvious is that there is still a dearth of literature on the Muslims in Thailand, especially in the English language. In addition to this, most of what has been written tends to focus on the Malay-Muslims and the political problems of the extreme south. While there are certainly valid reasons to examine the volatile problems in the south it would be misleading to imagine that they represent all that there is to the Muslim perspective in Thailand. The important thing to note is that the non-Malay Muslim factor in Thailand is also extremely important. Likewise, although there certainly was greater evidence of political disintegration in the Muslim provinces two decades ago, the situation has now improved greatly. The Malay-Muslims too have undergone a lot of changes in the last twenty years or so and more recent works on their role testify to this. It is essential that we recognize the dynamic role of the Muslims in Thailand in order to fully appreciate the processes of adaptation and change that have evolved over the years.

3. Historical Background of the Muslims

Historically, the Muslim presence in the traditional Thai polity is traceable to the 13th century in the Sukhotai era. It was, however, during the Ayutthaya period that the Muslims asserted their dominant position. The rise to prominence of the Thai Kingdom of Ayutthaya as a regional political power coincided with the period of the dominance of Muslim trade in Southeast Asia and the phenomenon of Islamisation in the region particularly in the Malay archipelago. This coincidence, no doubt, helped account for the presence and the influence of the Muslims in the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. Like most other Southeast Asian polities Ayutthaya was inextricably linked to the political and commercial events that were unfolding in the region as a whole, although, unlike the archipelagic kingdoms it was only peripherally affected by the Islamisation process.

The eclectic Siamese political structure with its acculturation of the important elements of Brahmanistic practices of the earlier Mon-Khmer culture into what was an essentially Tai Hinayana Buddhist kingdom showed an even more astounding degree of dynamic pragmatism during the Ayutthayan era when non-Buddhist and non-Tai came to be employed in the royal service, often in highly influential positions. It became a common feature of the Ayutthayan polity then to have foreigners such as the Japanese, Malays, Chinese, Portuguese, Persians and Indians in the service of the king and the state in various capacities.

Invariably, just as it was trade that ushered in the Islamisation and the political and economic development of the maritime states of the Malay world in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries A. D., it was also the dominant factor of trade that brought Islam into contact with Ayutthaya, perhaps more importantly securing for it a respectable place within the Buddhist polity.

The dominant position of the Muslims in Ayutthaya can be seen in the fact that many of them at various times, even served the King as his ministers and factors Collis 1936: 29,42\ A Muslim of West Asian origin

was said to have been appointed by the Thai king as a minister whose duties included the administration of foreign trade and the affairs of foreigners in Ayutthaya; the collection of import-export duties and the supervision of international shipping ²Kukrit 1972: 9. Subsequently he rose to occupy an even higher position in the royal court and at the age of 87, during the reign of King Prasat Thong, became a royal adviser ³Ibid.: 10.

The commercial influence of the Muslims was generally pervasive. It was, however, in the export sector that the Muslim merchants were most active ⁴Smith 1977: 75. The role of the Muslims as the king's ministers and merchants for successive rulers made them a very powerful group in the Ayutthayan court. This, to some extent, explains why many accounts of the time attribute the power and influence of the Muslims elsewhere in the Thai kingdom, particularly on the trans-peninsular trading route, as being the direct result of the instrumental role of the Muslim Ministers in promoting their cause from Ayutthaya ⁵Collis 1936: 42. The Muslims, therefore, not only totally engrossed the trans-peninsular trade, but also secured key administrative appointments all over the kingdom of Ayutthaya.

Along with the Indians and the Persians, the Arabs, Chams, Malays, Macassarese and Acheenese formed the broader section of Muslim society of the time, although numerically it was the Malays who were the most distinct. The Muslims appeared to be the largest foreign nationality in Ayutthaya. The Moors especially seemed to be a favoured group, who, unlike the other foreign nationalities came under the direct protection of the king ⁶Ravenswaay 1969 ⁷1900: 66.

The cause of Islam, interestingly was also supported by the State in many ways. Islam was patronised by the king ⁸La Loubere 1969 ⁹1691: 112. State funds were used for the construction of mosques in Ayutthaya and the cost of Muslim religious festivals was even borne by the king. The Siamese who embraced Islam had even been exempted from the personal service tax required of others. This was a clear evidence of early Siamese conversions to Islam. Foreign Muslim states too, perhaps encouraged by the special status Islam enjoyed in Ayutthaya and the presence of a large Muslim community had even tried to persuade the Ayutthayan rulers to embrace Islam by sending special missions for the purpose. In 1668 A. D. Ambassadors from Acheen ¹⁰Indonesia and Golconda ¹¹India tried in vain to persuade King Narai to accept Islam ¹²Wood 1926: 196 197. In 1685 a Persian Ambassador tried to convert the Thai king without success ¹³Anderson 1890: 248.

The Muslims in Ayutthaya also took up military duties. There were Moors and Malays in the Ayutthayan army ¹⁴Schouten 1969 ¹⁵1636: 134. The Moors made up two companies of the horse-guards who were in the service of the king ¹⁶La Loubere 1969 ¹⁷1691: 97. The Admiral in charge of a war fleet sent by Ayutthaya in 1692 A. D. in an expedition to quell the rebellion in Nakhon Si Thammarat, in the south, was a Malay, as was

the rebel governor of the province Wood 1926: 221J. The Muslims also served in the king's merchant navy; together with Chinese and Thai-born Chinese they helped man the king's junks Smith 1977: 40\.

The Thai traditional polity under the Chakri dynasty was in many ways unlike the traditional polity of Ayutthaya. If, during the Ayutthayan era centrifugal tendencies were reasonably tolerated among the distant provinces and vassals, during the Bangkok era, the process of territorial consolidation and centralization of power, which was started by Phya Tak during the Thonburi interregnum, from 1767 to 1782 A. D., was vigorously pursued by successive Chakri kings.³ Trade was no longer the dominant regulator of foreign policy as it used to be during the Ayutthayan times. Similarly, the international relations of Siam no longer principally involved the relations with the other independent and sovereign Asian and Southeast Asian states as was the case during the Ayutthayan days, because of the advances of colonialism which seemed to be subduing one state after another. In the second half of the 19th century, the flood of Chinese immigration into Siam had also altered considerably the demographic and economic landscape of Siam. However, up to the early years of the 20th century, the Muslims continued to constitute an important element of Siamese history and politics.

The Muslim population of Siam under the Chakris was as heterogeneous as ever consisting of Malays, Arabs, Persians, Chams, Bengalis, Chulias, Javanese and Baweanas Carter 1904: 111\.

Before the influx of the Chinese into the kingdom the Muslims constituted the largest single minority in the kingdom, next in importance only to the Siamese. According to one estimate in the early 19th century the Malays alone made up 1 million out of the kingdom's total population of 6 million people Bowring 1969 1857\: 81\.

The Muslims were not only a numerically large group but were also to be found in many areas in the kingdom apart from the southern provinces.

One factor which brought a fairly wide dispersal of the Malays in the kingdom of Siam was a direct result of State policy on man-power. The organisation of man-power was always a central concept in the Siamese art of government, as indeed was true of other traditional Southeast Asian States as well. Populations would be moved from one area of the kingdom to another for all sorts of reasons such as to open up new agricultural areas; to diminish the prospects of future rebellion by dependencies; to weaken the power of the provincial governors and etc. In the case of the majority of the Malays living in the central plains of Siam, many were brought there in captivity as prisoners-of-war and a good many more were forcibly rehabilitated in those areas as a consequence of defeat in war. The prisoners-of-war were mostly retained as slaves of the king although a few might be shared by the principal courtiers and settled in villages near Bangkok.

³ The Thonburi period was an attempt by Phya Tak to restore some measure of central rule in Siam after Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767 A. D. This period was soon followed by the establishment of the Chakri dynasty in Bangkok in 1782 A. D. The present dynasty owes its origin to this period.

The Malays did not only dominate the traditional bureaucracy in the tributary states but had also made their presence felt elsewhere in Siam. Ranong, a province in the Isthmus region bordering Burma, for example, had at one time a Malay chief. Phattalung too, another southern province, used to have a Muslim ruler. Malay interpreters served both in the Court of Bangkok and among the ruling circle of Nakhon Si Thammarat. Diplomatic missions, especially those that were sent to the Malay states, were undertaken by Malays in the service of Siam. The Malays were also engaged in trade in Siam. Malay ships sailed regularly between the Malay states and Siam. The Malays too participated in the overland trade of the Isthmian region together with the Chinese and the Coromandel Indians. There were also Arab merchants in Bangkok. It was, however, like earlier times, the Indian Muslims who appeared to be entrenched in the trade and commerce of Siam in the 19th century. Trade between Siam and Surat in India was still flourishing. Many Indian Muslims too had opened up small businesses in the kingdom although a good many continued to serve the commercial interests of the royalty and the mandarin elite. It was still through the avenues of trade that many Indian Muslims found their way into positions of influence and authority with the Siamese ruling elite of the time.

Generally, under the Bangkok rulers, the Muslims continued, at least until the opening decades of the 19th century, to enjoy a significant role in directing Siamese political and economic affairs although they were soon overtaken by internal and external events. By the late 19th and early 20th. century more Muslim immigrants, particularly from the Dutch East Indies and the Indian sub-continent made their way into Siam. There was also a good deal of internal migration, voluntary and compulsory, within the country. Increasingly, the Muslims in Thailand were becoming a much more diverse community. But while in most of Thailand the Muslims had been making all sorts of adjustments in response to the changes generated by Thailand's modernization efforts, the Muslims in the Pattani region resisted integration into the kingdom.⁴

The emergence of the Bangkok dynasty had introduced a new pattern in the nature of Siamese-Malay relations. Instead of the Ayutthayan model of indirect control, the Bangkok rulers, in their attempts to achieve the territorial consolidation of the kingdom, often resorted to the use of physical force and direct intervention in the affairs of the Malay states, a strategy which alienated the Malay rulers. It was during this period of territorial consolidation of Siam that resistance from the Malay states was at its height. The whole Malay region which used to maintain a tributary relationship with the Siamese traditional polity became restive and rebellions were endemic. The Sultanate of Pattani was eventually dismembered and its ruling elite displaced in the process of its complete territorial and political absorption into the modern nation-state of Thailand, while the Sultanates of Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu managed to free themselves of Thai political control and subsequently emerged to become part of Independent Malaya and then Malaysia,

⁴ The Pattani region essentially constitutes the present provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and some areas in the adjacent province of Songkhla.

which is usually perceived as being a Malay state.⁵ The direct Thai political intrusion in the Pattani region had led to an unprecedented cultural confrontation in the area between the Malays who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population and the new Thai bureaucrats sent to rule them from Bangkok. This was essentially the background of the chronic conflict that would characterise the Pattani region for much of the 20th century.⁶

In contrast to the experience of the Malays in Pattani, the cosmopolitan Muslim community living away from the Pattani region, had established a much more congenial relationship with the Thai state over the Chakri era. Perhaps assisted by their direct exposure to the mainstream of Thai culture and society they have become in many ways behaviorally Thai, at least outwardly. Generally they are indistinguishable from the other Thais and have in the context of the overall Muslim situation in Thailand been positive towards the modern Thai state, often, assuming the role of the political mediators of their co-religionists in the south.

4. Contemporary Sociological Profile and Political Role

It is obvious from the foregoing that the Muslims have ancient roots in Thailand. They are neither a recent community nor a marginal one. Thus, the Muslims now constitute an integral part of the modern Thai nation. The Muslims today, just as in the past, continue to be numerically and politically significant as a national minority in modern-day Thailand. The immediate question that comes to mind then is how many Muslims are there in Thailand. This is definitely not an easy question to answer because there are several versions as to how many Muslims there are in Thailand. The official version has always been that Muslims constitute slightly less than 4 % of the total population. Other versions differ dramatically. One foreign source estimates the Muslims to number around 14% of the Thai population. An internal Muslim official account with grassroots contacts claims that they make up 10% of the population (Zomar 1988: 1-2). Various academic estimates consider the Thai official version to be on the low side and the Muslim figures to be unduly inflated. A recent chapter published by a Muslim academic suggests that there are as many as 4 or 5 million Muslims in Thailand (Zmtiyaz 1998: 279). This view approximately coincides with my own personal estimate that there are between 5 to 8 % Muslims in Thailand (Zomar 1987: 8). In any case, the question is not whether it is 4 % or 5 % or even 10%, because even if we go by the lowest estimate given, in absolute terms we are really talking about a Muslim population in the region of at least 2.4 million. By any standard, numerically, the Muslim community in Thailand must be a very large community.

⁵ Control of the Malay States of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu was relinquished by Bangkok to the British in 1909 through a Treaty.

⁶ For a balanced discussion of the confrontation between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai State beginning early this century see Surin (1985: especially chapters IV and VII).

The Muslims are by no means a monolithic group although officially, they are all known as "Thai-Islam" or "Thai-Muslim" Zomar 1988: 24\ In the popular parlance the Muslims are often referred to as "Khaeg," a pejorative label meaning "guests" or "dark skinned visitors," which they strongly object to for obvious reasons Zbid.: 25\ They do not consider themselves as "aliens" and are often frustrated with the inability of the ethnic Thais to understand the ethnic mosaic that characterises Muslim society. The Muslims in Thailand are a heterogeneous group of people. For analytical purposes, it may be useful to classify them into two broad categories, namely, the Thai-Muslim and the Malay-Muslim. It must be recognised, however, that the boundaries between the two categories are not rigid but overlap considerably. Consciously and unconsciously too, there have been attempts by the Muslims to manipulate this aspect of their identity. The Thai-Muslims, who are generally more assimilated into Thai society, are represented by various ethnic groups such as Thai-Malay, Thai, Chinese, Javanese, Cham, Pathan, Tamil, Persian, Arab, Sam Sam, Bengali and Baweanese Zbid.: 5-12\ The Malay-Muslims, however, constitute the biggest ethnic group in the broader Muslim community in Thailand and appear to be the most resistant to assimilation into Thai society despite the fact that in recent years their Malay identity too has undergone a great deal of transformation. But even then, there are already signs that although the Malay-Muslims still, by and large, cherish their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness they have, at the same time, become definitely more integrated within Thailand now than ever before especially in the fields of language, education, commerce and economy. Politically too, apparently with the advent of democracy in the kingdom, their role in Thailand has become more visible. The Thai-Muslims have always tended to be more positive about their Thai identity. In fact, although in many ways there would still be tangible traces of their respective distinctive original culture even to this day and although they do continue to communalize along their respective sub-ethnic lines in certain areas, the cultural and linguistic boundaries that used to insulate them from the ethnic Thais have now become much more permeable and pliable. In a sense, they have emerged almost as a new community, decidedly Muslim in faith but recognizably Thai in culture.

It is also important to note here that on account of the fact that conversion is a primary institution in Islam and people do convert, the community therefore logically appears as an ever-expanding one. Converts do not suddenly leave behind their language, culture, jobs, friends, relatives, residence and whatever that used to be part of their lives. On the contrary they bring with them all their pre-existing network into contact with Islam and the Muslim community. It is this phenomenon that has helped expand the reach of Islam in the kingdom making it no longer a "foreign" faith but rather a familiar one in the eyes of many Thais who may not themselves be Muslims. But the important thing to take note of in trying to understand the contemporary Muslim society in Thailand is that, the muallafs or the new converts to Islam also constitute an important element of that society. For another, there have also been a significant number of intermarriages between new Muslim immigrants, be they capitalists, businessmen, tourists or missionaries and local Thai women, both Muslim and Muslim converts adding to the ranks of the Thai Muslim community a growing new breed of children of mixed parentage.

The growing significance of the role of the Muslims in Thailand becomes even more self-evident if we were to look at their geographical profile in the kingdom. For a long time the general myth that was perpetuated was that the Muslims in Thailand were essentially a border community living in the southernmost provinces which are either contiguous to Malaysia or in close proximity to it. The truth of the matter is that the Muslims are to be found in virtually every province in Thailand although their number varies from province to province. As at present the total number of registered mosques which are found in 53 out of 73 of the kingdom's provinces stands at a staggering figure of 2,800 and is still growing (see Appendix 1)⁷ There are definitely more mosques in Thailand than in many Muslim countries including, for example, Brunei, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait or even Jordan! There are also more mosques in Bangkok than in Bandar Seri Begawan or Singapore. Surely, if the mosque index in Thailand is any indication, the Muslims are not only well spread geographically but also maintain a visible presence all over the kingdom.

Although Muslims are found all over the Thai kingdom it is in the southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Satun, which lie close to Malaysia, that they make up the majority group reversing the national trend elsewhere. But it is, the Malay-Muslims who predominate in these southernmost provinces rather than the Thai-Muslims. It is this demographic reality that has made the Malay-Muslims the most dynamic element among the Muslims within the broader Thai national society, acquiring critical cultural and political leverage which is quite disproportionate to their numerical strength vis-a-vis the total population in the kingdom.

The Muslims in Thailand are represented both in the rural as well as the urban areas of the kingdom. Occupationally, they are also very diverse although the greater majority seems to be engaged in fishing, farming and agriculture. Muslims in Thailand have always been a part of the business community in the kingdom. They are represented by established trading families as well as the ubiquitous vendors in the local markets and the emerging business centres. The Muslims also have a virtual monopoly on the beef and cattle business in the kingdom. With a great deal of emphasis being given to industrialization, many Muslims too have become factory workers and managers. There has also always been a small but growing number of Muslim bureaucrats and professionals in Thailand. They are in most respects almost indistinguishable from the other Thais.

The majority of the Muslims in Thailand are Sunnis following the Shafiee school with a small number of Hanafi followers especially among the Haw Chinese and the Indians. The Shiites, however, also have a strong

⁷ In my earlier published works I was only able to identify about 2,111 mosques spread over 38 provinces. In my recent fieldwork I discovered the gap between my earlier data and the most current. This is of course partly because many new mosques have been built in a number of new areas since I conducted my field research in the late 1970s but partly it is also because many people were not aware of their existence then.

base in Thailand, especially in the Thonburi district of Bangkok. They have established themselves in Thailand for a few centuries already since they occupied a prominent role during the golden years of the Ayutthayan era. However, there are no serious tensions between them and the larger Muslim constituency. Other religious schisms within the Muslims such as the tussle for leadership of the Muslim community between the traditionalists and the fundamentalists, the competition for influence between the reformists and the others, and the general criticism of the community towards individuals who are considered too secular are definitely more relevant issues in the context of the present-day intra-community politics. Qaddiyani teachings, which are considered deviationist by mainstream Islam are normally not tolerated. Movements like al-Arqam, which has been banned in Malaysia, and the more informal tabligh and dakwah activities, generally flourish without serious difficulty in Thailand. In fact, in this context, there seems to be greater religious freedom for Muslims in Thailand than elsewhere including many Muslim countries where strict monitoring and control of Islamic activities is usually done to protect only the established school of Islam.

The existence of a fairly well insulated stretch of territory where Muslims predominate and where they appear to have closer affinity with their ethnic brethren across the border in Malaysia has become the principal source of the birth and growth of the problem of both Muslim secessionism and Malay irredentism in the extreme south of Thailand. This problem has often been manifested not only by the existence of various armed separatist groups but also a high incidence of political violence and an on-going guerrilla war in the region. The situation has not been helped by the fact that for the greater part of its recent history Thailand had been under military rule which generally encouraged local repression by intolerant, irresponsible and corrupt officials.

The cycle of repression and violence that had characterized the relationship between the Muslim separatist groups in these provinces and the State for more than four successive decades in the post Second World War period and the political instability that it often caused had seriously threatened to undermine Thailand's claim to political legitimacy over the area. It was the recognition of the need to overcome a serious credibility dilemma and the necessity to resolve the problem of the political mal-integration of the Muslims in that part of Thailand which appeared most vulnerable to secessionist pursuits that had impelled the Thai state to make concessions to the Muslims to try to win over their undisputed political allegiance to the kingdom. Thus, all kinds of concessions began to be given to the Muslims in the area of Muslim Family Laws, educational quota, job opportunities, dress codes, economic and infrastructural development of the region and so on. But perhaps the most significant gesture on the part of the state was the creation of a Muslim bureaucracy under the leadership of the Chularatmontri or Sheikhu-Islam, who was to be a royal appointee functioning as the official adviser to the state on Islamic affairs.⁸

⁸ For a brief but useful discussion of the institution of the Chularatmontri see Imtiyaz Z1998\

This bureaucracy brought Muslims throughout the kingdom under a kind of semiofficial and loosely structured Islamic administrative network which conferred on the Muslims some semblance of socio-religious autonomy. During the period when avenues for political participation for the Muslims were constricted, this bureaucracy had emerged as the most important political institution to bring about the political co-option of the Muslims into the State. The Muslim socio-religious bureaucracy created a framework which allowed the Muslims to become involved in their own religious activities within the broader national setting and with official patronage.

Paradoxically, the desire of the Thai state to placate the Malay-Muslims of the southernmost provinces in order to avoid the prospect of a prolonged crisis in that part of Thailand which seems most vulnerable to Muslim secessionism had the effect of, firstly motivating Muslims elsewhere in the kingdom to enthusiastically undertake the political socialization of their southern brethren and secondly, of giving Islam a higher national role and visibility. The very existence of that administrative network, especially for the Muslims outside of the Muslim-majority provinces, was generally positively viewed as a kind of benevolent patronage of their status and their religion. For many different reasons though the Muslims in the southern provinces were not as enthusiastic as their counterparts elsewhere in the kingdom. Nevertheless, they too became drawn into the new Muslim socio-religious framework and thus, in the process rendered themselves to greater exposure to Thailand.

The royal patronage of Islam has also been an important factor in promoting greater Muslim political allegiance to the state or at least in warding off opposition to it as the Thai king was highly revered and respected by the rural Muslim folk for his magnanimity towards them. This was also considered as a vital source of protection particularly when Thailand was under oppressive military rule. The Thai political system therefore, to a large extent has always had an important impact on the role of the Muslims within the state. Invariably, the incidence of greatest resistance to the state tended to coincide with the period of non-democratic rule. Democracy, had from time to time, given the Muslims a platform to air their grievances and participate directly in the affairs of government, but its repeated breakdown in Thailand, had only left them disillusioned and neglected. Bureaucratic rule in Thailand, usually under a military dictatorship of some sort tended to breed corruption and to encourage repression. The Muslims, especially those in the southernmost provinces, like their fellow-citizens elsewhere in Thailand had to bear the brunt of the excesses of a political system which they had no control over. It was only when democratization was pursued in a more vigorous manner that Muslims began to assert a growing role in the public affairs of the State. There is no doubt that democracy has directly helped give the Muslims in Thailand not only opportunities for greater political participation but also their proper role in government.

The significance of the Muslims is acknowledged by almost all political parties and they are normally represented almost at all levels in most political parties. The electoral strength of the Muslims in areas

where they predominate has always been recognized. Traditionally the Muslims have tended to identify with the Democrat Party but in 1988 the Wahdah⁹ group was formed by a number of leading Muslim politicians who decided to align themselves with the New Aspiration Party (NAP) to strengthen their political bargaining power. The strategy of the Wahdah group was to try to win as many seats as possible in the Muslim dominated provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Satun in order to be in a bargaining position for ministerial positions Zmtiyaz 1998: 290\ In the 1992 parliamentary elections six members of the Wahdah group representing the NAP were elected to parliament in the Muslim-dominated provinces while the Democrat Party had only four Muslim representatives who won the elections ZSuria 1998: 157-158\ In the 1995 general elections seven Muslim politicians from the Democrat Party were elected and five Muslim representatives from the NAP were returned Zbid.: 158-159\ In the 1992 Cabinet line-up two Muslim Members of Parliament were made Deputy Ministers but for the first time in the history of modern Thailand a Muslim was made a full Minister in the Government of Banharn Sila-arpacha in 1995 Zbid.: 160\ The trend of having Muslim ministerial representation at the highest level of the Thai government was sustained in the coalition governments of General Chavalit Yongchaiyut and Chuan Lekpai. Apart from this appointment there were also other Muslims who have been elected to successive Parliaments. At present the Speaker is a Muslim and the latest Thai Constitution bears his signature ZConstitution 1998: 99\ The present Foreign Minister of Thailand in Chuan Lekpai's Coalition Cabinet, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan who is from the Democrat Party, is also a Muslim.¹⁰ With a high-profile presence of the Muslims in Government, many more significant concessions have been gradually accorded to the Muslims. Prayer rooms, for example, have been allocated to Muslims in public places such as the International Airport, the major train station in Bangkok at Hualumpung and, even at the House of Parliament itself. Contemporary Muslim representation in Government has definitely given Islam a much more favourable place in the polity than ever before.

Of course, although the role of democracy has been fundamental in giving Islam space and recognition, there were also other factors which helped. There were at least three other important developments that favoured Islam and the Muslims in Thailand. The first, was the large movement of Thais going abroad to Muslim countries especially in the Middle East to work. The overwhelming majority of these people were Buddhists rather than Muslims. In their sojourn abroad most of them became greatly exposed to Muslim culture and way of life, often working for Muslims or with Muslims. When they returned to Thailand they

⁹ The term "wahdah" is derived from the Arabic word signifying "oneness" or "unity." In the Thai Muslim context the Wahdah group is supposed to function as a political faction presenting a unified position among Muslim parliamentarians to promote and pursue Muslim collective interests. It has to be borne in mind that as the Thai Constitution forbids the formation of a religious-based party, the formation of such a faction like the "Wahdah" is the closest the Muslim politicians could get to using religion as a common bond. The attempt to form a Muslim political faction was also aimed at challenging the traditional alliance between the Democrat Party and the the Muslims.

¹⁰ Dr. Surin Pitsuwan is a Member of Parliament for Nakhon Sri Thammarat province in a constituency where Muslims make up only about 15% of the electorate.

brought back with them the aggregate sum of their experience and knowledge. Quite a number among them who came back with language skills in Arabic, for example, even attempted to either set up their own businesses with dealings with the Arabs or continued to work in outlets in Bangkok and elsewhere where some degree of Arabic proficiency was required.

A significant number of people had even embraced Islam. For example, according to one source, more than 10,000 Thais from issaan or the northeast region, had converted to Islam in Saudi Arabia alone. The significance of this development is that, for a long while it was generally thought that there were no Muslims at all in the northeastern provinces of Thailand but apparently in the recent years Islam seems to be growing steadily in these provinces although it may not be due to this factor alone. But perhaps more importantly, Islam is increasingly asserting a presence in areas where it was said to have hardly existed before. The fact that this phenomenon is taking place at a time when more people from this particular area have converted to Islam albeit for whatever reason and in a foreign land too, must surely have some ramifications somewhere. The image of the Muslim as a "Khaeg" or a dark-skinned southerner or foreigner has already begun to change in Thailand. Of course, it is not only the conversion to Islam that has brought this about as this kind of attitudinal change has equally been an important function of education, enlightenment and greater exposure to Islam itself.

The other thing that brought about a shifting attitude towards Islam and the Muslims in Thailand was the influx of Muslim tourists, especially from the Middle East Zomar 1992a: 7-9\ . They were definitely not the best models of Muslims as most were plain pleasure seekers but the money they brought in to the kingdom and the jobs that they helped create and sustain especially in the tourism-related industry made them a very welcome group of people. If anything, it was the Thai Muslims who felt disappointed by the earthly pursuits of their co-religionists who were behaving in ways seen by them as being contrary to Islamic values and teachings. But this is besides the point. The important thing is that the ordinary non-Muslim Thai, through this kind of new exposure to Islam and the Muslims began to become more aware of the diversity that characterizes the Muslim world.

The third factor was very much linked to pure economics. As Thailand began to move aggressively into a market economy, Muslim capital was much sought after, just like other foreign investments. Of course, compared to Thailand's traditional investors like Japan, Hongkong, Taiwan or South Korea, investment from Muslim countries was still very nominal. But it was increasingly beginning to be seen as a relatively untapped source with a tremendous amount of promise. Muslim capital has indeed already begun moving into Thailand. But interestingly, the new contacts that were established, though primarily initiated by economic considerations, also brought about other probably unanticipated side-effects. For one thing of course, the movement of Muslim capital also brought with it the movement of a new Muslim culture, not that there was none before but this new phase certainly helped enhance the role of Islam within the modern Thai polity.

The initiative, energy, creativity and vision of the Muslims themselves have actually also generated a lot of interest and confidence in them. Although the Muslim community, like Muslim communities elsewhere, is not free from the internal tensions that often beset heterogeneous groups, its leaders have at least demonstrated their maturity, social skills and understanding in relating to the demands of citizenship without sacrificing their commitment to Islam. In fact, they have in turn shown that they can act in tandem with the State to help harness the positive aspects of Islam for the good of the country and its people across the board.

5. Conclusion

The Muslims have been an integral part of the Thai polity for centuries. Historically, politically, culturally and even economically their role has indeed been significant. Nevertheless they still appear to be little understood as a community. Even basic knowledge on Islam and the Muslims seems to be scanty and fragmented. The tendency to view Thailand as a Buddhist monolith has also had the unfortunate effect of marginalising their place in the kingdom. Likewise, for many decades in the post-Second World War era the frequent outbreak of violent resistance against the state in the Muslim dominated provinces and the repression by the military regime in Thailand on political dissent exacerbated mutual suspicions and gave rise to all kinds of prejudices against the Muslims. They were also often associated with the acts of violence, the lawlessness and the political troubles that were chronic to that part of the kingdom. Geographically they were seen as being essentially the people of the border provinces of the extreme south. The existence of Muslims elsewhere in the kingdom was either downplayed or little appreciated. The heterogeneous nature of the Muslim community too was not understood. Despite the high tolerance level of the Thai Buddhists there were prejudices toward Islam as a religion because it was invariably associated with the troubled south. It was against this background that a lot of the earlier works on the Muslims in Thailand focused on the theme of the political disintegration of the Malay-Muslims of the southern region.

As Thailand matures as a modern state and as democracy begins to assert its presence in Thailand the Muslims have begun to be viewed in a more positive perspective. The phenomenon of greater contacts between the Thai government and foreign Muslim governments and peoples, the intensification of interactions between Thai Buddhist migrant workers and their Muslim hosts in many Muslim countries, the adoption of more democratic measures and a commitment to the goals of a free market economy have all impelled the Thai state to adopt a more positive attitude towards its Muslim citizens and Islam itself as they begin to be treated as equals. A new era of positive Muslim-State relations seems to have emerged enabling the Muslims, among other things, to claim their rightful role in the new political scenario in the kingdom. They now appear more politically integrated and seem to assume a more visible public profile.

The new image of the Muslims in Thailand is much more positive than what it used to be for a long time. They now appear to have a tangible stake in the affairs of the nation. They are now seen and see themselves as an integral part of modern Thailand. Hence they have begun to move into what used to be thought of as unconventional areas for them, geographically, politically, occupationally and socially. Perhaps more important than this is that the emerging democratic political conditions in Thailand have created an academic climate which is conducive to research on Islam and the Muslims when not too long ago there used to be plenty of restrictions. This is most helpful for new research to take place.

What seems still lacking in our understanding of Islam and the Muslims in Thailand is reliable and comprehensive data on them. The sources for information on the Muslims in Thailand have not only become more varied but also much more easily accessible. It is, for example, now possible to gather data on the Muslims in Thailand through the internet. There are already a number of Thai Muslim web sites in place. Likewise, the number of Thai Muslim publications in Thailand, including Muslim newspapers and journals, has grown. Field-work in Muslim enclaves all over the kingdom is also easier to undertake now than any time in the past. The question of access therefore should no longer pose any major problem now.

In terms of research themes perhaps we should start from the basics. Indeed one of the most viable areas of research that could and should be undertaken soon is the collection and collation of basic demographic and ethnographic data on the Muslims. The survey type of work which Imanaga has initiated is extremely useful except that it needs to be more detailed, thorough and comprehensive. In the initial stages such a survey should not attempt to make regional comparisons but rather concentrate on getting raw and reliable data all over the country. In addition to this kind of survey more focused anthropological studies on specific Muslim villages should also be undertaken. It is surprising that, to the best of my knowledge, there has been very few anthropological studies of Muslim villages that have been conducted away from the Malay-Muslim provinces.

The role of Islamic ideas in Thailand has also not been systematically investigated. Scupin has made an invaluable contribution in examining the issue of Islamic reformism in Thailand but there are many more issues that can be researched. The evolution of Islamic literature in Thailand, in terms of sources, media, circulation and impact could be investigated without major difficulties. The Shiite sect which is still very much alive in Thailand as it has been for centuries certainly makes a viable research topic. The role of the al-Arqam in Thailand has not been examined at all. The tabligh movement too, which has a very strong international network and is very established in Thailand has not been thoroughly researched.

The role of Islamic institutions such as students' associations, teachers' unions, alumni, foundations, societies, mosques and madrasahs can also be systematically examined to try to understand the various complex processes that are taking place in the Muslim community. Islamic education is also an under-

researched area. The role of muallafs or new converts to Islam in the Muslim society in Thailand could also provide interesting insights into the dynamic nature of the community as opposed to its static or rigid image.

In the political realm, Muslim parliamentarians also make a good theme for research. Muslim political participation in Thai political parties is also worth examining. Muslim electoral behavior is another researchable topic. Another area which has yet to be touched upon is that of political biographies of leading Muslim personalities, past and present.

The list of researchable topics on the Muslims is almost endless but yet, hitherto, scholarship on Islam and the Muslims in Thailand is still sketchy and limited. The overemphasis on the role of the Malay-Muslims in the southern provinces at the expense of that of the national Thai-Muslim community too has not been very helpful. The complete picture of the role of the Muslims in Thailand is still far from clear. Much more certainly needs to be done to fill the existing gaps.

Appendix 1 List of Registered Mosques in Thailand

1	Bangkok	159	28	Phattalung	71
2	Krabi	144	29	Phichit	1
3	Kanchanaburi	3	30	Phitsanulok	1
4	Kalasin	1	31	Phetchburi	13
5	Khon Kaen	1	32	Petchabun	2
6	Chanthaburi	1	33	Phrae	1
7	Chachoengsao	50	34	Phuket	36
8	Chonburi	24	35	Maehongson	2
9	Chainat	1	36	Yala	308
10	Chumpon	5	37	Ranong	19
11	Chiengrai	4	38	Rayong	6
12	Chiengmai	11	39	Ratchaburi	2
13	Trang	95	40	Lopburi	1
14	Trad	8	41	Lampang	1
15	Tak	2	42	Sakolnakhon	1
16	Nakhon Nayok	25	43	Songkhla	294
17	Nakhon Ratchasima	1	44	Satun	147
18	Nakhon Sri Thammarat	97	45	Samutprakhon	10
19	Nakhon Sawan	1	46	Samutsongkhram	2
20	Nonthaburi	19	47	Saraburi	3
21	Narathiwat	477	48	Singburi	1
22	Pathum Thani	25	49	Suphanburi	1
23	Prachuabkhirikhan	9	50	Surat Thani	32

24	Prachinburi	2	51	Surin	1
25	Pattani	544	52	Angthong	1
26	Ayutthaya	55	53	Udonthani	1
27	Phangga	78			

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Chapter Three

Malay Exiles In Central Thailand: Revisiting the Cultural Geography of Islam in Thailand and the Malay World's Northern Diasporas

Christopher M. Joll

Abstract

This short article presents provisional findings that shed new light on both the cultural geography of Islam in Thailand, and northern extremities of the Malay world. An analysis of mosques officially registered in Thailand reveals that 10% are located in Central Thailand. Half of these are part of metropolitan Bangkok, and 74% of these are concentrated on its eastern districts along the Saen Saep Canal. I summarise the picture provided by Thai studies specialists who have documented the dates, origins, and circumstances of the (mainly involuntary) movement of Malays to Central Thailand, central Bangkok, and (later) to its eastern outskirts. This is followed by discussions of Siamese practices such as the taking of all slaves (*chalei*), and the organisation of labour under the *sakdina* system.

Keywords: Ayutthaya; Bangkok; Kedah; Malay world; Patani; Thailand/Siam

1. Introduction

Figure 1 is one of many archival photographs documenting 20th-century Siam widely available on the internet, but without any information about its provenance. Thai scholar Adis Idris Raksamani (2019) claims that this photo of Muslims – who are dressed in Malay sarongs, and a range of turbans and prayer caps – was taken at Bangkok's royal temple (Wat Phra Kaew) where the Siamese monarch Rama VI (r.1910–1925) had granted an audience to Muslim leaders. This might explain why Malays were assembled at a Buddhist temple, but what were they doing in Bangkok? This is, after all, approximately 800 kilometres from where Buddhists replace Muslims as the dominant religious community and bilingual or monolingual Malay-speaking communities are replaced by monolingual Thai-speakers (regardless of religious affiliation), somewhere between Satun and Songkhla. Below, I present provisional findings that requires revisiting both the cultural geography of Islam in Thailand, and northern extremities of the Malay world.

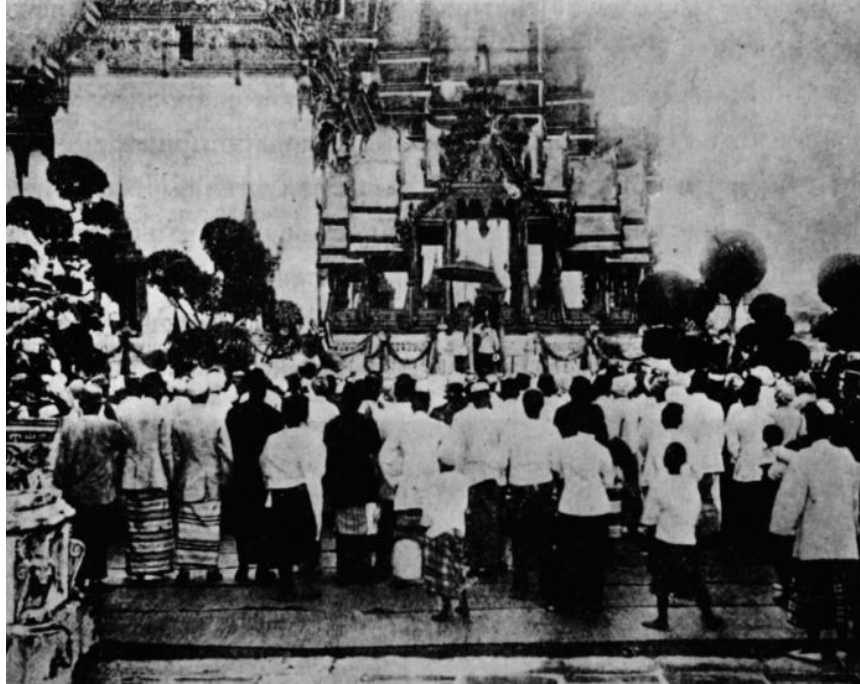


Figure 3.1. Muslim Leaders Granted an Audience with King Rama VI (r.1910–1925)¹

Sumit Mandal (2016) has argued that the concept of the ‘Malay world’ carries with it some problematic associations. In Southeast Asian studies, this has been situated in the ‘archipelagic region to the south’ (present-day Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines) – rather than the ‘mainland to the north’ (Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos). Nevertheless, cultural geographies of the Malay world are ‘not delimited by the boundaries of nationstates’ (Mandal 2016: 378). For Mandal, the cultural geography of the Malay world is less concerned with the ‘disruptions of abrupt borders’, than spatial continuities. Although changes in the cultural geography of the Malay world are discernible, these are less sudden and sharp, and more ‘nuanced and gradual’ (Mandal 2016: 371). For example, Joe Kahn’s *Other Malays* is best known for documenting a wide range of Malay-speaking Muslims who migrated to British Malaya from the late 1800s, where they farmed and traded. Kahn (2006: 173) adds that the Malay world exists well beyond the Malay Peninsula, including Indonesia’s outer islands Indonesia, the southern parts of present-day Thailand, the Mekong delta, and the southern islands of the Philippines. Connections between the Cham of the Mekong delta and the Malay world have recently been dealt with by Philip Bruckmayr (2019) who refers to the ‘Jawization’ of the Cham. Sunil Amrith (2013: 184) situates the Malay world within the wider Indian Ocean context by arguing that whilst the Straits of Melaka represents the most ‘intensive point of intersection’ between the ‘southeastern edge of the Bay’s eastern littoral’ and the Malay world, the boundaries of both were ‘neither fixed’, nor ‘exactly coincident’.

¹ Adis Idris Raksamani 2019: 31

Like Amrith, Kahn, and Mandal, Ronit Ricci (2013a: 169) questions conventional approaches to defining and mapping the Malay world. She refers to assumptions about (often rigid) boundaries imposed by ‘area studies and postcolonial studies’, obscuring the ‘diverse and complex realities of the distant and not so distant past’. Her work on Javanese and Malay exiles in present-day Sri Lanka is of relevance to the material I introduce and analyse below. In addition to more general treatments of exiles in colonial Asia (see Ricci 2016c: 169), she has produced a range of groundbreaking studies of Sri Lankan Malays (Ricci 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2016a, 2016b, 2019). Ceylon is ‘located squarely in South Asia’ by today’s ‘political, strategic and academic categorisations’ (Ricci 2013a:169). Whilst acknowledging recent progress has been made in ‘thinking in interdisciplinary terms’, conceptualising ‘mobility, connectedness and circulation’ both across and within the Middle East, and Muslim South and Southeast Asia continue to contend with what she refers to as ‘institutional and intellectual boundaries’ that separate the latter two from one another (ibid).

My analysis of accounts of the (largely involuntary) relocation of Malays to Central Thailand contained in a range of primary and secondary literature, and how these require the revisiting of both the cultural geography of Islam in Thailand and the Malay world’s northern diasporas, presents some preliminary findings. Following my analysis of registered mosques in both Thailand, and metropolitan Bangkok, I summarise the treatment of Malay elements in Central Thailand’s ‘ethnic melting pot’ by Edward van Roy (2017), which is interspersed with other relevant first-hand accounts. Having documented the dates, directions, and forms of (mainly involuntary) movements of Malays, I deal in more depth with the Siamese practice of relocating prisoners of war (Th. *chalei*) to Central Thailand, and how this manpower was managed in the *sakdina* system.

2. Registered Mosques and the Cultural Geography of Islam in Thailand

The following is a short summary of the size and geographical distribution of (mainly Malay) Muslims in Thailand and metropolitan Bangkok. Thai historian Dhiravat na Pombejra (2003: 14) once commented that anyone writing autonomous histories in Siam must accept that the lack of primary sources forces historians to ‘read between the lines’ of the fragmentary European ones. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for questioning the veracity of estimates offered by Europeans either visiting or residing in Bangkok before the early 20th century. These include the lack of details about conducting anything resembling a systematic study, and why so many claim the same numbers without citing sources.² Between 1854 and 1901 – before the large and overwhelmingly Malay ‘Siamese Malay states’ of Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu were ceded to Great Britain (in 1908) – many Europeans claimed that there were no less than one million Malays in

² The most recent synthesis of these has been undertaken by van Roy (2017: 21)

Siam.³ Back in 1834, Howard Malcolm (1840: 39) proposed the figure of 320,000. John Bowring (2013: 90–91) commented that in Siam, Malays were ‘very numerous’ and that Malay was widely spoken, which was but one example of many ethnolinguistic identities persisting in Bangkok. Finally, Archibald Little (1903) offered the figure of 600,000.

The most reliable estimate of Siam’s Malay population at the turn of the 20th century is the partial census of Siam conducted in 1903 and 1904 analysed by Volker Grabowsky (1993), who claimed that Malays were Thailand’s largest non-Buddhist minority. Furthermore, ‘nearly all’ Muslims in Thailand are ‘of Malay origin’ (Grabowsky 1993: 54). Bangkok might not have been included in this census, but 5,000 Malays were counted

Table 3.1: Location of officially registered mosques (adapted from Brown 2013: 223)

Provinces/Regions	Nationally registered mosques (%)
Narathiwat, Pattani, Satun, Songkhla, and Yala	65.0%
Between Trang/Phatthalung and Chumphon	20.0%
Provinces in Central Thailand	5.5%
Metropolitan Bangkok	5.2%
Thailand’s eastern provinces	3.0%
North and Northeast Thailand	less than 1%

in Ayutthaya (previously named Monthon Krung Kao). There were similar numbers in Monthon Prachinburi (Grabowsky 1993: 53) that includes Chachoengsao, which Grabowsky notes was ‘well known’ for its Malay minority. A total of 330,000 Malays were counted in 1903 (Grabowsky 1993: 54), and 80% of Central Thailand’s Muslims were ethnic Malays (Grabowsky 1993: 80). Five years after the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1908, the 1914 edition of the Directory for Bangkok and Siam cited 369,706 Malay subjects in Siam, and that 20,764 ‘Indians and Malays’ resided in Bangkok. Other details included in this edition was that there were 551 mosques in Siam, with 76 of these located in Bangkok, six to the east in Monthon Prachinburi, and 14 in Monthon Krung Kao (Ayutthaya) (Directory 1914: 190, 193).

The 1903 census was the last to provide data about ethnic minorities in Thailand, but data about religious minorities is widely distrusted. Chaiwat Satha-Anand (2005) comments that official estimates that there are five million Muslims in Thailand are approximately half of those offered by Muslim individuals and institutions, suggesting that numbers are more concerned with politics than statistics. This is illustrated by official estimates sometimes taking a dip, and rarely reflecting the widely acknowledged higher fertility rate amongst Muslims (Chaiwat Satha-Anand 2005: 111). Riyad Mustafa (2011: 31) suggests that there are at least 500,000 Muslims in metropolitan Bangkok. Rajeswary Brown’s response to the dearth of demographic data

³ These include Pallegoix (2000), Mouhot (2000), Rosny (1885) and Hallett (1890).

was to analyse the distribution of officially registered mosques in Thailand (summarised in Table 1) which she argues provides a more reliable estimate of Islamic elements in Thailand's religious geography (Brown 2013: 223).

Taking a leaf out of Brown's book, I have analysed the dataset of registered mosques maintained by the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT). Amongst other things, this documents that 164 mosques are registered in metropolitan Bangkok, with 129 scattered between provinces along metropolitan Bangkok's northern (Prathumthani and Nonthaburi), eastern (Chachoengsao), and southern (Samutprakan) borders. The most important insight revealed in this dataset is that approximately 72% of registered mosques in Bangkok are either located in, and east of, the district of Watthana. This includes the following districts: Suan Luang; Bang Kapi; Bueng Kum; Khan Na Yao; Khlong Sam Wa; Minburi; Lat Krabang; and Nong Chok. Nong Chok which borders Chachoengsao province, has registered 66 mosques.⁴ In the following sections I explain how Malay elements in Central Thailand's complex cultural geography became concentrated between east Bangkok and Chachoengsao, along the Saen Saep Canal.

3. Malay Ethnic Enclaves in Central Thailand

Edward van Roy (2016; 2017: 151–160) has provided the most recent, and authoritative analysis of the Malay elements of Siam's ethnic 'melting pot' during the late Ayutthaya period, Thonburi interregnum under King Taksin (r.1767–1782), and early Bangkok period between the reign of Rama I (r.1782–1809), and Rama III (r.1824–1851). He presents 26 'capsule biographies' of Muslim enclaves in central Bangkok associated with Arab, Cham, Indian, Malay, Persian, and what he anachronistically refers to as 'Indonesian' communities. The eight Malay communities included by van Roy are located in central Bangkok. As such, in addition to summarising the dates, origins, and specific locations of Malay ethnic enclaves in central Bangkok, sources complimenting his material – especially in east Bangkok where Malay communities are concentrated – will also be introduced. Readers unfamiliar with Bangkok will presumably appreciate the inclusion of Figure 2.

The earliest Malays in present-day Bangkok were survivors of the Burmese siege of Ayutthaya who accepted the invitation of King Taksin to relocate to Thonburi where they would be relieved of their status as war slaves (Th. *chalei*). Uri Tadmor's analysis of Malay communities in Nonthaburi includes mention of Malays being present long before the relocation of the first Malay *chalei* by Rama I. Malays from Ayutthaya had begun returning to the former capital, explaining its 'unusually large Muslim population' (Tadmor 2004: 515). Terwiel's curation of eyewitness accounts of Central Thailand penned by European travellers in the 19th century, includes descriptions of Muslim settlements in Ban Cho'ng on the outskirts of Ayutthaya – where the Patani dialect of Malay was spoken (Terwiel 1989: 151).

⁴ See CICOT <<https://www.cicot.or.th/th/mosque/lists/1/>>

Returning to Thonburi, most Muslims were assigned open tracts of land stretching eastward from the Chao Phraya River up the old Bang Lamphu Canal into the Thung Kraboe district. Bang Lamphu is the first of central Bangkok's Muslim enclaves specifically citing Malay cultural heritage. Like most, this was located along canals dug by its earliest residents. Off the city moat, was the Mahanak Canal that leads to the Saen Saep Canal (referred to in Figure 2 as the Bang Kapi Canal). In 1779, Jean Gerard Koenig (1894) penned one of the few European eyewitness accounts of Thonburi. This includes descriptions of the Chao Phraya River dividing before a Portuguese fortress. The smaller branch ran in a 'south-westerly direction towards the sea', where Koenig encountered 'many kinds of shops' some of which belonged to 'Mohametans' (ibid.: 159).

Figure 3.2 (Originally referred as figure 2): Summary of Malay Enclaves, Mosques, and Other Sites.⁵

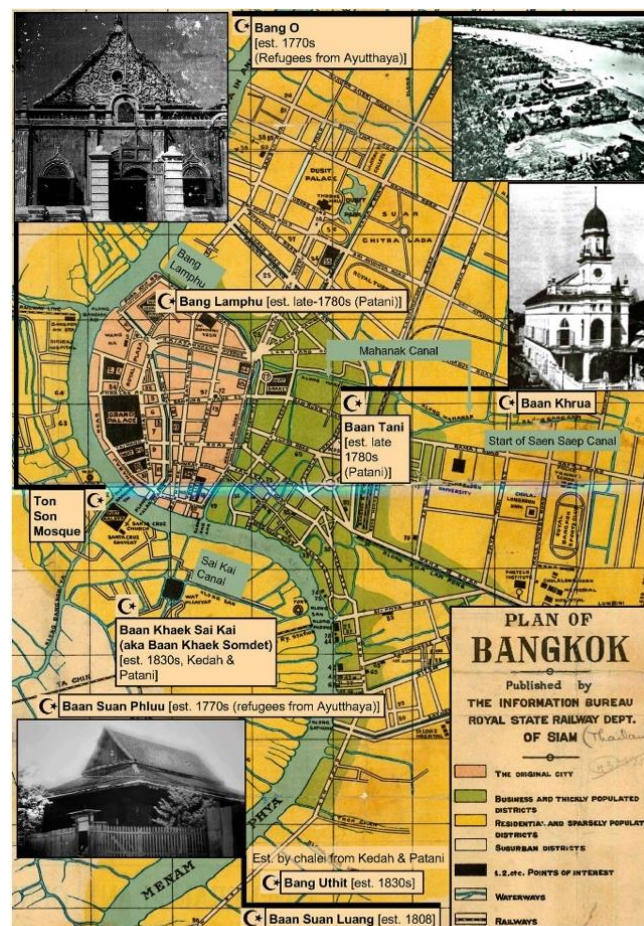


Figure 5: Infographic of Malay Enclaves and Mosques in Bangkok (based on *Plan of Bangkok*, published by the Information Bureau of the Royal State Railway Department of Siam, dated 1828)

⁵ This is mentioned by van Roy prepared by the author. This is based on *Plan of Bangkok*, published by the Information Bureau of the Royal State Railway Department of Siam (1828) and van Roy's map of Muslim communities in Bangkok's 'ethnic melting pot' (van Roy 2017: 134).

While nothing remains of the Muslim settlements in Thung Kraboe other than Ban Tani (described below), several Malay villages were established before 1782 on the outskirts of Bangkok. The Malay enclaves of Baan Suan Phlu (on the Bangkok Yai Canal) and Bang O (on the Chao Phraya River, north of the citadel), are also dated by van Roy (2016) to the Thonburi period. The former was founded by 'raft-dwellers' who fled Ayutthaya and moored their rafts along the Bangkok Yai Canal close to Thonburi's fortifications. As (former) war slaves, they were assigned the 'relatively remote' site 'three kilometers up the Bangkok Yai Canal from the Thonburi citadel' (van Roy 2016: 187). Bang O was located on the western bank of the Chao Phraya River approximately five kilometres upstream from the Thonburi citadel (van Roy 2016: 186).

Van Roy's first mention of Malay prisoners of war, which we discuss in detail in the following section, are those relocated to Central Thailand between 1786 and 1791. Most settled in Bangkok's northeastern perimeter (including Nonthaburi), where they presumably joined existing Malay communities. In 1808, Malays from Kedah were consigned sites farther downriver, as former subjects of Malay monarchs were scattered across Central Thailand in a 'preventive measure' against collaboration that might foment a future insurrection (van Roy 2016: 186).⁶ Van Roy (*ibid.*) claims that chalei from Kedah settled in the 'undeveloped scrublands' of Thung Kraboe, along the northern bank of the Mahanak Canal. Little is known about these settlements before 1852, when the Padung Krung Kasem Canal was completed, which transformed this district. Some Malays were moved to new eastern districts farther along the Saen Saep Canal, but the two Malay communities established in central Bangkok before the 1830s were Bang Lamphu and Baan Tani. The former was populated by a mixture of Malays from Thung Kraboe, and 'aristocrats and artisans' from Patani (van Roy 2016: 184). These were assigned sites close to the mouth of the Bang Lamphu Canal located inside the city wall (see Figure 2), which represents a rare exception to the prohibiting of chalei residing within the walled city. Following the construction of Chakraphong Road in the early 20th century, its mosque was renamed Masjid Chakraphong (van Roy 2016: 187). Uri Tadmor's account of Malays in Central Thailand adds to the picture the mention of members of Patani's royal family (along with other elites) being resettled at Bang Khaek intersection. By contrast, 'commoners' were assigned to other parts of Bangkok (Tadmor 2004: 516–517). That the first inhabitants of Baan Tani had come from Patani is clear as Tani represents one of the most common colloquial toponyms for Patani. As in Bang Lamphu, these included members of Patani's ruling elite. Its mosque, Masjid Mahanak, was located on the southern side of the Mahanak Canal, at the start of the Saen Saep Canal (van Roy 2016: 187–188).

Ban Suan Luang was first settled by Malays from Kedah, from around 1808. Van Roy (2016: 188) refers to these being relegated to a 'remote tract along the east bank of the river 5 kilometers downstream from the walled city'. Once more, Malay elites were 'separated from the bulk of their cohort' (*ibid.*: 188) Those of lower social status were moved downstream along the Chao Phraya River in the 'isolated marshlands' of

⁶ This assertion corroborated by Chaiwat Meesantan (2017) who documents which Malay polities chalei had come from.

Thung Khru. Baan Suan Luang's settlers linked their secluded village site with the Chao Phraya River by digging the Suan Luang Canal, which drained this area by reaching more than a kilometre into the 'deltaic jungle' (ibid.: 188) In the 1860s, after 'generations of isolation and deprivation', this village was transformed by a new road network that brought with it 'new employment opportunities' (ibid.: 188).

Most of the many Malays relocated to Bangkok during the period 1838 to 1839 were consigned to the hinterlands along Bangkok's new 'eastern corridor' of the Saen Saep Canal. Malay chalei dug this canal through Bang Kapi, Hua Mak, Minburi, and Nong Chok, which van Roy (2016: 188) describes as a 'vast waterlogged wilderness' that was 'gradually transformed into rice production'. The Bang Khanak Canal extended to the Bang Pakong River, approximately 80 kilometres from the Chao Phraya River. This 'web of tributary canals' that drained the 'extensive wetlands' required a further decade of labour (ibid.: 188). In addition to increasing rice production, this project was also motivated by the need to shorten the travel time of troops and supplies during Siam's campaigns against the Khmer and Vietnamese during the 1830s and 1840s. Construction was loosely supervised by the Ministry of Lands (Krom Na), and Malays, relegated to what van Roy (2016: 189) refers to as a 'wasteland', were largely left to their own devices, provided that they met their 'annual rice tax quotas for the royal granaries'.⁷

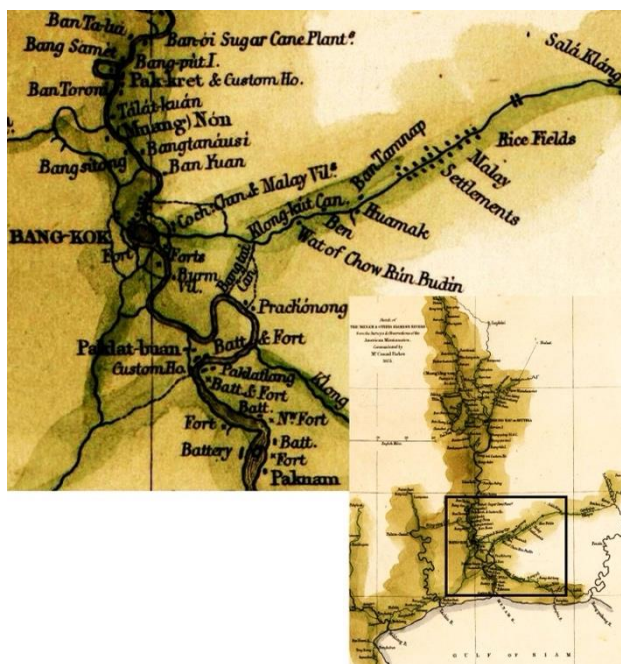
Modern land transport only reached these regions in the mid 20th century. This meant that 'Thai cultural integration' among this 'Malay Muslim hinterland' began later than in other Malay communities. This included Baan Khaek Sai Kai, which was renamed Ban Khaek Ban Somdet, a toponym referring to the nearby residence of the regent. Under Rama III, Chao Phraya Prayurawong and his brother Phraya Si Phiphat led expeditions to Kedah and Patani between 1832 and 1838. Both were rewarded with 'personal retinues' in the form of Malay artisans from Patani and Kelantan, who had been settled behind Chao Phraya Prayurawong's residence in 1832. In approximately 1840, the smaller settlement of Baan Chang Thong (Goldsmith Village) was created under the patronage of Chao Phraya Prayurawong and his son, Chao Phraya Si Suriyawong. After the latter ascended to the rank of regent, he built himself a 'princely retreat' known as Baan Somdet Chao Phraya (the Regent's Residence). Intriguingly, the smaller Malay community behind Phraya Si Phiphat's estate 'failed to flourish', as evidenced by no mosque being constructed and not gaining the formal status of a village, which led to its absorption into Baan Khaek Ban Somdet (van Roy 2016: 189). Other Malay ethnic enclaves established before the late 1840s that were located further south along the Chao Phraya River include Baan Uthit, and Baan Trok Mo. The former was associated with naval shipyards, and commercial ports that prospered as trade with China became more lucrative. Malay labour revived this facility, which led to the patronage of nearby Baan Suan Luang. The offer to donate land for a new settlement to those willing to accept regular employment explains its name (uthit referring to donations/endowments).

⁷ Similar observations are made by the Catholic bishop of Bangkok Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix (2000: 25), first published in French in 1854..

Notwithstanding there being more than one mention of the eastern movement of Malay chalei along the Saen Saep Canal in the 1830s, Figure 3 evocatively illustrates these developments. This map was originally published by Harry Parkes (1856: 71), included by Barend Terwiel (1989: 50) in his *Through travellers' eyes*, and has recently been republished by Simon Landy (2020). It was sketched by the American Presbyterian missionary couple Cowdon and Dean Slafter, who in the mid 1850s surveyed the eastern portions of the Saen Saep Canal. They pinpointed the location of 'Cohin Chan' (Muslim Cham) and Malay villages (in the vicinity of Baan Khrua) before their mention of a series of 'Malay Settlements' and 'rice fields' (Terwiel 1989: 167). Their account includes descriptions of this 'newly dug' canal, and that their journey became 'somewhat monotonous' as it stretched out in an almost 'perfect straight line' (ibid.: 156). As this part of Bangkok's infrastructure had only recently been completed, there was scarcely 'anything to be seen', apart from the occasional new village of around a hundred houses. The Slafters estimated that half of the settlers on the Saen Saep were Malay slaves from Patani, who had arrived in 1832 (Terwiel 1989: 174). The remainder were a mixture of local Siamese, Lao slaves, and Chinese immigrants (ibid.: 156). According to Terwiel (ibid.: 169), the presence of Chinese is explained by Phraya Si Phiphat (mentioned above) having supervised a 'large number' of hired Chinese, who dug almost 54 kilometres from 'Hua Mak to Bang Khanak', which took three years and cost approximately 76,500 baht, which at the time was a 'truly massive amount'. The section of the Saen Saep Canal that connected the Bang Pakong River was completed by Malay chalei labour, who – as we describe below – were phrai luang who worked for the government (in this case the Krom Na responsible for rice production) (ibid.: 169). Readers will now be familiar with the dates, directions, and circumstances surrounding Malays becoming part of Central Thailand's cultural geography from 1767. Riyad Mustafa (2011) has argued that more of those studying Bangkok's Muslim minorities must pay attention to Siamese practices of relocating subjugated populations to Central Thailand and the management of chalei labour within the sakdina system. While readers have already encountered these terms, their importance to

explaining the geographic concentration of mosques in eastern Bangkok along the Saen Saep Canal requires the following separate treatment.

4. The Status and Treatment of Malay Chalei in Siam's Sakdina System



ladder', had 'little recourse to the law and held a sakdina rank of no more than 5' (ibid.). It is important to

add that Malay *chalei* were peasants belonging to the king (Th. *phrai luang*) – not the Thai nobility (Th. *phrai som*) (Mustafa 2011: 98). The latter were registered with local masters (*nai*), who annually provided three months of unpaid labour. By contrast, *phrai luang* were attached to government departments or officials, and were annually subjected to heavier and longer *corvée* requirements, which we have noted included digging canals, and breaking in land for rice cultivation. John Bowring (2013: 189–190) adds that Malays served in Siamese armies. When on duty (for three months per year), they were ‘paid and fed’ and they could also do as they wished when not on duty. Van Roy (2017: 16) suggests that divisions between these *phrai* were ‘not as straightforward as it appears’, and that those not serving local *nai* generally enjoyed ‘relatively lenient treatment’, while R.B. Cruikshank (1975: 317) cites the conspicuous absence of accounts of war captives attempting to escape, suggesting that they had little reason to flee.

How were Malay *chalei* treated before arriving in Bangkok? Although far from a new source, the more than 330-page *Rama III and the Siamese expedition to Kedah in 1839: the dispatches of Luang Udomsombat* translated and edited by Cyril Skinner and Justin Corfield (1993) have made available a series of dispatches that few Thai and Malay Studies specialists have interacted with. Rama III instructed that Malay captives from Kedah and Patani be handed over in Bangkok to a descendant of Sultan Suleiman of Singora (r.1620–1676), who held the rank of *Phra Racha Wangsan*, or ‘Left Commander’, in the Cham Volunteers (*Krom Asa Cham*). Rama III was adamant that no one else in Bangkok should be entrusted with these Malays, and that he could use them as he thought fit (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 183).⁹ Rama III enquired whether the Ton Son mosque on the western bank of the Chao Phraya River (see Figure 2) was large enough to comfortably accommodate them. After *Phra Racha Wangsan* confirmed that this was the case, the monarch added that should any fall ill, a doctor must look after them (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 68). Permission was also given to draw on supplies of food, although in the event of ‘a lot more’ Malays arriving, these should be settled ‘outside the city, at Saen Saep (Canal)’ (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 183).¹⁰

Skinner and Corfield (1993: 271–272) includes a short, but insightful justification for relocating defeated populations to Bangkok by the influential half-brother of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r.1853–1910), Prince Damrong (1862–1943). After acknowledging that many might view this practice as ‘oppressive’, and resulting in ‘excessive hardship’, he explained the functions it served. Regardless of the outcome, whenever armies were mobilised, the number of fighting men would be reduced. As even victorious campaigns reduced Siam’s manpower, relocated *chalei* replaced the men they lost. Damrong also pointed out that those fighting for Rama III received no ‘regular pay’ but were rewarded with *chalei* they could add to their labour force. This practice also prevented further rebellions by reducing the capacity of defeated states to again wage war. As such, it represented a desirable – rather than reprehensible – practice. Damrong reminds readers of the

⁹ Yoneo Ishii (2012: 243) notes that Rama III’s rank meant that he controlled up to 2,000 men.

¹⁰ This interaction is noted by Ardruga (2012) and Mustafa (2011)

dispatches between Luang Udomsombat and Rama III in which Malays were treated compassionately and eventually became 'free men' on an equal footing with their Siamese conquerors.

The tone of some dispatches question some of Damrong's positive assessments. A letter from Rama III (dated 15 August 1839) begins by stating his objective of teaching the southern Malay rebels a lesson by 'stamping out' the revolt, 'rounding up' all prisoners, and putting 'an end to the business' (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 51). He then commands that enemies be attacked and crushed, and that prisoners in Bangkok be treated like 'the grass that's cut as fodder for our elephants and horses' (ibid.: 44). Commanders were also cautioned about leaving even a 'single blade standing', as it served the Malays right for being such a 'thorn in our flesh' (ibid.: 44). He lamented his past leniency, and reluctance to send the army to the south should 'innocent families ... suffer', before venting his rage at the Malays invading Songkhla which meant that they had to be wiped out (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 41). Rama III was in a rush to re-organise Kedah before the British were tempted to interfere. He adds that unlike in Patani, 'three-quarters of the inhabitants have gone over into British territory'; this meant that he only controlled a 'quarter of the population', as 'a lot of these have been brought up here as captives', meaning that there were not many left (Skinner and Corfield 1993: 248). We note that the comprehensive analysis of population movements along the Siamese-Malay Peninsula conducted by Nicholas Dodge (1980) includes this period. Amongst other things, Dodge (1980: 457) documents the Malay population of Province Wellesley having jumped from 9,843 (in 1812) to 14,080 (in 1820), before leaping to 60,000 in 1833. After the Siamese attacks of the late 1830s, this number dropped to 18,442 in 1842.

Francis Bradley (2010, 2012, 2016) is widely regarded for having written ground breaking accounts of the series of campaigns between Bangkok and its southern Malay vassals between the 1780s and the 1830s. These are based on a synthesis of first-hand accounts and analysis gleaned from secondary sources. Space permits no more than expanding the picture of Malay prisoners of war provided in first-hand accounts penned by Europeans in Bangkok.¹¹ Before doing so, I note that the lack of agreement on the total number of Malay chalei 'selected for enslavement'. Ibrahim Syukri (1985: 78–80) mentions that 'many Malay captives' were taken, which included 'men, women, and young children'. From Bangkok, John Crawford (1830: 219–220) claims that 'not less than ten thousand' Malays in Bangkok had been 'carried off from Quedah and Patani, but especially from the latter'. John H. Moor (1837) and George W. Earl (1837) gave some of the most unflattering accounts of how the Siamese treated Malays in both the 'Siamese Malay States' and in Bangkok. Moor is extensively cited by Bradley (2012, 2016), who points out how closely these resemble the

¹¹ The most important first-hand accounts by Europeans from Bangkok include Crawford (1828, 1830); Finlayson (1826); Walker (1830); Gützlaff (1834); Earl (1837); Moor (1837); Malcolm (1840); Neale (1852); Bowring (1857). The following were penned by European observers in Penang and Kedah: Osborn (1861); Burney (1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914). The Francis Light papers cited by Bradley are available on the Visions of Penang Online Archive

<http://visionsofpenang.com.my/search.php?product_owner=12&method=collection>

picture provided by Francis Light in Penang. Howard Malcolm (1840:103) refers to how Patani resembled a desert after the Malay inhabitants had been 'distributed to the principal families in Bangkok as slaves'. Earl's description is interesting for a number of reasons. Earl (1837: 170–173) documents that 'several junk loads' of Malays from Patani were confined in the 'court and lower apartments' of one of the British 'factories' in Bangkok (see Figure 2). In ways suggesting that Rama III's instructions had not been carried out, Earl (ibid.: 171) refers to the sufferings of these unfortunates as 'dreadful'. Although many were wounded, their Siamese masters would not provide 'even a bit of cloth.' Furthermore, while housed in this English factory, many – particularly young children – died from 'want of food, and from the horrible state of disease which prevailed in consequence of the miseries which they had endured on the voyage' (Earl 1837: 171).

5. Concluding Comments

Although Thailand's large, growing, and diverse Muslim minority is arguably the most extensively studied in mainland Southeast Asia (Joll 2021: 2), Malay and Muslim studies have suffered from having worked too long in the silos of these sub-disciplines. I have curated a diverse range of fragmentary primary and secondary sources referring to Malays in central Thailand (specifically metropolitan Bangkok) for the following reasons. Although appreciative of Edward van Roy's social history of Muslim minorities in Bangkok, I have added sources not included in his study. Moreover, I have pointed out that the vast majority of Bangkok's (mainly Malay) Muslim minority are concentrated in its eastern districts along the Saen Saep Canal, which were missed by van Roy (who concentrated on central Bangkok). Revisionist historiographies require placing the movement of Malay *chalei* described above in the wider context of Siamese imperial expansion and the *sakdina* system. The paper trails that I have provided have been motivated by concerns to assist others to contribute empirically grounded, and theoretically sophisticated perspectives on both the cultural geography of Islam in Thailand, and the northern extremities of the Malay world. As I have argued elsewhere, the former has been hamstrung by historical amnesia about the Malay cultural heritage of 'Thai Muslims', and these can unproblematically be divided with the 'Malay Muslims' concentrated along the Thai-Malay border (Joll 2011: 72–73; 2017: 317). Bangkok's Malay diaspora – most of whom are descendants of prisoners of war – resemble in remarkable ways the origins of Sri Lankan Malays analyzed by Ricci. The case study of Central Thailand's Malay diaspora confirms Mandal's thesis that notwithstanding the presence of incremental changes in the cultural geography of the Malay world, these are nuanced and gradual, rather than sudden or sharp. Like other linguistic, ethnic, and religious minorities, this Malay diaspora – who has lived far from South Thailand for generations – have lost their mother tongue and cooperated with the Thai state's project of ethnogenesis. As such, the vast majority are now monolingual, Thai-speaking, 'Thai Muslims'. None of these should prevent Thai and Malay studies specialists from engaging in an intentionally interdisciplinary approach to revisiting the cultural geography of Islam in Thailand, and this corner of the Malay world.

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Chapter Four

The Life of Javanese Moslems in Sathorn Bangkok Thailand¹

Yusdani²

Abstract

The following paper denotes the result of research that has been conducted by researchers since 2013 to 2014. This research constitutes the transdisciplinary approach, which integrating religion, culture, economics and political perspective. This study tries to trace the portrait and the life of Javanese Moslems in Sathorn Bangkok Thailand. Historically, they originates from Indonesia - Central Java, especially Kendal, Yogyakarta and East Java and now they are the third generation. The population of this community approximately 3000 people who live in Sathorn Bangkok Thailand. The Javanese Moslems have become Thailand citizen, but their lives represent a uniqueness in terms of Islamicity, forms of houses building, mosque building and cultural side. As moslems, they are devout moslems, and as the Javanese descent, they still conserve their ancestral traditions, such as kenduren, slametan, tahlilan, etc. Meanwhile, as citizen of Thailand, they are good citizens. The struggle of the Javanese Moslems community of Kampung Jawa since the first generation until the third generation nowadays explains a long process and dynamics in the field of socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-religious. In this regard, the most prominent is the role of son and grandchildren of KH Ahmad Dahlan the founder of Muhammadiyah in Indonesia. The results of this research has indicated that achievement of that community mentioned above illustrating how this community transform Islam as a creative in responding to the challenges and demands of the reality of religious life, culture, economics and politics in Thailand by conducting internalization, externalization and objectivation of Islam. In addition, the result of this research has revealed that Islam as a doctrine of revelation which was transformed by the community leaders and the full dynamics coupled with full creative policies in reading and responding to the realities, challenges and demands of society and age dynamics in various aspects of life in political, economic, social, religious as well as in the field of culture.

¹ Paper presented at Kuala Lumpur International Islamic Studies & Civilizations Conference 2016. This paper denotes a brief report of the result of research on "Moslems in Java Village (Kampung Jawa) in Sathorn Bangkok Thailand" from Social, Economical and Cultural Perspective. This research was funded by The Directorate of Research and Community Services (DPPM UII). The research has been conducted by Yusdani, Edy Suandi Hamid, and Muhammad Jauharul Maknun from 2013 to 2014.

² Yusdani the author or the speaker is a permanent lecturer of Shari'ah Department of The Faculty of Islamic Studies Islamic University of Indonesia (UII) and Director of The Center for Islamic Studies (PSI) Islamic University of Indonesia (UII) Yogyakarta Indonesia.

Keywords: Javanese Moslems, Sathorn, Bangkok, Islamicity and struggle

1.Introduction

This paper constitutes the result of a study regarding the life of Javanese Moslems in Sathorn Bangkok, Thailand. The life of this community describes the dynamics and struggles in the midst of the metropolis of Bangkok life. Therefore, this paper is expected to contribute to fill the lack of information related to the life and the portrait of one of the minority of Moslems in Southeast Asia.

In addition, this paper would also reveal the existence of the Javanese Moslem Community of Sathorn Bangkok who have the distinctiveness in term of social, cultural or economic. Even more the important thing is to explain how the dynamics of this community until the third generation, they are still endure and survive. On this basis, it can be stated that in terms of social and cultural life of the Moslem community in Sathorn Bangkok presenting the figure of Indonesian Javanese Moslem diaspora³ by featuring two of their identity as a devout Moslem and Javanese descent are still dominated by Javanese culture.

2.Theoretical Framework

The basic theoretical framework that applying in studying of Javanese Moslem departing from perspective that the interpretation of Islam according to a variant of Moslem has a characteristic. As there are also other variants of Islam, the basic framework like this is used in defining the life of the Javanese Moslems in Sathorn Bangkok. In addition, an understanding of the dynamics of the life of this community is supported also by the sociology of knowledge framework, it explains that the dialectic between this community with a dynamic context and the challenges and changes they face in Bangkok⁴. This dialectic process takes place in three stages: internalization, objectification, and externalization.⁵

³ Antje Missbach, *Politik Diaspora Aceh Suatu Gambaran tentang Konflik Separatis di Indonesia*, translated by Windu Wahyudi Yusuf from *Separatist Conflict in Indonesia: The Long-Distance Politics of The Acehnese Diaspora*. Forwarded by Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2012), p. 23-26. Diaspora can be defined community or society that has long left the country (of origin) and may have become citizens in their new place, but they still remember their ancestors who are still scattered in the region of origin, retain their collective memory as part of a good community of origin the culture and history, and they still maintain contact with the community so that they continue to live etnocomunal.

⁴ Muhyar Fanani, *Metode Studi Islam Aplikasi Sosiologi Pengetahuan Sebagai Cara Pandang*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2010), p. 54.

⁵ Kuntowijoyo, *Muslim Tanpa Masjid*, (Bandung: Mizan, .2001), p. 139-140 dan 337. Internalization stage is the process of understanding the characters and the Muslim community in Bangkok Thailand Kampung Jawa against the teachings of Islam. Objectification is done to understand the context of the implementation of Islam, namely the dynamics of life and with all the complexity of the problem, both local, national and global Moslem community faced Bangkok in Thailand. Phase objectification is part of the strategy of the Islamic actualization in the context of change, dynamics and challenges faced by the Moslem community in Bangkok Kampung Jawa, both in the field of socio-cultural, social, religious, economic and political. While the externalization

In addition, the study of the Javanese Moslems in Sathorn Bangkok is also based on the basic perspective of Islamic area studies, including the ethno - linguistic - historical and geopolitical. Thus, in this study, researchers integrate the two approaches. By doing so, the life of this community can be described comprehensively that covering the aspects of social, economy and culture life.⁶

3. The Location and The Historical Sketch of Javenese Moslems

For visiting to the location of Javenese Moslems in Sathorn or some people called this location as Java Village ("Kampung Jawa") is quite easily achieved, which is located in the district of Sathorn, Bangkok city center, precisely in the Road (Soi) Rangnamkeang 707, Yan Nawa. Kampung Jawa is strategically located in the center of Bangkok. Kampung Jawa clearly visible location on the map below. "A" is a place travelers BTS Surasak BTS down when riding and " B " is Kampung Jawa location.



stage is the implementation of the values that have been internalized and performed by prominent Moslem community in Kampung Jawa context changes and the dynamics of the Moslem community in Bangkok.

⁶ Ajid Thohir, Studi Kawasan Dunia Islam Perspektif Etno-Linguistik dan Geo-Politik (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2009), p.12-13. By combining two mapping models, namely cultural regionalism (entholinguistic-historical) and geopolitics. Entholinguistic-historical, it seems easier to see how the macro general feel of where each clump cultural regionalism. Meanwhile, geopolitical studies lead to the pattern of political territory (formal state power), can be to see the micro / local development atmosphere detail collected rationally within the geographical area of a country, in addition to cultural attractiveness sentiment cultural nuances of the parent clump (ethnolinguistic)

Figure 4.1: Jawa Location, Source : maps.google.com

From The right and next to the Rama III Road there is an alley to get to Kampung Jawa. The visitors can also ask the location of the mosque to the residents around the Rama III Road, for example, with the word "mosque" or ' Hong Moslem ', The index finger people pointing directly toward the residents of Kampung Jawa. In addition, there is an easy way to reach Java Mosque, the visitors can look for a tuk - tuk (Thai traditional transport) or also motorcycle, taxi and asked to be taken to the Java Mosque, people are ready to take the visitors to the Kampung Jawa. The price was not expensive just by paying 20 Bath (1 bath = Rp. 380) per person for a motorcycle or 40 Bath for a tuk-tuk that can be ride by 3-4 people.

Based on information from the residents of Kampung Jawa told that the first community in the township, there were only 5 natives of Java, Mr Ahmad Aska is oldest of Javanese descent in Kampung Jawa has 5 children who have been blessed with 11 sons / daughters. His father, Aska Bin Roso, is worker coming from Kendal (Central Java-Indonesia) is employed by the Japanese during World War II, the famous railroad bombing by the Allies in Kanchanaburi. Around 100,000 people died in the construction of railway linking Thailand with Burma at the time.⁷

In the later period many Javanese who come to Bangkok, Thailand in order to trade with the people of Thailand. The merchant is also often finally settled down and married a citizen of Thailand.⁸

Now, Thai's residing in Kampung Jawa is majority of Moslem. In addition, in some other provinces in Thailand, Kampung Jawa is one of the places Moslems live. The number of Moslem population living in Kampung Jawa reached about 3000 people⁹ consisting of Javanese Moslem descent, Malaysia descent and Thailand native descent.

4. The General Portrait of Javanese Moslems Life in Kampung Jawa

⁷ This information can be read from

<http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5130150d017608e82e000007/kampung-jawa-ditengah-kota-bangkok> accessed February 14, 2014. The same information was obtained from interviews with Pak Slamet Dariyat (age 83 years a resident of Muslim Javanese village Thailand Friday, on February 14, 2014 at Java Mosque Kampung Jawa). Parents Mr Slamet Dariyat comes from Kendal in Central Java and He isa second-generation Moslems in the village of Java,Sathorn Bangkok.

⁸ <http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5130150d017608e82e000007/kampung-jawa-di-tengah-kota-bangkok> accessed 14 February 2014.

⁹ This information was obtained from Mr. Mansoor (50 years old) Thailand citizen of one Moslem leader in Kampung Jawa and he is the third generation descendant of maternal origin of Kendal, Central Java, on Friday, February 14, 2014 at village Java Java Mosque Bangkok and also from [http:// www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5130150d017608e82e000007/kampung-jawadi-tengah-kota-bangkok](http://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5130150d017608e82e000007/kampung-jawadi-tengah-kota-bangkok) accessed February 14, 2014.

If the visitors come to Kampung Jawa can see the houses around the mosque resembles Java township “kauman” in Yogyakarta. The road is narrow, with a width of only about one to two feet on either side there are houses that fences high enough. Some houses here still have a pretty beautiful yard (asri) with an area of about 10-20 square meters. Kampung Jawa region as described above is not only inhabited by the descendants of Javanese and Muslim, a descendant of Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Thailand natives both Muslims and non-Muslims.¹⁰

Seeing from the style of houses in Kampung Jawa, where visitors can distinguish people from Javanese descent or Thailand natives. As already mentioned earlier that the Javanese descent usually still a two-storey wooden house but not a home stage (rumah panggung). Both the floor and the floor above it covered wooden walls.

The residents are descended from Javanese. They are almost all Moslems so there are several Islamic symbols in their house. At least one sentence of Arabic calligraphic displayed in their home. Indeed, the Thai people love religious symbols, so that the Moslems of Thailand then also display of Islamic symbols in their homes.

In Kampung Jawa, there is a popular mosque called Masjid Jawa (Java Mosque). The mosque is located in Rome street Nam Khaeng 5. Java Mosque was built in 1908, it stood on the land area of approximately 3,500 m², the building consists of an area of 370 m² building mosques, schools or madrasah area of 150 m² and the rest of the page and place ablutions and showers. Seen from the outside, the shape of the mosque like building mosques in Java with pyramid-shaped roofs and terraces.¹¹

Inside the mosque there are 4 main pillars with ornate like flower shape. It is told that the flower decoration idea came from Irfan Dahlan¹² (son of KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah the Islamic organizations in Indonesia). On each side (front, right and left of the mosque), there are 3 wooden door measuring 1.5 m wide and 2.5 m high with ornate engravings on each of the doors. All the doors only opened at the time of the day Friday or big events in the mosque. In front of the mosque, there is a madrasah two-story buildings that are intended for children and young Moslems to learn Islam.¹³

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Mansur (50 years) Thailand citizen, one of Moslem leaders in Kampung Jawa and he is the third generation descendant of maternal origin of Kendal, Central Java on Friday, February 14, 2014 at Java village Java Mosque Bangkok

¹¹ Benny Rhamdani, “Menengok Masjid Jawa di Bangkok” http://mizan.com/news_det/menengok-masjid-jawa-dibangkok.html accessed on 9 of March 2014.

¹² This information is obtained from Winai Dahlan submitted to investigators after praying Friday, on February 14, 2014 at Java Mosque in Kampung Jawa.

¹³ http://mizan.com/news_det/menengok-masjid-jawa-di-bangkok.html accessed 9 March 2014.

In the field of socio-religious life, Moslem community in Kampung Jawa have the freedom to practice their religious ritual. The existence of the mosque is still standing strong Java community signifies is supported by the government and the surrounding environment. Routine activities held at Java Mosque still runs consistently like congregational prayers, routine recitation and as a charity collection which is then distributed to the parties entitled to receive it.

Later in the economic field, the Moslem Community of Kampung Jawa by the Thai government granted equal opportunities in supporting the day-to-day needs. The Moslem community of Kampung Jawa like other Thailand citizen, they work in almost all sectors or regions as well as other Thai citizens. Their respective jobs as traders or entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial activity can be seen in all the way or the hallway to Kampung Jawa. There are also who work in banking, private employees or become civil servants, such as teachers, lecturers, and there are people work at the embassy in Bangkok, for instance in Indonesian Embassy.¹⁴

Moslem community in the Kampung Jawa, despite their quantity is less than the Buddhist community but they are more solid. The interesting thing is done in doing business while keeping their religious existence, is kosher labeling or stickers inscribed lafaz Allah, Muhammad or bismilahirrahmanirrahim.¹⁵

It is similar in politics, Moslem society of Kampung Jawa were given the right to vote to choose leaders according to their choices and freedom. In fact, as have been described above, a lot of Moslems who play role as one of the policy holders in the government of Thailand.

Thus, the position of the Moslem community of Kampung Jawa do not constitute a significant problem in the undergoing routine daily activities in terms of religious, social, economic and even political field. In general, the tendency of society Thai Moslems treat non-Muslims Kampung Jawa so well that the Moslem community are not difficult to live as a Moslem in Bangkok. However, the knowledge of Thai society regarding Thai-Moslems about Islam is still very minimum. They only understand the Islamic doctrine ban on eating pork.¹⁶

Understanding toward the dynamics of the Moslem community of Kampung Jawa in the political, economic, social, cultural and religious can be positioned as a process of social transformation. The process of social

¹⁴ This statement was delivered by Mr. Mansur (50 years old) Thailand citizen, one of Moslem leaders in Java village and he is the third generation descendant of maternal origin of Kendal, Central Java Friday, on February 14, 2014 at Java Mosque of Kampung Jawa Bangkok.

¹⁵ <http://papayapokpok.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/muslim-bangkok-di-tengah-mayoritas-thai-buddhist-bagian-1/> accessed 25 September 2013

¹⁶ <http://papayapokpok.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/muslim-bangkok-di-tengah-mayoritas-thai-buddhist-bagian-2/> 25 September 2013

transformation that occurred in the history of Moslem life of Kampung Jawa in Bangkok, about religious, Islamic practices done by these communities constituting a strategy building to survive under the shadow of the challenges of local, national and global demands in various fields of life such as politics, economy, culture and religion .

Nevertheless, the process of social transformation that is carried by Moslems of Kampung Jawa in Bangkok not only have an impact on the political and economic dimensions, but even at building worldview of Bangkok community. It is understood that the Moslem community of Kampung Jawa in Bangkok which were originally positioned as a newcomer, then they become a citizen , and now they become an asset of the nation and the state of Thailand.

5. The Important Role of Ahmad Dahlan's Grandsons/Daughters

One of the important research findings about the life of Moslems in Kampung Jawa this turns out one of the parties sufficient role in advancing the lives of Moslems in Kampung Jawa is the role of sons and daughters of Irfan Dahlan. Irfan Dahlan (other name - in Indonesia - is Djumhan Dahlan) denotes one of the sons of KH Ahmad Dahlan, Islamic reformer figures from Yogyakarta, and founder of Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest Modern Moslem organization.¹⁷

Who would have (has) thought if that is quite instrumental in advancing the Kampung Jawa Moslem community and Islam in Thailand, there is a role to be played by offspring (grandchildren) of KH Ahmad Dahlan. Researchers had met several grandchildren of KH Ahmad Dahlan in Kampung Jawa, it could that has then revealed the story of this family trip and their struggle to promote Islam in Thailand today.¹⁸

One of the grandson of the founder of Muhammadiyah, the son of Irfan Dahlan and Zahrah is Winai Dahlan. His figure is known as one of the leading Moslem figure in Thailand. He is also known as a preacher who was invited to several countries, a professor at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University and currently serves as Director of the Halal Science Center (HSC), a kosher food research center in Thailand.¹⁹

As noted by Ahmad Dahlan grandchildren have inherited their grandfather 's teachings. In view of Irfan Dahlan's children that their grandfather teachings always delivered by Irfan and Mrs. Zahra to their children. One good message that they always remember that the best legacy for children and grandchildren is a good

¹⁷ <http://muhammadiyahstudies.blogspot.com/2013/05/winai-cucu-kh-ahmad-dahlan-yang-jadi.html> accessed 15 February 2014.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <http://www.jpnn.com/read/2013/06/17/177256/Anak-Menyebarkan-Islam,-Cucu-Konsisten-Berdakwah-> accessed 14 February 2014.

education. Do not ever be ashamed of poverty but shame when doing the wrong thing. Do not be lazy to work and to be sincere when helping others. Do not ever insult anyone, because one day, they could have been raised in rank and become a great person. Do not ever ask for mercy and keep the faith, this as told by Rambhai Dharmikarak.²⁰

On that basis, "after the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Ahmad Dahlan visited Indonesia (Yogyakarta) in April 2013, they feel proud to be a descendant of KH Ahmad Dahlan, transmitted Irfan Dahlan's sons and daughters to their sons and daughters (great-grandson of the third - generation KH Ahmad Dahlan) spread across Thailand to the United States. Not just a sense of pride, they also make the name Dahlan, as the official name of the family lineage",²¹ said Winai Dahlan. Now the whole family descendants of Irfan Dahlan in Thailand have become Thai citizen.

6. The Characteristics of Javanese Moslems Life in Sathorn Bangkok

The Description of the uniqueness of Javanese Moslems life in Sathorn (Java Village-Kampung Jawa) includes several fields of life, for instances in term of their position as Moslem, minority, culture, economic and political aspect. The Characteristics of The reality of the lives of the Moslem community in Kampung Jawa Sathorn Bangkok is contrary to the picture of the daily life of Moslem minorities in non-Moslem majority neighborhood in various regions of the world. As is often depicted that the Moslem minority have problems that make their existence disturbed. The issue of religious life they lead sometimes have to deal with the culture and values that develop in the host societies.²² Ironically, the Islamic interpretation of " conventional " (legal - formalistic) as a reference Muslim minority lives in other parts of the world, it can not provide an answer to the life problems they face. The impact of this can not be fully integrated into the society in which they live.²³

The issue of Moslem minority life in America and in Europe is getting worse and complex as rising Islamophobia in some communities where the Moslem minority living. The legal and formalistic Islam affect Muslim minorities to make them attaching to stereotyping or preconception that trap. The implication, they actually become peripherals that are not fully integrated into society.²⁴

²⁰ Interview with Rambhai Dharmikarak has been done on Friday on January 12, 2014 and on Friday, February 14, 2014 at her home in Kampung Jawa Thailand. She is Thailand citizen in Kampung Jawa. She is a third generation of Java Muslims and she was one of the granddaughter of Ahmad Dahlan (She is daughter of Irfan Dahlan, and Irfan Dahlan is son of Ahmad Dahlan) Muhammadiyah founder of one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Rambhai Dharmikarak is the eldest daughter of Irfan Dahlan.

²¹ This explanation was delivered by Winai Dahlan on Sunday January 12, 2014 in Rambhai Dharmikarak's house in Kampung Jawa.

²² Abd. A'la, Pengembangan Fiqh Minoritas, Representasi Islam yang Menyejarah, in Ahmad Imam Mawardi, Fiqh Minoritas Fiqh al-Aqalliyat dan Evolusi Maqashid al-Syari'ah dari Konsep ke Pendekatan, (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), p. vii –viii.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

As part of the human race (which of course has the basic rights of human beings are the same as the others) and as a citizen of a country, they have the right to live a decent and normal as the host societies in general is a necessity. On top of that, as part of the Moslems, they need to present tolerant Islam, which should be far away from the perception of most people during this time. In this context, they need the understanding and interpretation of Islam that can accommodate their concerns in various areas of life become very urgent.²⁵

The presence of Moslem minorities²⁶ in the review of the various regions of the world by both Moslems and non-Moslems by researchers, actually originated from the accumulated anxiety Moslem minority community in various non-Moslem -majority countries when it has to do something related to their religion. On the one hand, they have to obey the teachings of the religion which is believed to perfect and chosen by God as a guide in accordance with human nature in finding peace in the world and the hereafter, while on the other hand there is a discrepancy between the terms and understanding that they understand conservative interpretation of socio-cultural reality in which they live. For them, this fact means that implement of the teachings that they understand will make them alienated from the environment, while leaving the religion is something they never imagined. From here arises the question of the claim of universality of Islam which states that all aspects of Islam, both related to Aqidah, Shari'ah, or morality is a manifestation of God 's grace is universal for all his servants.²⁷

The problem that arises then is when they understand that Islam is no longer adaptable and facilitate a handle on life in the country, where they live and make a living. The difficulty of understanding the application of conservative Islam in this context gave emerging two options when they need to stay afloat as a good Moslem: the first is out of the country where they live and look for life, or the second return to their home countries where they understand Islam can be executed easily. Both are doing a reinterpretation of Islam itself on the basis of the courage and spirit that Islam is in accordance with all the places and times as well as the rules that Islam can change with time and place.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid. pp. viii – ix

²⁶ Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Towards A Fiqh for Minorities: Some Basic Reflections*, (Richmon,UK: IIIT, 2003), hlm.3-4. Dan Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fi Fiqh al-Aqalliyat al-Muslimat Hayat al-Muslimin Wasat al-Mujtama'at al-Ukhra*, (Beirut: Dar alSyuruq,2001), pp. 30-34. In this sense it is interesting the statement of Andrew F. March stated that by saying that the initiators of fiqh thinking about Muslim minorities in Western countries are Muslim scholars who come from the fact that during this positioned as “syari’ah/fiqh minded” or “conservative” or also “tradisionalist”, or eventhough as neo-classic”, like Taha Jabir al-Alwani, Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, Faysal Mawlawī, Abd Allāh Ibn Bayya dan Khālīd Abd al-Qādir. The theoretical framework that they wake up in connection with this minority fiqh is comprehensive qualitative atau meta etik. Andrew F. March, “Sources of Moral Obligation to non-Muslims in the “Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities” (Fiqh al-aqalliyyāt) Discourse”, in *Islamic Law and Society* 16 (2009) 34-94.

²⁷ Ahmad Imam Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas Fiqh al-Aqalliyat dan Evolusi Maqashid al-Syari’ah dari Konsep ke Pendekatan*, (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), pp. 109-110.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 111.

While the results of the study of the Moslem Community Life of Kampung Jawa in Bangkok Thailand this show portrays the life of a successful Moslem minority in the fight and interpret and practice Islam as a faith and their culture in the face of life's challenges in a variety of fields such as economics, politics ,religion and culture, etc. But even the Moslem community of Kampung Jawa living in the state that do not apply the principles of the Islamic state, in reality they still survive and succeed even position and their role is taken into account by the Thai state and the nation as a valuable asset.

Therefore, of course, the success of this community struggles can not be separated from their commitment to Islamic teachings and cultural traditions on the one hand and wise and smart in reading the signs of the times. On this basis, the success of the Moslem community of Kampung Jawa can also be regarded as a valuable example for the Moslem community in the region about how to fight and transform (objectivication) Islamic doctrine creatively as prophetic teachings in addition to be dynamic and adaptive - accommodating with dotted - starting from the reality in which they live and at the same time without losing identity as a devout Moslem community in the middle of the rapids pull of globalization and the demands of life locality in which they live.

From the description and the story of the life of Moslem in Kampung Jawa, especially the success and the role played by the grandson of Ahmad Dahlan mentioned above can not be separated from the two values that affect the perspective and leads the Java community, the religion (Islam) and culture. Java community, religious view of life is important, so that the Java family tradition since the early members of the community they have been introduced to the ritual of worship in accordance with their religious beliefs. They believe that the provision of religious importance since the early implanted in their communities. Although it was realized that the religion is not a process that is completed, but in many Javanese families believe that religion should be introduced to their children since the beginning. Consciousness is what makes them give guidance and possible instill religion in the best way.²⁹

In addition to the religious life, the family of Java also attaches importance to the preservation of Javanese tradition. In the tradition of Javanese families, family members since childhood has been introduced to the various values that exist in the vicinity. Given the tradition of all its early Java, the Java family tended since the beginning of the first to introduce a more values-oriented culture. The values such as sabar (patience), jujur (honesty), budi luhur (nobility), pengendalian diri (self-control), prihatin (concerned), toleran (tolerant), hormat (respectful), manut (obedient), murah hati (generous), menghindari konflik (avoiding conflict), tepo seliro (tolerant), empati (empathy), sopan santun (courtesy), rela (willingly), narima (sincerity), pengabdian

²⁹ Muhammad Idrus, "Makna Agama dan Budaya bagi Orang Jawa", dalam UNISIA, Vol. XXX No. 66 Desember 2007, (Yogyakarta: UII), p. 391.

(devotion), and eling (aware). These values are taught for Javanese and they affected Javanese society's lives.³⁰

Associated with religious traditions, the Java community also introduce religious routine activities to their children. These values will be applied later by the child as a handle to interact with people inside or outside the family, and even it is possible these values hold true for an individual Java for the next life. Discussing about religion in the Java community, will be closely linked to the cultural values of their referenced, i.e. Javanese culture and at this point occurs a cross between a culture with religion and then come up with the name kejawen as a cultural phenomenon and religion together coloring Javanese life. Crossing also teaches Java community to cling to religion and culture as well as guidance in life. On this side, how the moral teachings of childhood into the handle most of the Java community, not open conflict, but take the middle path.³¹

Based on the explanation of the preservation of cultural values for the Java community above shows that if there is continuity between each generation of value, people will undoubtedly have a foothold which also became the basis of something new on it. That is, if between the young and older generation interaction of cultural inheritance healthy, young people will have no trouble to find their identity. Conversely, if there is a disconnect intergenerational interactions make the future generations have difficulty determining their identity.³²

The above description suggests that the cultural value system is growing and developing in the Java community, received by consciously or not, will be reflected in the day-to- day behavior of the nature of human life, the nature of human work, the nature of the place of humanity in space and time, the nature of the human relationship with the natural surroundings, and the nature of human relationships with each other.³³

Further it can also be argued that in the Javanese tradition that is often not very aware of the influence of Javanese culture against them. By doing so, Javanese culture influence the way people understand the world of Java without realizing it. The situation over the unconscious influence of Javanese culture in them usually appear in daily behavior that appears, namely in the way of thinking, or interact with people around him/her. A simple example of this situation is how the Javanese when they are in transmigration areas. Javanese tradition still influences the way of their thought, so that the problem is simple example of naming the village would be named as when they were on the island of Java. This overview describes the characteristic

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 391-392.

³¹ Ibid.p. 392.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. p.393

of Javanese society, that consciousness itself is a cultural phenomenon that widespread among the Javanese. Awareness of this culture is a source of pride and can be cultural identity.³⁴

The explanation of how religion and culture are so important for the Java community, it also appears in the life of Javanese Moslem community descent in Kampung Jawa in Sathorn Bangkok Thailand. In this atmosphere of Islamic Javanese in Kampung Jawa so pronounced. The average women wearing jilbab here. Kosher food vendors when shopping on their visitors, they usually say, *jazaakallah*. There is a middle-aged barber note that if there are no customers anymore, he/she reads the Qur'an. Children are little boys -do into the mosque wearing cap and gloves, and if meet each other by saying *assalamu'alaikum* and *alhamdulillah*.³⁵

Associated with portrait and reality of the relationship among religious believers in Kampung Jawa, as told by Mr. Mansur³⁶ explains that the Moslem community in the Kampung Jawa with non-Moslems, especially the majority Buddhist religion has been used to cooperation and are harmonious relationship. Even in good celebration of national holidays and holy days of Islam, Reverend Buddha attends and contributes to the children of Islam, as exemplified when the celebration of the child (children day) in Kampung Jawa on Sunday January 12, 2014 Buddha Pastor was invited, attended and provided and distributed the gifts to the children of Moslem in Java Mosque yard in Kampung Jawa.

The phenomenon mentioned above is a portrait of the adaptation process that carried out by Moslem of Kampung Jawa due to the fact of life in Kampung Jawa besides Moslems there are also Buddhists. It is also a portrait of the harmonious relationship of Moslems and Buddhists in Kampung Jawa happens Bangkok. The statement also explained that the Moslem community in Kampung Jawa did not isolate themselves exclusively. They still socialize and interact with the community of Buddhists and non-Java Moslem communities that life in Kampung Jawa can live together in peace and harmony with people and other communities.

7. The Concluding Remarks

As the end of the entire description, analysis, discussion that has been described earlier in this paper, it can be stated the following conclusions:

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ http://yessyinfra.blogspot.com/2012_10_01_archive.html accessed on Saturday on 15 February 2014.

³⁶ The explanation is given by Mr. Mansur (age 50 years) Thailand citizen of one Moslem leader in Java village and he is the third generation descendant home mother of Kendal, Central Java, on Sunday, on January 12, 2014 and on Friday, February 14, 2014 at Java Mosque of Kampung Jawa Sathorn Bangkok.

The results of this study has revealed and illustrated the uniqueness of the life of a Moslem community living in Kampung Jawa Sathorn Bangkok because on one hand they can still maintain their identity as Moslems who obey the fact remains lackluster execution of daily rituals of worship - they do in Kampung Jawa, especially in Java Mosque. While on the other hand, they are as citizens of Javanese descent can still preserve ancestral traditions, this can be understood from the fixed conserve Javanese traditions, such as kenduren, slametan, tahlilan. Similarly, their identity as citizens of Thailand, they include citizens who obey the rules and laws that apply in Thailand as well as fulfill their rights and duties as Thailand citizens.

The Moslem community struggles starting point from Kampung Jawa in Bangkok Thailand in achieving success is the teachings of Islam as a cultural revelation. Besides, Java is used as framing resources that transformed by the community leaders in accordance with the dynamics and the full creative coupled with read the full policy and addressing the realities, challenges and demands of society and age dynamics in various aspects of life in the political, economic, social, religious as well as in the field of culture.

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Informants:

Rambhai Dharmikarak (65 years old) Thailand citizen, Moslem lives in Kampung Jawa, one of offspring (grandchildren) of founder of Muhammadiyah, third generation Javanese Moslem in Kampung Jawa Bangkok.

Mansur (50 years old) Thailand citizen, Moslem resident of Kampung Jawa Moslem offspring of mother from Kendal (central Java Indonesia) and father of Thailand, Mansur is third generation of Javanese Moslem who live in Kampung Jawa.

Winai Dahlan (60 years old) Thai citizen, Moslem resident of Kampung Jawa offspring (grandchildren) of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, third generation of Javanese Moslem in Kampung Jawa.

Slamet Dariyat (83 years old) Thai citizen, Moslem resident of Kampung Jawa Moslem, his father and mother from Kendal (Central Java Province Indonesia) second generation of Javanese Moslem of Kampung Jawa.

Chapter Five

Hui Yunnanese Migratory History in Relation to the Han Yunnanese and Ethnic Resurgence in Northern Thailand

Wang Liulan¹

Abstract

The Yunnanese of Northern Thailand either came from Yunnan Province in Southwest China or have ancestors originating there. However, despite the heterogeneity of Yunnanese society, people are categorized under one broad ethnic term and labeled as “Ho” or “Chin Ho” in Thai. To understand the specific situation and ethnic identity of one group of Yunnanese today, the Hui Yunnanese, we must first appreciate the historical influences on their migration and interethnic relations during their migration to and settlement in Thailand. This paper outlines the history of first-generation Yunnanese migration since the end of the nineteenth century. Differing sociocultural and political backgrounds of the Han and Hui Yunnanese have led to different migratory patterns and expressions of ethnicity in Thailand.

Keywords: Hui and Han Yunnanese interethnic relations, Hui ethnicity, KMT, migratory history, Northern Thailand

1. Introduction

Throughout History, Yunnan Province has served as a gateway to the outside world and has played an important role in the sociopolitical and economic relations within Southeast Asia. In Thailand, Yunnanese Chinese are considered to be people who were born in or whose ancestors were originating from Yunnan Province. As Yunnanese commonly migrated by land, they are often categorized as “overland Chinese” and are thus differentiated from those Chinese migrants who came to Thailand by sea.

Yunnanese Chinese in Thailand are composed of two subgroups, the Han and the Hui. The Han are the largest ethnic group in China and generally adhere to a mixture of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. In contrast, the Hui are Muslims and were officially listed as one of minority groups by China’s Communist government in the 1950s² Among Yunnanese Chinese, these ethnic beliefs are differentiated colloquially as

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² For a discussion of the changing ethnicity of the Hui in China, see Fan Z2004\

Han jiao and Hui jiao, or Yisilan (Islam) jiao. In addition, a small portion of Han are Christians. Despite religious differences, both Han and Hui speak Chinese in a Yunnanese dialect. In Thailand, most of their villages are located along the national borders of Northern Thailand near Burma, and more than 100 villages are composed of Han and Hui Yunnanese.

In Thai society, Yunnanese Chinese are considered to be an ambiguous “ethnic group,” and details of their sociocultural diversity and history are often disregarded. They have been labeled as “Ho” or “Chin Ho,” terms of still uncertain etymology, and are differentiated from Chinese (Chaek) who came to Thailand by sea from coastal areas such as Fujian and Guangdong. Previous studies on Chinese migration have paid less attention to Chinese who migrated overland as opposed to those who took sea routes. One reason may be because southwestern China is far from the political center of Chinese history and thus has been seen as a less civilized and developed area in contrast to the coastal areas where Chinese migrants have expanded commercial networks for many centuries.

The Yunnanese Chinese are also excluded from the Thai category of “hill people” (Chao Khao), which describes a minority group in hilly Northern Thailand. Yunnanese Chinese who live in these mountainous areas have played key roles in trade, commonly serving as intermediaries in trades of opium and daily items with the hill people.³ The Yunnanese Chinese and hill people share socioeconomic and cultural ties, and interactions through language, dwelling, intermarriage, and commerce. The Yunnanese language functions as the lingua franca among Yunnanese and hill people. Yunnanese villages are also often closely distributed among those of the hill people, and thus intermarriage is not rare. However, the Yunnanese are not considered to be “hill people” by the Thai government. The Thai term “Chao Khao” was formalized by the end of the 1950s, with the aim of controlling the borderland and guarding against communist guerillas. In general, the Thais have different views and policies toward hill people and Yunnanese Chinese (Kataoka 2004).

The implications of the label “Ho” or “Chin Ho” have changed along with the sociopolitical and cultural contexts in Thai society. Local Thais tend to think of Ho as Hui Yunnanese who came to Thailand at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and used horses and mules to trade goods between China and the rest of Southeast Asia. Descendants of those Hui traders now live in the northern cities of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. In contrast, local Thais tend to consider Ho who have lived on the Thai-Burmese border since the mid-twentieth century to be Han Yunnanese. Those who migrated later are particularly perceived as ex-soldiers of the Chinese Nationalist Army (Kuomintang; KMT) who escaped from Yunnan through Burma and into Thailand after the communist takeover of China in 1949. These KMT soldiers were often also mistakenly called Komphom 93, in reference to the 93rd division of the KMT,

³ Grandstaff 1979.

expeditionary troops who fought with the Japanese army during the Second World War. In actuality, the ex-KMT soldiers who live on the Thai border were not these World War II soldiers. Also, as many Yunnanese were KMT soldiers, in the mid-twentieth century, they have often been considered by Thais as creating “political and social problems,” particularly in regard to border issues and opium smuggling (cf., McCoy 1972).

Because of such generalizations, less attention has been paid to the sociocultural backgrounds of the Yunnanese, despite the heterogeneity and multilayered history of their migration. Previous studies on Yunnanese society have tended to focus on either the Hui or the Han, and historical or anthropological studies have generally described the process of migration within the scope of only one ethnic group. For example, British historian Andrew Forbes, one of the leading authorities studying the Yunnanese, described the Hui Yunnanese migration in the context of caravan traders from the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century based on historical materials written in English and compiled by various Western travelers and missionaries (Forbes 1987; Forbes and Henley 1997). Although his studies on Yunnanese migration contain many details and explanations, his account of the Yunnanese migration is written from the perspective of outsiders. We cannot hear the voices of the migrants themselves describing their social interactions and their perceptions.

Within anthropology, three main works have examined Yunnanese society. Suthep, a Thai anthropologist, conducted fieldwork in a Hui Yunnanese community in the 1970s, and Hill, an American researcher, completed field research on the general situation of the Yunnanese community. Both works focused on the Hui Yunnanese as traders, focusing on their commercial roles and use of horses and mules prior to transportation modernization and the emergence of sovereign nation-state influences in Southeast Asia and China (Suthep 1977; Hill 1982; 1998). However, these works contain little information on the migratory situations of the Yunnanese, either from intensive fieldwork or interviews.

In contrast, Chang (1999), a Taiwanese anthropologist, emphasized the migratory history of the Han Yunnanese, particularly the influence of KMT troop movements to Thailand after the Chinese Communists assumed power in 1949. Although Chang’s report provides many details about the migratory history of KMT troops, or Han Yunnanese, she does not describe the sociopolitical interactions between the Hui and Han during the migration process. Further research was thus needed to clarify how Han and Hui Yunnanese communities were established historically and why and how these two groups have lived side by side in Northern Thailand until the present.

In this paper, I describe the social relationships between the Han and Hui during the migratory process to Thailand and discuss how these relations have influenced the Yunnanese community in Thailand. I also examine Thai government policy toward Yunnanese Chinese since the mid-twentieth century, and then

analyze the resurgence of Hui consciousness and Islamic identification among Hui Yunnanese following settlement in Thailand.

2. General Situation of the Yunnanese before the Mid-twentieth Century

The migratory histories of the Han and Hui Yunnanese are extremely complicated and intertwined. Situations before and after 1950 differed in particular, as migration responded to political, economic, and military events in China, Burma, and Thailand.

Yunnanese migration occurred in two major waves. Before the mid-twentieth century, a relatively small number of Yunnanese migrants entered Northern Thailand. However, the migrant population greatly expanded following the political upheaval in China around 1949.

Before the mid-twentieth century, only a small number of Yunnanese lived in Northern Thailand. Historical sources compiled by Western travelers and missionaries indicate that early pioneers to Northern Thailand were mainly Hui traders. These early traders normally came to Thailand from Yunnan by passing through Burma once or twice a year during the dry season. The pioneers carried hand-woven cottons, felts, silks, medicines, and household goods from Yunnan and returned home with ivory and traditional medicines, such as pilose antlers and bear gall bladders (Zf. Forbes 1987; 1997; Hill 1982; 1998). However, most researchers believe that relatively few Han Yunnanese migrated to live in this area, and no known written sources from this period describe them.

As Han Yunnanese probably did not settle in Thailand until the mid-twentieth century, the Yunnanese, or “Ho,” in Thai must have designated the Hui rather than the Han. Although little information exists, at least two mosques in Chiang Mai Province and one mosque in Chiang Rai Province were established by Yunnanese Hui traders before the 1950s.

Two mosques in Chiang Mai City Chang Phuak mosque and Ban Ho mosque were established before the migration of Han Chinese in the mid-twentieth century. Chang Phuak mosque was established first by both Yunnanese and Indo-Pakistani Muslim traders in 1877. At that time, Chang Phuak was surrounded by a desirable natural environment with ample water and grasslands. This place thus became the gathering spot where traders rested and grazed their horses and mules. Both Hui and Indo-Pakistani Muslim traders gradually started to settle in Chang Phuak. Before the establishment of the Chang Phuak mosque, the nearest mosque was in the Chang Khlan area, where Indo-Pakistani Muslim traders lived. A Yunnanese man named Na played an important role in building the mosque in Chang Phuak, and although information on Mr. Na is limited, he was born in Najiaoying in the Tonghai District of Yunnan and moved to Chiang Mai as a trader. Na was very active in constructing the mosque and assisting in religious affairs, and was selected as Imam (religious leader) of the Chang Phuak mosque. However, after his death in Chiang Mai, Indo-Pakistani Muslims gained

much power and changed the religious composition. Since that time, Chang Phuak mosque has been managed and used mostly by Indo-Pakistani Muslims.

The Ban Ho mosque is another example of Yunnanese influence in Northern Thailand. A man named Zheng became a key leader of the Muslim community after Na's death. Zheng was born in Yuxi in Yunnan Province and later traded goods by horses and mules, passing through Kyaingtong in Burma and Lampang, Tak (where he married a local Thai woman), Lamphun, and Mae Sai along the Thai-Burmese border. He and his family moved to Chiang Mai City in 1905, around the area where Ban Ho is now situated. At that time, no mosque existed for communal use. Therefore, he used his house as a place for Hui to pray and gather. It was not until 1917 that he started to collect funds from his peer Hui Yunnanese and also supplied his own land to build the mosque.

To this day, the stories of early pioneers in this period have been handed down through the generations. For example, a Hui Yunnanese informant told me that his father had traded in Yunnan and visited Chiang Mai in this period; his father died in Chiang Mai and was buried at Chang Phuak mosque in 1920/21. Hui Yunnanese at that time also had strong links with Thai society. For example, in 1920, Hui Yunnanese were contracted to transport materials by horse for the construction of a railroad from Lampang to Chiang Mai. The Hui also helped run the postal service. Furthermore, the founder of the Ban Ho mosque provided a camp of approximately 100 rai (1 rai = 1600 m²) to be used for grazing horses during the construction of Chiang Mai's airport. For these contributions to Thai society, Mr. Zheng received the title of "khun" from the Thai government and was awarded a Thai surname.

3. Yunnanese Migration after the 1950s: The KMT Impact and Hui Migrants

Political turmoil in China led to a surge in the Yunnanese population in Thailand. When the Chinese Communists took control in , the defeated Nationalist Army, or KMT,fled to Taiwan. Most Yunnanese people of the KMT were Han; thus, the population ratio of the Yunnanese in Thailand since the 1950s also changed accordingly. While prior to the 1998s Hui made up the majority of Yunnanese in Thai society, the influx of KMT troops and supporters to Thailand meant an increase in the Han population. According to interviews with Yunnanese in, more than 80,000 Han Yunnanese and 10,000 Hui Yunnanese were living in Northern Thailand.

Chang 2999\ also described the migration of KMT from Yunnan to Thailand. However, key questions related to the Hui Yunnanese were not addressed. For example, under what circumstances have the Hui migrated to Thailand since the 1950s ? Has their migration differed from that of Han, who were mainly KMT soldiers ? What kinds of social relationships did the Hui have with Han Yunnanese throughout their migrations ? In

the following section, I will briefly outline the KMT migration to Burma and its impact on Hui migrants during the same period.

3.1. KMT Impacts in Burma and on the Hui Yunnanese

In Yunnan Province, fighting between KMT and communist troops continued until 1950, when the KMT was finally defeated in the Yuanjiang area and many supporters escaped to Burma. Deng Z1961: 24,28\ estimated that only about 1,000 soldiers left when the KMT fled Yunnan. Fig. shows the route of KMT movements from Yunnan, through Burma on the way to Thailand.

Even after KMT troops escaped to Burma, many continued to fight the communists in China. In expanding military forces in Burma, the KMT advocated “anticommunist” ideology and encouraged Yunnanese refugees to become involved in military activities under the leadership of the KMT regular army. The KMT actively recruited civilian refugees who had escaped from Yunnan, mostly in the same period. In 1951, the Academy of Anti-Communist and Anti-Soviet Russia Resistance, Yunnan Province, was established at Mong Hsat in Shan State.

The academy trained civilian refugee recruits from Yunnan to combat the communists. As a result, KMT troop numbers in Burma gradually increased. According to estimates by the government of the Union of Burma, the number of such soldiers had risen to 4,000 by April 1951 and to 12,000 in 1952 Zgovernment of the Union of Burma, Ministry of Information 1953:3,16\.

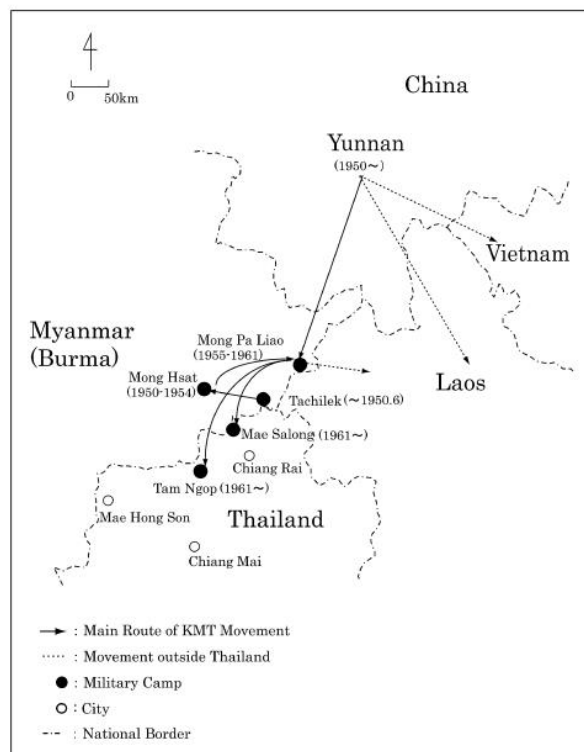


Figure. 5.1 Migration Route of KMT to Thailand

Various kinds of people were recruited as soldiers and/or forced to work under the influence and control of the KMT. Han Yunnanese constituted the majority of the KMT and controlled power. KMT military affairs in Burma greatly influenced the civilian refugees, as well as the ordinary people who lived in and outside Burma. Not only Han, but also members of other ethnic groups, such as the Hui Yunnanese, and minorities, such as the Wa, Shan, Lahu, and Palaung, joined KMT military forces in Burma. Moreover, Chinese in Laos and Thailand were also recruited as soldiers and engaged in military activities (Deng 1961: 143-144; Government of the Union of Burma, Ministry of Information 1953: 12-13).

Table 5.1 Civilian Porters Recruited by KMT⁴

No.	Place of Origin	Age	Number of People	Number of Horses and Mules	Reason of Migration
1	Xinping (Yunnan)	39	3	7 mules	Fought with Communist and migrated to Kyaing Tong after Liberation.
2	Weishan Yunnan	34	3	2 mules	Headman of the committee in the village. His father was killed by Communist.
3	Xinping Yunnan	29	4	13 Mules 1 horse	Engaged in caravan trade. Migrated in 1950.

⁴ Source : Modified from Wang (2004)

4	Xinping Yunnan	40	5	14 mules	Headman in the village called baozhang.
5	Jingdong Yunnan	34	2	4 mules	Merchant and landowner

What, then, was the situation among Hui Yunnanese ? As stated previously, the Hui often engaged in trading, using horses and mules to transport their goods. The KMT tried to utilize Hui social resources and commercial networks. Within the KMT, a Hui Yunnanese named Ma played an important role. Ma devoted himself to KMT military activities in Burma and was selected to lead and command troops. Ma also recruited Hui Yunnanese refugees from China who had escaped before and after 1949. Through his connections, he had civilian Hui Yunnanese traders use their mules and horses to convey military goods and relief to KMT troops (Deng 1961:48).

Table shows the traders who were recruited as porters to assist the KMT. The table lists the place of origin, age, number of people, number of horses and mules, and reason for migration. While these data do not provide a clear picture of the porters' ethnic backgrounds, it is estimated that more than 40,000 – 50,000 Hui Yunnanese traders worked as porters in support of KMT activities in Burma (loc. cit.).

A small number of Han Yunnanese traders also supported the KMT. For example, I met an about 70-year-old Han Yunnanese man in Chiang Mai who was formerly a trader in Yunnan and Burma. He was born in the Xinping District of Yunnan and had engaged in trade until he escaped from Yunnan in . He told me that he had encountered the KMT in Burma and was forced to assemble at Mong Heng when KMT troops were attacked by Burmese troops in the early 1950s. Because of this battle, he started to make his way to the Thai border in Doi Ang Khang.

3.2. Life Histories of Hui Yunnanese Traders

In this subsection, I describe the Hui migration to Thailand during this period, as well as their experiences. Interviews of elderly Hui suggest that their migration pattern was similar to that of Han Yunnanese in this period. In other words, escaping from Burma was difficult for both KMT soldiers and civilian refugees, but the latter were also randomly attacked by Burmese troops trying to push them out of Burma. However, at the individual level, Hui migrants differ in their experiences and perceptions of migration.

Below, I provide three migratory histories of Hui Yunnanese. These examples illustrate how economic activities were conducted before the presence of the KMT in Burma and how the KMT influenced the lives of Hui migrants thereafter. Mr. Ma's case (Case 1) shows how the KMT forced Hui Yunnanese to become involved with KMT military activities as porters.

Case 1. Mr. Ma, who worked as a trader, was temporarily caught up with the KMT in Burma

(Fig. 2) Mr. Ma was born in 1919 in Najiaying Village in the Tonghai District of Yunnan Province. The Tonghai District is located southeast of Kunming, the capital of Yunnan. Najiaying Village is known as a Hui village and has more than 1,000 households. In the past, Najiaying villagers were renowned as long-distance traders who used horses and mules to carry goods throughout Southeast Asia.

Since his grandfather's generation, Mr. Ma's family had included merchants who traded using horses and mules. When Mr. Ma was 12 years old, he accompanied his brother, who was years older, on a trading trip to Kyaing Tong, Shan State, Burma. During that time, his brother taught him how to feed and care for the horses and mules. For the next 7 years, Mr. Ma lived in Kyaing Tong without returning even once to his home in Najiaying. He continued to trade, traveling from Kyaing Tong to Menghai in Xishuangbanna, taking the following trade route: Menghai (Yunnan)Menghun (Yunnan) Mengban (Yunnan)Daluo (Yunnan)Mongma (Burma) Xiaohaijiang (unidentified, Burma) Kyaing Tong (Burma).

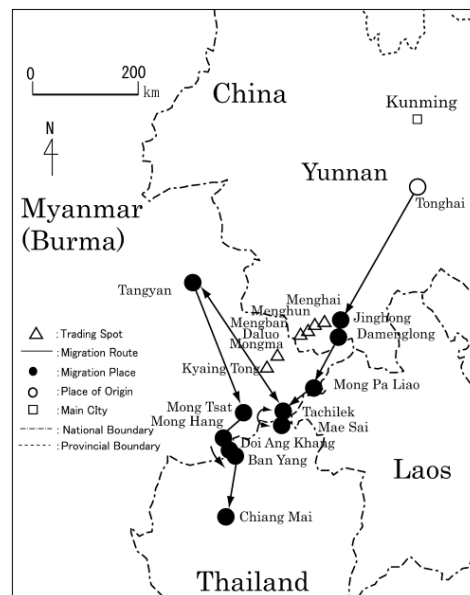


Figure 5.2 (Originally referred as figure 2) Mr. Ma's Migration Route

Mr. Ma was not willing to explain what he had traded between the regions, but he told me that he had brought forest goods such as pilose antlers and rhinoceros skins from Burma to Yunnan. He did not provide details on the kinds of goods he took from Yunnan to Burma.

Around 1945, when he was about 20 years old, he returned to Najiaying and married a Muslim woman; he then began trading separately from his brother. During this time, he continued to trade in the market towns of Yunnan Province. He traded such goods as salt, cotton, white silver, and tobacco. He bought salt in Mohei in the Simao District and brought it back to Tonghai, and he traded cotton and white silver with the hill peoples in Xishuangbanna. When asked about opium trading, Mr. Ma did not answer directly but explained that he had been to Lancang, where the Lahu lived. It is possible that he traded opium with the Lahu during that time.

In the latter half of the 1940s, China plunged into civil war, and the land was desolate. Mr. Ma was unable to pursue his commercial activities and felt he had lost all prospects for a good future. He left China in August 1949 at the age of 30, just ahead of the establishment of the communist regime. Leaving his wife and three daughters behind, he escaped to Burma. His elder brother left their village a year later but did not go to Burma. Instead, he moved to Menghai in Xishuangbanna, where he lived for the rest of his life. Fig. 2 shows the migration route of Mr. Ma from Yunnan to Thailand.

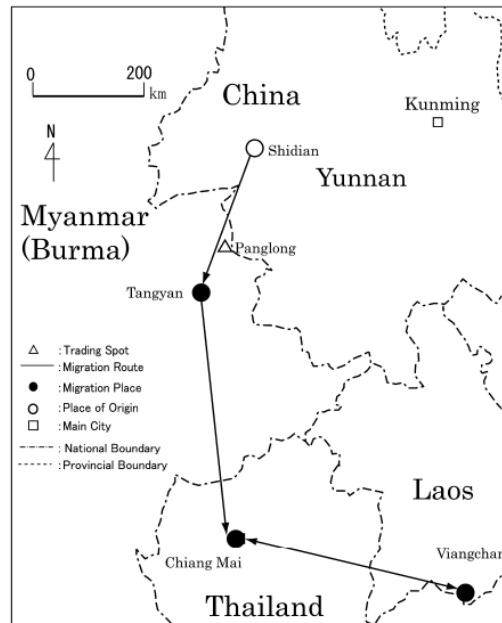
Mr. Ma took five horses with him when he left China and went to Tachilek, near the Thai border. There, he traded between Tangyan and the BurmeseThai border such as Tachilek and Mae Sai. While he was living in Burma, the KMT was defeated, and its armies moved south. Mr. Ma said he encountered KMT troops in Tangyan. Once the presence of the KMT was established, the situation in Burma drastically changed and turmoil ensued. Mr. Ma could no longer continue to trade as he had in the past. Moreover, Mr. Ma said that he was not recruited as a KMT soldier, but helped for a while by supplying food to the KMT.

Starting in the early 1950s, the Burmese army attacked not only the KMT but also the traders who had moved to Burma from Yunnan. Therefore, with his safety in mind, Mr. Ma fled to Northern Thailand in the early 1950s. At the time, Mr. Ma was deeply pained by the realization that he could never return to China. In Northern Thailand, he first moved to Doi Ang Khang, just across the border from Burma. He spent the next three or four years in a village of temporary construction where Han and Hui Yunnanese lived together. This village, called Ban Yang, is located in Amphoe Fang, Chiang Mai Province. He later moved south to Chiang Mai City.

The following example of Mr. Na shows a different version of Hui migration. Mr. Na's case is more complicated than Mr. Ma's because his migration was influenced not only by KMT affairs but also by domestic instability in Burma.

Case 2. Mr. Na, who migrated to Thailand after the 1960s (Fig. 3) Mr. Na was born in 1922 in Xishan Village, Shidian, Baoshan District, Yunnan Province. His family included generations of merchants, and he had seven brothers and sisters. In 1934/35, the second-eldest brother went to Chiang Mai to trade. When Mr. Na was

15 or 16 years old, he also started trading, using horses and mules. He engaged in trade between the Yunnan Burmese border and Burmese Thai border. For example, in 1944/45, he left Baoshan and entered the Panglong District of Wa State, where a Hui Yunnanese community had been established since the late



nineteenth century (Forbes 1988; Yoshimatsu 2003). He brought goods such as rice, cotton, tobacco, and pans from Yunnan and sold them in Panglong. After staying in Panglong, he went south toward Chiang Mai. In Chiang Mai, he bought foreign goods such as dyed cloth made in Germany, which had been transported from Bangkok, and returned again to Panglong. In Panglong, he bought opium and brought it back to Yunnan. In this way, Mr. Na could freely cross the Yunnan, Burmese, and Thai borders for trading.

Figure 5.3 (Originally Referred as Fig 3) Mr. Na's Migration Route

However, while he was trading in Burma, the situation in China became unstable due to the civil war. Mr. Na decided not to return to Yunnan and instead started to earn a living in Burma. In the early 1950s, Mr. Na moved to Tangyan and married a Panglong woman who was of Yunnanese Hui descent but born in Burma. They lived in Tangyan until 1986. During that period, he traded across the border of Burma and Thailand. According to Mr. Na, when he temporarily lived in Chiang Mai, he was asked by KMT soldiers to supply horses and muleteers. He also supplied food to the KMT.

In 1968, Mr. Na escaped from Burma because his business was not going well under Ne Win's socialist policies. He went to Viangchan in Laos and lived there for seven years. In 1974, Mr. Na returned to Thailand to earn a living. Of course, not all Hui Yunnanese were caught up in KMT activities as they migrated to

Thailand. Some people escaped to Thailand without becoming involved, as illustrated in the following example.

Case 3. Mr. Ye, who arrived earlier than the KMT in Thailand (Fig. 4) Mr. Ye was born in Najiaying Village in the Tonghai District. However, when he was only 1 year old, his village was attacked by bandits, and his family moved to Kunming. At the age of 20, Mr. Ye started to engage in trade. Although he was unwilling to talk about this trade, he said he had been to Xishuangbanna and had used mules. In 1947, he went south to Northern Thailand for trade, using horses and a car. First he used horses from Kunming to Kyaing Tong via Simao, Jinghong, Menghai, and Daluo. After arriving at Kyaing Tong, he drove by car through Tachilek and entered Mae Sai, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Mai. It was not clear from the interview what he traded during this time, but he then returned to Yunnan.

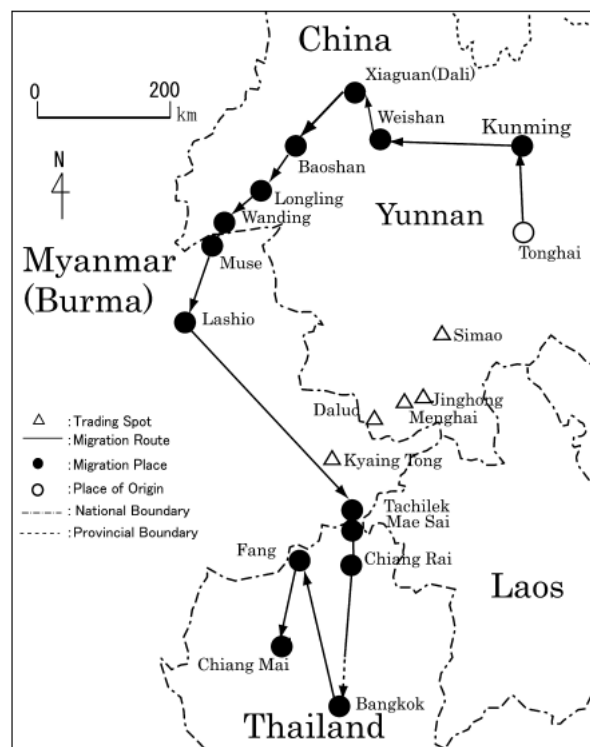


Figure 5.4 (Originally

Referred as Fig.4) Mr. Ye's

Migration Route

However, in 1950, Ye left China because of fear and turmoil following the establishment of the communist regime. He escaped from Yunnan by car, passing through Kunming, Weishan, Xiaguan (Dali), Baoshan, Longling, and Wanding (all in Yunnan), and then entering Burma via Muse, Lashio, and Tachilek before finally arriving at Mae Sai in Chiang Rai. In Mae Sai, he married a daughter of a Cantonese Chinese woman. In 1953/54, he moved to Bangkok for business and went back and forth between Bangkok and the Fang District of Chiang Mai for more than 10 years. After 10 years, he settled in Fang to engage in tea production. Mr.

Ye became wealthy from his success in the tea business, and about 10 years ago, moved to live in the city of Chiang Mai.

The above three life histories demonstrate the differing experiences and perceptions of Hui and Han migrants toward KMT activities in Burma. For the Han, KMT activities in Burma represented a challenge that could unite Yunnanese, both Han and Hui, under the ideology of “anticommunism.” However, for the Hui, who had been civilian merchants, KMT fighting had a negative impact on their life and economy. In interviews, the Hui Yunnanese I spoke with expressed common negative feelings toward the majority of Han Yunnanese because of KMT activities in Burma. During the war times, anticommunist political ideology both strongly impacted the KMT and civilian migrant life.

Hui Yunnanese often had no choice in cooperating with KMT military affairs. Ignoring the KMT presence was also impossible. One elderly Hui informant told me that “What we did in Burma was just to convey bullets.” Another Hui informant recalled constant attacks by Burmese troops; people had no time to rest and instead had to fight or flee the military attacks. Therefore, in Burma, sociocultural factors among the Han or Hui did not function as a key element to unite Yunnanese; rather, anticommunist ideology was considered the top priority.

4. Double Marginalization

4. 1 Distribution of Yunnanese Villages in Thailand

Yunnanese, including both KMT members and civilian refugees, were twice officially driven out of Burma. The Burmese government appealed to the United Nations that KMT activities had impinged on Burmese sovereignty and disturbed the territory of Burma. United Nations’ resolutions in 1953 and 1961 forced KMT troops to withdraw from Burma. After entering Thailand, all Yunnanese migrants, both Han and Hui, became stateless refugees living in “nan min cun” (meaning “refugee villages” in Chinese).

From 1995 to 2000, I conducted extensive field surveys to obtain an overall view of the distribution of Yunnanese villages. When I started fieldwork, little had been written about the distribution of Yunnanese communities including both Han and Hui in this area⁵

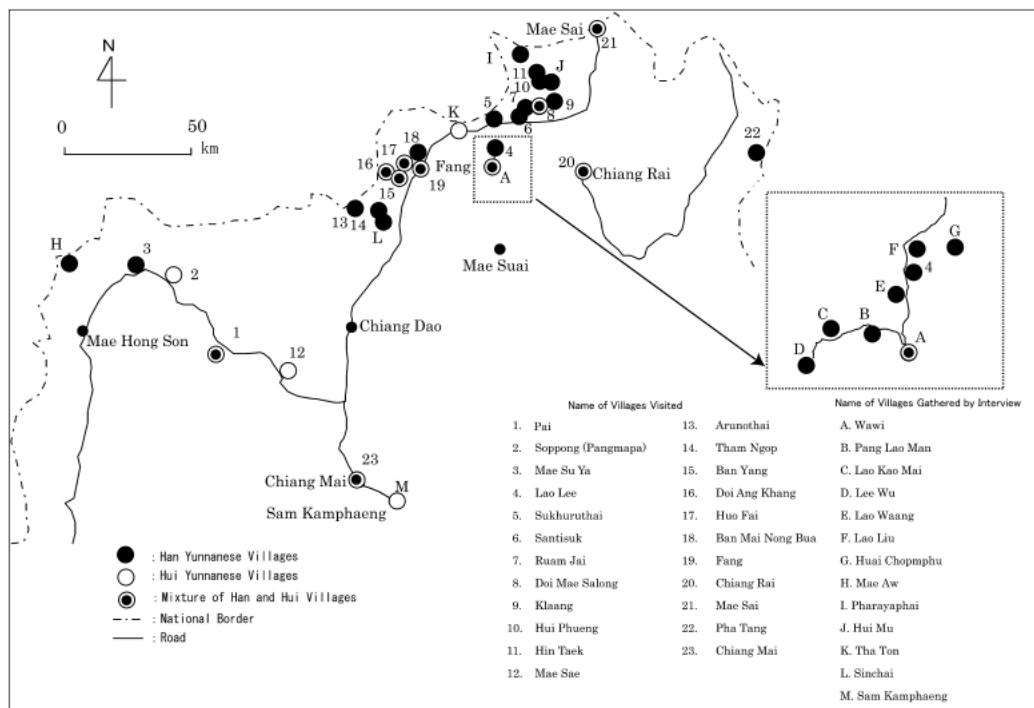
Through my fieldwork, I examined 36 Yunnanese villages (Fig. 5). Yunnanese villages built after the 1950s reflected multiple social factors. Socioculturally, Yunnanese migrants since the mid-twentieth century are also quite diverse and represent different layers of history. My field research showed four general types of villages established after the 1950s: villages with a mixture of KMT soldiers and civilian Yunnanese refugees,

⁵ For the distribution of the Hui Yunnanese in Northern Thailand, please see Imanaga 2000\

villages mainly composed of KMT soldiers, villages formed to combat communist guerillas in Thailand, and villages built by antigovernment Burmese military units. The first two types were established in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the second two types were constructed after the 1960s (Wang 2004).

Overall, my research indicated that the major influence in the making of Yunnanese communities in Thailand was the movement of the KMT to Thailand. Because the KMT army was mainly composed of Han Yunnanese, most of the villagers who live there today are Han. For example, among the 36 villages I studied, I visited more than 20 with Han Yunnanese and only 14 Hui villages. Among the 14 Hui villages, 11 were established after the 1950s, and 7 were a mixture of Hui and Han residents.

For example, Ban Yang, situated in the Fang District, Chiang Mai Province, is a Yunnanese village; it was established around 1953 on the Thai/Burmese border after the KMT movement to Thailand. In 1998, during



my fieldwork, Ban Yang contained approximately 250 households, among which more than 180 were Han Yunnanese and 60-70 were Hui Yunnanese. According to elderly informants, the Karen, one of the hill-dwelling minorities in Northern Thailand, had lived there previously but the Yunnanese migrants pushed them out. The Yunnanese village was established with 30 to 40 households, which were a mixture of KMT and civilian refugees at that time. In the early 1950s, villages were in poor condition; residents made houses from bamboo that could be abandoned if they had to escape from attacking Burmese troops on the Thai Burmese borderland. According to informants in other refugee villages in Chiang Rai, Yunnanese migrants, especially KMT troops in Ban Tham, went back and forth along the Thai Burmese border to fight in Burma or to obtain relief from fellow soldiers (Kanchana n. d.:30-31).

Figure 5.5 (Originally Referred as Fig.5) Distribution of Yunnanese Villages in Northern Thailand

With the changes in military circumstances between the early 1950s and 1960s, the number of illegal refugee villages gradually increased along the Thai-Burmese border. These refugee villages were mainly constructed in three provinces in Northern Thailand: Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hong Son (particularly the former two). It is estimated that approximately 4,570 refugees lived in Chiang Mai and about 3,564 lived in Chiang Rai.^{Zbid.: 51\}

The KMT movement to Thailand terrified Thai border security. The Thai government began to negotiate with Taiwan regarding the treatment of KMT and civilian refugees in Thailand; four negotiations took place from the 1960s to the early 1970s.^{Zbid.:52-59\} The Thai government wanted to push out the KMT and Yunnanese refugees to Taiwan, but KMT leaders in Thailand refused to retreat. The reason for their refusal is still uncertain, although some KMT leaders may have wanted to preserve their military and economic interests and networks, which were fostered through the warfare in Burma. The KMT's refusal to retreat to Taiwan presented the Thai government with a great challenge as to how to deal with KMT and civilian Yunnanese refugees who had started to settle along the Thai-Burmese border.

4.2 Thai Government Policy

What should be noted is that Thai government policy did not try to control the Yunnanese in terms of an "ethnic problem" based on ethnic differences between Hui or Han but from a national security point of view. For the Thai government, the biggest problem at that time was to control KMT military affairs for security reasons. Economic activities of the KMT related to drug trafficking both in Burma and Thailand also became a serious issue for the Thai government. Therefore, the Yunnanese were separately controlled as either KMT soldiers or as civilian refugees.

That is, the Yunnanese were categorized into two groups. KMT soldiers were classified as "adit thahan chin khanachat" (ex-KMT soldiers), and civilian refugees as "chin ho oppayop" (Yunnanese refugees). To control the Yunnanese, the Thai government tried to establish official policies toward the KMT and civilian Yunnanese refugees along the Thai border following the second stage of KMT settlement to Taiwan in 1961. In May 1961, the Thai government developed a policy to defend their national territory from KMT illegal occupation and ordered the military to control the KMT. At the same time, the Thai government ordered the Ministry of Interior to control Yunnanese civilian refugees and began negotiations with provincial officers in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, seeking a solution on Yunnanese settlement in Thailand.^{Zbid.: 50-51\}

Moreover, the Thai and Taiwanese governments started official negotiations regarding the resettlement of the KMT to Taiwan in 1967. Four meetings were held by military officials from Thailand and Taiwan in both countries, with two meetings in 1968, one in 1969, and one in 1970. Although little is known of the 1968 meetings, in July 1969, military leaders from Taiwan visited Northern Thailand to inspect KMT villages; they also met with two former KMT commanders: General Li and General Duan. In January 1970, representatives of the Thai military visited Taiwan to again negotiate the possibility of KMT resettlement in Taiwan. Taiwan and Thailand agreed on a resolution on KMT issues; however, in the end, the two former KMT leaders did not accept the agreement on resettlement in Taiwan. Until 1970, the Thai government had no special solution to control either the KMT or Yunnanese civilian refugees (Kritsana 1990:19).

During the Thai government's internal and international policy efforts, border dangers increased as communist guerillas in neighboring Laos tried to invade Thai territory, threatening government security. The attempted invasions caused the Thai government to reconsider the nation's border security and relationship with the KMT, whose ideology was anticommunist. The Thai government thus decided to utilize KMT military power to combat communist guerillas along the borders of Laos and Burma. More than 700 people were conscripted to fight against communist guerillas in the early 1970s⁶. Because of KMT cooperation and willingness to combat communist guerillas in border areas, ex-KMT soldiers were authorized to settle in Thailand. Moreover, as a result of their contributions, the government granted Thai citizenship to KMT soldiers in 1978. At least 2,904 people were granted Thai citizenship from 1978 to 1980. Furthermore, about 10,000 people were awarded legal resident status around the same time (Kanchana n. d.: 203). In contrast, Yunnanese civilian refugees, the group to which most Hui Yunnanese belonged, were treated as illegal refugees. It was not until 1984 that the Thai government changed their policy and started to give both KMT soldiers and civilian refugees equal legal status. Civilian refugees were also considered to be granted legal status as foreign residents in the next stage.

During this period, KMT soldiers were given preference in becoming Thai or legal residents. In the Thai context, Yunnanese living in Northern Thailand became refugees, and the political status of most Hui became lower than that of former KMT soldiers or Han Yunnanese, who were given Thai citizenship.

4.3. Han and Hui Relationships in "Refugee" Villages

The first generation of Yunnanese migrants (both Han and Hui), with few exceptions, faced difficulties living as foreigners in Thailand. Illegal residents were forbidden from traveling freely within Thailand and were only conditionally authorized to travel outside the administrative region in which they lived if they submitted a written request. Similar discrimination toward the Yunnanese was also applied to second-generation

⁶ The first stage in 1970 involved more than 721 KMT soldiers (Kanchana n. d.: 67).

Yunnanese. The Thai government has long touted the principle that all persons born in Thailand are automatically considered Thai. However, this principle was not applied to the Yunnanese. In 1972, Han and Hui Yunnanese born in Thailand were denied Thai citizenship.

Yunnanese commercial activities were also limited. Although informants divulged few details, many had few economic options other than trading with opium farmers among the mountain hill-dwellers. I gathered little direct information about commercial opium activity from Han or Hui Yunnanese informants; however, I did acquire information from some hill-dwelling people in the Mae Hong Son District who cultivated opium until the 1970s and exchanged opium with “Ho” merchants, who often came to their village and brought them to the market. In one of the Lisu villages in Mae Hong Son, I heard that in the past, some Han Yunnanese households had lived together with Lisu to earn their livings.⁷

Because Han and Hui Yunnanese were confined in refugee villages under the control of the Thai government, the two ethnic groups often had to live in the same villages along the Thai Burmese border. As noted above, among the 36 villages I visited, 14 were Hui villages and within these, 7 were a mixture of Hui and Han were a mixture of Hui and Han.

For the Han Yunnanese, the majority of whom were ex-KMT soldiers and their families, the KMT still controlled and organized village life at least until the early 1980s (Bo 1987: 155-159). To feed soldiers and their families, the KMT is thought to have engaged in opium trading across the border of Burma and Thailand even after their settlement in Thailand. Furthermore, many ex-KMT soldiers still took military orders between the late 1960s and 1970s, particularly when the Thai government recruited and reorganized ex-KMT soldiers to fight and evict communist guerillas near the Thai Laotian border in Chiang Rai Province.

The sociopolitical situation of the Hui Yunnanese is more complicated. The Hui had more diverse choices than the Han, who were predominantly soldiers. For example, in the Yunnanese village Ban Yang (Fang District, Chiang Mai Province) mentioned above, of households, about 180-190 were Han households and 60-70 were Hui households in 1998. The Hui residents included ex-KMT soldiers and civilian refugees. Although Hui Yunnanese living in Ban Yang divulged few details, responses suggest that these two groups earned different types of livings. One elderly informant who had been a civilian refugee living in Ban Yang told me, “We lived separately from KMT. Sometimes, we paid a toll tax to the KMT so that we could pass a certain way.” Another second-generation Hui civilian recalled, “When I was a child, I saw many villagers here who made up small trade groups using horses and brought goods from the lowlands to the uplands. My father also joined trading groups to earn money. Making a living depended on each household.”

⁷ Opium production became illegal and was officially banned in Thailand in 1958 (Manndorff 1967).

According to several informants who had lived in a refugee village, they considered these villages a transition stage in their migration rather than a permanent home. From the Thai perspective, political prejudice and government pressure over the opium trade caused many Thais to view Yunnanese in the early stages of settlement as frightening aliens. Therefore, some Yunnanese migrants, both Han and Hui, feared that the police would mistake them as being opium traders or arrest them as scapegoats; because of these fears, they could not live a stable life. Therefore, the early Hui and Han settlers took no collective action based on religious cultural factors to express their identity. One Hui informant noted that “we did follow the teaching of Islam throughout the migration process on the individual level; however, we had difficulty in doing so collectively because we had to survive and earn a living in the mountainous area, moving back and forth, being wary of the Thai government.”

5. Revival of Hui Ethnic Consciousness

5. 1 Remigration of the Hui

Social relationships between the Hui and Han have changed gradually during their processes of settling in Thailand. Interestingly, Hui living in refugee villages along the Thai Burmese border began a kind of movement to remigrate to other places and to build Muslim communities by themselves. Generally, however, this remigration was undertaken for practical business reasons rather than purely religious motives. For example, one second-generation Hui Yunnanese who lived in Mae Hong Son described her father who migrated from Yunnan around 1949 to Chiang Mai City. After staying there for several years, her father married a local Indo-Pakistani woman and they had children. While their family was living in Chiang Mai, her father often visited the Mae Hong Son District for commercial activities. According to the informant, in the early 1950s, few Yunnanese merchants lived permanently there. Her father saw this as a good business opportunity and decided to move his household to Mae Hong Son. Initially, only two Hui Yunnanese households were there, but more Hui newcomers arrived after several years. Most of these migrants were “remigrants” coming from refugee villages or other cities in Northern Thailand. As the Hui population gradually increased, the informant’s father started to build a mosque for communal use.

Another example of Hui community building involves the Ban Ho community in Chiang Mai City. The Ban Ho community, as noted above, was established by Hui Yunnanese traders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A Hui Yunnanese named Zheng Chong Lin played a major role and offered his land for the mosque in 1917.

Prior to the 1950s, the Hui population was relatively small because most Hui were traders and lived impermanently in Thailand for commerce. However, after the 1950s, more and more Hui Yunnanese migrants who had settled as refugees in the border areas began to remigrate and gather around the Ban Ho mosque

area near other Hui settlers. These newcomers from refugee villages requested assistance (e. g., food, housing, and trading) from Mr. Zheng and his relatives living near the Ban Ho mosque. One of the newcomers told me that when he first arrived in Chiang Mai, he borrowed a house near the mosque for several years from Mr. Zheng's son. Another informant told me that he sometimes slept at Mr. Zheng's house when he came to Chiang Mai for commercial activities. In 1998, I interviewed one of Mr. Zheng's daughters who was over 70 years old at the time and was living at her father's house. She described her father as a generous man who served food and supplied rooms for Hui newcomers. When she was a child, her house was used as a resting place for Hui merchants who came from refugee villages or other places; her family gave these visitors free food. Because the Hui merchants often used horses and mules at that time, her house was also used as a place to keep these animals.

As the population of Hui Yunnanese gradually increased, the Hui population in Ban Ho had great impact on social life. Hui Yunnanese intermarriage is one example. In the past, most of the migrants who settled in Northern Thailand were single men not accompanied by family or relatives from China. Many had family, including wives and children, in China but had left them behind in their homeland because of the hardships of caravan trade at that time. Because few Yunnanese Hui women lived in Northern Thailand prior to the 1950s, many Hui merchants who settled there married local Thai women or Indo-Pakistani Muslim women. Indeed, many mixed-ethnicity descendents of Hui traders still exist. However, with the influx of Hui Yunnanese migrants to Thailand since the 1950s, intermarriage among Hui gradually increased. During my fieldwork, I encountered several cases in which Hui second-generation women whose fathers were traders prior to the 1950s married new Hui migrants who had escaped from China around 1949. For example, Mr. Ma, whose migratory history I described earlier, married a second-generation Hui woman whose father was a trader from Yunnan and settled in Chiang Mai in the early 1900s.

5.2 The Making of the Hui Community

The resurgence of Islam has also had a great socioreligious impact on the Hui communities in Northern Thailand. As noted above, before the arrival of new Hui migrants in the 1950s and afterward, only two mosques served Hui Yunnanese in Northern Thailand. The influx of new Hui Yunnanese settlers after the 1950s revitalized the older community. Existing mosques were refurbished and new mosques were constructed by the initiative of Hui Yunnanese. One Hui Yunnanese who had established a mosque in the 1970s in the Fang District of Chiang Mai Province said, "The Thai government didn't support us at that time. Even worse, the Thai government viewed us with suspicion, wondering why Hui Yunnanese needed to establish mosques on the border of Thailand. The Thai government was afraid that Yunnanese would cause trouble in the border area and lead to instability there."

However, despite government pressure and prejudice, the Yunnanese mutually supported their community and raised funds to build mosques. Mosques were built not only in Ban Ho, an early area of Hui Yunnanese settlement, but also eventually in newer refugee villages along the Thai-Burmese border. In 1970, not far from Ban Ho mosque, another Hui Yunnanese mosque called San Pa Khoi mosque was founded. During the 1970s and 1980s, new migrants built five mosques in refugee villages clustered in the northern Chiang Mai District.

During this period, the Yunnanese became aware of the importance of teaching Islam and preserving their religious practices. In earlier decades, basic economic and personal survival consumed the time and energy of many Hui Yunnanese migrants, who although were Muslim by birth, did not have time for religious activities or fostering the Islamic heritage passed down from their ancestors.

Hui leaders who migrated in the late twentieth century, with the cooperation of the preceding Hui settlers and their descendents, were the main revitalizers of Islam. For example, in the case of Ban Ho, the original mosque founded by Mr. Zheng had only one floor made of wood and straw. In 1966, this mosque was refurbished into a two-story concrete mosque by the co-efforts of the pioneer settlers and newcomers. In 1970, San Pa Khoi mosque was founded by the Hui leader Mr. Hu, who had escaped from the political turmoil in China. Before Mr. Hu moved to San Pa Khoi to build mosque, he had lived in the Ban Ho area with the earlier Hui settlers.

Generally, Yunnanese leaders who played important roles in establishing the Hui communities since the 1950s were successful businessmen with a strong passion for preserving the Hui's Islamic heritage. However, these leaders commonly could not speak or write Arabic and did not have a deep knowledge of Islamic teachings because most had few educational opportunities growing up in rural China.

Mr. Hu was a large contributor to Islamic education in Northern Thailand. He founded the first Islamic school in Northern Thailand in 1972. The school was named Attaqwa School (in Chinese: Zingzhen\). Mr. Hu was born in in the Mong Huo District, Yunnan. Although little information exists on his family background, he traded along the BurmeseThai border and was chosen as a chairman of the Administration Committee of the district for two years.⁸ He was not only successful in his career but had also been enthusiastic about Islamic education even in China before he escaped to Thailand. As a businessman, he established and headed the Mu Kwang School for Islamic education in Yunnan. However, his community was attacked by the communists in 1946 and fighting continued. As a result, he escaped China, leaving his wife and children behind. He lived in Burma until 1950 and then migrated to Chiang Mai in 1951.

⁸ The life history of Mr. Hu is based on TQYQ Z988:175-179\.

When he came to Thailand, he focused on work in order to survive. He traveled between Chiang Mai and Bangkok and finally set up his house in Chiang Mai in 1957. While in Chiang Mai, he began to think about the importance of Islamic education for Muslims in Northern Thailand. He was pessimistic about the Islamic situation in the Muslim community at that time, saying “though all of the muslims 在 Chiangmai came from China, Pakistan, India, etc., most of them only knew that they were muslims; very few knew much about the teachings of Islam; the mosque was left with very small number of members. Since God had helped me escape from the communists and be successful in business, I decided to work for Islam, and to help the muslim society.”⁹

Mr. Hu collected funds and donated his own money to establish the Islamic school. He bought a piece of land for private use and for building the San Pa Khoi mosque and Islamic school in 1966. He also asked for the help and cooperation of several Hui Yunnanese leaders who lived in the San Pa Khoi and Ban Ho areas to raise funds to complete his plan. The mosque was finished in 1969, and the Islamic school was completed, including a school building, dormitory, and cafeteria, in 1972. The facilities accepted not only Hui Yunnanese but also persons of other ethnicities, such as IndoPakistanis and Thais.

Due to Mr. Hu’s effort, Islamic education began in 1973 and was registered under the Education Department in Thailand. The school initially accepted only male Muslims, and female students were not admitted until 1982. To enhance female education, a Saudi merchant family named Talha who had lived temporarily in Northern Thailand, contributed large donations and solicited help from Mr. Hu and other Hui Yunnanese members. The Talha family donated 9,775,371 baht over 11 years.¹⁰ As noted by Mr. Hu:

After Mr. Talha spent some time with muslims in the northern region he had the idea that muslim-men in this area had a reasonable knowledge of Islamic teaching, but the muslim women still lacked knowledge. The women are closest to the children and therefore they have the most influence upon the children. Hence, the mother should have Islamic knowledge in order to mould the children’s heart into having a strong faith.¹¹

Since 1982, both female and male students have studied at the Islamic school, and the number of students has gradually increased. At the school’s 10th anniversary in 1987, 104 boys and 44 girls were enrolled.¹² Several of the graduates have received scholarships to study abroad in Arab countries and have returned to Thailand to serve as religious leaders in the community. For example, the present president of the Chiang Mai Islamic committee and Imam at Chang Phuak mosque studied abroad for graduate school. In addition, some of the teachers at Ban Ho mosque and other mosques in Chiang Mai are also the graduates of Attaqwa School. Thus, by creating mosques and the Islamic school, the Hui

⁹ TQYQ 2988: 175\.

¹⁰ TQYQ 2988: 138\.

¹¹ TQYQ 2988: 177\.

¹² TQYQ 2988: 128,179\.

Yunnanese have raised consciousness and awareness of their religious background and symbolically differentiated themselves from the Han Yunnanese.

6. Conclusion

Although the Yunnanese have long been referred to by the generic name “Ho” in Thai society, their migration and interethnic relationships are diverse and have changed over the years. The migration history and identity creation of Hui Yunnanese in Thailand have intertwined with those of the Han Yunnanese and been influenced by Thai government policies, especially since the mid-twentieth century. Before the 1950s, Yunnanese living in Northern Thailand were considered to be Muslims. Most traded around Yunnan and into Burma, Laos, and Thailand. However, since the 1950s, sociopolitical situations have changed drastically because of political turmoil in China and KMT activities in Burma. Because Han comprised the majority of the Yunnanese population in Thailand at this time, Yunnanese villagers were generally perceived as ex-KMT soldiers and Han.

Thus, Yunnanese migratory history in the latter half of the twentieth century has largely been viewed from the perspective of KMT activities. This one-sided view, as well as accompanying prejudice, has also been held by the Thai government, which has affected policy making regarding national security and border control, especially in regard to communist guerilla threats inside and at the border of Thailand in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, little attention has been paid to Hui migrants, who built their livelihoods and communities in the face of KMT military pressures in Burma, pressures that impacted their migration, sociocultural activities, and relations with the Thai government.

In some ways, the Hui Yunnanese have been marginalized not only by the Thai government but also by Han Yunnanese who controlled the KMT military throughout migration. However, my field research and interviews also revealed that Hui Yunnanese have tried to manipulate their identity in accordance with their sociopolitical environments. While Hui ethnicity was downplayed during the beginning of their migratory process, its resurgence gradually emerged after their settlement in Thailand.

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Chapter Six

Burma as 'Corridor': A Case of South Asian Descendants' Community in Northern Thailand¹

Mineo Takada

This paper highlights the location of Burma (Myanmar) and reconsiders its geographical territory and its historical position. There were and are a lot of studies of Burma/Myanmar. Most of the studies were on the Burma itself or on those people living in Burma. On the other hand, Burma situated at the meeting point of South Asia and Southeast Asia. In other words, Burma holds a position of the node or corridor which connecting these two regions. This paper tries to focus on Burma as 'corridor', by considering a case of South Asian migrant groups in Thailand, a Bangladeshi (or Eastern Bengal) Muslim descendants' community in northern Thailand.

1. South Asia and Southeast Asia: Continuity and Disjuncture

At first, it should be pointed out that there seem several reasons for having not paying attention to the continuity between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Firstly, we must think about the very existence of nation states and its borders. We, those who accustom with the nation states and its borders, are tented to presuppose the framework of those ones. Van SCENDEL (2005:45) pointed out this tendency clearly and critically, and suggested the difficulty to avoid its grip as 'territorial trap'. Needless to say, there are two borders, India/Bangladesh-Myanmar border and Myanmar- Thailand border, between South Asia and Thailand. In addition to these, there lays down a vast geographical space of Myanmar between these two regions. It might be difficult to imagine that there were and are communications beyond these borders and land. Because of this, the theme of the land-route connection between two regions might have been left almost untouched. Moreover, the borderland area of Myanmar is the tribal area and the conflicting zone where many tribal people and their armed fronts have been severely confronted with the central government. Movement of an ordinary person has been restricted and it has been difficult to cross the borders. This

¹ The draft of this paper was originally presented at "the International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies: Burma/Myanmar in Transition: Connectivity, Changes and Challenges", University Academic Service Centre (UNISERV), Chiang Mai University, Chinag Mai, Thailand, 24– 26 July 2015.

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situation would have been affected to the scholar's thinking as if the communication before this period had been also restricted.

Secondly, we must think about that the scholars of Southeast Asian studies focus on the topics and themes of Southeast Asia. They pay attention to the topics 'inside' the area, but not so to the topics beyond the area. In other words, the cultural exchange or the peoples' movement between the larger regions such as 'South Asia' and 'Southeast Asia' has not been highlighted. van SCHENDEL (2002) pointed out this problem critically. To avoid this trap, he proposes to rethink the existing "academic politics of scale" and to introduce the "jump scale". Exceptionally, the communication between these two regions by 'sea-route' has been discussed in some degree. It might be because of that there is no border, national or geographical, on the surface of the ocean.

Thirdly, I will mention to the concept 'Zomia'. SCOTT (2009) developed the argument raised by van Schendel (2002) and presented a 'Zomia' hypothesis. He grasps the vast hilly area, i.e. The north-eastern part of South Asia, the northern part of Southeast Asia, and the southern part of China, as a continuous body and named it as 'Zomia', and argues its unification and its autonomy from the plane land powers. In contrast, he states that the plane land was conquered by the 'national power' earlier, lost its autonomy and included as a part of 'states', and as a result people are divided by the states' borders. This is perhaps true in some degree. But, recent development of border studies tells us such facts that there were and are continuous communications and transactions across the borders, and that this kind of transactions are not only limited to the 'illicit' flow of the goods and people, but also often seen as a broad range of movement of the ordinary people along the border area or of the people of larger area. Then, we cannot help suspecting that, contrary to the Scott's hypothesis, there were (and are) any flow of people, which the 'state' cannot be able to control fully in the fringe area of Zomia. In other word, there might be a 'land-route' connection between South Asia and Southeast Asia and we would have to re-think about the continuity between these two regions.

2. Burma Studies and the 'Indian': Some Simple Questions

It is well known that there were a lot of 'Indians' in British Burma, especially in Rangoon at that day. For example, Tin Maung Maung Than (1993) describes largely that there were many 'Indians' in Rangoon and they even consisted of over-half of the population of the city in the late colonial period. He also points out that many kinds of people were included among the 'Indians'; i.e. people of the different regions and of different religious beliefs. We should pay attention to a fact that the large numbers of Muslim people were included in this 'Indian' category. They were labeled as 'Chittagonians' or 'Bengalis'. After the WWII, as a result of the independence of Burma, many 'Indians' left Burma and returned to Indian sub-continent and, as a result, 'Indian' population was decreased drastically. He referred to a very interesting point that,

as the mass exodus of the Hindu population from the city had happened, “in terms of visibility the Muslims appear to be more numerous and active than the Hindus in both retail trade and services” (Tin Maung Maung Than 1993: 594). And this sentence stimulate me to think a simple question; where did they, this large number of Muslims, go? Of course, some of them has been staying in Myanmar today, but another would have left there. Then, where were their destinations?

Many studies suggest that there were intimate relationship between those ‘Indian’ people in Burma and India. They did frequently come and go between these two areas because these areas were belonging to the same British Raj. Perhaps because of this reason, many Hindu people went back to India after the independence of Burma. But, in the case of Muslims, the situation was a different. Their homeland was divided and they persuaded to choose where to go back, India or Pakistan. If they think about to go back the Islamic state, they again should have to choose the destination, West Pakistan or East Pakistan. I suspect that, in the case of those Muslims from Eastern Bengal, i.e. Chittagonians or some of Bengalis, they (some of them, at least) might go back to East Pakistan by land-route. Because, Burma and Eastern Bengal (East Pakistan) are relatively close in terms of distance and are connected by land. Unfortunately, as we have not sufficient data or detailed studies on the relationship between Eastern Pakistan (after 1972, Bangladesh) and Burma (Myanmar), it is rather difficult to confirm the right or wrong of this conjecture. Though there are a lot of recordings and documents on the close connection between Burma and India (ex. migration flow in the colonial era, return of the Hindu migrants to India after Burma’s independence, etc.), it is curious that we can find a few of those kinds on the relationship between East Pakistan (or Bangladesh) and Burma, despite East Pakistan (or Bangladesh) is a neighboring country of Burma. As I have tried to investigate on the documents and books in Bangla in Bangladesh, I could find a few of those, except on the themes of Rohingyas or of Hill Peoples like Marma etc. And it is also difficult to know about the people’s movement from Burma to Thailand, except the studies on the labor migration or on the refugee problems. We raise the simple question in this case, too; though there was a close connection between Burma and India by sea-route, were and are there a weak relation between East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and Burma or those between Burma and other Southeast Asia by land-route?

3. Muslim studies in Thailand, and Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai

In the field of Thai studies, we can find some valuable studies on South Asian migrants and their descendants; ex. HUSSAIN (1982), MANI (1993), NAKAVACHARA (1993), SATO (1995). However, these are the studies on the groups in Bangkok, and especially focuses on the Sikhs from Panjab or the Hindus from northern India. Except these studies, a few studies have been done on the other ethnic or religious groups. Moreover, almost all groups these studies mentioned had been migrated by sea-route (by air, later). Few studies did mention on the ‘land-route’ migration.

We must think about another aspect. Although Thailand is a Buddhist majority country, a sizable Muslim population is also living in. The official census figure of the Muslims population in the country is about 4.5% (Jitmuad 2009), but some scholars suggest that the figure may be bigger. For example, Bajnid (1999) suggests the figure as 5–8%. On the other hand, it has generally believed that the Muslim population is concentrated in southern districts near Malaysian border and most of them are Malay Muslims. It is plausible, as some part of those people insists the independence or autonomy of the region and often armed struggles have happened in the area. Because of this, most of the Muslim studies in Thailand deals with the Muslim of this region. But, in reality, there are many Muslim people also in the central part and the northern part of the country. Even so, we can find relatively few studies on the Muslims in these areas. Besides, in the cases of the Muslim studies, a tendency to emphasize the communication by ‘sea-route’ is also found, just as those in the cases of the Sikhs or of the Hindus (ex. Gilquin 2005).

One of the places where the Muslim population is concentrated mostly in the northern Thailand is Chiang Mai city and its neighboring area. And some studies that dealt with the Muslim people in the area has been found (ex. SUTHEP 2013, WANG 2011, YOKOYAMA 1992). These studies refer that there are two major Muslim communities in this area; Chinese Muslims (Yunnanese Muslims, ‘Chin-ho’ in Thai) and ‘Indian’ Muslims. But, curiously, except the work of Suthep, most studies only deal with Chinese Muslims.

Suthep (2013-1978) is not only one of the earliest studies on Muslims in northern Thailand, but also the only study of the ‘Indian’ Muslims (‘Pakistani’ Muslims, in his word) in the area. In this sense, we should highly appreciate his work. Unfortunately, his work had only vaguely mentioned the place of their origin, such like ‘Eastern Bengal’, their route of migration, and the reason and process of migration. Exceptionally, in the case of the first Imam of the Chang Klan mosque in Chiang Mai city, he described a little bit longer. But, in this case also, the details of the movement had lost. It seems that there was no written record at this point and the only data which Suthep found was the oral tradition of his descendants. Perhaps for this reason, it is suspected that some part of his description is dubious.

In the conditions mentioned above, studying Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai and its neighboring area is very important. 1) It will contribute the understanding of Muslim society in northern Thailand. 2) It will confirm the connection between South Asia and Thailand. 3) As a result, it will offer the clue to re-think the continuity and connection between South Asia and Southeast Asia. 4) We will position the place of Burma (Myanmar) as a node or corridor between two regions. 5) It will help to grasp the character of Chiang Mai as a cosmopolitan city. 6) It is also possible to offer a new point of view for the Border Studies.

4. Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai and Neighboring Area

Chiang Mai is a major city of north in Thailand. As I have mentioned above, there are two different Muslim communities in Chiang Mai, Chinese Muslims and so-called ‘Indian’ Muslims. I will concentrate on the latter

only in this paper. 'Indian' Muslims are in reality a descendant community of the Muslims from Eastern Bengal in the British era. The area had changed its name as Eastern Pakistan after 1947 (Partition of India and Pakistan) and then to be Bangladesh after 1971 (the independence of Bangladesh). To avoid the complexity, I will mention them as 'Bangladeshi Muslims' hereafter. SUTHEP (2013) writes that "at present, the Pakistani Muslims have two major quarters within the city with a total population about 2,500." This figure was in 1978. The most recent figures are around 1500, reported by a leader of a Chang Clan mosque. This difference of figure is not because of the decline of the community, but due to the following reasons;

- 1) They are concentrated in the neighboring places of two mosques in Chiang Mai city, the Chang Klan in the south and the Chang Pueak in the north. Besides, there are smaller communities in the neighboring cities such as Doi Saket, Samkamphen, etc. But, now a days, people's change of location is gradually proceeding and the Muslim population is scattered in and around the city along with the development of Chiang Mai city, so it is rather difficult to grasp all their locations.
- 2) Because of the modernization and even of the globalization, the younger generation has been moving to the other places, especially to Bangkok in Thailand or such places outside of the Thailand as middle eastern countries, for the purpose of getting higher education or of getting a better job opportunity. Therefore, though the number of households has not been changed, the number of the people is fluctuating.
- 3) Just because of the same reason, the cases of mixed marriage with the other Muslim groups, such as Malay Muslims or Pashtu Muslims (Pathans) or even Chinese Muslims, has been increasing. We can find some cases of marriage, both husband and wife are mixed blood. In this case, their children's ethnic identity hardly defines. For this reason, it is rather difficult to determine the exact number of the community members.
- 4) There is many Burmese Muslims in and around the community. They are very similar to the Bangladeshi Muslims except their native language, Burmese. And in some communal feast occasion such like the Id festival, both communities celebrate it together. This makes also difficult to define the outline of the community.
- 5) There is no ethnic-based organization of Bangladeshi Muslims. The only formal organization is the Mosque Committee and it is a religious organization. As its religious character, the organization recognizes well on its core members who are practicing Islam enthusiastically, but not so for those who practicing it halfheartedly. So, we can safely say that their population is around 2000-2500. It should be noted here that their settlement in Chiang Mai is "the largest in northern Thailand" (Suthep, 2013:18)

Concerning their identity, the Thai government authority referred them as 'Thai Muslims', but they themselves prefer to say 'Bangla' or 'Bangladee' (Thai pronunciation of 'Bangladesh'). But, almost all of them lost their ancestral language, Bangla or Bengalee, and even lost the knowledge of their forefathers' history. The only knowledges that they can refer to their ancestors are the terms such as 'Chittagong' or 'Noakhali'. They know that these are place name, but, except this, they can say nothing more. Some of them even told me, "we do not know what these words mean, if these are the name of the district, or of the county, or village, we do not know." They speak only in Thai, except religious terms of Arabic. In this

sense, they are in reality Thai Muslims, except their South Asian flavored faces and their self-introduction, 'Bangla'.

Muslims from Eastern Bengal had come to Chiang Mai in the British era, married with local Thai women, and once settled there. These Thai women converted to Islam and they, Bangladeshi Muslim migrants and their families, formed the core of a small South Asian descendant Muslim society in Chiang Mai and its neighboring area. They also greeted their followers, i.e. those migrants from Eastern Bengal. This flow of migrants stopped at around the WWII and supply of the first generation migrants from Eastern Bengal (East Pakistan at that time) had almost finished then. SUTHEP (2013:26) writes; "The majority of the present population of these two quarters are third and fourth generation descendants of the first settlers" in the period of 1978. This means that the majority of the community today has been changing over fourth, fifth, or sixth generation.²

5. Migration route: Mae Sariang as a Key Point

Suthep (2013:27–29) narrates; "Four major thoroughfares on the borders of northern Thailand are known to have been used by the Pakistani migrants to penetrate into the northern region and Chiang Mai city." Those are Mae Sod (Mae Sot), Hot, Mae Sariang, and Mae Sai. Of these, Mae Sod is the most important point and many 'Pakistani' (=Bangladeshi) Muslims headed to the various northern towns including Chiang Mai, he said. This identification is very important, because this is the first and only identification of the transit points of the migration of Bangladeshi Muslims. Admitting his contribution, however, I must point out that his description includes some errors or misunderstandings.

First, the communication between Bangkok and Chiang Mai was very difficult until the late 19th century, and it took about 1 and half or 2 months for going upstream. "Because of the slow connection, mail from Europe and even from North America was sent to Chiang Mai via Moulmein in Burma" (PENTH 2004:142). Namely, until the early 20th century, Chiang Mai is a closer connection with Moulmein, Burma, than with Bangkok.³ Moreover, POBGSAWAT (2007: 386) pointed out that "the first commission from Moulmein to Chiang Mai did not take the Raheng route to Chiang Mai, but the Mae Sarieng (Currently district of Mae Hong Son) which was in the Lan Na territory." (Italic, as original). Raheng is almost the same as present Tak and this route means via Mae Sot. His historical survey suggests that it was Mae Sariang, not Mae Sot, as a transit

² Hirosue (2013:6) describes "cosmopolis" as the node of greater network of the region and he points out a tendency that local wives of the migrants and their descendant community becomes to be a host of various outsiders visited the cosmopolis. Bangladeshi descendant community in Chiang Mai is a typical case of the group and, in this sense, the city Chiang Mai itself is a kind of such 'cosmopolis'.

³ Concerning this point, though a specific source is unknown, GILQUIN (2005:21) pointed out that in 1830s there was a small community of Bangali Muslims in Chiang Mai and they were participated with cow trade between Chiang Mai and Moulmain. The period he mentioned here "1830s" is questionable. I will try to tell on this matter in detail later.

point from Moulmein to Chiang Mai. In addition, a British councilor in Bangkok who traveled around northern Thailand in 1863, from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, then to Moulmein and went back to Bangkok, reported very interesting observations; i.e. 1) the communication between Bangkok and Chiang Mai was not so good and took time, 2) a letter of introduction issued by Bangkok palace had almost useless in Chiang Mai, and 3) the communication from Chiang Mai to Moulmein was easy and this was the common route from Chiang Mai to the outer world (Schomburgk 1863).

Besides, my own research in Chiang Mai reveals that many Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai reported Mae Sariang as their forefathers' transit point, not from Mae Sot. My research in Mae Sariang reveals the following points; the communication between Moulmein and Mae Sariang via Papun, Burma, was very active in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century. Compared to this, communication to Chiang Mai was not so, because the over-hill trekking route was rather difficult to go. Also, my own research in Mae Sot declares as; until WWII, most of the consuming goods were coming from Burma side. The communication to Bangkok was not so frequent and communication with Chiang Mai was limited.

All of these historical studies, memoirs and research indicate the conditions of communication of northern Thailand in the late 19th century, such as; 1) the relationship between Chiang Mai and Bangkok was weak because of the difficulty of movement. 2) Chiang Mai had a close connection with Moulmein via Mae Sariang/Papun. 3) Mae Sot was surely a node between Bangkok and Rangoon, but the communication of these two places was with much difficulty. If these are all plausible, Suthep's writing, which insisted that many of the first generation migrants from East Bengal had come "via Mae Sot", was dubious. Perhaps, he did not conduct his own research in Mae Sot or Mae Sariang, or at best visited these places very short term.

I will add one more supporting evidence. In my survey in Mae Sot, some informants told me that the first group of Bangladeshi migrants was coming from Satkania, though they do not know the place's whereabouts. Satkania is a southern suburb of Chittagong city, a port city of eastern Bangladesh and the district capital of Chittagong district. On the other hand, as I will explain later, it is revealed in the research in Mae Sariang that many of Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai was migrated from Mae Sariang. And, my research in Bangladesh declares that at least some of the migrants (their ancestors) were coming from the northern most part of Chittagong district or southern most part of Noakhali district, i.e. the area at the mouth of Feni River. Considering these all, it is highly probable that the original homeland and the history of migration of these two Muslim groups, i.e. of Chiang Mai (via Mae Sariang) and of Mae Sot, are different.

Suthep's description seems to depend largely on the narratives of the Imam as of 1977, the grandson of the first Imam named Miyashi, and, because of this reason, detailed description of the migration history was limited to Miyashi's case only. Then, it is suspected that Suthep might stretch the Miyashi's case to the Bangladeshi Muslim in Chiang Mai as a whole. Concerning Miyashi's case alone, Suthep wrote that Miyashi

had visited Mae Sot or Mae Sariang several times before migration to Chiang Mai. But, as there is no description that Miyashi visited Mae Sot and Mae Sariang in one time, we can suppose that Miyashi had visited these two places in the different times respectively. Moreover, there is no description of his (Miyashi's) migration route to Chiang Mai. All of this suggests the following sequence of events; 1) Miyashi had the experiences of visiting Mae Sot and Mae Sariang for business purpose before settling in Chiang Mai. 2) When he migrated to Chiang Mai, he came from Burma via Moulmein and Mae Sariang. 3) Miyashi narrated these all to their children or grandchildren orally, but left no record. 4) The Imam as of 1977 remembered what Miyashi had said, but he did not (or, could not?) differentiate the details of 1), 2) and 3). As a result, Suthep heard as if Miyashi had migrated into Chiang Mai via Mae Sot. Even if Miyashi himself had really migrated via Mae Sot, it is highly probable that many of other first generation migrants from Eastern Bengal was coming to Chiang Mai 'via Mae Sariang.'

6. Migration Process

Some elder Bangladeshi Muslims in Chiang Mai reveal that many of (some of, at least) their first generation ancestors were cattle herder and they were wandering around without any destination at that time. On the way seeking a good feeding place or seeking good business opportunity, they accidentally arrived in Chiang Mai and tentatively stayed there at first. Gradually some of them settled down and married with the local woman, most of them Thai. It is very difficult to confirm this, because there is no written documents or no records of eyewitness testimony. But, judging by the narratives of plural persons, this was more plausible. In addition, the present jobs which some of their descendants participates, such as butcher, meat shop owner, small stalls selling meat related food etc., also suggests that this earliest days' image seems plausible. Getting any information from the first group of migrants or some other sources, their followers were coming. These latecomers would have been different in their professions. Namely, they were participating some small business. There were certainly some people doing 'portering' business in the late 19th century to early 20th century between Chiang Mai and Mae Sariang or Burma (Pobgsawat 2007:386, Bowie 1988:187–194).⁴

Moreover, there were "oxen caravan traders (poh khaa wua tang)" between Chiang Mai and Yunnan and between Chiang Mai and Moulmein (Bowie 1988:164–171; GEHAN 1985:103). For the person who bears this

⁴ Bowie cited a narrative of a man; "He himself went every year with 2-3 others to Mandalay to obtain raw silk fiber for his weaving operation in San Khampaeng. Once they had bought the silk, they would transport it by train to Phaako. In Phaako, he hired a motorcar to transport the silk to Pimmale. In Pimmale he hired mules to take the silk to the Salween River crossing at Phaphun. This portion of the trip by mule took 10 nights. Once he had crossed the Salween, he would again seek transport for the next segment of the journey to Wang Lung. At Wang Lung, he crossed the Ping River, and then hired a motorcar for the remaining segment of the trip back to San Khampaeng." (BOWIE 1988:190) "The main goods,... cloth; raw silk; and dried fish." (ibid. 191)

business, it was identified as the Chin Ho in the case of Yunnan-Chiang Mai route. On the other hand, it was not clear in the case of Moulmein-Chiang Mai route, especially between Mae Sariang and Chiang Mai. Judging from the witness collected in Mae Sariang and its neighboring area, it is most probable to assume that the bearers were Muslim and local Karen people. Getting the help of local Karen, Muslim traders would have collected cattle in Mae Sariang and its neighboring area, and herded the caravan to Chiang Mai.⁵ On their occupation and social condition of the Muslim migrants from around 1900 on, I have been able to collect many detailed witnesses by their descendants, but, because of the limit of space, it is impossible to mention anymore.

The flow of migration process had almost stopped around the end of WWII. It was because the independence of Burma and the partition of India and Pakistan made difficult to communicate from the East Pakistan (later, eastern part of independent Bangladesh) to northern Thailand through Burma (later, Myanmar). That is, Burma as 'corridor' had ended once.⁶

7. Mirsarai, Chittagong, Bangladesh: Situated at the Mouth of the Feni River

On the first or second generation migrants, especially on their native village and on the reason to decide migration, it is difficult to declare from the research in Thailand. We will then turn our eyes toward Bangladesh.

After a series of field survey, I finally identified a village as a migrant's home village which situated in the northern part of Mirsarai Thana (county), a northern most county of Chittagong district. The following research revealed that the area situated at the mouth of the Feni River, which runs through the border of Chittagong district and Feni district (an eastern part of the previous Noakhali district) was the main source (at least, one of main sources) of early migrants in northern Thailand. The area belongs an active delta and had been often suffered severe riverbank erosion of the Feni River or affected by tidal erosion of the bay of Bengal. The repeated erosion and sediment had transformed the shape of villages in the area, and some of the villages had almost vanished. This fact suggests a possibility that the reason, which some people of this area had decided to migrate, was the effect of the flood and erosion caused by the Feni River and Bay

⁵ Cf. The route between Moulmein and Chiang Mai via Papun and Mae Sariang had used for centuries long. For example, a Thai prince's memoir on the ThaiBurma War from 16th century to 18th designates this route on a map (Map 1: Major Places and Military Routes"; Prince Damrong 2001: ii).

⁶ SUTHEP (2013:26) writes; "After 1947, with the partition of India and the establishment of Pakistan after the British rule, there has been a continuous flow of immigrants from East Pakistan into northern Thailand and eventually into Chiang Mai city. The great number of immigrants, however, did not move immediately into Thailand once they had left their native country. The majority of them went first to settle in Burma for sometime and married Burmese wives, before moving further into some northern provinces of Thailand and finally reached Chiang Mai city." This seems his misunderstanding. He probably confuse Bangladeshi Muslims (following his saying, Pakistanis) with Burmese Muslims or even with Rohingyas. As far as I studied, most of the first generation migrants of Bangladeshi had come before WWII.

of Bengal. Van Schendel (1981:64–68) tells us a case of migration from Noakhali to Rangpur, a north-west district about 450km distant from their place of origin, and this case is indeed caused by the very same reason. Following his description; “shortly before 1950 the village of Chor Mozlishpur near Feni in Noakhali was severely affected by the nearby river, which changed its course and submerged many fields. A few of most affected households were forced to leave home for lack of employment. First the men left to find a new place to settle. They wandered north to Mymensingh and Assam, and from there into Rangpur, working as day-laborers or religious teachers” (ibid.: 65). Following some interviewees’ witness in Mirsarai, Chittagong, in an earlier period, northernmost part of Mirsarai had experienced the river erosion and many houses and farmland has been washed away. It is most plausible that the mighty current of a same river, i.e. the Feni River, caused these two cases, a case of Chor Mozlishpur in the north bank and a case of Mirsarai in the south. In contrast to the people of Chor Mozlishpur in the north bank of the Feni River who went to seek the fortune to the north, some people of Mirsarai in the south bank of the river went to southward, first to Rangoon via Chittagong and then to northern Thailand. That is, the people of the north bank went to the northward and the people of the south went to the southward. This movement of people at that time is proofed by the case of some families in Chiang Mai. The flood and erosion caused by the Feni River were not only the one-time happening but a repeated phenomenon. There were surely floods and erosions many times before the case of the before-1950 which van Schendel mentioned. This repeated disaster should be the reason (one of the reasons, at least) which people of the area had to migrate to other areas, and the northern Thailand was one of such destinations.

A study of local history of Chittagong describes; “Burma was a land of nurturing (lalan bhumi) for the Chittagong district and the Noakhali district in particular. Several lakhs of people were living there and earning their food, and to do so they fed their families” (CHOUDHURY 1982:176). Following this, the author pointed out that the only carrier from Chittagong to Rangoon via Akyab was the weekly ship service run by British India Steamship Navigation Company Ltd. As this company abused the passengers (=people of Chittagong), some leaders living in Rangoon and some people of Chittagong had started their own new company, Bengal Burma Steamship Navigation Company Ltd. in 1929. Namely, this is suggested the situation that, from the latter half of the 19th century on, people of Chittagong (mainly Muslims) had migrated to Rangoon by using ship service run by British India Steamship Navigation Company Ltd., and at a time (perhaps around 1900) there were several lakhs of people living in Burma.⁷ Another book of Mirsarai’s history testified that a local prominent person of Mirsarai named Moulara Fararokh Ahmad Nezampri worked as an editor of a journal, ‘Bangla Gajet’ (Bangla Gazette) published from Bengal Burma Steamship Navigation Company Ltd. in Rangoon (Choudhury, 2004:128–134). This same part of the description vaguely suggests that there was a lot of people from Mirsarai living in Rangoon before that (around 1929).

⁷ Thant Myint-U (2011) briefly mentions the close relationship between Burma and Bengal as a whole.

To sum up, the following process is emerging; an area situated at the mouth of the Feni River had repeatedly experienced flooding and erosion and many people had suffered. At the same time, there were many migrants from Mirsarai to Rangoon or some other part of then Burma. Therefore, some of the sufferers of the flood or erosion had decided to leave the place and headed to Rangoon. From Chittagong to Rangoon, they perhaps employed a ship service run by a British company. I collected some witnesses in the field survey in the process after that. That is, though some of the migrants had stayed in Rangoon, some others felt frustration on their life there. They had intended to start up a small business there, but their small capital had not permitted to do so in Rangoon. Accidentally, they heard an information (rather, a rumor) that a remote area in the Burma-Thai border would offer them a good opportunity. Hearing this, some young boys with an adventurous mind had headed to the place to seek fortune. Those places were Papun (Burma side) or Mae Sariang (Thailand side). They started a small business there; portering, tailoring, retailing, etc. Moreover, a few of them further moved to Chiang Mai or nearby area and settled there. It seems that they are the second wave or third wave of the Bangladeshi Muslim migrants.

Before them, I supposed that some waves of movement of the predecessors from the northern Mirsarai or nearby area to northern Thailand, and these people should be the first generation of migrants in Bangladeshi Muslims in northern Thailand. I suppose that these people were cattle herder. Unfortunately, it is not confirmed yet, and it will be very difficult to prove this in future also, because even local people tends to forget the very existence of a land and of those people living in the land after the land had been once washed away⁸

On the timing of leaving the first generation migrants from Mirsarai or Eastern Bengal and of reaching Chiang Mai, there is no reliable data or document to prove it. But, from some supporting evidences, I suppose it to be around 1870s or so. 1) SUTHEP (2013) mentioned some different timings in relation to this, “1850s” in one part, “1870s” in the other, and “during the second half of the 19th century”. These are all falling into the range of the second half of the 19th century. 2) The oral traditions of the Muslims of Chiang Mai or nearby areas suggest “1870s” as the time of the coming of the first generation. 3) Recent studies on the global migration describes 1870s as the turning point of the Asian diaspora; around 1870, “This step change in the scale of migration was made possible by a revolution in transportation and technology” (AMRITH 2011:25). 4) As I have mentioned earlier, a historical book on Chittagong reported that there were weekly ship communication between Chittagong and Rangoon run by the British India Steam Navigation Company Ltd. in the latter half of the 19th century. A record of the company reported; “Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Company secured the East India Company’s mail contract between Calcutta and Rangoon and founded the Calcutta & Burmah Steam Navigation Company Ltd, registered in Glasgow in 1856” and this company renamed to the British India Steam Navigation Company Ltd. in 1862.⁹ This means that, in 1862

⁸ It is well exemplified by the case of lost ‘Mirgar’, a place of Panchagar district in northern Bangladesh (HASAN 2012).

⁹ P&O Heritage HP: <http://www.poheritage.com/our-history/company-guides/british-india-steam-navigation-company> (last access June 23th, 2015)

at the latest, the company had operated a weekly ship service from Calcutta to Rangoon via Chittagong. All of these supports my supposition that the timing of first generation migrants moved to Chiang Mai was around 1870s.

If this so, it will help to understand the difference of jobs of the first generation migrants and their followers. A local historian compiled a history of a logging-company in Mae Sariang, and the report tells us that The Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Limited, a British company, opened its field branch in Mae Sariang in 1884 and cut teak wood and brought it to Moulmein by using Salween river. The porters (Muslims, at least some of them) who flown down with the teak to Moulmein were coming back to Mae Sariang by land, via Bilin, Papun, and Tha Tavan (Wuchian 2005). This means that there should be a periodical transportation from Moulmein to Papun or a place on the other bank of a Sarween River of Tha Tavan by land after 1884. In other word, for the ordinary business person like petty traders, it should be difficult to go this route before 1884. Wandering cattle herders or some oxen caravans alone would have been able to travel in such a difficult condition of land-route.

Considering these all, I will suppose the pictures like this; before 1884 (perhaps around 1870s), a small group of migrants from Mirsarai or from some other part of Chittagong district (or a nearby area) had started to migrate to northern Thailand. They went Rangoon by ship at first, then traversed a long distance to the area of the Thai-Burma border by land (on foot?). The reason why they had not stayed in Rangoon was perhaps that there were so many 'Indians' (many of them, Hindus) and it was difficult to find any niche for them. Some of them had collected cattle in the border area and further moved to Chiang Mai or its nearby area as a cattle herder. They settled there as a pioneer of Bangladeshi Muslim migrants. After their settlement, getting information from them, some other people followed. Among them, perhaps after 1884, a new type of migrants had appeared, a young, ambitious boys who intended to start up a small business like grocery shops or tailoring shops. They had employed the same route which the porters of the British logging company had used, from Bilin to Papun. A party of people opened shops there, some others in Mae Sariang, and another proceeded to Chiang Mai. Many of them, irrespective of former cattle herders or business oriented people, had married to local women and formed a community.

8. Concluding Remarks

To put it theoretically, we have confirmed the movement of Bangladeshi Muslim migrants at the fringe of or outskirts of 'Zomia'. That is, until recently (and even today) 'state power' has not completely controlled the movement of ordinary people. It is said that "borders unite as well as divide, and that their existence as barriers to movement can simultaneously create reasons to cross them" (Donnan & Wilson, 1999:87). Just exemplified by this, many Bangladeshi Muslims had crossed the borders once, and most of Bangladeshi Muslims in northern Thailand today are losing the connection with their land of forefathers and lost their

original language. They are in all respects Thai Muslims now, except their vague consciousness of identity. What makes this situation and this consciousness is the land of Burma, long distance from their ancestral land, and the borders which their forefathers crossed. In relation to this, a concept, 'frontier effect' (DONNAN and WILSON 2010), come to mind. This is "the result of political actions and identifications that are dependent on the nations and states who meet, greet, and contest their political futures at the limits of their sovereignty and territory, and which by their very nature can only occur in borderlands." In this sense, we may say that the very existence of the Bangladeshi Muslims in Northern Thailand itself is a result of 'frontier effect'.

There were a lot of Indian people in Burma, especially in Rangoon. In this sense, Burma was a destination for those Indian people. But, during the same period, many people were traversing Burma from Eastern Bengal to eastward and went to Thailand. Bangladeshi Muslim descendant' communities in northern Thailand are the legacy of this flow. And, though I cannot mention them in this paper, Burmese Muslims who were flowing into Thailand in recent years or is flowing into today are the witness of and living proof of this movement. For them, Burma was (and Myanmar is) the corridor to Thailand. Moreover, considering some of the descendants of them are moving to Bangkok for the purpose of getting higher education or of getting jobs, and considering some others to more distant places, including Malaysia or even the Middle East, Burma is a corridor to the other part of Southeast Asia or to the greater world. Horstmann and Wadley (2006) insist that "scholars of Southeast Asian borderlands should concentrate more on the cultural complexity of the borderland communities themselves, on their transnational networks and spaces." The case of Bangladeshi Muslim community teaches us the truism of this suggestion. We should pay more attention to the aspect of Burma as 'corridor'.

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Chapter Seven

The Change in Pashtun Identity: Ethnicity and the Religion of the Pashtuns in Northern Thailand¹

Murakami Tadayoshi

パシュトゥーン・アイデンティティの変容

□タイ国北部におけるパシュトゥーン系住民の宗教と民族□

村 上 忠 良

要旨：本論文は、タイ国に居住するパシュトゥーン系住民の民族意識と宗教の関係について、タイ国内の民族関係を通して考察する。タイ系仏教徒が多数を占めるタイ国には、現在約300万人もの非タイ系のムスリムが居住しており、これらのムスリム少数派にとってイスラームは自らの民族意識を形成する上で重要な要素となっている。一方、これらのムスリム少数派は多様な民族集団から構成されており、ムスリム少数派をめぐる民族間関係は、多数派のタイ系仏教徒との関係だけではなく、ムスリム少数派の諸民族集団間の関係も含んでいる。本論文では、タイ国内のムスリム少数派の事例としてタイ国北部のパシュトゥーン系住民をとりあげ、パシュトゥーン系住民を取り巻く民族関係のなかで、イスラームとしての繋がりが民族意識の拠り所となると同時に、その民族性の解消へとも向かわせる働きを持っていることを指摘し、その両義的な関係を回避するための試みを明らかにしている。キーワード：パシュトゥーン、タイ国北部、民族間関係

Keywords: Pashtun, Northern Thailand, inter-ethnic relations

1. The framework of my research on ethnicity and religion in Thailand

In this paper, I will consider the relationship between the ethnicity and religion of the Pashtuns in Northern Thailand.² The Pashtuns are one of Muslim minorities in Thailand. Most of the research on ethnic minorities in Thailand focus on the relationship between ethnicity and religion in the framework of the majority-minority

¹ The draft of this paper was reported in oral presentation at CSEAS International Workshop "Reconsideration on the Historical and Contemporary Land-route Connection between South Asia and South East Asia," 8th -9th March, 2014, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.

² I conducted field research on the Pashtuns in Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand in 1998 and 1999, as part of the research project "Religion and Ethnicity among Asian Immigrants," Anthropological Institute, Nanzan University.

dichotomy. Researchers have paid attention to the religions of ethnic minorities as one of the important factors differentiating them from the Thai Buddhist majority (cf. Surin 1985; Tapp1989; Kammerer 1990; McCargo 2008). This research framework was found to be useful for analysis of the integration or disintegration of ethnic minorities in Thailand. It explained that the coincidence between ethnic and religious boundaries intensifies the distinctive opposition between the Thai Buddhist majority and ethnic minorities. However, the inter-ethnic relations in Thailand are not only confined to the majority-minority relationship. As a multi-ethnic state, Thailand has a variety of relationships among ethnic groups. Therefore, the identities of ethnic minorities are not only defined by their relationship with the Thai Buddhist majority, but also that with other ethnic minorities (cf. Murakami 2005). I will study the relationship between the ethnicity and religion of the Pashtuns in the various inter-ethnic relationships they have developed within Thailand's Buddhist dominant, but multi-ethnic, society.

2. The Pashtun in Thailand

2.1. The Pashtuns among "Pakistani" Immigrants in Thailand

The Pashtuns (Pakhtuns, Pathans) are people who mainly live in Afghanistan and the northwestern part of Pakistan with a roughly estimated population of 50 million. The majority of them are Sunni Muslims. They are traditionally both pastoralists and agriculturalists. Outside Afghanistan and Northwestern Pakistan, the Pashtuns live in many cities throughout India. Small Pashtun communities are also found in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Southeast Asia, and Europe as well as North America. They make their living through various vocations.

The Pashtuns started to migrate from Northwestern Pakistan into Thailand as British subjects in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They then scattered throughout Thailand in the first half of twentieth century. An article of Bangkok World published in 1962 reported that the total "Pakistani" population was at about 3,000 persons; at least 80 percent of the "Pakistani" people were Pashtuns from the area of Pakistan near the Afghan border, and the remaining 20 percent were largely the Bengalis.³ Considering that this article mentioned "Pakistani" people before the division between East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (Pakistan) in 1971, we could see that most of immigrants who came from the area known as Pakistan today were the Pashtuns and its population would be at around 2,400, or 80 percent of the 3000 persons at that time. Most of the early generations of the Pashtun immigrants were either merchants dealing in livestock or meat producers. Bangkok World's 1962 article described the Pashtuns in Thailand as follows:

³ "Cattle and Culture: The Pakistanis in Thai life," Bangkok World, Sunday Magazine Section, March 11, 1962, p. 2, as cited in the publication of the Department of the Army, USA (Headquarters, Department of the Army 1970:1099). Bangkok World is an English language newspaper started in the 1960s and closed in the mid-1980s.

Most of the Pashtun Pakistanis, being largely engaged in cattle production, are found in rural areas in the provinces of Chon Buri, Chiang Mai, Ubon, Khorat, Nong Khai, Nakhon Sawan, and Udorn. They can also be found in nearly every district of the four southern Moslem Provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Satun. (Headquarters, Department of the Army 1970: 1099)

The “Pakistani” immigrants in Thailand, mainly consisting of the Pashtuns, set up the Thai-Pakistani Friendship Association in 1954 with support from the Pakistan Embassy of Thailand. Their headquarters is located near the General Post Office, Bang Rak Area of Bangkok. The founding members are mainly from the first generation of Pashtun immigrants. There were 2000 persons registered as members in 1962. It has a mosque in the same compound which functions both as the center of the Pashtun network and a meeting-place for different “Pakistani” ethnic groups in Thailand. Although inactive politically, some members have been very active in Islamic religious activities: building of several mosques and sponsoring a translation of the Koran into Thai (Headquarters, Department of the Army 1970:1102)

While in the 1970s the association became less active, the second and third generations of the Pashtuns re-invigorated its activities in 1991. In the time of my research in 1999, a member of the board of the Thai-Pakistani Friendship Association informed me that the number of its members was around 4,000 and estimated the total population of the Pashtuns in Thailand to be around 20,000.⁴

2.2. The Pashtuns in the flux of South Asian migration

Although the Pashtun immigrants are not big population, they widely live all over Thailand. I presume that they moved into Thailand through several routes. Since most of the first generations of the Pashtun immigrants came as British subjects from British India or British Malaya, it is appropriate to view them as a part of the influx of South Asian immigrants from British colonies into Thailand since the latter half of the nineteenth century. The transition of South Asian immigrant groups serves as a useful reference to the Pashtun’s immigration into Thailand.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Tamil (both Muslims and Hindus) and the Gujarati Muslims moved into Southern Thailand through British Malaya. Then, people from the north and northwestern area of British India began to migrate into Thailand: the Punjabis (both Sikhs and Hindus) in the 1880s and Hindus of Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces) in the early twentieth century. After World War I, the Punjabis increased their numbers and overwhelmed other South Asian immigrants in Thailand (Sato 1995: 13–26; cf. Mani 1993). I suppose that the Pashtun’s immigration occur along with the South Asian immigrations from the north and northwestern areas of British India or British Malaya. In southern Thailand, we can estimate the history of

⁴ Interview with Mr. Kram Prathansiri, a member of the board of the Thai-Pakistani Friendship Association, in September, 1999. The number of the Pashtun population here includes both Thai nationals and Pakistani nationals.

Pashtun's settlement through the years their mosques were established. The Pashtun's earliest mosque in Thailand was established in 1922 and the second in 1928 in Phang-nga, a province on the west side of the Malay Peninsula. The third was established in Yala, the province next to Pangnga, in 1930. Mosques established by the Pashtuns were latterly called "Pakistan Mosques" to show their identity.⁵ The Pakistan Mosque in Trang was established in 1947; the one in Satun was established in 1950. Those in the provinces along the east coast, Pattani and Narathiwat, have been established since between the 1970s–1990s. The establishment of Pakistan Mosques shows that Pashtun immigrants first settled in Phang-gna and Yala. They then extended their settlements to other provinces in the south, such as Trang, Satun, Pattani, and Narathiwat.⁶ In Bangkok, a British diplomat frequently mentioned cases of the Pashtuns in British consul court in the early twentieth century in his memoir (Sato 1995: 76–77). This shows that the Pashtuns established their community and became involved in economic activities in Bangkok at that time.

From the years that their mosques were established, we infer that they immigrated to southern Thailand from British India or British Malaya at the end of the nineteenth century or during the early twentieth century. The Pashtuns in Bangkok would come from the cities of British India directly at around the same time. Some of them moved landward to other provinces of Central Thailand, such as Ayutthaya, Saraburi, Angthong, and Chon Buri. Others went farther to lower Northern Thailand, Nakhon Sawan Uttradit, and Phisanulok; or to Northeastern Thailand, Nakhon Ratchasima, Mahasarakham, and Roi-et. I will discuss the Pashtun's immigration into Northern Thailand in the next section.

Figure 7.1: Pashtun's Immigration into Northern Thailand

3. The Pashtuns in Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand



⁵ I will discuss the meaning of the name "Pakistan Mosque" in section 5.

⁶ The network between the Pashtuns in Malaysia and Southern Thailand needs further study

3.1. From Northwest Pakistan to Chiang Rai

As for the Pashtuns in Northern Thailand, their ancestors came by land from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan today, through the upper part of Myanmar in the early twentieth century. The colonization of Myanmar by the British accelerated the immigration of the Pashtuns into Myanmar since the middle of the nineteenth century. The census of British India in 1891 shows that there were 15,689 Pashtuns in British Burma (Yegar 1982: 102). After the colonization of the upper part of Myanmar in 1886, some of them moved northeastward into Yunnan of Southwest China through the Shan State of Myanmar and then moved southward into Northern Thailand and Laos. Most of the early Pashtun immigrants were livestock traders. They were single men and married local Northern Thai women. We can find Pashtun families in the cities and towns along the trading routes in Northern Thailand.

Chiang Rai is a province of Northern Thailand bordering Myanmar and Laos. Its provincial capital, Chiang Rai city (Chiang Rai Municipality, *thetsaban nakhon chiangrai*), is the second largest city in Northern Thailand, after Chiang Mai, with the population of 67,000. While the majority of the residents are Northern Thai (*khon mueang*), Chiang Rai city, a center of the border trade with neighboring countries, has a variety of ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Hill-tribes (*chao khao*), the Central Thai, Yunnanese Ho Muslims, and the Pashtuns.

3.2. Kokthong: A Pashtun Community in Chiang Rai

Kokthong is a Pashtun community of Chiang Rai Municipality. It is located at the outskirts of Chiang Rai City. Kokthong Pashtuns tell the story of their ancestor's immigration into Chiang Rai as follows:

In the 1920s, two Pashtun brothers migrated from Northwestern Pakistan and settled in Chiang Rai City. They are known as "Mula Yai" (Senior Imam) and "Mula Noi" (Junior Imam) because of their knowledge of Islam. These brothers married local Northern Thai women and had children. While Mula Noi left Chiang Rai a few years later, Mula Yai's descendants and other Pashtuns formed the Kokthong community in the suburbs of Chiang Rai. Then, just before World War II, the Pashtun families in Vientiane and Luang Phaban of Laos fled the Japanese military in the French Indochina and came to live in Kokthong. This event increased the population of the Pashtuns in this community. Today, the descendants of the Vientiane Pashtuns predominate the population of Kokthong.⁷

Kokthong Pashtuns still have intimate relationships with the Pashtuns in Laos and the Shan State of Myanmar across national borders. Beyond the regional network, they are in contact with the Pashtuns in the NWFP

⁷ Derived from my interviews with Kokthong Pashtuns in 1999.

of Pakistan, where their ancestors originated. Since the rapid economic growth of Thailand in the 1980s, a certain number of young Pashtun males come from the NWFP of Pakistan in search of work.⁸ Some of them would go home after stay for a few years; others settled down and raised a family with local woman in Kokthong. Additionally, the Pashtuns of Kokthong have provided financial help for their“relatives” to construct mosques in Pakistan. These regional and international networks maintain the Pashtun identity among the Kokthong people.

As for its population, while most of the Pashtun communities in Thailand usually consist of a small number of households at around 20–40, Kokthong has a remarkably large population in comparison with other Pashtun communities. It has 157 households with a population of about 1,110.⁹ Most of its population are descendants of the Pashtun immigrants with small populations of Malays (6 households) ,Bengalis (2) , Yunnanese Ho Muslims (1), and Northern Thai converts (10).¹⁰ Their joining with the Pashtuns from Laos made their population rapidly increase in the 1940s–1950s, resulting in the large population of this community.

While Kokthong Pashtuns maintain their ethnic identity, they steadily adapt to the social life of Thailand. Most Kokthong Pashtuns have Thai citizenship, send their children to government schools, and earn their livings in the local economy. Over the years, they have come to speak Northern Thai (khammueang) as their first language, not Pashtu, with the exception of a few kinship terms, such as baba (grandfather) and abai (grandmother). On the point of their vocation, Kokthong Pashtuns have engaged in agriculture as well as stock farming¹¹ and meat production since their settlement in Chiang Rai. Kokthong Pashtuns characterize their community as an agricultural and stock farming village in contrast with the Pashtuns in Chiang Mai, the political and economic center of Northern Thailand. The Pashtuns in Chiang Mai are merchants living in the urban area because their ancestors were originally merchants of the commercial towns in the NWFP of Pakistan. The ancestors of the Kokthong Pashtuns, as livestock traders in early years, settled in the suburb of Chiang Rai City, because their ancestors came from the agricultural area in the NWFP.¹² Besides agriculture and stock farming, Kokthong Pashtuns have entered a variety of jobs in the process of adapting to local society: sales business, company employment, public employment, etc.

⁸ In 1999, there were around 40 Pashtun newcomers from Pakistan. As they came to Thailand by air, they are no longer“overland immigrants.

⁹ The population size and household numbers come from the resident registration in 1999.

¹⁰ Northern Thai converts are people who married Kokthong women.

¹¹ The Pashtun farmers of Kokthong breed water-buffalo, goats, and cattle for meat. Until recently, they had bred“Indian waterbuffalo” for milk and agricultural work, which their ancestors brought to Thailand. Today there are few genuine breeds of“Indian water-buffalo.”

¹² The ancestors of the Kokthong Pashtuns came from Buner region, Swat, in the NWFP of Pakistan today. Interviews with the elders of the Kokthong Pashtuns were conducted in 1999

3.3. Mosque as a Focal Institution of the Community

Kokthong has a mosque as its center. Before the establishment of the mosque in their community, Kokthong Pashtuns used to attend worships and festivals at the Darul Aman Mosque (清莱清真寺)¹³ near the municipal market in Chiang Rai City, three kilometers away from Kokthong. In the 1960s, Kokthong Pashtuns established a small private Islamic school for their children and used the upstairs of its building for daily worship, because the mosque at the city's center was far from their community. This worship place was not registered as a mosque with the government. As time went on, Kokthong Muslims felt the necessity of having their own mosque in the community.

In 1985, they started to build a mosque. The ground for the mosque was donated by a faithful benefactor who would be its Imam.¹⁴ The construction cost of 2.5 million Baht was collected from the donations of Muslims both inside and outside of the community. The construction was completed in 1986, and they registered the mosque as the Nurul-Islam Pakistan Mosque (Matsajit Nurun-Islam Pakisatan)(Ibrohim 1992). Upon the registration of the mosque with the Thai government, the mosque's committee to run its religious activities was established. It consists of the three main posts of Imam, Kotheb (khatib), and Bilan (bilal) as well as nine other members. In 1992, the building for a private Islamic school was newly constructed next to the mosque.¹⁵

Because Kokthong is a community under the direct administration of Chiang Rai Municipality, it is not admitted as a self-administration organization. There is neither a representative institution nor village headman. Therefore, the mosque committee often has community meetings to form their opinion or to impart information from the municipal authority upon request. The Imam of the mosque seems to be the de facto "headman" of the community. The mosque committee actually takes the role of the representative institution of the Kokthong community in addition to its responsibility for religious activities. The municipal authority also regards it as the committee of the residents' association.

4. "Thai-Muslim" Activities

¹³ This mosque was established by Yunnanese Ho Muslims in 1922.

¹⁴ The ground for the mosque is 7 rai, or 11,200 m² (Ibrohim 1992).

¹⁵ The private Islamic school in Kokthong teaches classes from 17:00 to 18:30 on weekdays and from 9:00 to 12:00 on Saturday and Sunday. The contents of the teachings are based on the standard curriculum established by the Central Islamic Council of Thailand. In 1999, 140 students from the age of 6 to 18 years old studied with five teachers; four are Kokthong Pashtuns and one is a Malay Muslim who married a Kokthong Pashtun woman.

Chiang Rai Province has a certain number of Muslim populations consisting of various ethnic groups: the Yunnanese Ho, the Pashtuns, the Malays, the Bengalis, and so on. Including the mosque of Kokthong, there are seven mosques in this province. Two are located in Chiang Rai city: at the city's center and in Kokthong. One is in Mae Sai, a merchant town thriving on border trade with Myanmar. Four are in the Yunnanese refugee villages in the mountainous area (see Table 1).¹⁶ Classifying these mosques into two types, the mosques of Kokthong and the four Yunnanese refugee villages are classified as community based; the members and followers are exclusively confined within each community. The mosques of Chiang Rai city and Mae Sai town are classified as the urban-type; we can see the alignment of citydwelling Muslims from various ethnic groups. As I mentioned above, in the early stages of immigration, Kokthong Pashtuns had joined the daily worship and religious festivals of the Yunnanese Ho at the mosque in the city's center. Even today, Muslims of other ethnic groups living and working in the urban area also attend this mosque. The mosque in Mae Sai town also has Muslims of various ethnic groups who attend worship

Table 7.1 Mosques and Muslims in Chiang Rai Province.

	Location of mosque		Ethnic group
1	the center of Chiang Rai City	Muang District	Yunnanese Ho, Pashtun, Malay, Bengali
2	Kokthong	Muang District	Pashtun
3	Mae Sai town	Mae Sai District	Yunnanese Ho, Pashtun, Bengali
4	Ban Tham	Mae Sai District	Yunnanese Ho
5	Mae Salong	Mae Chan District	Yunnanese Ho
6	Ban Rak Thai (Ban Hin Taek)	Mae Chan District	Yunnanese Ho
7	Doi Wawi	Mae Chan District	Yunnanese Ho

According to the religious administration on Islam run by the Thai government, the Islamic Committee of Chiang Rai is formed as a provincial affiliate of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand. This provincial Islamic Committee is responsible for the religious affairs of Muslims in Chiang Rai.¹⁷ Each mosque committee is placed under the supervision of the provincial committee. While daily worship and most festivals are independently held in each mosque, some festivals or religious activities are held as events of all Muslims in the province. For example, the provincial Islamic Committee adjusts the schedule of the Mawlid festival so that each mosque holds it on a different day, allowing every mosque to host a large celebration by inviting all Muslims in Chiang Rai.¹⁸ Therefore, Mawlid festivals function as fund-raising events for each

¹⁶ As the result of defeat of the Kuomintang in the war with the Communist Party in China, the Kuomintang army and proKuomintang Yunnanese refugees migrated from the Yunnan Province and the Shan States into the mountainous area of Northern Thailand in the 1950s–1960s. These Yunnanese refugees include both Han people and Ho Muslims.

¹⁷ For the religious administration on Islam in Thailand, see Ishii (1977). The Islamic committee of Chiang Rai consists of 15 members, including one chairperson and two deputy chairpersons.

¹⁸ Mawlid (mawlid al-nabi) is the birthday festival of the prophet Muhammad.

mosque through reciprocal altruism. The activities of the provincial Islamic Community have forged social relationships and built a sense of unity among Muslims in Chiang Rai.¹⁹ The social relationships and sense of unity lead the Pashtuns to identify as Thai-Muslim under the hierarchical and central governance structure of the religious administration on Islam in Thailand.²⁰

5. Transformation of Pashtun identity

5.1. From Pathan to Pakistan

The Pashtuns in Thailand have gone by the name “Pathan,” which is the ethnonym in English. The Pashtuns themselves use the name “Pathan” to express their ethnic origin.²¹ Meanwhile, after the independence of Pakistan, the Thai-Pakistani Friendship Association was established at Bangkok in 1954. Most of its members were those Pashtuns who originated in the NWFP of Pakistan. The Pashtuns living in local area of Thailand have also become members of this association. The activities of the association give the Pashtuns in distant parts of Thailand increased chances of getting to know each other. This brings two results in the sense of identity among the Pashtuns in Thailand: the reformation of the Pashtun’s network in the national unit of Thailand and the tendency to represent their identity using the national name of “Pakistan/Pakistani.” Kokthong Pashtuns also connect through the Pashtun network in Thailand and show the tendency to express their ethnic identity using the name “Pakistan/Pakistani.”

The naming of mosques is an example of this tendency. When the mosques are established mainly by the Pashtuns in Thailand, they find value in naming them “Pakistan Mosques” in their registration with the Thai government.²² As we see above, the Pashtun immigrants in Southern Thailand are the forerunners of this trend. The oldest mosque established by the Pashtuns in Thailand is located in Pangnga Province; it was established in 1922 and registered to the government authority in the 1950s under the name of the “Phangnga Pakistan Mosque.” The second is the “Bangkhli Pakistan Mosque” in Pangnga Province. It was established in 1928 and registered in 1955. The third is the “Pakistan Mosque” in Yala Province, established in 1930 and registered in 1953.

¹⁹ In addition to the religious activities, Muslims in Chiang Rai City share a cemetery. The Municipality of Chiang Rai lays out its cemeterial place in the hillside of the Denha area, on the west side of the city. It contains a Buddhist crematorium and a Muslim cemetery for the residents. Deceased Muslims are similarly buried in this cemetery regardless of their ethnicity

²⁰ I already indicated the emergence of the “Thai-Muslim” identity through both top-down control of the religious activities of Muslims and bottom-up movements of non-governmental organizations (Murakami 2005).

²¹ Some of the Pashtun families in Northeast Thailand use “Pathan” as their surname (Duagnthip 2011). The internet site of the Pashtuns in Thailand also uses the name “Pathan Club Thailand” (<https://th-th.facebook.com/PathanClubThailand>).

²² The system of registration of mosques in Thailand started in 1945 (Ishii 1977).

Because the usage of the name “Pakistan” could not predate the independence of Pakistan, the mosques that were established before 1947 would not be named “Pakistan” at time of their establishment (1920s–1930s). However, it is significant that they named them “Pakistan Mosques” in their registration. Currently, there are 25 mosques that bear the name “Pakistan,” as far as I know (see Appendix).

Since their settlement in Chiang Rai, Kokthong Pashtuns have called themselves “Pathan” and maintained their ethnic identity through the relationships among inland Pathan/Pashtun immigrants in Northern Thailand, Laos, the Shan State, and the upper part of Myanmar. These relationships are still upheld today. However, key persons of the Kokthong community became members of the Thai-Pakistani Friendship Association. The membership of key persons to the association gave Kokthong Pashtuns a sense of belonging to “the imagined community” of the Pakistani in Thailand regardless of their ethnic categories, time and route of immigration, and their place of origin in Pakistan. In this situation, Kokthong Pashtuns are inclined to proclaim themselves as “Pakistan/Pakistani” in formal situations. The mosque of Kokthong is one of the “Pakistan Mosques” in Thailand. After years of attending worships and celebrations at the mosque established by the Yunnanese Ho at the city’s center, the Kokthong Pashtuns established the “Nurul-Islam Pakistan Mosque” in their community. The naming of the Pakistan Mosque was due to the influence of the trend among the Pashtuns in other locations throughout Thailand.

5.2. Two meanings of Pakistan in Thai: Pakisathan and Pakisatan

Pakistan is the name of the nation, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where the Pashtun is one of the ethnic minorities. “Pakistan Mosque” literally means mosques for all Pakistani Muslims, including various ethnic groups. As we have seen, however, use of the word “Pakistan” in the names of mosques has a connotation indicating the Pashtuns’ ethnic consciousness in Thailand, where the Pashtuns are predominant among Pakistani immigrants. Therefore, the term “Pakistan” has two meanings in this context: denotation and connotation. The Pashtuns in Thailand give it a twist to emphasize its connotation by using two ways of transcribing “Pakistan”: Pakisathan (ปากีสถาน) and Pakisatan (ปากีสถาน).²³ The former is the regular transcription for the name of the nation. The latter is newly invented and mostly used for the name of their mosques. The consonant “t” is written using a different letter than “th” in Thai. Although both Pakisathan and Pakisatan could be found in the name list of Pakistan Mosques, they seem to prefer the term Pakisatan to Pakisathan for naming mosques. For example, the Pakistan Mosque of Phisanulok in central-north Thailand is registered by the name Matsajit Pakisathan, but the nameplate in front of the mosque, in practice, shows its name as Matsajit Pakisatan.²⁴ In Yala, Pakistan Mosque was changed its name from Matsajit Pakisathan

²³ The difference between the consonants of “t” and “th” is underlined by the author

²⁴ See photographs of the Pakistan Mosque of Pisanulok on the website of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (<http://www.cicot.or.th/2011/main/mosque.php?page=&category=61&id=223>) .

to Annur Pakisatan in 2012.²⁵ It could be that while they use Pakisathan in registering the mosque with the Department of Religious Affairs, they use Pakisatan to show its connotation in practice. Sometimes, they even use the term Pakisatan in registration.

6. Final remarks

In this paper, I discuss the transformation of the Pashtuns' identity in two ways: as Thai-Muslim and as Pakistani, and the dilemmas that they face in this transformation. As the Pashtun are a Muslim minority in Thailand, Islam is indispensable for their ethnic identity. However, as a minority among various ethnic groups of Thai-Muslims, they cannot monopolize Islam as a key factor for their ethnic identity. The activities of the provincial Islam committee lead the Pashtuns in Chiang Rai to build up their identity as Thai-Muslims. It seems that various Muslim minorities aim for unity under the name of Thai-Muslim as a religious minority in Thailand. However, the incorporation of the Pashtuns into the category of Thai-Muslim would blur cultural differences and social boundaries between the Pashtuns and other Muslim minorities in Thailand.

As the descendants of Pashtun immigrants from the northwestern part of Pakistan today, the Pashtuns in Thailand express their ethnic identity as "Pakistan." Because most Thai people do not know the name of the Pashtun, one of the ethnic minorities in Pakistan, the term "Pakistan" is more recognizable in Thailand. However, because the term "Pakistan" is the name of the nation, it indicates not only the Pashtuns but also other ethnic groups of Pakistan or their descendants in Thailand.

As we have seen, the way to break out of this dilemma is using the term Pakisatan in the name of their mosques. By using the name of the place where their ancestors came from, which is known better than the name of their ethnic group, they can show their identity through the name of the mosque that is the center of their religious life. This naming does not only contrast the Pashtun Muslims to Thai Buddhism, but also the Pashtun Muslims to Muslims of other ethnic groups. At the same time, in using the term Pakisatan, not Pakisathan, they avoid being integrated into the national identity of Pakistan today. The invented transcription of Pakistan is more appropriate in showing their identity. Although the two terms sound similar, the meanings are differentiated. The Pashtuns in Thailand obviously discern the implication of the replacement of the consonant "th" by "t" and make a choice to use these terms depending on their situation.

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Chapter Eight

Persians and Shi'ites in Thailand: From the Ayutthaya Period to the Present

Christoph Marcinkowski¹

1. Introduction

The Buddhist kingdom of Siam—present-day Thailand—can look back to several Thundreds of years of contacts with the Middle East. Iran features most prominently in this regard. Iran's cultural and trade relations with Southeast Asia date back far into the pre-Islamic period.



Figure 8.1: Safavid Iran. ²

Although contacts during the Sasanid and the early Islamic periods have been documented (see Colless 1969, 1969–79; Tibbetts 1955, 1957, 1981), official diplomatic relations between the two regions, exemplified by the exchange of non-permanent missions rather than by permanent extraterritorial embassies, become traceable only during the Safavid period (1501–1722).

¹ This article expands on a public lecture which was presented by the author on 20 March 2012 at the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS. I would like to thank Dr. Geoff Wade and the NSC team for their kindness and hospitality.

² Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Safavid_Empire_1501_1722_AD.png

Contacts between Persians (whether via the Indian subcontinent or from Iran proper) and the Thai people became possible only after the latter's gradual settlement and domination of the central plains of present-day Thailand. This process of migration culminated in the foundation of Ayutthaya in 1351 by King U Thong (r. 1351–69, under the throne name Ramathibodi) as the capital of a Thai kingdom which became known as Siam.

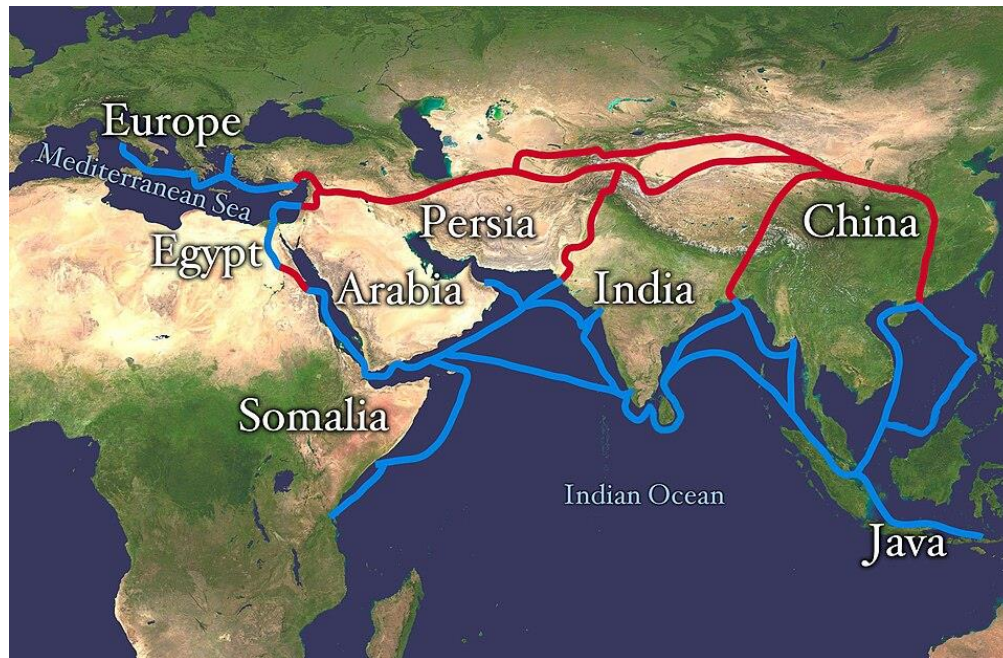
Figure 8. 2: Siam during the Ayutthaya Period.³



³ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map-of-southeast-asia_1400_CE.png

Ayutthaya is situated about 80 km to the north of modern Bangkok. It is strategically located on the navigable Chao Phraya river system which leads to the Gulf of Thailand and was destined to become one of the region's most important trade emporia, situated equidistant from East Asia, China and India. In the long term, however, sea-borne trade was of less significance to Iran than was the traditional Silk Route. Lack of investment in ship building and the navy, provided the Europeans with the opportunity to monopolize this trading route.

Figure 8.3: Major International Trade Routes in the 17th Century.⁴



In the first half of the 15th century, the Muslim Chinese writer Ma Huan, who accompanied the famous Ming admiral Cheng Ho on some of his explorations in the Indian Ocean region, also visited Siam (Hsien-lo) and reported on the presence in Ayutthaya (Yu-ti-ya) of 'five or six hundred families of foreigners', yet without explicitly mentioning Persians among them (Ma Huan 1997:106). In 1442, Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, in his *Matla' alSa'dayn*,⁵ refers explicitly to close trade connections between the Persian Gulf emporium of Hormuz and Shahr-e Nav, a synonym for Ayutthaya. Arab sources of the 15th century, such as Ebn Majid, refer to the same Shahr-e Nav, calling it Shahr Nawa.⁶ I have elaborated elsewhere⁷ on the circumstance of Ayutthaya being referred to by the Persian name Shahr-e Nav—and its many variant spellings—among

⁴ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Silk_route.jpg

⁵ English translation in Browne, 1984:397–398.

⁶ See Tibbetts 1981, 'index of place names' and 'Arabic index'.

⁷ See Marcinkowski 2002e:25–29.

foreigners and non-Thais. Here, it can only be mentioned briefly that Shahr-e Nav, 'City of Boats and Canals', appears to be the correct form.⁸

2. The Coming of the Persians to Siam

In order to understand the background of the presence of Persians in Siam, it is important to consider the wider setting. The insubordinate status of the principality of Malacca (avassal of Ayutthaya on the Malay Peninsula) during the 15th century, and especially its final extinction by the Portuguese in 1511, had forced its Siamese sovereigns to look for additional gateways for trade with the western Indian Ocean region.

Figure 8.4: The Qotb-Shahi Kingdom.⁹



During the 1460s, Siam took control of Tenasserim, followed in 1480 by Mergui, thus gaining direct access to the Gulf of Bengal and Mughal India (Sunait 1999). Further west, the 16th century saw major political changes in northern India with the gradual establishment of the Mughals. Towards the beginning of the 17th

⁸ See Marcinkowski 2004a; Al-Attas 1970:3 ff.; Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail 1998:110 ff.; English tr. in Brown 1952:45 ff.; Yule and Burnell 1996:795–96, entry 'Sarnau, Sornau'.

⁹ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Golconda_Sultanate.jpg

century, the Mughals had gained full control over Bengal and Orissa, by which they obtained access to the Bay of Bengal.

A formidable power in the southern Indian region was the Deccan kingdom of the Qotb-Shahi dynasty (1512–1687) in Golconda,¹⁰ a successor-state of the Bahmanid kingdom (1347–1525). The Qotb-Shahi rulers were Twelver Shi'ites with political links to the Safavid shahs of Iran, whose names were even mentioned alongside the names of the Twelve Imams in the sermon during Friday prayers. Their highly Persianate kingdom was not only a major trading power but also was to become a haven for Shi'ites, in most cases Persians from Persia but also from northern India, who were at times subjected to persecution under the Sunni Mughals. In his study of the migration of Persians from Persia to India and Southeast Asia, Subrahmanyam (1992) has provided abundant evidence for their massive economic, political and literary presence in the Qotb-Shahi kingdom.

By the second half of the 16th century, intensive trade links existed between Golconda's main port Masulipatam (or Matchlibandar) and Siamese Tenasserim (Alam 1959). The Qotb-Shahi kingdom thus also served as an important gateway to Southeast Asia, and the Thai empire of Ayutthaya in particular, since merchant-ships bound for the east used its harbors as stopover ports. In spite of the existence of Bengali, Gujarati, and Hadrami trade networks in the Indian Ocean region, the role of the Persians should be seen as beyond that of pure merchants. This last aspect, i.e. the various additional educational and cultural activities of the Persians, however, still needs further investigation and clarification since similar activities are due also to the Hadramis with regard to their role in spreading Sufism in Southeast Asia. In the light of the dominating role of Persianate Muslim states on the Indian Subcontinent, however, it is not surprising that the Siamese trading emporium of Ayutthaya should have been known to the mainly Muslim merchants under a Persian name. Politically and militarily, the Qotb-Shahi kingdom was on the decline from the second half of the 17th century onwards, due particularly to Mughal pressure from the north. To the knowledge of the present writer, Indo-Persian historiographical literature (especially from the Deccan) has not yet been investigated with regard to Siamese-Deccan relations from the 15th century onwards.¹¹

As argued by Subrahmanyam (1992), the first Persians in the Ayutthaya kingdom might have settled in Tenasserim and Mergui. There is evidence, at least, for Persians in Siam's Burmese neighbouring state Pegu and in Malacca for the early 16th century.¹² The presence of Persians in the Siamese capital Ayutthaya, however, seems to have remained limited in number up to the beginning of the 17th century. Several factors appear to have contributed to an emigration of Persians (mainly from southern India, but perhaps also

¹⁰ See the relevant studies by Sherwani (1974) and Minorsky (1955).

¹¹ For an overview of Persian literary activities in that kingdom, see the excellent, but often neglected study by Devare (1960). A reprint of this work with a foreword by the present writer is forthcoming.

¹² Based on assertions by the early 16th-century travelers Ludovico de Varthema and Tome Pires; see Ferrier 1986:423.

directly from Iran) to Siam, in particular during the 17th century. These include political instability in the Deccan, the extension of international Safavid trade under Shah Abbas II (r. 1642–66) and the expansion of Siamese trade with East Asia, and in particular Japan (Nagashima 1997, Nagazumi 1999). The latter resulted in Ayutthaya becoming an important entrepôt of its own for trade with that region, and thus attracted foreign immigration. Up to the end of the 17th century, Shi'ite Persians, whether immigrants from India (in particular the Shi'ite kingdoms of the Deccan) or from Iran proper, might have even have constituted the majority of the Muslims resident at Ayutthaya. The French traveler and diplomat Guy Tachard¹³ reported ta'zia processions during the 1680s in that city, sponsored by the Siamese (Buddhist!) monarch.¹⁴

One obstacle to research on the Iranian community in Ayutthaya using the surviving fragments of Thai 'Royal Chronicles' is the circumstance that non-Siamese individuals, whether subjects or foreign residents and visitors, are for the most part hidden under Thai official titles and are referred to throughout as *khaek* if they are of Middle Eastern or Indian ethnic origin. In the latter case, non-Muslims are included.¹⁵ Interestingly, in the 'Royal Chronicles', when referring to events from the 16th century until today, the Thai language refers to Westerners by the expression *farang*.¹⁶ In that form, *farang* is derived from Persian, where it has the same connotation. Apparently, there exist other fragments of Thai chronicles which survived the sack of the Ayutthaya in 1767 at the hands of Burmese invaders but to which the present author has had no access. Thai historians of the 19th and early 20th centuries have based their works on them.¹⁷ They refer to a certain 'Shaikh Ahmad Qomi' or 'Kuni', an immigrant who is said to have arrived toward the beginning of the 17th century as a merchant 'from the West', perhaps via India. He is said to have risen to favor with King Song Tham (r. 1610/11–1628), who appointed him to the highest administrative positions and who put him in charge of Siam's entire trade with the Middle East and Muslim India (Wyatt 1999c:108). Under the Thai title *chualarajmontri*, the Muslim office of Shaikh al-Islam¹⁸ was introduced to Siam by Shaikh Ahmad, who was appointed to this position by the king as its first holder.¹⁹ The necessity for this action might be seen in the increase of Ayutthaya's Muslim (Shi'ite?) population (Marcinkowski 2003b; Yusuf 1998). Remarkably, his Shi'ite descendants who became known as the Bunnag family, continued to be appointed to this position up to 1945. Since that year, Sunnites had held that office. From about 1750 onwards, the majority of his descendants, however, converted to Buddhism in order to be allowed to be present at court permanently, and many of them hold influential positions in Thai public life even today.

¹³ See Part 2 of Tachard 1999:214–215.

¹⁴ For the text, see Marcinkowski 2002c and 2002d.

¹⁵ See Cushman 2000, Index of proper names, s.v. *khaek*

¹⁶ See *ibid.*, s.v. *farang*

¹⁷ See Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong Maha Kosa Thibodi 1939.

¹⁸ See Marcinkowski 2003a, 2003b.

¹⁹ For details see Marcinkowski 2002d.

3. Persians and Shi'ites in the Ayutthaya Kingdom

The fortunes of Ayutthaya's Iranian community rose under King Narai (r. 1656–88) who opened the kingdom further to foreign trade and who was also interested in cultural contacts. For this period, we have the late 17th-century Persian travel account *Safine-ye Solaymani* of a Safavid embassy to Siam, written by Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim (Marcinkowski 2002a). To my present knowledge, this text appears to be the only extant Persian source for the extensive Safavid contacts with the region in question. In it we read that 'Since Siam is close to the ports of India and is situated on the sea route to China and Japan, merchants have always been attracted to settle there'.²⁰

Ayutthaya's becoming an emporium of international trade in Asia, the presence of numerous foreign merchants there, and political and strategic considerations might have driven the Siamese rulers—apparently on the advice of the resident Iranian community—to seek diplomatic contacts with other countries with an interest in Indian Ocean trade, perhaps also as a counterbalance to Mughal India. In 1664, for instance, the court of Golconda received a splendid Siamese embassy (Alam 1959:178). In 1669, another Siamese embassy, sent by King Narai (r. 1656–88), arrived at the court of the Safavid Shah Solayman (r.1666–94)²¹ Another Siamese trade mission was in Iran in 1680/81 (Hutchinson 1990:11 n. 2, 127–128). A letter, dated 20 January 1683, by the Apostolic Vicar and titular bishop François 'of Caesaropolis', a French missionary based in Isfahan, to his sovereign Louis XIV, also refers to a Siamese embassy which was present during that year at the Safavid court (Du Mans 1890:339). Engelbert Kaempfer, too, who visited Iran prior to his sojourns in Siam and subsequently Japan, reports in July 1684 of (another?) Siamese embassy present at the shah's court at the Bagh-e Sa'dabad, referring to a 'native-born Persian' as the leader of the Siamese delegation (Kaempfer 1940:199). This individual was most probably the Hajji Salim, Mazandarani referred to by Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim.²² The Iranian embassy of 1685/86 to Ayutthaya (of which Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim was a member) was thus rather a return visit, responding to the Siamese mission to Isfahan of 1684 and thus not to the earlier Siamese visit of 1669.

Ayutthaya's development as a major trading power in the second half of the 15th century resulted in an influx of foreign merchants, many of whom were to stay permanently. This necessitated the introduction of maritime laws and of clearly marked responsibilities for officials dealing with foreigners (Breazeale 1999:1–54). A similar situation prevailed with other states on the Indian Ocean rim such as Malacca on the Malay Penin-sula and Masulipatam, where officials with the Persian title *shahbandar* were to be found (Subrahmanyam 1992:345). The maritime relations of Ayutthaya were the responsibility of a minister known in Thai as Phra Khlang, rendered by Breazeale as 'Ministry of External Relations and Maritime Trading Affairs'.

²⁰ Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim 1972:94.

²¹ Records of the Relations between Siam and Foreign Countries in the Seventeenth Century, vol. 2, pp. 92–98.

²² Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim 1972:20, 104, 105; see also Aubin 1973:121–122.

The title Phra Khlang became known to European traders of the time under various corrupted forms, such as 'Berklam' or 'Barcalon'.²³ This ministry was organized in four main departments: the 'Department of General Administration, Appeals and Records', the 'Department of Western Maritime Affairs', the 'Department of Eastern Maritime Affairs and Crown Junks', and the 'Department of Royal Warehouses.' The 'Department of Western Maritime Affairs' was concerned with the Indian Ocean trade and was called in Thai Krom Tha Khwa (literally: the 'Harbor Department of the Right'). At court, the official in charge of it sat to the right of the king, higher than his colleague of the 'Eastern Department' who sat to the left of the monarch and who was regarded as lower in rank. The holder of the 'Western Department' was usually a Muslim.

The Iranian Shaikh Ahmad, whom we shall consider below, was in charge of the Krom Tha Khwa. Apparently, the Krom Tha Khwa department also had various territorial responsibilities, in particular with regard to the Siamese Indian Ocean ports on the west coast of the peninsula. The power of the 'Western Department', which was larger and more complex than its 'Eastern' counterpart, declined towards the later 18th century. Leonard Andaya (1999:127) has referred to the office of Phra Klang as 'king's merchant' and noticed apparent similarities between the Malek al-Tujjar ('king of merchants') in Iran and comparable offices in the Southeast Asian trading world, such as that of shahbandar.

In 1610, presumably towards the beginning of the rule of the Siamese king Song Tham, a contemporary of Shah Abbas I the Great (r. 1588–1629), the Phra Khlang ministry is said to have been reformed with the help of two Iranian immigrants.²⁴ Apparently, the division of the ministry into a 'Right' and 'Left' department happened under their influence. Leonard Andaya (1999:125) refers to these two men (in fact Shaikh Ahmad and his brother) as originating 'from southern India', unfortunately without presenting evidence for this assertion. According to Andaya, Ahmad was to stay in Ayutthaya and to become head of the Krom Tha Khwa, the 'Right Department' in charge of trade with the Indonesian world and the western Indian Ocean area. His brother is said to have returned to India. Ahmad and his followers were granted a village site for their houses, a mosque and a cemetery which is still known today as Ban Khaek Kuti Chao Sen.²⁵

Professor Wyatt's (1999a, 1999c:108) genealogical studies into the origins of Thai nobility provide more detailed information on the mysterious Shaikh Ahmad. According to Wyatt, Shaikh Ahmad together with his younger brother, Mohammad Sa'id, arrived at Ayutthaya in 1602 'from the Persian Gulf' (without giving evidence), where they took Thai wives. Ahmad was soon appointed 'Head of the Department of the Right.' Early under Song Tham, he was promoted to the position of Phra Khlang. By the end of the reign of that monarch he rose to the position of prime minister or Samuhanaiyok, with the rank of Chaophraya. About

²³ Kaempfer 1998:39; de Chaumont and de Choisy, *Aspects of the Embassy to Siam 1685*, tr. Smithies (1997:111).

²⁴ Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong Maha Kosa Thibodi 1939:3.

²⁵ Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong Maha Kosa Thibodi 1939:3.

1630, his eldest son (known under the Thai name Chün) succeeded him in that position, holding the official title Chaophraya Aphairacha, until 1670. He, in turn, was succeeded by his eldest son Sombun, the later Chaophraya Chamnanphakdi. Elsewhere, Wyatt (1999a:96) also supplies a genealogical table (stemma) of Shaikh Ahmad's descendents.

The 16th- and 17th-century trade-network of Iranian merchants virtually controlled the eastern Indian Ocean maritime trade and operated from southern India (Subrahmanyam 1992, Aubin 1973). Subrahmanyam's study contains rich material on the biographies of eminent Iranian merchants of southern India, the most successful of them being Mir Mohammad Sayyed Ardestani (1591–1663), who grew up in Isfahan and went to the Golconda kingdom during the 1620s. Contemporary Western observers, as well as Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim, state that up to the middle of the 17th century the presence of Persians in Siam, in particular at Ayutthaya, seems to have been limited in number.²⁶ Significantly, Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim never refers to Shaikh Ahmad by name or as the alleged 'founder of the Iranian community' in Siam.

During the 1680s, the fortunes of Siam's Iranian community were checked by the rise to royal favor of another foreigner, the Greek Konstantinos Gerakis, or Constantine Phaulkon. This occurred about the time of Ebn Mohammad Ebrahim's visit to Siam. As a result of the sack of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in 1767, surviving Thai historical writing on this period is rare (Charnvit Kasetsiri 1976, Wyatt 1976). From the ancestry of the Bunnag family, on which David Wyatt has worked, we learn that Shaikh Ahámad, who is said



²⁶ Caron and Schouten, 1986:134; Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim 1972:94.

to have arrived at Ayutthaya in 1602, features as the ancestor of the Bunnag family in 19th and 20th century Thai works on the genealogy of Siam's nobility. At times, he is referred to as 'Shaikh Ahmad-e Qomi', i.e. 'of Qom.' His actual place of origin, however, must be considered as far from being established since we also come across the expression 'from Arab lands' (Andaya 1999:125). Thus, an origin 'from Qom', such as stated on a recently erected commemoration tablet at his tomb in Ayutthaya, cannot be verified. The same must be said concerning the nesba 'Qomi.' King Narai himself is said to have been under Iranian cultural influence in terms of his daily food and dress and his preferred architectural styles (Subrahmanyam1992:349).

Figure 8.5: The Tomb of Shaykh Ahmad in Ayutthaya Today. Photo credit: Author\

Apparently, the services and the cooperative attitude of the Iranian community towards their host-country were appreciated by Ayutthaya's rulers. According to Professor Anthony Reid, Persian Shi'ites were among Narai's closest advisers, especially as commercial counterweights to the more dangerous European companies.²⁷



Figure 8.6: Memorial Plaque at the Tomb of Shaykh Ahmad in Ayutthaya, Thailand.

Photo credit: Author\

The usually reliable Engelbert Kaempfer, who visited Ayutthaya in 1690, refers to the Persian language as a lingua franca among Muslims in Siam (Kaempfer 1940:135). Perhaps this refers to matters concerning the trade with the Muslim states in India, since the Malay language seems to have been employed in dealing

²⁷ See Reid 1993:190, and Dhiravat 2001:176–183.

with the Malay-Indonesian world. It cannot be established with certainty how many Iranian Muslims actually lived in Ayutthaya during the second half of the 17th century and up to the destruction of the city and kingdom by Burmese invaders in 1767. At any rate, trade, cultural and religious relations with Iran and the rest of the Persian-speaking Shi'ite world were severed in 1722 when Safavid power was ended and Iran's capital, Isfahan, suffered the same fate at the hands of the Afghans as did Ayutthaya 45 years later at the hands of the Burmese. Furthermore, as we have seen, Phaulkon's rise to power in Siam and the annexation of the Shi'ite kingdom of Golconda in 1687 by the Indian Mughals might have slowed or stopped the steady influx of Persians (or at least Persian-speaking Muslims) to Siam. Nevertheless, Kaempfer (1998:24) referred to the Phra Klang of that time as an 'Indian Muslim' (i.e., an Iranian from India?).

Muslims, along with countless others of their Buddhist compatriots, must have suffered during the total destruction of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in 1767. Some of Shaikh Ahmad's descendants must have survived this disaster, however, since political influence exercised by personalities originating from families of Iranian descent continued even in the subsequent Bangkok period. The main branch of Shaikh Ahmad's family is said to have converted to Buddhism later in the 19th century, when it featured in the court society of the 'Bangkok period' (i.e. under the Chakri dynasty which has ruled in Thailand since 1782) as the Bunnag family (Wyatt 1999a:96–105, 1999b:106–130). Another branch of Shaikh Ahmad's family, however, remained Twelver Shi'ites, since we have already seen that until 1945 the office of Chularajmontri or Shaikh al-Islam used to be bestowed upon a descendant of Shaikh Ahmad.

Figure 8.7: Palace Gate in Lopburi, the Second Residence City of King Narai, Featuring Persianate Architectural Features.

Photo credit: Author\



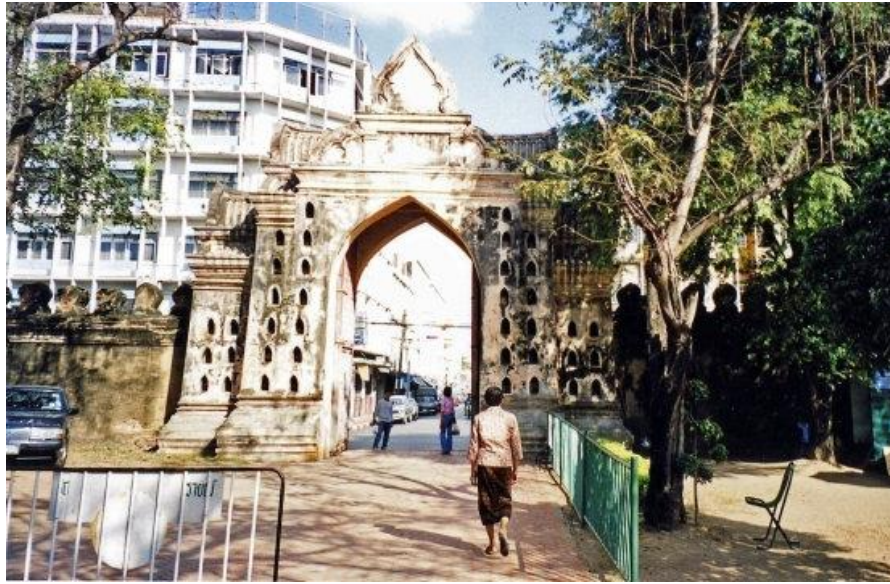


Figure 8.8: Another Palace Gate in Lopburi. Photo credit: Author\



Figure 8.9: Another Building Inside the Lopburi Palace Complex. Photo credit: Author\

Shaikh Ahmad and the history of the presence of Persians in Siam have been the subject of several conferences in Thailand. The first, held in 1994 at the Historical Study Centre Ayutthaya, resulted in the

publication of a volume of proceedings in Thai, with selected English abstracts.²⁸ A similar meeting took place on 1 March 2003 at the Asia-Pacific Institute of Bangkok's Srinakharinwirot University under the title Conference on the Thai–Iranian Relations: Past–Present–Future.²⁹ Another meeting—possibly the best so far of those dealing with Thai–Iranian relations in past and present times—was the International Conference on the Effects of Persian Sufism on Southeast Asia, which took place in Bangkok on 7–8 February 2004 and was organized by Assumption University, a Catholic institution. This conference, too, resulted in the publication of a volume (see Yusuf 2004). I attended the last two mentioned meetings. The Cultural Center of the Iranian Embassy at Bangkok was actively involved in the organization of all three meetings.

4. A Tiny mMinority: Shi'ites in Thailand Today

It appears that the embassy described by the Ship of Solayman, was the last diplomatic contact between Iran and Siam until diplomatic ties between Tehran and Bangkok were resumed in the 20th century.

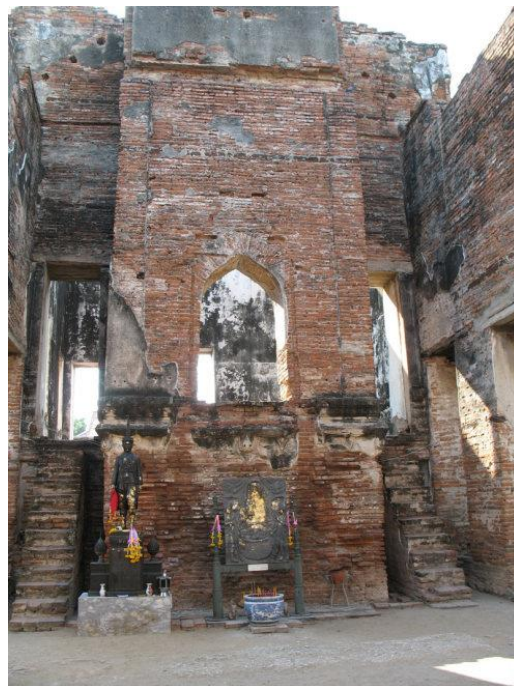


Figure 8.10: The Dusit Sawan Hal in Lopburi, Thailand. Photo credit: Author\

Diplomatic relations between Siam (Thailand) and Persia (Iran) collapsed as a result of the destruction of the Ayutthaya empire (by the Burmese) in 1767 and of the Safavid empire (by the Afghans) in 1722. They were, however, resumed, this time on a permanent basis under Iran's bygone Pahlavi monarchy. Both the

²⁸ Cultural Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran 1995.

²⁹ Apparently, a proceedings volume of this conference was published by the Cultural Centre of the Iranian Embassy; I have been unable to verify this.

Thai and Iranian monarchs visited each other during the 1960s. Now there are permanent embassies in both countries; the one in Bangkok, established in 1956, is the first between Iran and any Southeast Asian country.



Figure 8.11: Persians or Indo-Persians on a mural inside Wat Ko Kaeo Suttharam, Phetchaburi, Thailand (1734). Photo credit: Author

The World Factbook³⁰ for June 2006 put Thailand's population figure at 64,631,595 and the percentage of Muslims in the kingdom at a rather low 4.6%, with 94.6% Buddhists. Here is not the place to dispute these figures, although perhaps the actual Muslim percentage might be around 10%. More importantly, the Muslim community of present-day Thailand, although not ethnically homogeneous, is culturally dominated by southern Thailand's Malays, who adhere firmly to the Sunnite Shafi'ite legal school.³¹ Their cultural and religious perspective is directed towards neighboring Malaysia and the Arab world, rather than toward Iran or India, as it was the case during the Ayutthaya period. The main and decisive historical factor behind the dominance of Sunnite Islam among the Muslims of contemporary Thailand seems to be—aside from the end of the 'Persian intermezzo' during the Ayutthaya period—the incorporation in 1902 of the four southern

³⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, 'The World Factbook: Thailand', available online at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/th.html> (accessed on 27 June 2006).

³¹ See RISEAP 1996 and Farouk 1988. For general accounts of the history of Islam in Thailand, see Gilquin 2005, and Farouk 1988. Important sources in Thai language are Khatchatphai Burutsaphat 1976 (Thai mutsalim, 'Thai Muslims'), and Kukrit Pramroj 1970 (Khwam pen ma khong mutsalim nai prathet thai, 'History of the Muslims in Thailand'). For introductions to the issue of Islam in Southern Thailand, in other parts of the kingdom, and on other social issues, see Kersten 2004, Kraus 1984, Scupin 1981 and 1988, and Arong Suthasasna 1984. For an interesting introduction to traditional religious education among Southern Thai (Sunnite) Muslims, see Madmarin 2002, Che Man 1991, and Marcinkowski 2004b.

princely states of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and Satun into the administrative framework of the kingdom, resulting in Islam becoming the country's largest minority religion (Yusuf 1998:284).

Figure 8.12: Postal Stamp (2006) Issued by the Royal Thai Mail, Celebrating 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations. Source: Royal Thai Mail

The dominance of Sunnite Islam also resulted in the appointment, in 1945, of a Sunnite 'head of the Muslim community' (known as *chularajmontri* in Thai and *Shaykhal-Islām* in Arabic) instead of the previous Shi'ite

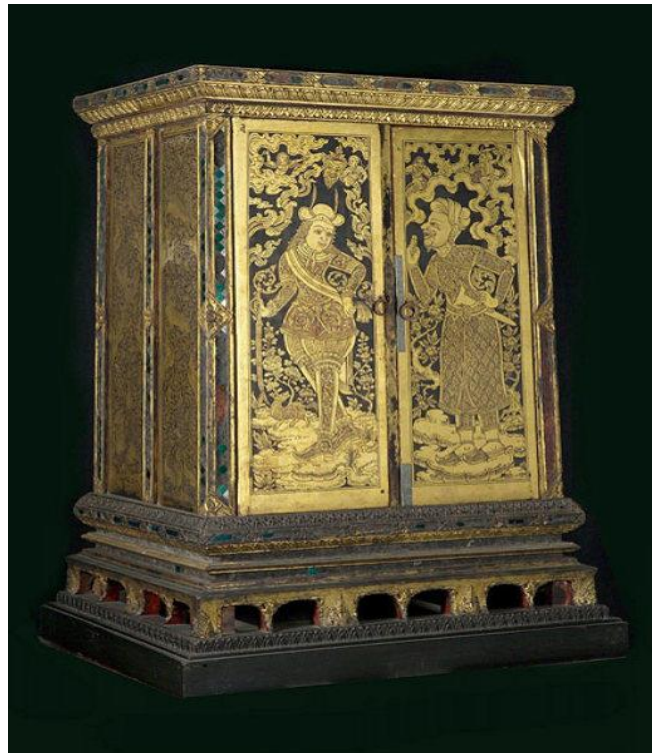


ones. Those Shi'ite heads, as we saw earlier, had been members of the Bunnag family and as such descendants of 'Shaykh Alḥmad of Qum', the Persian immigrant scholar and merchant favored by the Ayutthaya kings.³²

³² On the 1997 reorganization of the office of *chularajmontri*, see also Teerapol Arunakasikorn et. al., *The Royal Act on Islamic Organization Administration* (Bangkok, 1999), Division 1, Articles 6–10, 9–12 (in Thai; unfortunately, I had no access to this work, quoted in Chaiwat Satha-Anand 2004:161, n. 44).

Despite the end of 'Shi'ite dominance', Shi'ite Muslims, mostly ethnic Pathans, but also new Thai and ethnic Malay converts, continue to live in the kingdom. Shi'ites are now merely an insignificant minority in metropolitan Bangkok which, perhaps, may come as a surprise to most given the great history of Shi'ism in Thailand in the Ayutthaya period. Although it is impossible to give any numbers, my informants put the number of Shi'ites in Thailand at 'about one percent of the country's Muslim population', which would mean tens of thousands of people, depending on which population figures one is basing an assessment. According to the US Department of State, Thailand's Z. \ Religious Affairs Department (RAD) reports that there are 3,479 registered mosques in 64 provinces, with the largest number in Pattani Province. The majority of these mosques are associated with the Sunni branch of Islam. The remainders, estimated by the RAD to be from 1 to 2 percent of the total, are associated with the Shi'a branch of Islam.³³

Figure 8.13: Cabinet, Ayutthaya Period, Around 1650–1750, with Persians (or Indo-Persians) and Europeans, wood, painted, gilded. Note: Height: 164.5 cm; width: 118 cm, National Museum Bangkok. Photo credit: Author\



At any rate, Shi'ite life in contemporary Thailand seems to be dominated entirely by the Iranian embassy in Bangkok and its Cultural Centre, in spite of the presence of the rather quietist 'As-Sayyid Al-Khoei (Al-Sayyid al-Khū'ī) Centre' in the same city. I have tried to find out more about this institution but I have been told that it is no longer active. Ayatollah Sayyid Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Khū'ī (1899–1992) was perhaps one of the

³³ United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 'International Religious Freedom Report 2005: Thailand', available online at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51531.htm> (accessed on 5 July 2006).

most respected Najaf-based Shi'ite quietist scholars of the 20th century. He was fervently dedicated to establishing welfare, social, cultural, and educational institutions under his name for Muslims worldwide (e.g. in London, New York, Lebanon, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Thailand).

The Iranian embassy in Bangkok tries to promote a 'favorable environment' for Iran by convening conferences and publishing classical Persian literature in Thai translation, such as the poetry of Ḥāfiz, Sa'dī, Rūmī, and others. 'Shaykh Ahmad' and the history of the presence of Iranians in Siam, for instance, have been the subject of several conferences in Thailand—mostly in conjunction with several local universities. The Cultural Center of the Iranian embassy houses in its compound a 'Shaykh Ahmad Qumi Library that mainly hosts religious books and publications on Iran and its history and culture. As mentioned earlier, the Cultural Centre was always actively involved in the organization of conferences; the Iranian embassy also organized a Conference on Shaykh Ahmad Ghomi, which took place in Bangkok from 23 to 24 November 2005. It was mainly thought of as an official commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and the Kingdom of Thailand in 1955. As stated earlier, it appears that the Iranian mission described by the 17th-century travel account *Ship of Sulaymān* was the last diplomatic contact between Iran and Siam until diplomatic ties between Tehran and Bangkok were resumed in the 20th century. It is worth noting that Thailand was apparently the first Southeast Asian country with which Iran established permanent diplomatic relations during the Pahlavi period.³⁴

Most of the members of the Thai staff working at the Iranian embassy appear to be converts, some of them ethnically Malay, some of them ethnically Thai. Since the early 1980's, Thailand features a steadily increasing number of converts to Shi'ism, mostly from Sunni Islam, and many of them rather fervent supporters of the current regime in Tehran. Moreover, most of them are former seminarians of the Twelver Shi'ite study centers in Iran, such as Qom. Most of them appear to be rather unconditional adherents of Iran and its current political system.³⁵

³⁴ For a brief account of Thai–Iranian relations, see Marcinkowski 2002b

³⁵ Because of this, they often find themselves in isolation vis-à-vis their Sunnite compatriots and have almost nothing in common with the southerners and their struggle for more autonomy.



Figure 8.14: During the Visit of Shaykh Ghulam Ali Abazar (right) to Iran.³⁶

Shaykh Ghulam Ali Abazar (which appears to be his name as a Shi'ite convert; his original name is unknown to the author), for instance, is running a study center and a training seminary for talented Thai students in Bangkok, which has also a mosque, 'Al-Huda' ('Guidance'), whose name is planned to be changed to 'Al-Mahdi' in the near future. He is said to be the representative of about twenty Thai Muslim organizations. One of his latest trips to Iran was even sponsored by the 'Vali-e Asr World Center', a particularly hard-line Mahdist organization in the Islamic republic. As per the agreement concluded between Abazar and this organization, the 42nd branch of it would be established in Thailand.³⁷

The delegates visited the offices of the grand ayatollahs and had meetings with them. It is worth mentioning that during their trip to the Middle East the Thai delegates also visited Iraq's holy cities of Karbala' and Najaf. During that part of their journey they met the leading Shi'ite religious authorities in Najaf including, Ayatollahs Sistani, Bashir-Najafi, Ishaq Fayaz and Muhammad Ali Sabzavari.

³⁶ Source: <http://bahrololom.com/eng/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/82.jpg>

³⁷ 'Thai Shiites' Prominent Personality Visits I.R. Iran', available online at <http://bahrololom.com/eng/thai-shiites-prominent-personality-visits-i-r-iran/#more-72> (accessed on 23 January 2014).



Figure 8.15: A Visit by a Delegation Led by Thai Shi'ite Leader Hujjat al-Islam Shaykh Ghulam Ali Abazar (right) in Iran.³⁸

In terms of security concerns on the part of the Thai government, it might be stated that so far Shi'ites have not been singled out as distinct from their Sunnite brethren, as the Muslims in the kingdom are generally seen as part of the 'southern problem', i.e., ethnic Malay separatism. This might change in case of an escalation of the Iranian nuclear issue—which involves the United States, Thailand's closest ally. In that scenario, we might see a repetition of the events of the 1980s, which saw Shi'ites worldwide portrayed as potential security risks and 'walking time bombs'. This, by the way, might not only be the case with regard to Thailand. On the other hand, for the future, I cannot foresee any changes with regard to the reliance of Thailand's Shi'ites on Iran, as the funding for Shi'ite cultural and religious activities seems to depend almost entirely on that country.

Unfortunately, in February 2012, Thailand unexpectedly became the stage of the current conflict between the regime in Tehran and Israel over the nuclear issue. On 14 February, a series of explosions in Bangkok

³⁸ Source: <http://bahrololom.com/eng/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/42.jpg>

injured five people. Thai authorities said that the bombings were a botched attempt by Iranian nationals to assassinate Israeli diplomats. Several Iranians were arrested and charged for the attacks.



Figure 8.16: Thai Bomb Squad Officials Inspect the Site of an Explosion in Bangkok on 14 February 2012.)³⁹



Figure 8.17: Thai Police Escort Iranian Suspect Mohammad Khazaei at the Immigration Bureau in Bangkok on 16 February 2012.⁴⁰

³⁹ Source: AFP/FILE, via The Express Tribune (accessed on 23 January 2014), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/336808/israel-says-bangkok-bombers-linked-to-new-delhi-georgiaattacks/>

⁴⁰ Source: Reuters, via Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (accessed on 23 January 2014) http://www.rferl.org/content/thai-police_seek_two_more_suspects_in_iranian_bombing_case/24487129.html

In closing, it remains to be mentioned that, in recent years, Thailand has also become a popular destination for Iranian medical tourists (Pratruangkrai 2007). However, due to numerous incidents of drug smuggling, Iranians coming to Thailand fall under heavy suspicion from police. According to the Narcotics Suppression Bureau (NSB), most drug smugglers arrested at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi international airport are from Iran and Iranian nationals travelling to Bangkok appear at the top of drug police watch lists as potential trafficking risks (DuPee and Wahee 2011).

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Chapter Nine

Cham Muslims of Thailand: A Haven of Security in Mainland Southeast Asia

Raymond Scupin

1. Introduction

Not long ago this journal published a moving account of the forgotten Muslims of Kampuchea and Vietnam by Seddik Taouti.¹ In Kampuchea Taouti estimates that approximately seventy percent of the Muslim population was exterminated by the Khmer Rouge led by the Pol Pot regime. The author cites the Ministry of Planning in Kampuchea as recording a Muslim population of 190,000 surviving Muslims from a total population of 800,000. The author visited areas such as Kompong Cham in which 66,793 Muslims reside. Although during the Pol Pot regime Taouti states that the majority of Muslims were exterminated because they were of the Islamic faith, he suggests that presently (in 1982) the Muslims appeared to live in harmony with their Buddhist neighbours in Kampuchea.

In a thorough essay on the genocidal policies carried out against Cham Muslims Ben Kiernan relies upon both Kampuchean and Vietnamese documents and eye wit-ness accounts to estimate that approximately 90,000 Cham Muslims were executed.² Kiernan concludes that Pol Pot's regime tried not only to destroy the Islamic tradition, but to systematically exterminate the Cham Muslim community in Kampuchea. He states that about fifty percent of the Cham Muslims were killed in this genocidal massacre. The Chams, along with other minorities such as the Chinese and Vietnamese in Kampuchea were viewed as a threat to the racist and nationalistic policies of Pol Pot. In particular, the Cham Muslims had openly carried out demonstrations against the Khmer Rouge and Communist suppression of their religious beliefs in surrounding communities. These demonstrations were used by Pol Pot as an excuse to carry out their executions. Anyone interested in a thorough account of what has happened to the Cham Muslims of Kampuchea should consult Kiernan's essay which has excellent documentation and in-depth examples.

Gregory Stanton, anthropologist and lawyer, who has been directing the Cambodian Genocide Project has documented other details regarding the ethnic minorities including the Cham Muslims who were massacred

¹ Seddik Taouti, "The Forgotten Muslims of Kampuchea and Viet Nam" in *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 3-13. 1982.

² Ben Kiernan, "Orphans of Genocide: The Cham Muslims of Kampuchea under Pol Pot." in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol 4. Oct-Dec 1988, pp 2-33.

during the Pol Pot regime.³ He describes how the Khmer Rouge classified certain religious and ethnic minorities forbidding them to speak their languages or practice their traditions. He notes that the Cham Muslims were especially singled out for murder:

Whole Cham villages were murdered. Cham children were taken away from their parents and raised as Khmers. Chams were not permitted to speak their language. Though Muslims, they were forced to eat pork. 'We drank tears,' said a Cham to me. Their leaders were killed. Most Chams were classified as 'new people' because they were Cham. Censuses I have taken in Cham villages show that a quarter to a third, over a hundred thousand of them, died. There is evidence that the Khmer Rouge planned to kill the rest of the Cham and were only stopped by the Vietnamese invasion on Christmas Day of 1978.⁴

Although the figures cited by these observers are somewhat different, all accounts indicate the enormous genocidal disaster that swept throughout the Cham Muslim communities of Cambodia.

Seddik Taouti also visited Vietnam and found that before 1975 approximately 60,000 Muslims resided in this Southeast Asian region. Following re-unification after the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 1975, the vast majority of Muslims fled from the region leaving behind about 10,000. After visiting Muslim centers in Ho Chi Minh city and Hanoi, Taouti suggests that despite needed improvements in the infrastructure of Islamic facilities, the remaining Muslims appear to be fairly secure in Vietnam for the present.

The majority of the Muslim population in both Kampuchea and Vietnam are descendants of the Islamic community within the ancient Southeast Asian Kingdom of Champa. I would like to add some insights into the remaining descendants of the Cham Muslim population in mainland Southeast Asia by describing the recent socio- economic and cultural circumstances of the existing Cham Muslim population in Thailand.

Although the majority of Muslims in Thailand are ethnically and culturally related to Malay Muslims, other Muslim ethnic groups have settled in Thailand during different historical periods. Since the seventeenth century Iranian, Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian, Chinese, and Cham Muslims have entered the Thai kingdom. The brief essay will explore the historical, political, and socio-economic role of the Cham Muslim population in Thailand.⁵ The data are drawn from historical documents and oral history derived from informant interviews in 1976-77.

2. Cham Muslim History

³ Gregory Stanton, "Blue Scarves and Yellow Stars: Classification and Symbolisation in the Cambodian Genocide". Paper read at the American Anthropological Association Meetings. Phoenix, Arizona. 1988.

⁴ Ibid, p. 5.

⁵ For further details see Raymond Scupin, "The Socio-Economic Status of Muslims in Central and North Thailand" in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* Vol 3, No. 2, pp. 162-189, 1981.

The Cham Muslims have a history which extends back to the ancient Hinduized Kingdom of Champa (192 - 1472 A.D.), an independent polity with limited agricultural resources but vast mineral, forest and marine resources. The major city of Champa was a complex urban area well-known to many Middle-Eastern traders. Both Persian and Arab sources indicate that there were Muslim settlements in Champa's urban center during the eighth century.⁶ M. Ravaise's translations of Cham documents indicate that the Muslim community had elaborate political, legal, and judicial institutions to serve the needs of their community.⁷ The documents suggest that the Muslim community included not only merchants, but also artisans, scholars, religious leaders, and other craftsmen. The Muslim community appears to have a well-integrated, self-sufficient, socio-political enclave.

Champa was a maritime kingdom supporting a substantial navy commanded by various royal princes.⁸ For twelve centuries the prosperity and stability of the Cham state was due to its strategic location which enabled the kingdom to maintain naval predominance off its shores. However, the Champa kingdom was vulnerable to land attacks from its northern Vietnamese neighbours who had inaugurated a continual southward expansion against the Cham during the eleventh century. In addition, the Khmer empire on its eastern border was continually invading the region. The Cham resisted these invasions for several centuries; but, in 1471, the state of Champa was decisively defeated by a Vietnamese land invasion.⁹

No precise data can be given for the diffusion of Islam into Champa. The Persian and Arab traders did convert some segment of the Cham population, but most historical evidence suggests that the vast majority of Islamization occurred after the collapse of Champa. Following the Vietnamese victory many Cham refugees fled to Malacca, Java, and Cambodia. During this period the Cham were exposed to the intensive wave of Islamization which affected other Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples in the Malay and Indonesian coastal states.¹⁰ Malayan and Indonesian Muslims were successful in demonstrating the spiritual efficacy of Islam to these Cham refugees.

The absence of any substantive historical data on the Cham refugees in insular Southeast Asia after the fifteenth century suggests that these Cham Muslims assimilated into the Malayan-Indonesian social and cultural milieu. However, historical data do exist with respect to the Cham Muslim population of mainland

⁶ S.Q. Fatima, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*. Singapore; Malaysian Sociological Institute, 1963, p. 53.

⁷ G. Maspero, *Kingdom of Champa*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1949, pp. 15-16.

⁸ R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East : I, Champa*. 1927. pp. 152-154.

⁹ F. Hirth, and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Jukua : His work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Entitled *Chu Fan Chi*, St. Petersburg, 1911.

¹⁰ Chams, unlike other mainland Southeast Asians, spoke a Malayo-Polynesian language. This gave them a strong cultural affinity with insular Southeast Asian peoples. See Robbins Burling, *Hill Farms and Padi Fields : Life in Mainland Southeast Asia*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1965. "Chams" in F.M. Lebar, Gerland C.Hickey and John K. Musgrave, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. Human Relations Area Files Press. New Haven 1964.

Southeast Asia. Cham Muslim refugees settled in Cambodia at Kampong Thom and Kampong Cham near the Mekong River about 120 kilometers from Phnom Penh.¹¹ These are the areas which were the focus of recent genocidal policies of the Khmer Rouge. Historical data also exists regarding the Cham Muslim population which remained in Vietnam.¹²

As described by French scholars the Cham Muslims in Cambodia were culturally and religiously different from the Cham Muslims who were in Vietnam. The Vietnamese Chams were distinctively Shi'a as compared with the Sunni Cham Muslims in Cambodia. But, more importantly, the Vietnamese Cham religious traditions were influenced greatly by the pre-Islamic Hindu-Brahminist conceptions. In general, the Chams in Cambodia were Islamicized directly in a more orthodox Sunni tradition which was prevalent throughout insular southeast Asia; but the Vietnamese Chams were isolated from the mainstream Sunni Muslim thought. The Vietnamese Cham Muslims maintained a syncretic blend of Islam and pre-Islamic religious traditions.

3. The Cham Muslims in Thailand

The earliest historical documents which mention Cham Muslims in Thailand date from the Ayudhya period (1450-1767 A.D.)¹³ Cham Muslims were residing in the capital of Ayudhya at least as early as the seventeenth century. Although the historical data do not indicate the national origins of the Chams, circumstantial evidence suggests that these Chams were mercenaries from Cambodian provinces. The Chams were incorporated into the traditional Thai polity within the Sakdina socio-political structure as organized military volunteers.¹⁴ During the reign of King Narai (1657-1688 A.D.), the Cham military leaders directed an unsuccessful campaign against the state of Pattani. This military action indicates the degree of incorporation (and presumed loyalty) of the Cham Muslims in Thailand.

After the Ratana Kosindra era (Bangkok Period, 1782 - present), Cham Muslims came to Thailand as consequence of external and internal factors in Cambodia. During the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Cambodia was a semi-dependent province of Thailand. Shortly thereafter Thailand and Vietnam began vying for political control of Cambodia. This competition continued until the establishment of a joint protectorate by the Thais and Vietnamese in 1845.¹⁵ Because of this political strife, conditions for

¹¹ Donald P. Whitaker, et. al. *Area Handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)* Washington; US Government Printing Office, 1973.

¹² A. Cabaton, and G. Meillon, G. "Indochina (Islam in)" in B. Lewis, et. al. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. London; Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1971, pp. 1208-1212. A. Cabaton, "Chams" in J. Hastings, (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Vol. III 1928. pp. 345-350.

¹³ Kot-Mai Tra-saam-Duang. (Law in Former Times). Book 1. n.d. p. 307. Bangkok : National Library.

¹⁴ Raymond Scupin, "Islam in Thailand Before the Bangkok Period" in *Journal of the Siam Society*. Vol. 68. No. 1. pp. 55-72.

¹⁵ W.F. Vella, W.F. *Siam Under Rama III, 1824-1851*. New York; J.J. Augustin, 1957, p. 92; Ronald Smith, *Siam, or the History of the Thais, 1569 A.D.* Bethesda, Decatur Press, 1967, p. 125; D.G.E. Hall *A History of Southeast Asia*, New York, MacMillan and Co., 1964, p. 412.

the Cham Muslims in Cambodia were unpredictable. Some Chams were captured by the Thai military as war prisoners, while others arrived in Thailand as political refugees.

The Chams were well-known for their prowess as sailors who fought on the canals in East Thailand and Cambodia; hence, the Thai military appropriated Cham services in the initial organization of its naval defense capabilities. Archival materials from both King Rama-IV and Rama-V specify that the Cham Muslims were involved as sailors and warriors on the war boats near Bangkok and other Thai cities where they protected Thai waters from pirates and enemies.¹⁶ Chams were also conscripted to be stationed on warships to escort royal convoys and safeguard Rama-IV and later Rama-V on their voyages from Bangkok to the upcountry. Chams received royal bonuses for this activity, and they were also exempt from paying land taxes and corvee labor. Normally, individuals within the social category Phrai Luang (as prescribed by the Sakdina system) were subject to land taxes and corvee labor for six months per year.

Eventually during the nineteenth century many of the Cham Muslims in Thailand settled in the Bangkok area. They resided in an area known as Ban Krua in the present-day vicinity of the National Stadium. Ban Krua was simply an agricultural settlement, one of many rice paddy settlements, on the outskirts of Bangkok's administrative center. Many of the Chams were involved in both agricultural and fishing activities in and around the canals of Ban Krua. Others were traditional craftsmen engaged in the art of boat building. Although the Thai Buddhists referred to these Chams as Khaek Krua, there is no indication that there was any ethnic dissension between the Buddhists and Muslims in this area.¹⁷ In general, it appears that these communities had very amicable relationships with each other.

Gradually, as urban expansion increased during the twentieth century, Ban Krua became another densely populated neighborhood of Bangkok, now known as Charoenphol. As other Bangkok residents, Cham Muslims abandoned their traditional occupations and adapted to varied economic roles in the newly diversified urban economy. During this process the Cham Muslim community of Ban Krua began to lose much of its ethnic cohesiveness. Young Cham Muslims moved to other areas within Bangkok. Although some of the descendants of Cham Muslims still reside in the Charoenphol area, it is no longer associated with the Cham population.

One significant economic development in the 1950s had a definite impact on the Cham Muslims in Bangkok. As other rural peoples of Southeast Asia, the Chams maintained household hand looms to weave textiles

¹⁶ Rachanee Sardpream of Silapakorn University and Chaninratana Leautrakul of Ramkhamhaeng University helped me obtain and translate the documents from King Rama IV and Rama V's archives.

¹⁷ Historically the term khaek is used by Thai Buddhists to refer to Indian, Pakistani, Arab, Iranian, North African, Malay, Southern Thai, Indonesian and Cham Muslims. In certain contexts the term 'khaek' has a definite pejorative meaning.

for their own purposes. This traditional art was well-developed by Chams throughout their history.¹⁸ In the 1950s this traditional silk-weaving cottage industry was transformed into a modern enterprise. An American, the famed Jim Thompson, established a mass-production based silk-weaving industry in the midst of the Cham Muslim settlement. Modernized methods of silk-weaving, which increased production, were introduced within the context of the basic familistic household industry. Despite the fact that Thai silk - weaving production has shifted from Bangkok to Northeast Thailand (where labor is cheap), some descendants of the Cham are now employed by the firms which are subsidiaries of the original Jim Thompson corporation.

In general Cham Muslims in Bangkok exhibit the same social, structural and religious patterns as most of the other approximately 200,000 Muslims (of a total population of about 4 million) in the capital city. Cham family structure tends to be nuclear in form with parents and offspring living in a single household. Generally children of Cham families are educated in the Thai public school system; but, typically, these Muslim children also receive religious instruction after school hours and Saturdays at the local mosques. The children study the Quran and become familiar with the Arabic language for use in religious contexts. A small percentage of the male children are sent to Islamic religious schooling to be trained as religious leaders. Several mosques in Ban Krua were constructed with the support of the Cham population. These mosques presently serve as a center for the basic Sunni rituals and traditions maintained by the descendants of Cham Muslims and other Muslims in the area.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at precise population statistics for the descendants of Cham Muslims in Thailand. From informal sources based on interviews of Muslim leaders, I estimated the present Cham population at between 1,500 - 2,000. Yet, it must be emphasized that though many of these descendants were dimly aware of their ethnic heritage, I could not locate any Cham descendants in Bangkok who had definitive knowledge of the Cham language. This is not an atypical pattern in respect of other Muslims in Bangkok. Economic, social and political conditions in Bangkok were conducive for Muslims to adopt Thai as their native language, to educate their children in the Thai public school system, and to de-emphasize their original ethnic heritage. Although Cham ethnicity may be meaningful in certain situational contexts, it is but a distant memory for the majority of Cham descendants in Bangkok.

Since the end of the fifteenth century and the demise of the Champa kingdom, the Cham Muslim minority has been vulnerable in the same way as other minority populations in mainland Southeast Asia. During different historical periods many Chams were forced to become refugees and relocate their families in new regions and unfamiliar countries. More recently as Taouti, Kiernan, and Stanton document many Cham Muslims in Cambodia have suffered as a result of genocidal policies directed at ethnic and religious minorities. In respect to this tragic historical background, Cham Muslims have been relatively successful in

¹⁸ Maspero, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

their adaptation to Thailand. In general there were no definitive structural or cultural obstacles within the Bangkok environment which militated against a successful adjustment on the part of the Cham population. Ethnographic data suggests that for the most part the Cham Muslims have been assimilated fairly peacefully in the context of the urban area of Bangkok. In this respect they are much like the other Muslim ethnic groups which have settled in Central and Northern Thailand.

Chapter Ten

Weaving the Tapestry: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Diverse Muslim Ethnicities As the Collaborative Force for the Thailand Nation

Shekh Mohammad Altafur Rahman

Srawut Aree

1. Introduction: Reclaiming Pluralism in the Thai Muslim Narrative

This book, *Mapping the Mosaic*, embarked upon an ambitious scholarly mission: to systematically dismantle the pervasive, monolithic view of the Muslim community in Thailand and replace it with an analytical framework centered on ethnic pluralism. Using a rigorous documentary research methodology, the preceding chapters synthesized key findings from historical records, sociological studies, and policy reports on the diverse Muslim ethnic groups that constitute the Thai Muslim population, including Malay, Javanese, Indian, Persian and Arab Muslim descendants, Pashtun, Cham, and Chinese Hui (*Mapping the Mosaic: An Introduction*, this volume).

The central thesis, which has been robustly supported by the detailed case studies (Aree, 2024; WANG, 2006; Cham Muslims of Thailand, 1989), is that these distinct cultural traditions, historical narratives, and social networks have contributed not to a fragmented mosaic, but to a rich, highly interwoven “tapestry” of faith and heritage. This concluding chapter draws together the threads of the book, arguing that recognizing and engaging with this internal diversity moves critically beyond existing inter-religious dynamics to foster intra-group cohesion, which in turn, strengthens social and economic bonds with the wider Thai nation.

The approach of this volume is deliberate: it reframes Muslim ethnic diversity not as a vulnerability susceptible to political fragmentation, but as a demonstrable and potent collaborative force for the Kingdom of Thailand. The findings hold significant implications for social cohesion, interfaith relations, and policy formation, suggesting that effective strategies for integration and conflict resolution must be rooted in an appreciation of this nuanced ethnic landscape.

2. Deconstructing the Monolith: Synthesis of the Ethnic Tapestry

The preceding nine chapters have provided granular detail on the spatial, historical, and socio-cultural specialization of Thai Muslim ethnic groups, fundamentally challenging the homogeneity often imposed by the dominant Malay-centric narrative (The Muslims in Thailand: A Review, 1999).

2.1 The Foundational Diasporas: Historical Integration in the Center

Chapters focusing on the long-established communities—Persian/Shi'ites (Persians and Shi'ites in Thailand, this volume), Malay Exiles (Malay Exiles in Central Thailand, 2022), and Javanese (Aree, 2024)—reveal a historical model of top-down and bottom-up integration centered around the Siamese court and the metropolitan area. The Persian/Arabdescendants, whose lineage traces back to Sheikh Ahmad Qomi, illustrate how Muslim figures became foundational to the Siamese administrative elite, demonstrating that Islamic identity and loyalty to the monarchy are mutually compatible and historically entrenched.

The presence of Javanese Muslims in Metropolitan Bangkok offers a crucial contemporary model of Fiqh At-Ta'ayusy(Jurisprudence of Coexistence), where religious practice is successfully negotiated within a multi-religious urban environment (Aree, 2024). This urban integration, often characterized by the absence of territorial claims, provides a vital counterpoint to the political geography of the Deep South, showcasing an enduring tradition of pragmatic accommodation.

2.2 The Corridor Communities: Bridging Northern Thailand

Chapters focusing on Northern Thailand, specifically the Pashtun (The Change in Pashtun Identity, this volume), South Asian descendants (Burma as 'Corridor', this volume), and Chinese Hui (WANG, 2006), highlight the region's historical role as a cross-border corridor rather than a mere periphery. These groups are economic actors whose identity is intrinsically linked to transnational trade routes connecting Yunnan, Burma (Myanmar), and the Indian Subcontinent.

The case of the Hui Yunnanese demonstrates a complex ethnic resurgence distinct from the security-centric focus applied to the Malay-Muslims. Their identity, often expressed through food and architecture, is successfully asserted within a framework of economic integration, providing an exemplary model of how a non-Tai minority can maintain cultural distinctiveness while contributing to the regional economy (WANG, 2006). The Pashtuns and other South Asian descendants similarly leverage their ethnic ties to maintain crucial, low-profile commercial links that facilitate regional economic activity.

2.3 The Resilient Diaspora: The Cham Experience

The study of the Cham Muslims (Cham Muslims of Thailand, 1989) underscores the function of Thailand as a haven of security in Mainland Southeast Asia. Fleeing persecution and displacement, the Cham diaspora integrated successfully by specializing in maritime and fishing industries. Their story validates the Thai state's historical capacity for humanitarian inclusion, confirming that the nation's political structure can absorb and accommodate significant non-Tai, Muslim populations while fostering a strong sense of national loyalty.

3. The Collaborative Force: Functional Specialization as National Asset

The synthesized findings underscore that the dynamism of Thailand's Muslim communities is a direct result of their varied ethnic histories, which have generated invaluable, non-replicable functional specializations for the Thai nation. This diversity is thus transformed from a perceived liability into a strategic asset.

3.1 Economic Synergy: The Halal and Transnational Trade Network

The economic contributions of the diverse Muslim groups extend far beyond the rubber and rice fields of the South.

Halal Industry Leadership: The Central Thai Muslims ("Tad") and assimilated urban groups (Javanese, Persian) are the primary drivers of Thailand's booming Halal industry, a sector valued at over \$5.6 billion in 2021 (The Islamic Bank of Thailand, 2022). Their cultural proximity to mainstream Thai society, combined with verifiable adherence to Islamic dietary laws, makes them ideal intermediaries for certifying and distributing products, thereby anchoring Thailand as a major Halal hub in Asia.

Global Market Access: The unique ethnic composition provides diverse and reliable access to global markets. The Persian/Arab and Indian descendants offer historical and contemporary trust networks in the Middle East and South Asia, crucial for energy, finance, and textile trades (Ampalavanar-Brown, 2012). Concurrently, the Hui and Pashtun networks facilitate crucial terrestrial trade and transport along the northern borders, essential for the Greater Mekong Subregion's supply chains (WANG, 2006).

This economic specialization demonstrates that ethnic pluralism in the Thai Muslim community functions as a sophisticated, pre-existing infrastructure of transnational capital and trust that the state did not have to create, but only needs to recognize and leverage.

3.2 Diplomatic and Soft Power Projection

The varied ethnic roots translate directly into enhanced Thai diplomatic and soft power capabilities within the global Ummah and the region.

Bridging the Islamic World: Where the Malay-Muslims naturally connect Thailand to the Malay Archipelago (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei), the Persian/Shi'ite community offers unique diplomatic and cultural access to Iran and Shi'ite communities globally. The Javanese ties to Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, establish crucial bilateral trust through shared religious and cultural practices (Aree, 2024). This multiplicity of entry points safeguards Thailand from becoming overly reliant on a singular, geographically constrained regional identity.

Cultural Resilience as a Narrative: The stories of the Cham and Pashtun diasporas are powerful narratives of refugee-to-citizen resilience. These successful integrations project an image of Thailand as a secure, accommodating, and multi-religious state, countering negative international narratives often stemming from the Southern Conflict and enhancing the nation's reputation as a safe haven in a volatile region (Cham Muslims of Thailand, 1989).

4. Policy Imperatives: From Assimilation to Appreciation

The ultimate purpose of mapping this tapestry is to provide concrete directions for policy transformation. The book's findings argue that the Thai state must strategically move its policy foundation from Assimilation to Appreciation—recognizing diversity not as a challenge to be neutralized, but as a resource to be cultivated.

4.1 Nuanced Governance of the South and the Urban Center

The centralized, security-focused policies applied to the Malay-Muslim South must be radically re-evaluated to incorporate culturally sensitive solutions, focusing on bilingual education and local autonomy (Liow, 2009). However, the success stories of the non-Malay communities must inform this strategy by demonstrating that integration does not necessitate the abandonment of ethnic markers.

For the vast majority of non-Malay, urban Muslims, policy is required to move beyond their current invisibility. This involves:

1. **Official Ethnic Recognition:** Formally recognizing the unique cultural and linguistic needs of groups like the Cham, Hui, and Pashtuns, whose numbers may be small but whose contributions are high.

2. Cultural Resource Allocation: Providing dedicated support for the preservation of minority languages (Cham) and cultural centers (Hui mosques, Persian heritage sites) as national cultural assets, not private liabilities.
3. Economic Channelization: Creating specialized economic zones or support programs that leverage the specific skills of these groups (e.g., funding for Hui food tourism, or specialized banking services for South Asian trade networks).

4.2 Fostering Intra-Group Cohesion

The greatest potential for cultivating trust lies in strengthening the relationships between the Muslim ethnic groups themselves. The variety of schools of thought (Sunni vs. Shi'ite, different madhahib) and ethnic traditions could lead to fragmentation, yet the urban centers show high levels of functional coexistence. Policy should support platforms where these diverse communities can collaborate on shared civic projects—be it the centralized administration of the Halal standards or joint cultural festivals—thereby building a sense of collective Thai Muslim identity rooted in shared faith and national commitment, rather than singular ethnicity.

5. Conclusion: The Practical Imperative for a Collaborative Future

This book, *Mapping the Mosaic*, concludes with the unwavering assertion that the ethnic diversity of Muslims in Thailand is a source of profound strength, not inherent weakness. The exhaustive documentation of Malay, Javanese, Indian, Persian/Arab, Pashtun, Cham, and Chinese Hui communities provides empirical evidence that multi-ethnic coexistence within a multi-religious state is a lived, successful reality in Thailand.

The dynamism and complexity inherent in these unique identities are precisely what offer Thailand a resilient, self-sustaining model for national progress. By embracing this tapestry—by recognizing the historic integration of the Persians, the economic utility of the Pashtun, the cultural resilience of the Cham, and the coexistence model of the Javanese—Thailand can resolve the fundamental tension between its need for national unity and its diverse reality.

The effective strategy for a more collaborative future is one of Appreciation. It is a practical imperative that moves beyond merely managing difference to actively harnessing it. For Thailand to realize its full potential as a resilient, influential, and harmonious nation in the 21st century, it must definitively affirm that to be Muslim, whatever the ethnic root, is to be an integral and powerful force for the Thai Nation.

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