War and trade: Siamese interventions in Cambodia, 1767-1851

Puangthong Rungswasdisab
University of Wollongong
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WAR AND TRADE: SIAMESE INTERVENTIONS IN CAMBODIA, 1767-1851

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

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PUANGTHONG RUNGSWASDISAB

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICS

1995
Erratas

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Page 9, para 2, line 5 Cambodia
Page 9, next to last line Meleka
Page 11, line 7 the reward
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Page 175, line 3 father
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Abstract

Cambodia’s status as a “weak vassal” of Siam and Vietnam has been a matter of consensus amongst historians. Most previous studies on Thai-Cambodian relations are based on the framework of tributary relation, emphasising the factor of political and ideological conflict among the courts of Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam. Based on such a framework, scholars have tended to conclude that Siam had no real economic motivation in Cambodia. This thesis aims at reexamining the history of the Thai-Cambodian relations between 1767-1851, in terms of two economic factor: trade and manpower. This thesis argues that trade and manpower, which were the basis of power of traditional states in Southeast Asia, were the economic reasons for Thai interventions in Cambodia.

The consolidation of Thai power over Cambodia, as part of the trans-Mekong basin, was essential for the development of Siamese economy between the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods. The effective control of trade and manpower in the trans-Mekong basin enabled Siam to rebuild its devastated economy after the fall of Ayudhya and return to its former position as one of the most powerful states in the region in the early nineteenth century. However, the presence of the Vietnamese created difficulties for the Thai consolidation of power over Cambodia as well as other parts of the Mekong region. The major factor stimulating conflict between the Thai and the Vietnamese in Cambodia was the attempts by these two rivals to control local trade networks in the area.

As for the Cambodian state, the economic conditions significantly determined the political configuration of Cambodia in the mid-nineteenth century. Its economic basis was either appropriated or largely destroyed by successive wars, devastation
and depopulation by its powerful neighbours. Besides, economic interest and external interventions further exacerbated factionalism in the Cambodian state. The role of the Khmer nobles in northwestern Cambodia, Battambang and Siemreap, was critical in sustaining Thai domination in Cambodia. The development of Battambang and Siemreap reveals a regional diversity in history of Cambodia. The two provinces not only retained different administrative systems from other Cambodian regions, but were also cut off entirely from the jurisdiction of the Cambodian rulers in Udong/Phnom Penh.

Since Cambodia's basis of power was destroyed, its rulers lacked effective means of implementing policy and securing the loyalty of the okya. The weakness of the Cambodian state revealed in its vulnerability to both local revolts and external incursions. Such conditions were an obstacle for the Cambodian state in achieving real independence from the domination of the Thai and the Vietnamese. In fact, by the mid-nineteenth century, Cambodia ceased to exist as a viable political entity.
Acknowledgements

I feel that I have always been very fortunate to have had many good khru, teachers, and this thesis would not have been possible without help and kindness from them. I am in debt to Melanie Beresford, my supervisor, for her devoted time, suggestions, criticism and encouragement throughout my study. The friendship and hospitality Melanie and her partner, Bruce McFarlane, have given me, particularly during my stay with them for eight months at the house in Woonona in 1989-90, is unforgettable. My great gratitude also goes to Adrian Vickers. Although he generously became my co-supervisor just two years ago, his sharp criticisms, comments and suggestions contributed a great deal to my work. I will never forget the help and kindness of Ben Kieman, my first supervisor from July 1989 to July 1990. I am grateful for his guidance with the topic of the thesis and particularly his help during my first year in Wollongong. Although now he is in Yale University, he helped reading the first draft of this thesis.

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Chaiwat Satha-Anand, my former teacher at Thammasat University, has always been ready to help me whenever I am in a difficult situation. The friendship and moral support Chaiwat and his wife, Suwanna Satha-Anand, are most invaluable. Another teacher of mine to whom I am grateful is Thawit Sukhaphanich. His care, support and sense of humour always helped me out of the depression which is a usual symptom for PhD students.
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Niti Pawakapan, my husband, has been very supportive and helpful in many ways. His company has helped me overcome all difficulties and contributed a great deal toward the completion of this thesis.

Finally, throughout the period of the thesis writing, there are two important persons whom I always think of. I dedicate this work to my mother, who has been ill since I began to write this thesis, and to the memory of my dearest friend, Sukanya Boontanont.
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Note on the Transcription

The transcription in this thesis follows Romanization Guide for Thai Script, of the Royal Institute, (Bangkok, 1968). This system is also applied to Khmer words. For the name of the Thai provinces, I adhere to The Proclamations of the Prime Minister Office and the Royal Institute, (Bangkok, 1981) except Ayutthaya. I prefer "Ayudhya", which has been widely used among historians. In the case of some personal names, I have to adhere to the owners' transcription.
### Abbreviations Used in Footnotes and Bibliography

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<tr>
<td>AOM</td>
<td>Archives Nationale dépôt d'outremer, Aix-en-Provence</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSEI</td>
<td>Bulletin Société des Études Indochinoises de Saigon</td>
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<td>CMH. R.II</td>
<td>Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song (Record of the Second Reign of the Chakri dynasty)</td>
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<td>CMH. R.III</td>
<td>Chotmaihet ratchakan thi sam (Record of the Third Reign of the Chakri dynasty)</td>
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<td>CMH. R.IV</td>
<td>Chotmaihet ratchakan thi si (Record of the Fourth Reign of the Chakri dynasty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.S.</td>
<td>Jula sakkarat (Lesser era). C.S. + 638 = AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>JRAS</td>
<td>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain &amp; Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSEAH</td>
<td>Journal of Southeast Asian History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSEAS</td>
<td>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Journal of the Siam Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Prachum Phongsawadan (Collected Chronicles)</td>
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<td>RI</td>
<td>Revue Indochinoise</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.S.</td>
<td>Rattanakosin sok (the Bangkok Era). R.S. + 1781 = AD</td>
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<td>R.V</td>
<td>Ratchakan thi ha (the Fifth Reign of the Chakri dynasty)</td>
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<td>TNL</td>
<td>Thai National Library, Bangkok</td>
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Map I  Cambodia in relation to Siam, Laos and Vietnam.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to reexamine the history of Thai-Cambodian relations between 1767 and 1851, in terms of two interrelated economic factors: trade and manpower. This study covers the beginning of the Thonburi period and the Third Reign of the Chakri Dynasty. The major questions of this research are: what were the economic reasons behind Thai interventions in Cambodian affairs and what was the significance of Cambodia for Siamese economic development? By examining the two economic factors, particularly with reference to the Battambang region, I wish to explain the conditions under which Cambodia ceased to exist as a meaningful political entity by the middle of the nineteenth century. As a result of economic conditions, Cambodia became dependent upon its powerful neighbours, Siam and Vietnam, which successively achieved control of Cambodia's economic lifelines.

Review of Prior Literature

Cambodia's status as a "weak vassal" of Siam and Vietnam has been a matter of consensus amongst historians, with the consequent view that its weakness culminated during the first half of the nineteenth century when intensive foreign invasions took place. The period of this study thus covers what historians have regarded as the dark age of Cambodian history when Cambodia was overtaken by foreign interventions, war, migration, famine, and local revolts.1 Such studies have attributed the downfall of Cambodia in the first half of the nineteenth century mainly to ideological and political conflicts between the Thai and the Vietnamese courts.2 In this explanation, because Cambodia held the status of muang song fai

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fe, a state with dual overlordship, the conflict was a result of overlapping tributary relationships which Cambodia was obliged to enter into with Siam and Vietnam. These two contending states had different ideologies. The Thonburi and Bangkok Chakri kings, who were new to power, made an endeavour to fulfil the ambitious ideal of the chakravatin, the Buddhist universal monarch or the king of kings, by exercising their claims over various states around their frontiers. The successful establishment of their hegemony over the lesser states demonstrated the fund of merit the king possessed. The accomplishment thus depended on the personal capability of each ruler.

The relations between the traditional Southeast Asian polities have been described as being modelled on the Mandala or Galactic Polity, as it has been formulated by Stanley Tambiah and Oliver Wolters. The concept of Mandala may be useful in clarifying the anachronistic view of the "nation-state" of historians, and characterising the power of the pre-colonial state within its kingdom. That is, the


3 Chandler, A History, p. 96, 115; idem., Cambodia Before the French, p. 4-5.


5 Stanley Tambiah, World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against A Historical Background, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976); Oliver Wolters, History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives, (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982).
concept of strictly defined boundaries was not applicable for Southeast Asian states at the time; rather, the structure of a Southeast Asian political community was a variable sphere of influence. The position of the periphery varied in proportion to their proximity to the centre, while the power of the ruler in the centre over the peripheral regions was similar to the diminishing radius of the candle light, which became weaker the further one was away from the centre. However, this political framework seems insufficient to explain how one state expanded their power over the other. The Galactic polity model interpreted the bonds between the lesser kings and the king of kings as religio-cultural, and dependent on the capability of each ruler at a given time. It does not take into account the economic factors which were a basis of one state's power to encompass another. Besides, the galactic polity suggests that the submission of one state to a more powerful state was based on consent rather than oppression. This framework cannot explain how one state could achieve its power in economic terms. Moreover, it has led to a neglect of the negative impact this had upon the weak states.

The status of Cambodia as a muang song fai fa or vassal with dual overlords, the Thai and the Vietnamese rulers, does not conform with Tambiah's notion of the cosmic power of "king of kings". Cambodia was not overwhelmed by the aura of the Thai king's power, but was practically responding to more than one external power. In contrast to the Thai, the Vietnamese rulers' ideology was based on the Confucian model of kingship. The Nguyen emperors were anxious to demonstrate through the tributary system that they were the legitimate representatives of Confucian civilisation in Southeast Asia.6

In practical terms, David Chandler has stated that the Thai kings required Cambodia's loyalty, and with it able-bodied men during war time to fight against their traditional enemy, the Burmese, while the Vietnamese wanted Cambodia's land. Michael Eiland has proposed a slightly different view that the Vietnamese interference in Cambodia was based on considerations of Vietnam's security, which was threatened by the Thai expansionist policy of securing Cambodia's acknowledgment of their superiority.

Using a religio-political framework, scholars have tended to conclude that the Thai rulers had no real economic interest in Cambodia. The same interpretation also occurred in studies of Siamese economic development, that is, that the Thai ruling class did not conceive of the neighbouring states as part of the country's economic resources. Generally, the significance of the expansion of overseas trade during the early nineteenth century and its effects on the Siamese socio-economic development has been highlighted in several recent studies. By contrast, factors such as the relentless pressures of interstate competition and resultant state interventions in the development of Southeast Asian economies and societies have received little or no theoretical attention.

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7 Chandler, Cambodia Before the French, p. 68.
8 Eiland, op. cit., pp. 6-7, 18-19.
After the devastation of Ayudhya in 1767, Siam's politico-economic order was completely destroyed. Its commercial and agricultural activities were disrupted. The central Chao Phraya basin was largely deserted because of Burmese depopulation. But by the early nineteenth century Siam could stand up again as the major political and economic power in the region. Its empire expanded further than ever before. Such a remarkable change has been explained mainly as the result of the expansion of overseas trade which constituted a major part of state revenue for rebuilding the country's economy. But how a country whose economy had been so completely disrupted, particularly during the Taksin and Rama I periods, was able to obtain goods for export has not been explained satisfactorily. The main explanation has been the influx of Chinese labourers who became involved in the Thai economy as junk crews, merchants, craftsmen, crops producers and pay labours. Significantly, it is generally recognised that the Chinese tended to be involved in the production process of agricultural exports, but the export products of Siam during Taksin and Rama I was mainly composed of forest products. Indeed, the best known area of supplying forest products for Siam since the Ayudhya period was the Khorat Plateau and the trans-Mekong basin. This implies that the Thai rulers could not afford to ignore these potentially important economic areas. Surprisingly, the remarkable advancement of the Siamese economy has never been considered in relation to Thai policy towards its neighbouring states, although along with the attempt to rehabilitate the country's economy, the Thai monarchs were extensively involved in the suppression of the neighbouring states along the trans-Mekong basin, Laos and Cambodia. By the Third Reign, the Thai had successfully moved to establish more effective control over the Khorat Plateau and the trans-Mekong region. Besides, extensive warfare

11 Sarasin, op.cit., chapter 8; Nidhi, Pakkai lae bai-rua, pp. 107-128; Cushman, op.cit., chapter 5.
between the periods of Taksin and Rama III against their neighbours required enormous expenditure and took place when the country was facing economic difficulties. This warfare has been viewed within a framework of political conflict or as an exercise of the chakravatin idea of the Thai monarchs. If there is any link between warfare and the Siamese economy, it was interpreted only as a cause of trouble for state revenue. For example, Walter Vella states:

There had been shortages in revenue during the previous reign (Rama III). In some years Rama III had even to defer paying, or pay in rice, the normal salaries of government officials. Rama III's government incurred heavier expenses than that of his predecessor. The king was a devout Buddhist, and much more money was expended on donations to the Buddhist order. It is probable that a greater amount of money was appropriated for war and defence during the Third Reign than during the previous reign.\(^{12}\)

The reverse has also been argued: that expansive warfare could be undertaken because the Siamese economy had already achieved prosperity, which was a result of the growing maritime trade from the Thonburi period onwards, and thus could provide the king with heavy expenditure for the war. Hong argued with Vella that:

On the contrary, it can be discerned that by the Third Reign the economy of the country had been nursed back to health by the overseas trade..., and could sustain a system of tax farms on an unprecedented scale. There was enough trade for the general economy to be increased well above the agricultural base, and the expenditure of the sovereign, governed by expectations befitting the ruler of a flourishing kingdom, rose too. When additional sources of revenue in the form of internal taxes became available to him, Rama III could afford to challenge Vietnam's claim over Cambodia by utilizing heavy expenditure, to support a more elaborate and demanding bureaucracy, and to realize his penchant for temple building.\(^{13}\)

This thesis tries to fill the gap in the arguments by presenting evidence that Siamese policy towards its neighbouring countries along the trans-Mekong basin

\(^{12}\) Vella, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

\(^{13}\) Hong, *op.cit.*, p. 84.
was constantly influenced by its economic interests.

Further, the interchangeable influences of the Thai and the Vietnamese over the Cambodian court have been attributed to the capabilities of their respective rulers. The possibility of either maintaining peace or a disaster in the kingdom of Cambodia was also very much based on the king's personal capability, rather than on wider social and economic circumstances. Sometimes the Cambodian monarch could create a kind of equilibrium between the forces of the two powers. This could mean peace or even "independence" such as Cambodia experienced under the reign of King Duang (r.1847-1860). But sometimes it was not possible, for example, during the period of King Chan (r.1806-1835).14

According to previous studies, factionalism seems to have been part of the nature of Cambodian political institutions. The shift of allegiance and factionalism among the court people was a prominent characteristic of Cambodian politics. It was another key factor determining the country's fortune, as court figures always invited foreign intervention into their affairs. However, factionalism and domestic revolts were not at all uncommon in pre-colonial Southeast Asian states. How and why factionalism became a critical factor for Cambodia is not answered in terms of the economic basis of the power of Cambodian king and his relations with his nobility. On the other hand, by overlooking the economic factors which provided the state's existence, previous studies have used an a priori assumption that the Cambodian state was a natural, cohesive political, economic, and social entity. By contrast, I argue in this thesis that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Cambodia's existence could never be taken for granted. The autonomous existence of Hatien and the northwestern region (Battambang and Siemreap) provided kinds

14 Chandler, A History, p. 116; Also, Eiland, op.cit.
of sub-division or separate polities within Cambodia. These two areas were entirely removed from the Cambodian central power throughout the period of this study.

Southeast Asian Statecraft and Inter-state Relations

Basically, my proposition is that economic power determined political relations in the traditional Southeast Asian states. Such power was based on successful control of trade and manpower. Manpower control was fundamental in the formation of social and political organisations in Southeast Asian polities, as it was a precious resource and vital for the development of the state's economic, political, and military powers.⁷ Manpower constituted corvée labour for government construction works, and for military service in fighting off local revolts and neighbouring states. In lieu of corvée, a head tax, either in currency or in kind, which formed the bulk of export goods of the royal trade, constituted substantial revenue source for a state. The acquisition of manpower was also associated with the increasing demand for commercial crops in foreign trade. The deportees often served either as cultivators who then turned large wild and uninhabited areas into productive lands, or as gatherers in the areas where valuable forest products were abundant. A state which could sustain an effective system of manpower control

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would succeed in active participation in maritime commerce which generated enormous wealth for the rulers. Maritime wealth was used for beautifying the royal centres and temples, patronising the king's entourage, strengthening political and military power for subduing their subjects, rebellion, and neighbouring polities, which in turn constituted a concentration of resources for a ruler.

The ambition to absorb manpower, resources, and commerce not only determined a form of relationship between the ruler and the ruled, but also was crucial to regional inter-state relations. The ruler of a competing state would naturally try to extract natural resources, and manpower, and even annex a commercial base of the neighbouring polities. This was the case for the Siamese-Cambodia relations during the period of study.

It is widely recognised that expansive maritime trade as an external stimulus produced significant impacts on state formation in Southeast Asia particularly from the fifteenth century. In order to acquire effective control over maritime trade and redistribution of goods to local residents, Southeast Asian rulers usually moved to reside at, or close to the main ports where the central authority was in force, and merchandise from interior and surrounding regions were concentrated for export. Southeast Asia benefited from its geographical setting, with international trading centres for merchandise moving between China and India, the Middle East and Europe, emerging throughout the region. These included Pegu, Ayudhya, Phnom Penh, Hoi An (Faifo), Meleka, Patani, Brunei, Pasai, Aceh, Banten, Japara, Gresik, and Macassar.

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A primary requisite for a ruler was to maintain stability and authority in his or her domain. Alliances between a king and nobility, particularly the locally-based elites, were crucial. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how the traditional political and economic system operated and developed. The ideas of kingship and statecraft were significant for the development of traditional polities. In the mainland Buddhist states such as Cambodia, Siam and Burma, the origins of ideas of kingship were in Hindu-Buddhist astrological principles, which formed a metaphor for the power relations between the ruler and his subjects. The king represented divine power by claiming to be a man of merit, a Bodhisattva (a Buddha-to-be) as well as the Chakravatin (the Buddhist universal monarch). He could also be perceived as a reincarnated Hindu god, i.e., Siva or Vishnu. His existence was the keystone of the polity, since he brought peace and prosperity to his people and the world. Such a claim obliged the people to provide royal service. A monarch possessed absolute power over his subjects and the supreme right of disposing of or rewarding his followers with titles and ranks. Nobilities constituted state apparatuses for fulfilling such royal requirements such as tax collection, levies of corvée labour and troop mobilisation.

But in reality, royal power depended on the ability to form alliances with ambitious nobles, who attempted to expand their political and economic interests. Powerful officials could jeopardise royal power. Mabbett has stated that "cliques, factions, personalities, clientele and patronage were essential elements in Angkorean politics". In Cambodia, the powerful nobles often created revolt and intrigue in support of pretenders for the throne. In Siam, the nobility could even provide replacement rulers, as the case of King Taksin and Rama I.

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The distribution of power between a monarch and his nobles was a critical means of strengthening loyalty and alliance, reinforced through a patron-client system. Apart from a king, people who were actively involved in maritime trade were members of the royal family, high-ranking officials, and foreigners who were attached to the royal court, and who provided services as shippers, interpreters, and trading agents, for reciprocal advantages. The privileges the nobility enjoyed in trade and their authority over their subjects was the reward for their services for a king. These substituted for the absence of fixed salaries. Rewarding and enlisting a new circle of officials after a succession was the usual means of creating loyalty and security for a new king.\textsuperscript{20}

As royal power diminished in the distant regions because of difficulties of communication and transport, local officials usually retained relatively autonomous power and interest over the areas under their authority. Though the central authority tended to maintain local chiefs to govern the areas, the latter, nevertheless, had to be incorporated into a centralised, prestigious hierarchical system, symbolised by a royal ceremony for an oath of allegiance at the capital.\textsuperscript{21} Annual travel to the royal capital and the holding of members of local elites as hostages at the court were arranged. In cases where the peripheral region was sandwiched between two powerful polities, local elites tended to take dual allegiances in order to avoid militarily attack from the overlords. But if one of the overlords became weaker, they would decide to maintain a tie only with the stronger overlord. The competing ruler would promise to give local elites political and military protection against the other side. In this fashion Battambang and

\textsuperscript{20} Chandler, \textit{A History}, p. 109.

\textsuperscript{21} Hall, "An Introductory Essay," in Hall and Whitmore (eds.), \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 11-12.
Siemreap were subject to the Thai court, which proved more powerful than the Khmer court throughout the period of study.

With respect to inter-state relations, ties between overlord and vassal were not stable. Some vassals successfully threw off subordinate status and created their own networks of vassals. A vassal could also withhold submission from a suzerain who proved impotent, and shift to the rising overlord. On the other hand, some vassals could hold multiple overlords at the same time for reasons of survival, preventing any military threat from the powerful polities. Cambodia and the Lao kingdoms in the first half of the nineteenth century sent tribute to both Bangkok and Hue. The conflict between the Thai and the Vietnamese over Cambodia shows the overlapping interests of the two competing polities.

Military power was another significant factor in subjugating local elites and distant principalities. It was an effective means for a competing ruler to make his subordinates aware that it was more worthwhile for them to provide him with cooperation, which in return could generate on-going mutual interest, whereas dissent could result in severe suffering. Commercial revenue was an important source which permitted the Southeast Asian rulers to expand their military power. The royal court usually employed foreigners as artillermen, gunsmiths and military trainers. Sometimes the objective in appointing foreigners to important positions was to prevent the indigenous nobility exploiting these positions and becoming so powerful that they might turn against the king. In the Ayudhyan court, the important positions in the court of King Narai were occupied by foreigners. The best known case was the Greek Constantine Phaulkon, who became the prime minister.22

The consolidation of hegemony rendered a higher concentration of resources from the distant principalities. Territorial consolidation of peripheral regions and distant principalities by Siam, Burma and Vietnam up to the 1830s was a dramatic development which indicates a process of centralisation in mainland Southeast Asia. In the seventeenth century, the Siamese administration could only vaguely incorporate the region as far as Nakhon Ratchasima. Cambodia and the Lao kingdom sent tributes to the Ayudhyan court only on an irregular basis. But from the Thonburi period (r. 1767-1812) and particularly by the reign of Rama III of the Chakri dynasty (r. 1824-51), Thai hegemony was more firmly established as far as the east bank of the Mekong river. Battambang and Siemreap became part of the Siamese administrative system. After the Chao Anu revolt in 1827-28, the Lao kingdoms of Vientiane and Champassak were placed under direct Siamese administration. Tribute and local tax collection were conveyed to Bangkok annually; censuses were taken more regularly.

Alliances between the central authority and the regional chiefs not only facilitated the flow of resources and manpower, but were also crucial to a link between overland trade and the port city. As the process of tribute and tax conveyance always accompanied royal trade in the hinterland, the routes used by central


23 Lieberman, op. cit., pp. 480-84.


authorities developed into important overland trade routes. Besides, central authorities would certainly influence local officials to encourage hinterland traders to come to the port city. Overland trade was regarded as significant in its contribution of both supply and demand for the kingdom's trade. Also, the increasing proportion of the population - a product of frequent deportations - would naturally activate socio-economic life in the new settlements. The deportees contributed enormously to the politico-economic growth of the competing polity by turning wild and sparsely inhibited areas into parts of the overland trading network, whereas trade in deserted areas gradually diminished. A shift of population thus meant a shift of trade route.

Subject and Objective

My thesis is that after the devastation of the Ayudhyan kingdom by the Burmese in 1767, Siam was faced with the task of rebuilding the country's economy. It required effective control of the states along the trans-Mekong basin, which had greater economic significance for Siam's revival than just annual ceremonial gifts of gold and silver trees, as historians have viewed the situation previously. Indeed, it potentially furnished two interrelated factors crucial for Siamese overseas trade: one was the provision of local trade routes (inland and coastal) which allowed Siam to gain access to local supplies of export products and provided local demand for foreign products; and the other was manpower supply, providing corvée labour for both agricultural and military activities, and suai, head tax in kind or in money for state revenue. In other words, the eastward territorial


27 Evers has perceived Siam in the Thonburi and Early Bangkok Periods as a trade-based state, and recognised the importance of the integration of the hinterland into the royal power at the port cities, in his case Ayudhya. But on the other hand he has underestimated the economic significance of the trans-Mekong basin. See, Evers, "Trade and State Formation," pp. 754, 759.
expansion facilitated a concentration of economic and military resources which was the basis for rebuilding Siamese state power after 1767. However, the existence of Vietnam invited difficulties for the Thai expansion over the trans-Mekong basin. The crisis with Vietnam usually involved depriving the Thai of such economic resources from the Thai.

One of the factors that this study wishes to explore is the significance of local trade network, both the overland route along the trans-Mekong basin and the coastal route along the Gulf of Siam, for Siamese overseas trade. This will lead to my argument that the attempt to control local trade networks was a major factor in stimulating conflict between the Thai and the Vietnamese in Cambodia. The subjugation of Cambodia was crucial for the economic security of Siam. But from the Cambodian viewpoint, the competition between the two contending states produced substantial impacts on the Cambodian polity and economy. One of the objectives of Thai interventions during the Taksin Reign and the Third Reign of the Chakri Dynasty (r.1824-1851) was to control strategic towns such as Phnom Penh and Hatien, which were commercial towns in the region and were in the zone of the Vietnamese influence. When these towns were out of Thai control, the Thai army devastated them.

One comment by Breazeale and Sanit is worth noting; that is, that the separation of the events in Cambodia from other parts of the Indochinese peninsula would limit the understanding of a war which extended across the trans-Mekong area. Although the research by Breazeale and Sanit emphasises only the political aspect of the Thai involvement in the upper Mekong basin, their suggestion is useful.

when talking about the attempts by Siam and Vietnam to take control of the trading network along the trans-Mekong basin, since the trade routes, especially the Mekong river, connected several parts of the region together. Besides, the Mekong river has always been the reference to indicate the position of towns in early nineteenth century Thai documents. The terms "east" (left) and "west" (right) banks always appear in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Thai documents. The terms also refers to the positions of towns in Cambodia, since the Mekong runs through the heartland of Cambodia. In fact, the separate treatment of the history of Cambodia may indicate the confinement of the nation-state idea in modern historiography, an idea which did not exist in the region before the middle of the nineteenth century. Changes in any part of the area in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could possibly bring tension or changes to the others. This thesis will show that when Siam encountered crisis either in Laos or Cambodia, it often reacted by the imposing direct control over one or the other in order to prevent the loss of their economic benefit.

Apart from the trade network, I would like to examine the acquisition of Khmer manpower for Siamese economic development and its effect on Cambodia and economy. The most prominent feature of the Thai invasions of Cambodia was that they were always accompanied by the forced migrations of local people to resettle in the Thai-controlled areas. Historians of Thailand agree that manpower control was the basic element in the formation of the traditional Thai state and social organisation. Manpower control was vital for the political and economic power of the Thai ruling class, for it contributed to the state head taxes, labour for land

29 In the case of Cambodia, see, for example, TNL, CMH_R III C.S.1209/2: Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan krang ratchakan thi sam (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for General Phraya Singhaseni, 1933), pp. 2-3, 67. Towns on the western bank include Battambang, Siemreap, Kampot, Pursat, Bati, Kampong Som, Lovek, Samrong Thong and Kampong Svai; towns on the eastern bank include Phnom Penh, Ba Phnom, Sombok, Sombor, Chlong, Srei Santhor, Prei Veng, Kampong Siem.
cultivation and construction projects, and military forces. The Thai ruling class had to try to increase manpower by conquest, enticement and compulsion of its neighbour's inhabitants.\textsuperscript{30} Following the wars with their neighbours, the Thai always deported villagers from the defeated state to resettle in their domain. However, it appears that only the contribution of the influx of Chinese labours for the Thai economy has been fully appreciated. Evacuees from the left bank of the Mekong river, Laotians and Khmers, have not received full attention. Although recent researches has explored the significance of the left bank migrants, they have mainly concentrated on certain aspects of the Thai economy or local history such as the collection of suai or head tax in the Northeast, and the origin of muang (towns) in the Northeast.\textsuperscript{31} They do not link the extensive evacuation of manpower in the neighbouring states with the specific politico-economic requirements of Siam between the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods. Besides, none of them approaches the issue in terms of inter-state competition and economic perceptions of the Thai ruling class towards the trans-Mekong region. The conflicts between Siam and its surrounding states which resulted in the appropriation of wealth into Siam have always been explained as only being oriented towards political security rather than economic interests. Thus, this study argues that Cambodia, as part of the trans-Mekong basin, played a crucial role as a major source of manpower supply for Siamese economic development after the Thonburi period, and it was Thai policy to extract such a precious resources for the revival of the war-torn economy and subsequent economic growth in the early Bangkok period. Thai interventions and wars in Cambodia always involved

\textsuperscript{30} Akin, op.cit; Nidhi Aeusrivongse, \textit{Kan muang thai samai phrachao krung thonburi} (Thai Politics in the Reign of King Taksin), (Bangkok, Sinlapa watthanatham special issue, 1986), chapters 1 & 3.

\textsuperscript{31} For example, Boonrod Kaewkanha, op.cit; Theerachai Boonmatham, op.cit; \textit{idem.}, Prawattisat thongthin huamuang kalasin, pho so 2336-2450 (Local History of Kalasin, A.D.1793-1907), (MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1981).
manpower issues.

Furthermore, this thesis will shed light on the importance of Thai control over the northwestern region of Cambodia - Battambang and Siemreap - from the Thonburi period. Following the loss of the most fertile area in the Mekong Delta to the Vietnamese in the late seventeenth century, Cambodia again lost the rest of its fertile land in the Northwest to the Thai in the late eighteenth century. Battambang and Siemreap were completely removed from the Cambodian court's jurisdiction and were under Thai authority until 1907, when they were ceded to the French protectorate. The area is generally recognised for its fertile rice-plains, Great Lake fisheries, and forest products. However, previous studies - oriented as they were to politics - seem to have overlooked such an important aspect of the area. It's wealth has never been fully taken into account in the study of Thai-Cambodian relations. According to David Chandler, the Thai seemed to have no long-range plan towards Battambang and Siemreap when they were first brought under Thai control, but Rama I was obliged to grant the two provinces to Ta-la-ha (the prime minister) Baen for his years of faithful service for the Bangkok court. Thai suzerainty over the Battambang region meant only that Baen had to send tributary gifts to Bangkok from time to time. The Battambang region has been seen only as a Thai military and political base against Vietnam throughout the Thai occupation. So it has seemed that the Thai gained no economic interest from the Battambang region and that the region had little economic importance for Siam. According to David Chandler, the Thai seemed to have no long-range plan towards Battambang and Siemreap when they were first brought under Thai control, but Rama I was obliged to grant the two provinces to Ta-la-ha (the prime minister) Baen for his years of faithful service for the Bangkok court. Thai suzerainty over the Battambang region meant only that Baen had to send tributary gifts to Bangkok from time to time. The Battambang region has been seen only as a Thai military and political base against Vietnam throughout the Thai occupation. So it has seemed that the Thai gained no economic interest from the Battambang region and that the region had little economic importance for Siam. Furthermore, to understand the role of the region in Thai-Cambodian relations, I think we need to know why the Khmer elites decided to work for the Thai; what kind of benefits did they obtain by serving the Thai? Interesting also is the

question of how different was Thai policy towards the Battambang region to Thai policy towards the area outside their control or under the Vietnamese domination. The history of the Battambang region will show how the regional Khmer elites built up their autonomous politico-economic sphere outside court power. This would provide an efficient explanation of the root of factionalism among the Khmer nobles.

In brief, in this thesis, I argue that control over economic and military resources were the key objective of Thai expansion into Cambodia. Such resources were crucial for rebuilding Siamese economic and political power in the region after the fall of Ayudhya. Conversely, the loss of effective access to its own resources contributed to the overwhelming decline of the Cambodian state. I believe that with an emphasis on economic factors we can better understand the basis on which Cambodian history has developed since the late eighteenth century. Such a basis was critical to the future of Cambodia for it impeded Cambodia's existence as an autonomous entity, but forced it to be continually dependent upon its powerful neighbours.

Chapter Two will provide the background of the economic development of post-Angkorean Cambodia and its relations with Siam and Vietnam up until the eighteenth century. This chapter argues that an "economic centred" rather a "state-centred" view better explains the development of Southeast Asia, and of Thai-Cambodian-Vietnamese relations in particular. Chapter Three will discuss the political and economic conditions affecting Siam after the devastation of the Ayudhyan kingdom. It provides a basis for understanding why the consolidation and contest for power over the trans-Mekong basin was indispensable in the struggle for the revival of Siam between the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods.
Chapter Four demonstrates the significance of the overland trade along the Mekong River and coastal trade along the Gulf of Siam in the Thai-Vietnamese conflict over Cambodia. In Chapter Five, I will concentrate on the Thai acquisition of Khmer population and how it contributed to the development of Thai economy in the nineteenth century. In Chapter Six, I will examine the politico-economic significance of Thai control over Battambang and Siemreap and the role of the area and its elites in Thai-Cambodian relations. Chapter Seven will conclude by looking at the consequences of Thai control over the Cambodian polity and economy: how the loss of its economic strength determined its political configuration.

Sources

This dissertation attempts to integrate and compare available sources in Thai, Khmer, French and English. It relies primarily on archival materials both in published and unpublished forms, with Thai and Khmer dynastic chronicles being employed with caution. The French and English sources are likely to be unreliable in conveying Thai and Khmer points of view and interpreting Thai-Cambodian-Vietnamese relations, as they tended to impose a western idea of statecraft over Southeast Asian states. Such retrospective imposition seems to be part of John Crawfurd's account, for example. Despite the fruitfulness of his description of trading centres along the Gulf of Siam, he was confused about the limit of the Vietnamese domination in Cambodia in his placing of Cambodia as one of the divisions of the Vietnamese empire, of which the other divisions were Cochin China and Tonkin.\(^\text{33}\) The western idea of government was so different from that of traditional Southeast Asian states that the French saw villages' autarchy in

Cambodia as having no government at all.\textsuperscript{34} Besides, since the French were much preoccupied with the attempt to colonise Cambodia, they tended to be very concerned and perhaps exaggerated the economic interest the Thai obtained from Cambodia. The Khmer sources like Battambang in the Period of the Vassal, written by Tauch Chhuong in 1974 also appear to be very nationalistic and lack accuracy particularly in dealing with the first half of the nineteenth century. The retrospective impositions made Tauch Chhuong misinterpret the objective of Thai rule in the Battambang region. In order to discredit the Thai occupation of Cambodian land, the history of the Battambang region in his eyes was absolutely destitute, even though the region was proved to be highly commercial orientation in the late nineteenth century. However, its usefulness comes in Tauch's interviews with approximately twenty people who had experienced in Battambang before the area was ceded to the French Protectorate. For the Thai documents, particularly those concerning military expeditions in Cambodia, possibly overclaimed their success in the war against the Vietnamese and their influence over the Cambodian nobles.

Between July 1990 and December 1991, I conducted my archival fieldwork in Thailand at the National Library and National Archives, Bangkok; in France at the Archives Nationale dépôt d'outremer in Aix-en-Provence and Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris; and in England at the Public Records Office.\textsuperscript{35}

Those Thai archival sources from the National Library comprise invaluable

\textsuperscript{34} The notion was quoted from French archival document by Chandler, \textit{A History}, p. 104.

\textsuperscript{35} Unfortunately, the Aeroflot airline lost my luggage which contained all documents from Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères and some from the Public Records Office during my flight from London to Bangkok.
official correspondence about Thai-Cambodian-Vietnamese relations during the early nineteenth century, the Third and the Fourth Reigns of the Chakri Dynasty in particular. This group of documents is under the title chotmaihet (official correspondence or record). The National Archives provides official correspondences of the Fifth Reign, some of which refer to the situation in the earlier period. In addition, there is available a large number of published official correspondence during the Second and the Third Reigns. Despite their fragmentary nature, this group of documents is useful especially on the issues of the suai payment from northwestern Cambodia to Bangkok, Thai policy in northwestern Cambodia, the Thai depopulation campaigns in Cambodia, the situation in Cambodia, and local trade.

The French documents from the first half of the nineteenth century are not very fruitful when compared with those from the second half of the nineteenth century, when French penetration in Indochina began. However, they are still useful in giving a picture of what conditions were like in Cambodia after the period of extensive Thai-Vietnamese warfare and intervention. The most interesting materials arose because the colonial officials were usually much concerned about

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36 Those are Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho so 1173 [Records in the Second Reign, Lesser Era 1173 (AD 1811)], (Bangkok, Published on the occasion of the 203th birthday of Rama II, 1971); Khampaikan ruang thap yuannai ratchakan thi sam, (Testimony Concerning the Expedition against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (Bangkok, Sayambannakit, 1933); Chotmaihet ratchakan thi sam (Records in the Third Reign), 5 volumes, (Bangkok, Published on the occasion of the 200th birthday of Rama III, 1987); Chotmaihet ruang thap yuann khrang ratchakan thi sam (Records Concerning Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for General Phraya Singhaseni, 1933); Thai sathapana kasat khmen (Thailand Established the Cambodian Kings), (Bangkok, Office of the Prime Minister, 1962); “Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi” (Records Concerning the Expeditions in the Thonburi Period), in Prachum Phongsawadan, (Collected Chronicles) Part 66 [hereafter PP 66], (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1985); “Wa duahtet kan muang khmen ton set songkhram thai kap yuan” (Records Concerning Cambodia After the End of Thai-Vietnamese War), in PP 56, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1932), “Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuannai ratchakan thi sam” (Record Concerning Cambodia and Vietnam During the Third Reign), Part One in PP 67, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1969), Part two in PP 68, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1969);

Note PP 67 is in separate volumes of 41 and 42. Therefore, hereafter I will cite as PP, 67/41 and PP 67/42.
the economic situation, so that there is a reasonable amount of material about politico-economic conditions in the Battambang area.

In addition to archival materials, the two-volume *Annam sayamyuth* (Annam-Siam war) compiled by K.S.L. Kulap (pseudonym) is also useful, particularly the second volume, which contains much information about the intensive Thai-Vietnamese warfare in Cambodia. Though K.S.L. Kulap did not provide any of his sources, his accounts appear reliable, since some available chotmaihet confirm their accuracy. Therefore, the reader will find that in this thesis the *Annam sayamyuth* has been cited along with chotmaihet in many places.

The Thai and Khmer dynastic chronicles, most of which are filled with references to Cambodian affairs, have also been consulted for this thesis. Of the sources, the dynastic chronicle of the Thonburi Dynasty (the Phan Chanthanumat version), which was compiled by the high-ranking official Chaophraya Phiphitphichai by order of King Rama I, appears to be quite accurate. Its information about the Thonburi troop attacks on Hatien and Cambodia can be checked against the published archival records of the same period, *Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi* in PP 66. This suggests that the part which deals with Cambodia was based on the archival records. The First and the Third Reign chronicles were compiled by Chaophraya Thiphakorawongse (Kham Bunnag), a high-ranking

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39 *Phraratchaphongsawadan krung thonburi chabap phanchanthanumat* (The Dynastic Chronicle of the Thonburi Period, Phanchanthanumat Version), in PP 65. (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1985). This Thonburi chronicle is a part of *Phraratchaphongsawadan krung sriayudhya chabap phanchanthanumat* (The Ayudhyan Dynastic Chronicle, Phan Chanthanumat Version) which covers the period between 1351 and 1784.
official at the court of King Chulalongkorn (r.1868-1910), and the Second Reign chronicle was compiled by Prince Damrongrachanuphap, King Mongkut's son, in 1914.40 Most of the accounts are, nevertheless, concerned with court politics, with little economic information. So, their usefulness lies in what they say about political aspects of Thai interference in Cambodian affairs. The Thai dynastic chronicles elaborate the royal Thai perspective towards their vassals. Cambodia was always claimed by the Thai rulers, who saw themselves as having a legitimate right to control and manipulate internal Cambodian affairs. On the other hand, as a vassal state, Cambodia had to pursue an obligation to fulfill the Thai kings' commands and requirements such as supplying manpower and resources when demanded. Failing to do so, the Cambodian kings and okya would be condemned as treasonous by the Thai rulers.

As far as the accuracy of the chronicles between the First and the Third Reigns goes, the extant archival records reveal that these parts of the chronicles were generally based on archival records. Both Thiphakorawongse and Prince Damrong had greater access to court materials than any other writers during their period. However, there are a few problematic points, which I have discussed specifically in the body of the thesis, making comparisons with archival records where these overlapped.41 Such cross-examination also has been made with the Khmer

40 Thiphakorawongse, Chaophraya, Phraratchaphongsawadan krung rattanakosin ratchakan thung (The Dynastic Chronicle of the First Reign of the Chakri Dynasty - hereafter PKRR I), (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1983); idem., Phraratchaphongsawadan krung rattanakosin ratchakan thung sam (The Dynastic Chronicle of the Third Reign of the Chakri Dynasty - hereafter PKRR III) 2 volumes, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1961); Damrongrachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan krung rattanakosin ratchakan thung song (The Dynastic Chronicle of the Second Reign of the Chakri Dynasty - hereafter PKRR II), 2 volumes, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1961).

chronicles.

In addition to the Thai dynastic chronicles, the surviving two versions of Khmer chronicles which were translated into Thai will be used for this study. The first is the so-called "Nong Chronicle" composed about 1820 by Okya Vongsa Sarapet (Nong), a Khmer official at the court of King Chan.42 This version covers the period between 1414 and 1819. It was presented to the court of King Mongkut in 1855 and first published in Thai in 1868. This version also served as the basis for the French translation. The second version is a copy of the "Nong Chronicle" and known as the "Nupparot Chronicle", composed under the supervision of a Khmer prince, Nupparot, in the 1870s. It covers the period between 1414 and 1866. Coedès presented it to the Thai National Library in 1916. These two versions are slightly different from each other, and do not reveal much of the Cambodian perspective towards the Thai and the Vietnamese. Most of the texts contain information about internal rivalries and turmoil in Cambodia. Nevertheless, when this information is placed against that concerning the general administrative organisation of Cambodia, it gives a good idea of who were the powerful okya in Cambodia, and the root of their conflicts. This issue has been discussed below in the section on the Cambodian administrative system.

Another source on the history of Battambang is the chronicle of Battambang which was compiled by its eighth governor, Chaophraya Kathathon-thoranin (Yia), in 1860. It supplies useful information about genealogies of the Battambang governors.43 However, it appears to have inaccuracies in dates which will be

42 The Thai translation is "Phongsawadan khamen" (The Cambodian Chronicle - hereafter "Nong Chronicle") in PP.1, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1963).

43 Kathathon-thoranin (Yia), Chaophraya, "Phongsawadan muang phratabong" (Chronicle of Battambang), in PP.16, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1964).
discussed in the body of the thesis.

A number of western explorers' accounts are invaluable. As the Europeans were mostly concerned with commercial activities, they give good accounts of the coastal trading centres and foreign trade in the area. Changing economic conditions - such as the rise and decline of regional trading centres - can be seen when comparing accounts which were produced at different times.

There are some other interesting aspects that I wish to examine such as the perception of the Khmer villagers towards the Khmer nobility, and those in the Battambang region towards the Thai authority. Unfortunately, the existing sources do not completely covered these aspect of Cambodian history. In addition, although the Vietnamese equally played an important role in Cambodian history during the period of my study, this thesis mainly concentrates on the Thai side because of the linguistic and practical limitations to the sources I could employ. Vietnamese interference in the Cambodian economy is a potential area of future research. While this thesis focuses on the role of the Battambang region in Thai-Cambodian relations, I believe that the area close to the Vietnamese domination is as interesting as the Battambang region, particularly for an understanding of regional diversity in Cambodia.


45 Dr. Li Tana at the University of Wollongong is carrying out interesting research on how the occupation of formerly Cambodian land in the Mekong Delta was crucial for southern Vietnam's economic development.
CHAPTER II
POST-ANGKOREAN CAMBODIA
PRIOR TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter looks at the economic development of the post-Angkorean period. It will discuss how changes in the Southeast Asian maritime commerce in general resulted in the transformation of the post-Angkorean Cambodian polity. Between the fourteenth and early eighteenth centuries Cambodia remained one of the important economic centres in the region, if not the most important one. This historical background will demonstrate that the expanding international trade was a key element in the formation of the Southeast Asian states, and significantly affected inter-state relations particularly among those in the mainland. It created inter-state competition in acquiring resources for foreign markets and control of important trading centres. In such circumstance, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries Cambodia's potential geographical position became the target of its increasingly powerful neighbours - Siam and Vietnam - both of which actively participated in and enormously benefited from the international commerce. This historical background thus suggests that an economy-centred view rather than a state-centred view better explains major developments in Southeast Asia, especially in terms of inter-state relations.

Cambodia in the International Commerce

In order to explain the role of economic factors, it is necessary to begin with examining the context of Southeast Asian commerce which shaped the political and economic life of Cambodia. China had been a key factor that determined the development of Southeast Asian maritime trade as early as the rise of Srivijaya, for it was the biggest market for Southeast Asian merchandise. It allowed Srivijaya to
become a central entrepôt in the region between the seventh and eleventh centuries. From the twelfth century, changes occurred in the Chinese maritime trade policy under the Sung dynasty (1127-1279), the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) and the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and thus produced dramatic effects in the Southeast Asian economy and state formation. The new policy permitted Chinese private fleets to come to trade directly with various centres of production in Southeast Asia, which effectively responded to such opportunities by expanding their production of pepper, sappanwood, spices and tin. The imports from China consisted of porcelain, silken materials and yarns, musk, gold, silver, iron, beads and vast quantities of small copper coins. As the Chinese junks visited various ports, they by-passed Srivijaya's trading lines. The change brought a decline of Srivijaya as a central entrepôt in the archipelago. Instead, many port kingdoms in the region such as Melaka, Majapahit, North Sumatra, Tenasserim, Ayudhya, Pegu, and a new Cambodian centre around the present-day Phnom Penh region, emerged. Southeast Asia at the end of the fourteenth century was no longer dominated by a single entrepôt, but was characterised by the existence of various ports throughout the region.¹

The establishment of the Mameluke dynasty in Egypt in 1250 brought about peaceful conditions in the Red Sea passage from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean, which facilitated the flow of Indian and Southeast Asian merchandise into European markets. In conjunction with the collapse of the "silk route" from China to the Black Sea, which the Yuan dynasty had organised in the

late fourteenth century, the maritime route between the East and the European markets that passed through Southeast Asia began to flourish.\(^2\)

There was, however, an abrupt interruption of this trade increase during the reign of T'ai-tsu (r. 1368-98) when China became isolated and hostile to the outside world. T'ai-tsu decided to interrupt the tributary trade that he himself had restored. Foreign vessels visiting China were rejected. But there remained trade conducted by Chinese private traders, whom the Chinese court could hardly eliminate from the sea. A new stimulus for the Southeast Asian trade was introduced by Emperor Yung-lo (r. 1402-24) because China was confronted with a deficiency of revenue. Yung-lo decided to undertake the tributary trade again.\(^3\)

Trade in a tributary system, however, put the Chinese private junks at a disadvantage, since they were banned. Fortunately, the intensive involvement of Japan from the early fifteenth century saved their livelihoods and was another external stimulus for expanding the scale of Southeast Asian trade. After the unification by King Sho Hashi in 1429, Chinese private traders were encouraged to settle in his island kingdom of Ryukyu, and to conduct trade under his auspices. As Ryukyu retained relations with the Chinese court, Southeast Asian goods flowed to China via Ryukyu. Silver was a major Japanese export to Southeast Asia. The period 1604-35 was the peak of the maritime trade with Japan when at least 299 Japanese ships visited Southeast Asian ports.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Wolters, op. cit., pp. 155-57.

\(^4\) Reid, op. cit., pp. 16-18.
Between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, active European participation offered a boost to Southeast Asian trade. The Dutch, English, Portuguese, and Indian traders were highly competitive, trying to manipulate Southeast Asian production. Pepper was carried to the European markets in abundance. In return, European and Indian traders brought Indian textiles to Southeast Asian. The extensive involvement of China, Japan, India, and Europe in Southeast Asian seas made the period 1570-1630 the peak of what Reid calls the Southeast Asian "age of commerce".  

In the case of Cambodia, the traditional historical literature on Thai-Cambodian relations has tend towards the conclusion that the rise of the Ayudhyan empire after 1351 resulted in the fall of the Angkorean empire, which was attacked and captured by the Thai several times. Consequently, the Cambodians had to abandon their capital and flee to the east to found a new capital close to the region of Chaturumuk, around the junction of four river branches - present-day Phnom Penh. Vickery, however, provides a new interpretation which argues that the term "fall" seems to be inappropriate to the immediate post-Angkorean period. As Cambodia actively participated in international commerce, the shift of the Cambodian capital southward in the fourteenth century is likely to have been connected to the rapid expansion of Chinese maritime trade. The area close to the river junction was obviously more suitable for international commercial purposes than the former royal capital at Angkor. That is, Angkor was no longer an appropriate centre under changing economic conditions. The shift of the Khmer capital, therefore, did not necessarily mean the fall of Angkor, only a change in its form. Cambodia became a

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5 Ibid., pp. 16-26.

trade-based state, just as other Southeast Asian states benefited from the changing economic conditions.\(^7\)

Lovek and Udong were more suitable than the old capital at Angkor so that the Cambodian elites were able to assert control over the Chaturamuk region and retained convenient communications with the hinterland. Owing to its superior location at the junction of the four river branches, Phnom Penh was an emporium of goods coming from surrounding Cambodian towns and Laos. The river route between Laos and Cambodia also facilitated commercial relations between Cambodia and the uplanders, who were situated around the present day borders of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.\(^8\) Wuysthoff, a Dutch traveller in Cambodia and Laos in the seventeenth century, recorded that the Chinese in Sombok and Sombor brought salt, Chinese earthenware, and iron ware into this remote interior; in return, they purchased gold, deerskin, wax, rhinoceros horns, ivory, gamboge, stic-lac, and slaves.\(^9\) Sombok served as a point of commercial interaction in this remote area. Trade in the area appeared to give rise to the active commerce of Sombok, as Wuysthoff found that the Chinese constituted a high proportion of its population. The area was so important that in the seventeenth century the

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\(^8\) The uplanders in this area belong to either the Austronesian (Malayopolynesian) or Mon Khmer speaking groups. The Austronesian groups include Hroy, Rhadé, Jarai, Chru, Rai (Seyu, and Roglai). The Mon Khmer speaking groups comprise of Bahnar, Rengao, Sedang, Halang, Jeh, Monom, Kayong, Hre, Cua, Takua, Todrah, Cua, Kotua, Stieng, Mpong, Koho, Chrau, Katu, Kantu, Phuang, Bru, and Pacoh. See Gerald Hickey, *Son of the Mountains: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*, (New York, Yale University Pr., 1982), pp. 5-6.

The uplanders were traditionally called by pejorative names, "Moi" by the Vietnamese, "Pnong" or "Phnong" by the Khmer, meaning savage; and "Kha" by the Thai and the Lao, meaning "slave". Frank M. Lebar et al., *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*, (New Haven, Human Relations Area Files Press, 1964), p. 94.

Cambodian kings had to send triennial tribute to the leaders of the upland Jarai, who were known as the King of Fire and the King of Water, with the wish that they would continue to protect this trading traffic and forests from the invasion of the enemies. The governor of Sombok bore the responsibility for conveying this tribute to the Jarai leaders. The lands of the Jarai kings were chiefly located to the west of Quy or the present day Vietnamese province of Pleiku.\(^\text{10}\)

Cambodia's active role in international commerce between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries has been confirmed by the Chinese, Japanese and Western accounts. Between 1371 and 1419 about twelve tributary missions were sent from Cambodia to China. The number was higher than throughout the Angkorean period.\(^\text{11}\) Wolters indicates that Cambodia was one of the two states which were T'ai-tsu's favourite vassals, the other being Ayudhya. This contrasted with some Asian states such as Majapahit, Vietnam, Champa and Korea, where the Chinese court accused their rulers of dishonesty and subsequently rejected their tribute missions.\(^\text{12}\)

Cambodia also gained advantages from the increasing Japanese trade in the region. Li Tana's study of the economic history of the Nguyen Vietnam shows that between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the amount of Cambodian trade with Japan was impressively high.\(^\text{13}\) It is interesting to see that between 1604 and 1635 the number of Japanese junks visiting Cambodia ranked it fourth out of nine

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\(^{10}\) Hickey, *op.cit.*, pp. 126, 171.

\(^{11}\) Wolters, "The Khmer King at Basan 1371-3 and the Restoration of the Cambodian Chronology During the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *Asia Major*, 12, 1 (1966), pp. 44-89.


trading centres (see table 2.1). In return, between 1647 and 1720, Cambodia despatched 109 junks to Japan. The number ranked third after Cochin China and Siam (see table 2.2). The products the Japanese sought from Cambodia were deerskins, lacquer, ivory, wax honey, black sugar, buffalo horns, rhinoceros horns, betel, chaulmoogra seeds, pepper, sharkskins, peacocks' tails and cotton.14

Before the establishment of Spanish authority in the Philippine islands, it was estimated that about 400-500 Cambodian junks arrived in Sulu annually.15 The Spanish records reveal that Cambodian trade with the Philippine islands increased continuously during the Spanish period.16 Rice was also one of the important export products of Cambodia, supplying Manila, Sulu, Cochin China, and the Dutch. Cambodian rice that was carried to Cochin China was also re-exported by the Vietnamese junks to other Southeast Asian ports such as Batavia.17

14 Ibid., p. 67.


Table 2.1 Number of Japanese ships to Southeast Asian countries, 1604-35

Please see print copy for image

Sources: Li Tana, *op.cit.*, pp. 621-b.

Table 2.2 Number of Chinese junks from Southeast Asia to Japan, 1647-1720

Please see print copy for image

Source: Li Tana, *op.cit.*, p. 70.
In addition to commercial relations with the Asian states, Cambodia retained active trade with the West. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish played a crucial role in the Cambodian court and trade. The rich and populated areas along the trans-Mekong river in Cambodia probably convinced the Spanish missionary San Antonio that Spain should colonise Cambodia for religious and commercial reasons. The study of the Dutch in Ayudhya in the seventeenth century by Smith reveals that when the VOC (the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) could not gain enough goods from Ayudhya, Cambodia was their alternative supplier of benzoin, rice, deer hides, rayskins, gold, and gumlac, some of which came from Laos. For this reason, the VOC decided to open factories in Cambodia in 1620 and 1636. The English began to engage in trade with Cambodia around 1613. By 1651, a factory of the English East India Company was built up in Cambodia with the main purpose of selling Indian cloth and purchasing benzoin, wax, silk and the other Far Eastern wares. Cambodia was a major place for securing enormous amounts of benzoin, stic lac and ivory coming from Laos annually. The English, however, had gained little commercial success, since they failed to cope with the royal trading monopoly system in Cambodia and high competition with the Chinese.

The growth of economic activities in Cambodia during this period can be traced to the expansion of foreign settlements. According to Willmott's study, the number of Chinese immigrants in Cambodia had been increasing since the founding of Phnom-Penh in the fifteenth century. An established Chinese community with its own political structure had existed in Cambodia from that time. In the seventeenth

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18 Chandler, A History, p. 87.
19 Smith, op. cit., pp. 51, 54, 61, 86.
century there were about 2,000 Chinese in Phnom Penh alone. Most of Cambodia's trade was conducted by the Chinese. The Spanish were apparently frustrated by this competition with the Chinese in Cambodia. Late in the 16th century the Portuguese appear to have settled in Cambodia, and the number increased considerably. They established regular trading-posts in Cochin-China and Cambodia, the most advanced of these being at Phnom Penh. There were also separate quarters for Japanese, Arabs, Spanish, and traders from the Indonesian archipelago. European writers always emphasised the importance of foreign traders resident in Lovek and Phnom Penh. These traders worked through officials close to the king and members of the royal family.

The growth of foreign trade seems to have changed remarkably the kingdom's socio-economic organisation. During the Angkorean period this had been primarily based on agriculture supported by well-developed irrigation systems, and control of population. From the fourteenth century Cambodia became more dependent upon trade. A sign of change was the lack of inscriptions and monuments erected since the late thirteenth century. The organisation of manpower is likely to have been loose. Settlements and the administration centre shifted southward to an area more appropriate to foreign trade. The royal capital at Angkor was abandoned and from the fifteenth century the new Khmer elites showed no intention of moving backward.

21 Blair & Robertson, op.cit., Vol. 31, pp. 92-93.
23 Chandler, A History, pp. 86.
24 Vickery, Cambodia After Angkor, pp. 509-20.
Cambodia-Ayudhya Rivalry

The fourteenth century saw the rise of Ayudhya, with Cambodia playing an active role in Southeast Asian maritime trade. Ayudhya was one of the Southeast Asian states which was enriched by commercial expansion in the region. Trade was a basis of power which enabled Ayudhya to take over Sukhothai and consolidate power over the Chao Phraya basin. The flurry of international maritime trade in Southeast Asia, however, produced critical effects on the inter-state relations in the region. Although Ayudhya stood as the important entrepôt for trade between Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian, and European trades, there were usually alternative entrepôts in the area for traders such as Melaka, Hoi An, Cambodia, Patani, Champa, Aceh, Tenasserim, Pahang, and Banten. These trade-based states were naturally more or less in competition with each other in attracting shippers to visit their ports. Ayudhya thus seems to have harboured the ambition of becoming the principal power in the region. The Suphanburi dynasty in particular, which secured control over Ayudhya from 1408, was apparently ambitious to acquire control over a vast territory containing several trading centres, and claimed suzerainty over several vassals, both in the South China Sea and the western side of the Malay Peninsula. Such attempts were designed to impede the


26 Li Tana, op.cit., p. 63 suggests that the flourishing trade of Hoi An in the first decade of the seventeenth century possibly brought a decline to the trade of Champa. Also, the rise of Cochin China in the seventeenth century was at the expense of commerce of Cambodia, Siam, and Luzon.

27 Vickery, Cambodia After Angkor, p. 520.
trade activities of other ports with China, and to control a supply of local products for Ayudhya's trade.

Melaka, which was a prosperous entrepôt in the Malay peninsula in the fifteenth century, was one of the major objectives of Ayudhya. The Siamese appear to have eyed Melaka as its trade competitor. In 1407, 1419, and 1431, the Melaka rulers despatched complaints of Thai molestation to the Ming emperors, requesting Chinese protection. On the last occasion the Melaka ruler protested that the Thai had prevented Melaka's envoys from going to China. Then in 1455, Ayudhya finally launched an attack on Melaka. Despite the absence of direct control over distant principalities, the Portuguese sources tell us that Ayudhya claimed suzerainty over Melaka, Tenasserim, Kedah, Pahang, Trengganu, Kelantan, Patani, Ligor, Petchaburi, and Bang Plasoi. Nidhi and Akhom reveal that the domination over several ports along the Malay Peninsula and the Gulf of Siam was very significant for the emergence of Ayudhya in the international trading world. A vast trading network would certainly make Ayudhya an important centre of the region, where foreign merchants would be able to collect numerous kinds of products supplied from various places. The greater variety of goods would certainly attract more foreign merchants to trade with them. Trade with Ayudhya yielded high profits for the foreign merchants. It is estimated that profit would range between 50 and 200 percent. This meant Ayudhya became a favoured place for the distribution of

28 In a recent of article Professor Yoneo Ishii also suggests that Melaka could be seen as an emerging commercial rival of Ayudhya. See "Some Aspects of Ayuthayan Port-Polity as Seen from a Ryukyuan Source," South East Asia Research, 2, 1 (March 1994), pp. 53-63.

29 Wolters, Srivijaya, pp. 154-55.

30 "Phraratchaphongsawadan krung sriayudhya chabap luang prasoet aksonnit" (The Ayudhyan Dynastic Chronicle, Luang Prasoet Aksonnit Version), in PP 1, p. 135.

Chinese and Southeast Asian products into the world market and re-export of western merchandise to the Chinese and Southeast Asian markets. The bigger network meant a larger demand and supply for the products that Ayudhya had secured. For example, Tenasserim carried on its trade mainly with western Asia, and also had business connections with Bengal and with the Sumatran ports of Pasai and Pidir. Although few merchants from the Indian Ocean came to trade with Ayudhya, and Ayudhya did not trade with Pasai and Pidir, it could acquire their products from Tenasserim. Kedah produced pepper and rice in large quantities. This pepper was brought by way of Siam to China, with that which they brought from Pasai and Pedir also. When any ship came to Tenasserim and to the ports of Siam, it came to Kedah to sell its merchandise also.

It is interesting to see that of the products which Ayudhya supplied to Melaka and China, some were not products of Ayudhya, but gained from its hinterland and other local ports. Burma's benzoin and lac and Chiangmai's musk were sent down river to Siam. George Smith indicates that it was the Lao traders who brought benzoin, gold and gumlac for Ayudhya's exports. In return, they purchased Indian cloth, red yarn and opium. Cambodia was an alternative destination for the Lao traders when they were troubled by the Thai. The absence of Lao products seemed to have concerned the Ayudhyan court when King Prasat Thong sent a number of embassies to Lan Chang to restore trade relations. The continued migration of the Lao people into the Khorat Plateau in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries resulted in the area becoming more important for the Siamese economy.

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32 Nidhi and Akhom, Sriam, pp. 88-93.
33 Pires, op. cit., p. 106.
34 Ibid., p. 111.
35 Smith, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
Meanwhile, Ayudhya began to exert its domination over the Khorat plateau. Nakhon Ratchasima (Khorat) was established during the reign of King Narai (r.1656-68) with the purpose of making it a centre for the Siamese control of the northeastern towns and Lao affairs.36

In the context of Cambodian-Siamese relations, Ayudhya’s attacks on Cambodia are likely to have been influenced by the objective of seeking hegemony over several polities in the region. Vickery interprets the wars between Ayudhya and Cambodia in the fifteenth century as much influenced by economic factors. The growth of maritime trade turned the new Cambodian centre in the Chaturamuk region into an economic rival of Ayudhya. The attempt to control or suppress the new Cambodian trading centre occurred after Ayudhya failed to suppress Melaka, which obtained strong Chinese protection, and thus lost its status as the dominant power over the Malay Peninsula to Melaka. By the fifteenth century, Ayudhya turned its attention more towards the northern and eastern areas, which led to attacks on Cambodia.37 In 1431, King Boromracha II of the Suphanburi dynasty launched an attack on Cambodia, and placed his son Phra Nakhon In or Indharacha on the throne at Angkor. About twelve years later the Siamese oriented-administration in the Angkor region was overthrown by the Phnom Penh-based resistance under the leadership of Phraya Yat. Yat is believed to have been a son of a deposed king of Ayudhya, who was sent to reside in the Phnom Penh region by his usurper. Though Yat aimed at driving out Ayudhya’s intrusion, he did not seek to administer the Angkor region. Instead, the Phnom Penh region appears to have

37 Vickery, Cambodia After Angkor, p. 520.
been a more favourable place which Yat wanted to build up as his own politico-
economic base.\textsuperscript{38}

The antagonistic relationship between Ayudhya and Cambodia was unchanged in
the sixteenth century. The ongoing maritime trade seems to have provided military
strength for Cambodia in fighting against its rival. Although Cambodia was unable
to beat off most of the Siamese invasions, it did not lose all the battles. While
Ayudhya was occupied by the protracted war against Burma and was eventually
sacked by the Burmese in 1569, between 1570 and 1587 Cambodia took
opportunities to launch six attacks on the Siamese territory. The Cambodian army
usually ended up evacuating Siamese war captives to Cambodia.\textsuperscript{39} By the late
sixteenth century, Ayudhyan troops invaded Cambodia two times in retaliation
against earlier Cambodian attacks on Siam. The first was in 1587 during King
Mahathammaracha's reign, but this failed.\textsuperscript{40} The other incursion took place in
1593, after King Naresuan regained the kingdom's independence from the
Burmese. The Cambodian king, Nak Phra Sattha, had requested military assistance
from the Spanish governor-general of the Philippines. The need for help compelled
the Cambodian king to promise the Spanish that he would convert to Christianity.
But no kind of assistance ever came. In the subsequent year Lovek was devastated
and Nak Phra Sattha and his two sons were forced to seek asylum in Laos.\textsuperscript{41}

55-56, 79-80.

\textsuperscript{39} Wyatt, op. cit., p. 100.

\textsuperscript{40} "Phraratchaphongsawadan...luong prasoeth," in PP 1, p. 151, omitted the failure of the 1587
Siamese incursion, while it was recorded in the Khmer inscription. Chandler, A History, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{41} Blair and Robertson, op. cit., Vol. 9, pp. 76-78, 161-180, 197-203; Vol. 10, p. 226.
Despite the fact that the Thai continually attempted to suppress Cambodia, the latter remained strong enough in the face of its rival until the early eighteenth century. Cambodia's strength is revealed in its intermittent attacks on Siam; the successful fight against the Siamese invasions in 1587 and later in the seventeenth century; and its rapid recovery after the war of 1593-94. Although Ayudhya's superiority over Cambodia became apparent since the late sixteenth century, the latter at least could retain its independence in dealing with the international trade. Siamese suzerainty over Cambodia before the late eighteenth century was not constantly established, particularly after the arrival of the Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta.

Siam, Vietnam and Hatien: A Balance of Interventions

Until the 1620s, the Cambodian royal family had been able to balance the Thai influence with the Vietnamese. However, the increasing foreign interference, particularly since the Vietnamese had begun their advance to the south (Nam-Tien), Cambodia's political and economic power began to steadily decline. The result of the arrival of the Nguyen lords in the Mekong Delta of Cambodia in the 1620s was that Cambodia gradually lost its land in the Mekong Delta and the Cambodian court came under two overlords who competed at the expense of Cambodia.

Vietnamese influence at the Khmer court began in 1620 with the marriage of a Vietnamese princess to the Cambodian king, Chey Chetta II. A few years later, the Cambodian king granted permission to Vietnamese settlers and traders to move into the area near present-day Saigon. In 1626, the Nguyen overlords broke completely from the northern Le dynasty in Hanoi, and began to govern the southern provinces in their own right. The Nguyen government saw the Mekong Delta area as an

42 Vickery, Cambodia After Angkor, pp. 510-11, footnote 53. Also, see "Nong Chronicle," in PP L, pp. 197-209.
extensive and fertile rice-growing area which would be able to better the living of its people. In 1679, a Cantonese General named Yang left China with 7,000 men. The Nguyen emperor then empowered Yang to colonise the border land. Yang went to the region of Mytho and one of his subordinates to an area not far from Saigon. Yang was killed by his lieutenant, who then proceeded to build a fort at Mytho to intercept shipping on the Mekong. This fort was eventually destroyed by the Nguyen emperor, aided by a group of Chinese living near Saigon. It seems probable that the Chinese in Saigon must have seen the possibilities of lucrative trade up the river. This phase of Vietnamese expansion culminated in 1698 with the establishment of a viceroyalty over the provinces around the present-day Saigon area. From then the Vietnamese became continually involved in Khmer affairs. The influx of Vietnamese produced pressure upon Khmer-held lands, but the Cambodian government could do little to resist such encroachment.

By 1780 the Nguyen lords had expanded their control over most of the territory within the present boundaries. This expansion was assisted by a group of Chinese settlers in Hatien (also known as Cancao; Ponthaemas or Phuthhaemas in Thai; and Peam in Khmer). Hatien's creation dates from around 1700, with the settlement of a group of Cantonese migrants from southern China, under Mac Cuu's leadership. Mac Cuu arrived in Cambodia in 1671, and was later appointed as an okya at the court of King Chai Chetta IV. Later, he persuaded the king to authorise him with administrative power and to appoint him governor of the unsettled region of Hatien.

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45 Cotter, *op. cit*.

Mac Cuu and his Cantonese followers moved to build a Chinese-style town named Hatien. He successfully consolidated power and wealth through commerce, mining and gambling in Hatien. Also, its fertile land allowed rice-growing to become another essential factor in the development of this new settlement. Traders and Chinese migrants were encouraged to come and settle in Hatien and its seven surrounding towns. Mac Cuu died in 1735, and was succeeded by his son, Mac Thien-tu, whose mother was a Vietnamese from Bien-hoa.

The creation of Hatien was possibly influenced by the fact that Cambodia had lost the more convenient river outlet down the Mekong to the Vietnamese. Hatien was thus aimed at being an alternative outlet to the sea for Cambodia. Although Hatien's commerce was not as vigorous as those of the major ports in Southeast Asia such as Ayudhya, Melaka, Batavia, Manila and Aceh, western traders and adventurers began to recognise Hatien from the time of its early settlement. Western travellers gave the impression that during the eighteenth century, Hatien was a bustling port on the Siamese Gulf, as Alexander Hamilton, visiting Hatien in 1720, described it:

The next Place in Ponteamass, a Place of pretty good Trade for many years, having the Conveniency of a pretty deep but narrow River, which, in the rainy Seasons of the Southwest Monsoons, has Communication with Bausack, or Cambodia River, which Conveniency made it draw foreign Commerce from the City of Cambodia hither; for the City lying near 100 Leagues up the River, and most Part of the Way a continual Stream running downward, made the Navigation to the City so long and troublesome, that few cared to trade to it, for which Reasons, foreign Commerce chose to come to Ponteamass, and

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flourished pretty well till the Year 1717, that the Siam Fleet destroyed it.49

Hatien also traded with the Philippines islands and Batavia.50 Its active commerce was no doubt owed to its geographical position, being situated at the mouth of the Vinh Te or Giang-Thanh river, the upper reaches of which run close to the Bassac River, the southern arm of the Mekong. It permitted traders to come up the river and to make the short transit overland to the Bassac.51 But the two rivers were connected during the rainy season, as Hamilton described above. Such a location gave Hatien the privilege of being able to obtain products from Phnom Penh, which was an emporium of products from all over Cambodia and the southern Lao towns.52 Compared to other Cambodian ports, the trades of Kampong Som and Kampot were not as active as that of Hatien, due to their difficulties in communication with Phnom Penh. There was no waterway linking them with Phnom Penh. People had to travel by cart which was longer and more laborious, and was possible only in the dry season.53 However, Kampong Som and Kampot were essential to the traffic which made Hatien flourish, since they possibly played a role in the demand and supply of goods for Hatien.

From 1708, Hatien became a tributary state of southern Vietnam, although Mac Cuu continued to pay tribute to the Cambodian court. The Mac family appeared,
however, to be able to retain autonomous power over their territory.\textsuperscript{54} Although in the eighteenth century the Nguyen lords appeared to exercise slight power over Hatien's affairs, it is most likely that because of the commercial respect gained by Hatien that the Nguyen lords paid much attention on it. Cochin China was another clear case of a new state which rapidly developed from commerce. Li Tana's study of the socio-economic development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of southern Vietnam reveals that overseas trade was the crucial factor in the speed of Cochin China's development. The Nguyen lords were enthusiasts for foreign trade, and for foreigners. It was commerce that empowered the new Vietnamese state to become rich and strong enough in a few short decades to secure its independence from the North, and to fund its expansion to the south. They vigorously managed to give Cochinchina a crucial role in the Chinese, Japanese and western trades, and made it a major player in wider Asian commercial relations.\textsuperscript{55}

The rise of Hatien certainly could not escape Siamese attention. Hatien stood as the objective of the Siamese-Vietnamese rivalry in the eighteenth century. Ayudhya explicitly manifested its concern over this coastal region, and attempted to control Hatien from the time of its early expansion. To place Hatien under its dominion would certainly facilitate Ayudhya a concentration of Cambodian and Laotian goods, which were valuable in the Chinese market. Moreover, the location of Hatien was essential for the exertion of Thai domination over the Cambodian court. It was the most convenient route for troops to penetrate from the Gulf of Siam into the Cambodian capital at Udong. Increasing Vietnamese encroachment in Cambodian affairs and their control of the Mekong Delta, therefore, invited Thai anxiety.

\textsuperscript{54} Gaspardone, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 369.

\textsuperscript{55} Li, \textit{op.cit.}, chapter 3&4.
Around 1717, King Thaisa sent an army overland to attack Cambodia, in support of his own candidate for the Cambodian throne. At the same time, Siamese troops penetrated Hatien. But the expeditions failed, since both Udong and Hatien received military assistance from the Nguyen lord. However, the city of Hatien was utterly destroyed by the war. Alexander Hamilton, the British merchant travelling in Indochina in 1720, relates to us that Hatien was full of ruins. The war also affected commerce and production in the area, as both Phnom Penh and Hatien were unable to supply products for foreign merchants coming to trade with them.

It seems likely that sometime after the Siamese incursion, the Mac family established tributary relations with the Ayudhyan court in order to avoid any further attack. It appears that Mac Thien-tu also held a Thai title and rank as Phraya Rachasetthi, which indicates that he also retained tributary status with the Ayudhyan court. Apart from his title and rank, the available records do not describe any other contact between Hatien and Ayudhya. Around 1767 it was rumoured that

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56 The date of the Siamese invasion is problematic. The Vietnamese source Liệt-truyền indicates that there were two Siamese invasions of Hatien, but does not give a date for the first one. Sellers, op. cit., pp. 19, 167, footnote 18, proposes sometime prior to 1708-11 for the first invasion; Gaspardone, op. cit., p. 385 suggests 1688, which seems to be too early. The Cambodian chronicles record only one invasion during the early eighteenth century, but with a different date; "Nong Chronicle", p. 222 and Hamilton, op. cit., p. 105 propose 1717. The Ayudhyan chronicles also indicates only one attack during the reign of King Thai Sa. But the Phanchanthanumat version indicates 1711, while the Chakkraphadhiphong version indicates 1719. See Phraratchaphongsawadan krong sri ayudhaya chabap phanchanthanumat kap phra chakkraphadhiphong (The Ayudhyan Dynastic Chronicle, the Phanchanthanumat Version and the Chakkraphadhiphong Version), (Bangkok, Khlang Witthaya, 1964), pp. 446, 942. Vietnamese sources indicates 1715. See Gaspardone, op. cit., p. 384-85.

It seems likely that there was only one invasion, and I incline to the view that it took place in 1717 as recorded by Hamilton. Since he arrived Hatien in 1720, he certainly obtained the most reliable information from Hatien's inhabitants who just had experienced the invasion.

57 Hamilton, op. cit., p. 105.

58 Chen, op. cit., p. 1545.
Ayudhya was preparing to attack Hatien, but Ayudhya was itself preoccupied by the war with Burma. Finally, Ayudhya was destroyed by the Burmese in 1767.59

Hatien soon recovered from the 1717 Siamese attack. Mac Cuu began to strengthen its commercial, military, and administrative organisation. Being free from external invasion, the Mac family had the chance to invigorate Hatien's trade without interruption. An attempt to enrich the flow of products from the interior was undertaken. Roads were built in order to link Hatien with nearby towns. Hatien successfully shifted its status from a new settlement to a new political entity.60

The tie between Hatien and the Nguyen lords continued to strengthen. The Siamese attack on Hatien appeared to push the Mac family in to closer relations with Vietnam, as it compelled Mac Cuu and his family to seek asylum in Cochin China. In 1724, Mac Cuu himself travelled to Hue to pay homage to the Nguyen lord.61 He certainly considered that only the Nguyen lords could provide protection against Siamese attack, as in 1749 the Nguyen lords gave him a hundred soldiers to station in Hatien.62

Hatien's relations with the Nguyen lords were, however, a crucial moment in the gradual absorption of Cambodian territory in the Mekong Delta into the Vietnamese domain. The Mac family assisted the Nguyen lords in the acquisition of Cambodian territory throughout the eighteenth century. In 1754-55, Vietnamese interference in Cambodian court conflicts compelled King Chai Chetta V to take asylum in Hatien.

59 Vu The Dinh, op.cit., p. 171.
60 Sellers, op.cit., pp. 34-35.
61 Ibid., pp. 31, 34.
Mac Thien-tu acted as an intercessor, convincing Chai Chetta to give Chaudoc to the Nguyen lord Vo Vuong (r. 1738-65). Thien-tu again played the same role in 1757, when another Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia took place. This time King Phra Uthairacha or Nak Ang Ton offered the provinces of Bassac and Tra-vinh in exchange for the Nguyen lord's recognition of his throne. Thien-tu himself was rewarded with five provinces from Phra Uthairacha for his good offices. At the height of his power, the overlord of Hatien ruled an area stretching from west of the Bassac River to Kampong Som.

It should be noted that the Cambodian king did not entirely give up his claim over Hatien, but the latter appeared to be strong enough to maintain its autonomy, as Hatien successfully defeated the Cambodian incursion in 1739. Consequently, Thien-tu's power over Cambodian affairs was apparently augmented. He went further by proclaiming himself king of Cambodia under the royal title of Nak Somdet Phra Sothat. In 1742, he took advantage of his power by sending an official letter to the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan requesting a restoration of trade relations between the two countries.

A close tie between the Mac family and the Nguyen lords was thus critical for the Cambodian economy. From the time of its creation on, Hatien began to replace Phnom Penh and eventually accounted for most of Cambodia's foreign trade. Hatien's convenient location discouraged foreign merchants from sailing up against the tide to the city of Phnom Penh. Therefore, export products from Phnom Penh

64 Chen, op. cit., pp. 1537-38.
65 Ibid., p. 1554.
were almost entirely controlled by Hatien and subsequently by Vietnam. Foreign merchants who wished to trade with Cambodia, either at Phnom Penh or Hatien, had to receive permission from the Vietnamese authorities. Cambodia was now cut off from maritime access to the outside world. Moreover, the Vietnamese also drew one half of the custom duties and taxes raised in Cambodia by trade.\textsuperscript{67}

**Conclusion**

The eighteenth century, therefore, saw a shift in the socio-economic development of Cambodia. The intervention and control of economic activities by the two external rivals were a crucial factor in the increasing instability of Cambodian political affairs in the post-Angkorean period. Cambodia was an economic objective that Siam wished to control in competition with Vietnam. In the pattern of rivalry and interference between Siam and Vietnam, the role of the regional lords of Hatien was one of the main elements which consistently weakened Cambodia. The control of a potential port city was an important reason why these regional nobles were able to expand their power vis-a-vis Cambodian royal power. Meanwhile, they played a critical role in facilitating the Vietnamese expansion in Cambodia.

However, Cambodia from the late eighteenth century onwards experienced external interference. This interference left the country devastated and deeply affected the formation of a Cambodian polity. As for Hatien, its potential for commerce began to attract the interest of the Thai and the Vietnamese, both of whom were determined to take control of Hatien. In the period between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Hatien also suffered extensive wars, devastation and depopulation by the Thai, as will be discussed in following chapters.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., pp. 107-108, 111.
CHAPTER III
SIAM'S QUEST FOR SURVIVAL

In a relatively short time after the Ayudhyan kingdom had been completely destroyed by the Burmese in 1767, the Thai had successfully rebuilt up its military and economic power so that they were able to stand up as one of the powerful states in the mainland Southeast Asia again. It is generally recognised that overseas trade was the most significant factor in Siamese economic development from the time of King Taksin's reign. Trade was the impetus for the rapid expansion of the country's manufacturing production and brought prosperity and power for the Thai ruling class. But this notable advancement was not simple as Siam encountered several difficulties throughout the period of economic achievement. The key to overcoming the difficulties and the struggle towards supremacy in the region was the expansion of Siam's control over the natural resources and sources of manpower along the trans-Mekong region. This chapter will discuss the economic conditions which Siam experienced between the period from the reign of King Taksin (r.1767-1782) to Rama III (r.1782-1809). This will provide a basis for further discussion of why the consolidation and contest of power for the trans-Mekong region was indispensable in the struggle for the revival of Siam.

Searching for Commodities

The fall of Ayudhya had an enormous impact on Siam's politico-economic position. Agricultural and trade activities were abandoned. The country confronted serious famine which was further aggravated by droughts and floods. The number of people who died of starvation in the first year of Taksin's reign was probably higher than that of those who were killed in the war with Burma. Continued

1 "Chotmaihet khong phuak balthuang farangset nai phaendin phrachao ekhat, khrang kruno
sporadic warfare with Burma and the struggle among local rivals further exacerbated the problems. It was a time of chaos particularly in the central Chaophraya basin, where many towns had been depopulated by the Burmese. The scarcity of manpower made the country's revival more difficult. To rebuild the kingdom, the kings had to make an effort to revive trade and mobilise people to resettle in their domain. Several studies demonstrate that the Sino-Siamese trade in particular was a lifeline for speeding up the kingdom's economy. The involvement of private commercial ventures in overseas trade which was promoted by the kings expanded significantly. During the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods, overseas trade contributed the major proportion of state revenue. Revenue from trade enabled the Siamese government to purchase imported goods essential for the country's rehabilitation as well as things for warfare against the Burmese and local rivals, such as weapons, salt-petre, building materials, metal goods, chinaware, earthenware, textiles and the foodstuffs.

The expansion of overseas trade, nevertheless, could hardly have been achieved unless Siam was able to retain its stability and role as the dominant power in the major trading networks, as well as the ability to mobilise people to serve as suppliers of products for trade. The other aspect of this was that an increasing population would provide a greater demand for imported products. The dense population of the Siamese-dominated area would certainly have stimulated


3 Cushman's examination of imported Chinese goods in the early nineteenth century shows that they were not only for the Siamese elites, such as luxurious goods as was previous believed, but also for general consumption at all levels of society. See Cushman, Fields From the Sea, (1993), p. 74; Also, Sarasin, op.cit., pp. 144-149.
economic activity, and have attracted more traders to come. Thus, the shift of population could mean a shift of trade as well. Stable conditions would bring a return to economic activity in the area of the dominant power - connecting interior trade and the port cities; facilitating the flow of goods in form of suai (head tax); encouraging local ventures from the interior to the port cities and vice versa; and attracting foreign merchants to visit its ports. Such conditions required either amicable relations with or else power consolidation over surrounding polities, which provided the sharing of benefits from the trading networks. The dominant power could attract people to come to trade at its port cities by maintaining alliances with local officials. The expansion of hegemony rendered a higher concentration of resources from distant principalities. The rebuilding of Siam therefore depended on the integration of manpower and trade from the distant areas. The period between 1767 and 1851 saw the expansive consolidation of Thai power over the major trading routes, extensive mobilisation of manpower from the trans-Mekong basin and subsequent concentration of economic resources.

It should be noted that the Khorat Plateau had become significant to Siam in the seventeenth century. Prior to that the Khorat Plateau had been virtually recognised by both the Lao and Siamese kingdoms as a boundary region. After the successive crises in the left bank of the Mekong, which brought a continuous influx of Lao people to resettle in the Khorat Plateau, in the seventeenth century, the Thai began to advance their influence in the area. King Narai (r.1656-88) established Nakhon Ratchasima, in the old town called Khorat, as an outpost of Ayudhya. The division of Lan Chang resulted in Siamese expansion into the Khorat plateau. The growing power of the Siamese over the area seems to have been linked to the expansion of Ayudhya's overseas trade, since the area was well-known for its forest products,

which were in high demand in the overseas market. The influx of Lao migrants acted as gatherers and suppliers of forest products for Ayudhya.

However, the Thai control of the area remained minimal. Tributes and taxes from the area were conveyed to Ayudhya on an irregular basis. Until the eighteenth century, however, the Thai monarchs had begun to intensify their control over the Khorat Plateau and the left bank in order to concentrate the resources for state revenue and trade. The area was more effectively integrated, both administratively and economically, into the central power based at Thonburi/Bangkok than ever before. Between 1767 and 1882, about 150 new muang were created in the Khorat Plateau, Laos and western Cambodia. The Thai asserted control over the chao muang, provincial governors, who usually were indigenous elites in the localities. The local elites had duties of levying manpower and suai payment for the capital. In return, the chao muang were empowered to administrate local affairs and villagers. In other words, the creation of new muang was a step towards greater centralisation by Thonburi/Bangkok.

Suai or head tax was a substitute for corvée labour obligations collected in kind or currency from the phrai (commoners) who were registered as lek suai or able-bodied men subject to suai payment to the court (for further details of the suai system, see discussion on the Siamese administrative system in the Battambang region in Chapter Six). The importance of the suai payment to the Thai economy was that they provided significant proportion of the commodities for the royal junk trade from the Ayudhyan period up until the early Bangkok period. The royal trading junks usually contained forest products for overseas trade since they were low in weight but highly priced in the Chinese market, while the private trading ventures usually conveyed export crops such as rice which occupied a larger volume but yielded a lower profit per unit than the forest goods. Besides, the suai
system significantly contributed to the profitability of royal trading ventures, for it minimised the expenditure of the royal trade. The suai system was especially significant for Siam’s economy between the period of Taksin and Rama I, since the agricultural activities of the kingdom had not yet been nursed back to health. Trade was undertaken for the main purpose of survival rather than for profit. Although the Thai kings tried to promote private ventures, they were the country’s chief traders because they were the only people who could gain substantial amount of products from the suai payment. 5 The composition of export goods of Siam during the Thonburi and the First Reign of the Chakri Dynasty was mainly based on forest products, including ivory, cardamom, gamboge, rhinoceros horn, animal hides, skin, peacock feathers, elephant, sappan wood and eagles.6 It seems likely that the Siamese government was able to secure part of the commodities from the suai imposition. It was a much easier way to secure products from the distant and undevastated regions.

By the Second Reign, Siam confronted a new economic difficulty. The royal monopoly system began to be challenged. The system was not only a major source of revenue for the Thai monarchs, but also for the aristocrats, who largely participated in foreign trade as will be discussed below, and who also shared the benefits. Siam was increasingly confronted by difficulties with western merchants who demanded the liberalisation of trade. The internal administration was required to adapt in response to the western demands. In 1825, Rama III announced the abolition of the monopoly on various export articles and a commercial treaty with

5 Hong, op.cit., pp. 42-44,46.
the British mission led by Henry Burney was signed in 1826. The king turned to an internal source of revenue, the tax farming system, which had been inherited from the Ayudhyan period. However, it was applied more extensively during the Third Reign. An additional thirty-eight items such as pepper, teak, coconut oil, sugar, tobacco, shrimp paste, iron pans and firewood were taxed. The system was operated under royal permission given to private individuals, usually Chinese, to collect taxes on certain products from people in a certain area within a specific period. In return, the king obtained the amount of money offered by the prospective tax farmer. Both Hong and Nidhi agree that the successful shift to the tax farming system as the major source of state revenue was a result of royal promotion of private commercial ventures to engage in foreign trade after the Thonburi period. In response to the increasing demand of the world market, the capacity of the country's production consequently expanded and thus could sustain the extensive use of the tax farming system by the state.⁷

Although Hong and Nidhi appreciate the abandonment of the royal trading monopoly system and the shift of the major source of state revenue as a successful achievement of the Thai kings in response to the changing economic situation, it is obvious that towards the end of the Second Reign the Siamese government confronted several difficulties which required it to seek another revenue resource. This further demonstrates its ability to adapt to changing situations. Although the foreign trade of Siam with both China and western countries was expanding during the Second Reign, the government suffered a crisis of revenue shortage as its expenditure was higher than its revenue. In some years Rama II had to reduce to about half the amount of biawat, or grants for members of the royal family and the

nobility, even substituting the *biawat* with products gained from the *suai* payment.\(^8\)

The Royal Treasury was at a disadvantage in the royal junk trade with China.\(^9\) In some years, the price of export products for the Chinese market fluctuated, bringing a lower profit or disadvantaging Siamese junks.\(^10\) Although this was not the case for every year, and the trade with China was still the most important for Siam, such instability coupled with the revenue crisis of the government would have influenced the king to seek another channel of income.

The response was an increased effort to expand trade with the west. Rama II initially sent royal vessels to trade with the Portuguese in Macau. Soon afterwards, in 1818, the Portuguese envoy from Macau led by Don Carlos Manoel Silviera arrived in Bangkok with a mission to set up commercial relations. They received a licence to trade, and to act as a trading agent for ships of their own countrymen trading with Siam. They later established a consulate, and a warehouse in Bangkok. The existence of the Portuguese warehouse thus can be seen as a measure to guarantee a fixed demand for Siamese products. In the same year, trade with the United States was also initiated. By the end of the 1820s, Siam steadily evolved its intercourse with western traders centred at the British Strait Settlements (B.S.S.) in Singapore, which had arisen as a trading centre in the region since its establishment in 1819. The value and amount of commercial intercourse between Singapore and Siam continued to expand. Furthermore, the emergence of the B.S.S. helped extend Siamese trade with other ports in the Indian Archipelago including Kelantan, Trengganu, Pahang on the Malay Peninsula, Riau, Melaka, Penang, Batavia, Semarang, Ceribon, Palembang, and Potianak. Staple exports from Siam included


\(^{9}\) Hong, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-47.

\(^{10}\) Sarasin, *op.cit.*, p. 225
sugar, pepper, salt, oil, rice, and minor articles such as stic-lac, iron pans, coarse earthenware, and lard.\textsuperscript{11}

With the development of trade with western countries, pressure on the Siamese state to adjust its economic structure became evident as the royal monopoly system was challenged. The pressure came from the British in particular. In 1821, the unofficial British mission led by John Morgan arrived at the court of Rama II, hoping to create a commercial treaty, but nothing came of the venture. Soon afterward came another British mission under the charge of John Crawfurd with a purpose of establishing "free trade" with Siam: that is to set up a fixed tariff schedule, for the western traders were confronted with heavy duties on an irregular basis in contrast to smaller Chinese traders who paid little or none. The mission, nevertheless, failed again. The failure of the British mission was understandable for their demands would have meant a loss in direct revenues for the court people and the royal treasury.\textsuperscript{12} Nevertheless, it appears that at least the Siamese government tried to adjust itself in order to please the western nations. Officially, twenty kinds of products were announced as being under the royal monopoly, but, in fact, Rama II reduced the number of monopolised export products to include only the products that were carried by the royal trading junks in great quantity. Thus, many goods in high demand in the outside market, such as tin, dried meat, dried fish, dried shrimp, cotton, animal skins, and timber for ship construction could be purchased by the western traders. Furthermore, although the Crawfurd mission failed to establish a free trade treaty, Rama II promised to reduce the duty levied on the size of vessel if at least five British vessels would come to Bangkok annually.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 204-7.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 225-26.

\textsuperscript{13} Nidhi, Pak-\textit{kaik l\ae  bai-rua}, p. 96.
Finally, in 1825, Rama III decided to abandon the royal trading monopoly.

By the Third Reign, trade with western nations was increasingly significant when a crisis between China and Great Britain broke out into the Opium war in 1839-1842. The British had been dissatisfied with the tributary trading system of China, which gave privileges to Asian tributary junks, but discriminated against western and private vessels. Within the tributary system, the Asian tributary junks were granted exemption from all import-export duties by the Chinese government. It thus made the capital outlay of western ventures more expensive. Besides, the western merchants were limited to trade only at Kwangtung, which was a small market, and often that trade had to be conducted through the trading agents. The Opium War ended with China's agreement on the Nanking Treaty in 1842, bringing into effect the abolition of the tributary system and the opening of Chinese markets for western nations.\(^{14}\)

The decline in the Sino-Siamese trade began at the outset of the Opium War since the route to China became too dangerous for trading ventures. Direct access to the Chinese market further decreased the importance of Siam as an entrepôt of Chinese goods for western vessels. The War consequently caused the number of Siamese royal junks trading to China to decline.\(^{15}\) As a result of the decline in Sino-Siamese trade, it became imperative for Siam to develop its trade with the West in order to maintain the constant level of state revenue. During the crisis in China, the volume of Siam's trade with the B.S.S in Singapore notably increased (see Table 3.1). Perhaps because of the decline in the revenue from the Chinese trade, the Thai court decided to turn back to its former source of revenue, the royal monopoly system. In

\(^{14}\) Cushman, Field From the Sea, pp. 135-36.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
1841, Rama III violated the commercial treaty with the west by reinstating the royal monopoly system on teak, and on sugar in 1842-43. As sugar was often in high demand by western merchants, this resulted in the higher price of sugar in the market. The profit the government obtained from sugar exports increased from the previous year to thirty percent. The switch back to the monopoly system by Rama III reveals the difficulties the Siamese ruling class underwent in the changing conditions in the world market. In an attempt to survive in the competitive trading world, the king decided to adapt his trading system to the western style. However, the monopoly system remained the immediate source of wealth when the king wanted to prevent the decline of his profitability.16

Table 3.1 Singapore's Trade with Siam in Spanish Dollars

Table: Singapore's Trade with Siam in Spanish Dollars

Please see print copy for image


In coping with the above difficulties, Siam required a higher concentration of resources to substitute for what it had lost by giving up the royal trading monopoly

and for the decline of trade with China. The increasing volume of trade under pressure from the western nations demanded the Thai kings make an effort to expand the volume of export articles, both forest products and staple crops. The ability to advance domestic production was possible because Siam successfully increased its population for the country’s production process. However, trade expansion also demanded effective control over the major trading networks in the region, to facilitate the flow of goods from distant areas to the capital and vice versa. The tax farming system can be seen as another effective means to facilitate the flow of local products to the centre. It created economic links between Bangkok and the remote areas, through tax farmers setting up tax farms on certain items in a certain district and petitioning the king to allow them to be in charge of tax collection on the items. The farmers not only collected tax in currency but also in kind, the products being either sold to different regions or exported. They often had monopoly rights to purchase the items over which they held tax farms. Some tax farmers participated in local administration and held responsibility of conveying the suai payment and purchasing local products for the government.17

Although by the Second Reign agricultural products had become a major component of Siam’s export and the amount supplied by suai payment or forest goods alone could not meet the growing demand for more types and quantity of goods for the foreign market, there is no evidence of any intention of the Siamese government to give up the acquisition of forest products through the suai system. Instead, by the Third Reign, when the Thai moved to firmly establish domination in the trans-Mekong region and forced resettlement took place on a vast scale, the amount of suai payment from the Northeast increased remarkably. The fruitfulness of the suai accounts reveals that the imposition of suai obligation on northeastern

17 Hong, op.cit., pp. 86-87, 91-93.
Siam, Laos and western Cambodia was better organised than it had previously been. It not only shows the greater efficiency of Bangkok in the acquisition of local products from distant areas, but was evidence of the successful concentration of resources derived from extensive consolidation of Siamese power over the trans-Mekong basin.

It was not only the king who secured revenue for himself and for the state's use from the expansion of trade and the concentration of resources from distant regions, but individual courtiers also obtained substantial profit from them. Hong demonstrates well the political and economic power of the high-ranking princes and nobles particularly the ministers of the Krom Mahatthai (Interior - responsible for the North and the Northeast), the Krom Kalahom (Defence - responsible for the South) and the Phra Khlang (Treasury - responsible for the east coast). They maintained absolute power over manpower in the territory under their responsibilities. As the traditional administrative system of Siam gave them wide-ranging powers over military, political and economic affairs in their areas, they were able to gain personal advantage from their performance of several functions, especially the collection of revenue for the state. They could deduct their administrative expenses from the revenue collection, without an effective state organ to check on them.¹⁸ The greater size of the population meant the greater benefits they were able to gain. This suggests that they too benefited from the influx of population into the Siamese domain. It appears that after Taksin successfully besieged Hatien and Cambodia in 1772, he distributed a number of his war captives to Chao Phraya Yommarat, later Rama I, who joined the expedition.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 13-16.
¹⁹ "Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi" (Records Concerning the Expeditions in the Thonburi Period), in PP 66, p. 145.
The creation of the princes of krom rank (literally unit or department) by Rama II reflected the idea of power and interest distribution the king shared with the ambitious royal members. The princes' krom were to be granted a body of manpower to rule over instead of town. It was not only to dignify the princes, but also to give them wealth. This could be seen as the way the king had to distribute interest in order to contend with their alliances. The princes of krom rank tried to enlarge their entourage for their own profit and possessed a large number of phrai som, which automatically resulted in the decrease of the number of phrai luang of the king. Thus, sometimes caused tension and conflict between the kings and the princes. 20

The high-ranking Siamese officials and members of the royal families had always been involved in the overseas trade. They often exploited the channel of tributary trade by fitting out their junks as part of the tributary mission so that they did not have to pay duty as private ventures did. The kings even allowed the nobles who did not have their own junks to make profit by using some tonnages in the royal junks for their goods. Such methods formed the basis of the remarkable expansion of the Sino-Siamese trade during the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods. The rank and power provided them with privileges in securing export products at low expense. As the three ministers undertook responsibilities for the suai payment and purchasing local products for the court, they were likely to carry on their own business at the same time. The rate of official purchasing was generally known to be lower than that of the private traders. Chaophraya Bodindecha, for example, while performing his duty in Cambodia in the 1830s, ordered the caravan suai from the Champassak territory to carry his goods, including five ivory tusks and four

21 TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1199/52.
22 Nidhi, Pakkai lae bai-rua, pp. 101-4.
resources. The encroachment was carried out in various forms, including the imposition of suai payment and tax farming, forced resettlement, and the creation of new towns and central administration in the remote areas. It was in this respect that the trans-Mekong region is so significant for the development of the Siamese economy between the Thonburi and the early Bangkok periods. But things were not so easy as the expansion of Vietnam began to threaten profitability and the security of Siam in the trans-Mekong area. These two contending states made attempts to control both the inland and the coastal trading networks in order to procure the commodities which formed an important part of their overseas trade and to expand their domestic trade networks.

**Summary of Political Events, 1767-1851**

Before I start examining the Thai interventions in Cambodia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is appropriate to first summarise the political situation between 1767 and 1851 in order to make the significance of the economic factors clearer.

Intensive competition between the Thai and the Vietnamese in order to exercise tight political control over Cambodia began in the early Thonburi period. Vietnamese influence at the Cambodian court had been strong during the period of the Thai-Burmese war. A year after ascending the throne, King Taksin dispatched a demand for royal tribute to the Cambodian court of Ang Ton (Phra Narai Racha to use the Thai title), as a sign that his superiority should be honoured. Ang Ton apparently refused to recognise Taksin as a legitimate king, indicating that the latter had no blood tie with the Ayudhyan dynasty, but was a usurper. Moreover, Ang Ton received two fugitive Ayudhyan princes, Chao Srisang and Chao Thuy, seeking military assistance against Taksin's faction. Later, the princes fled to Hatien. Soon
after Taksin’s faction was able to consolidate power, he launched an expedition against Hatien and Cambodia at the juncture of 1771 and 1772, during which the Nguyen court of Vietnam was pre-occupied with the Tay Son revolt (1771-1802), led by the three brothers Nguyen Nhac, Nguyen Lu, and Nguyen Hue.23 Both Hatien and Cambodia were brought under Thai suzerainty, and Ang Ton and Mac Thien-tu fled to southern Vietnam. Taksin placed his Cambodian protege Ang Non or Phra Ramracha, who had taken refuge in Siam before the fall of Ayudhya, on the Cambodian throne and appointed his own official as the governor of Hatien.24 However, not long after that Ang Non and the Siamese army were driven out from Udong and Phnom Penh by the Vietnamese troops, which reinstated Ang Ton. Ang Non fled to Kampot. The continued struggle caused such turbulence in the kingdom that Ang Ton finally decided to abdicate in favour of his rival in 1775. Ang Ton himself took the position of the Uppayoreat, and died two years later.25

By 1777, the Tay Son rebels were able to conquer much of central and south Vietnam, and the eldest brother subsequently proclaimed himself emperor of Vietnam. Losing the battle, Mac Thien-tu decided to take refuge at the Thonburi court. But a few years later he was executed by Taksin. This came as a result of the Tay Son conspiracy to make Taksin falsely accuse Thien-tu of plotting against

23 The dynastic chronicles revised during the Bangkok period indicate that the first expedition against Cambodia, which was led by Phraya Aphaironart (later Rama I), and his brother, Phraya Anuchitracha (later the Front Palace ruler of Rama I), took place in 1769. But once the expedition was successful in seizing Siemreap and Battambang, the Siamese troops had to abandon the battlefield and return to Thonburi hurriedly because of the false news that there was chaos in the capital. (see, Thiphakorawongse, PKRR I. pp. 19-20). However, according to Nidhi, it is likely that the 1769 expedition never happened, and that this part of the chronicle was revised in order to save face for the Bangkok king, who had launched an unsuccessful attack on Nakhon Srithammarat. See Nidhi Aeusrivongse, Prawattisat rattanakosin nai phraratchaphongsawadan ayudhya (History of Bangkok in the Dynastic Ayudhyan Chronicles), (Bangkok, Thai Khadi Studies Institute, 1980), pp. 43-44.


25 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR I, p. 22.
Taksin. Meanwhile, in 1779, Thai domination in Cambodia was challenged when Ang Non was executed by the anti-Thai nobility who then placed Prince Eng, a seven-year-old son of Ang Ton, on the throne. Taksin despatched an army led by the future Rama I to counter the anti-Thai Khmer faction. Before the Thai army could capture Udong, there was political agitation against Taksin, and the army had to return immediately to Thonburi. Three years later when Rama I had become ruler (r. 1782-1809), turmoil in Cambodia forced Eng to take refuge at Rama I's court, where he had to stay for twelve years. During Eng's refuge in Bangkok, Ta-la-ha Baen, a Khmer noble who worked for the Thai, took full control of the kingdom with Rama I's approval. One of his crucial services to the Thai was to suppress the anti-Thai factions in Cambodia. At the same time as Eng's refuge in Bangkok, Rama I warmly received Prince Nguyen Anh, who had lost the battle to the Tay Son. Nguyen Anh was a young nephew of Ton That Xuan and the Nguyen lord of the south, Dinh Vuong. Rama I amiably supplied Khmer troops several times for the Vietnamese Prince to fight against the rebellion. After Nguyen Anh had defeated the Tay Son rebellion and proclaimed himself Emperor Gia Long (r. 1802-19) of the unified Vietnam, the two continued friendly relations until the end of Rama I's reign.

In 1794, Rama I decided to send Eng back to reside in Udong, and granted him the Thai title of Somdet Phra Narairama. This was a gesture demonstrating Bangkok's permission for Eng to be king. At the same time as Eng's coronation, Rama I removed Battambang and Siemreap from Eng's jurisdiction in order to grant them to Baen, who was apparently antagonistic to Eng and his adopted father Ta-la-ha

27 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR I, pp. 27, 42-3.
28 Ibid., pp. 27-29.
Pok. Baen became a *chao muang*, or governor, of the two provinces under Thai suzerainty. The period of Eng's reign was characterised by strong Thai influence. However, not long after his return to Cambodia, Eng died in 1796. As Eng's eldest son, Prince Chan, was just six years old, Rama I appointed Ta-la-ha Pok as Regent with full administrative power. Pok could retain a free hand over Cambodian affairs. Rama I was possibly satisfied with Pok's service as he actively responded to the former's dispatch by sending Khmer troops to assist the Thai against the Burmese in 1797, and to assist Nguyen Anh against the Tay Son revolt in 1799, at Bangkok's orders.

The period of strong Thai domination did not last long after peace returned to Vietnam. The accession of Gia Long in 1802, followed by Prince Chan's ascension in 1806 (r. 1806-1835) after Pok's death in the same year, marked an early decline of Thai influence in Cambodia. An immediate aim of Gia Long was his intention of restoring Cambodia's tributary relations. In 1805, a Vietnamese embassy carried Gia Long's letter and gifts to Udong, advising that he now was the Vietnamese emperor. After Chan's ascension, he quickly demonstrated his goodwill to the court of Gia Long by sending Khmer officials to inform the latter of his succession. Gia Long exercised his suzerainty by granting Chan a set of Sino-Vietnamese symbols of investiture and a letter of permission for Chan to rule over Cambodia. The Cambodian mission subsequently travelled to Hué for the submission of tribute.

The prominent feature of Cambodia under Chan's reign was its anti-Thai orientation and strong Vietnamese domination. The explanation for Chan's animosity toward

29 ibid., pp. 143-44.
31 "Nong Chronicle," in PP. 1, p. 279.
the Bangkok kings, first given by Prince Damrong, is that it was the result of his spending his youth under close supervision in the faction-ridden Cambodian court. Unlike his father, who had lived and been educated in Bangkok for twelve years, Chan was likely to have been influenced by the anti-Thai nobles. They wanted to return Battambang to Cambodia's jurisdiction. Besides, Chan personally antagonised Rama I by offences against palace protocol during his visits to Bangkok in 1802 and 1805. From the Thai point of view, the re-establishment of the Nguyen court encouraged Chan to act vigorously towards Bangkok since he could expect support from the other side once he had Chan re-established tributary relations with Gia Long in 1807.32

His dissidence against the Bangkok king was more apparent after Rama I died in 1809. Chan did not join the royal cremation of Rama I in Bangkok but he sent his full brother, Prince Snguon and his half brothers, Prince Im and Prince Duang. The action demonstrated contempt for Rama II since the rulers of all tributary states were expected to be there. Rama II certainly could discern Chan's dissidence. Therefore, without any precedent, Rama II bestowed on Snguon the title Upravorach, the first viceroy, and on Im the Upraracha, the second viceroy, granting them insignia of rank during their visit in Bangkok. The appointment signified the legitimate candidacy of the two princes for the Cambodian throne.

Rama II's action of sustaining Bangkok's power obviously polarised the Cambodian court into pro-Thai and pro-Vietnamese factions. After the group of Snguon had returned to Udong, conflict with Chan suddenly broke out. In 1810, Phraya Chakri (Baen), and Phraya Kalahom (Muang), both of whom had accompanied Snguon to Bangkok, were put to death by Chan. While in Kampong

Svai, Phraya Decho (Main), who had a close tie with the Thai, cautiously mobilised troops in his srok. Both sides were on the alert. Chan also feared a sudden attack from the other side, instantly requesting Vietnamese protection. A Vietnamese naval contingent with approximately ten thousand troops soon arrived in Udong, forcing Main to flee to Bangkok. Meanwhile, Rama II dispatched troops from Nakhon Ratchasima to defend and fortify Battambang and Siemreap, for he was worried about the Vietnamese capture of the two provinces. Finally, Chan's three brothers and a group of Khmer officials secretly escaped to northwestern Cambodia where, with support from the Thai forces, a battle against Chan broke out. Snguon appeared to be so confident of Thai support that he demanded Chan grant him three srok to the south of Pursat. Snguon's forces advanced to seize Sombor, Kampong Chanang, and Udong. When news of Snguon's advance reached Chan, the Vietnamese hastily took Chan and his followers downriver to Saigon. Concerned with the security of Snguon, whom the Thai expected to be a candidate for the Cambodian throne, Rama II ordered him and his followers to follow Im and Duang to Bangkok. Snguon died of illness in Bangkok in 1815. Chan moved from Udong to reside in Phnom Penh, where the Vietnamese warships could approach more easily than Udong.

The attempt to reassert Thai power over the Cambodian court was unsuccessful throughout Rama II's period, although Chan still sent the annual tribute to Rama II. Chan's alliance with Vietnam appeared to be painful and expensive for Cambodia, since the process of Vietnamisation of Cambodia began and continued into the reign


of Chan's daughter, Queen Mei (r.1835-1840). The extensive Vietnamisation eventually brought Cambodian provincial leaders into local revolts against the Vietnamese.

An attempt to restore Bangkok's influence took place again during the reign of Rama III (r.1824-1851). The Thai expedition against the Vietnamese began in 1833 when news of the Le van Khoi revolt in southern Vietnam against Emperor Minh Mang (r.1819-41) reached Bangkok. The army commander of the Thai force was Chaophraya Bodindecha, who had led the attack against the Chao Anu revolt between 1827-1828. Intensive warfare between the two rivals continued until 1847. In the early stages of the war, the Thai appeared to lose the battle and retreat. In 1835, the conditions in Cambodia turned favourable for the Thai when Chan died unexpectedly. Chan left four daughters, but no son, while the Thai still held two Cambodian princes, Im and Duang, under their custody. Although the Vietnamese installed Princess Mei as queen, the Thai hoped that the princes would be able to draw loyalty and support from the okya. Unfortunately, in 1839, while Im accompanied Bodin to station in Battambang, he and his followers secretly fled to seek Vietnamese protection with the expectation of becoming king. Duang then was sent from Bangkok to Battambang to replace Im. As a matter of fact, Rama III suspected him of seeking Vietnamese support in 1837 and had held him Bangkok, but apparently he was the only alternative the Thai had left. During the protracted 14-year war Cambodia was in a state of catastrophe. Finally, military stalemate


36 "Chotmaihe kieokap khmen lae yuan nai ratchakan thi sam" (Records Concerning Cambodia and Vietnam during the Third Reign), in PP 67/42, pp. 146-48.

37 Chotmaihe ruang thap yuan khrang ratchakan thi sam (Records Concerning the Expeditions Against Vietnam During the Third Reign), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for General Chaophrya Singhaseni, 1933), p. 61.
compelled the two rivals to begin negotiations. Duang (r. 1848-1860) then ascended the throne after a peace settlement with the authorisation of both the Thai and the Vietnamese under the condition that he was obliged to send annual tribute to Bangkok and triennial tribute to Hué.

The events summarised here will be used to support the argument of the thesis that political struggle was necessary for the major rivals to take control of economic resources, not that politics was itself the cause of conflict.
CHAPTER IV
CONTENTION FOR TRADE

This chapter examines the significance of Cambodia as part of the trans-Mekong region from Laos to the Mekong Delta, the major source of forest goods for overseas trade of the surrounding polities. The control of Cambodia and other parts of the Mekong basin had been crucial for Siamese economic development since the Thonburi period. It was because of this that Siam's extensive encroachment into Cambodia in competition with Vietnam took place. As products from the area were carried through its vast trading network connecting hinterland with the port towns, it was imperative for the two rivals to compete with each other in order to monopolise Cambodia's wealth and take control of the trade network and resources. In discussion the contention for trade, it is appropriate to first give an idea of how traders from Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Siam formed relations, and the extent of the economic significance of Cambodia as part of this trading network by providing some detail about the trading network along the Gulf of Siam and the trans-Mekong basin.

Trading Networks

Despite fragmentary documentation, many historical works briefly mention the overland routes along the trans-Mekong basin, which had existed for some time (for this section, see Map I). In the middle Mekong basin, five passages north of Cambodia served in times of peace as trade routes: the basins of three middle left-bank rivers (the Ca Dinh, Bang Fai and Bang Hieng), the Phuan state, and the Thaeng (Dien Bien Phu) plain. People could travel between Vietnam and the left-bank basin through three passes: the Keo Neua, Mu Gia and Ai Lao, where
travellers could continue navigation by way of three tributaries of the Mekong: the Bang Hieng, Bang Fai and Ca Din. However, the rapids of the first two rivers could only be navigated by small boats for part of the year, depending on the rainfall. From there one could reach Northeast Siam. From the left-bank Lao towns to Siam, traders could cross the Mekong river to Nongkhai, via the Khorat Plateau to Nakhon Ratchasima, and then down through the heavily forested hills to the river, landing north-east of Bangkok. The second route was to leave the Mekong farther up-river at Paklai, the southernmost town of the Luang Phrabang principality, and to continue the journey overland through forested hills to the boat landings above Phichai, from where it took about twelve days travelling down-river to Bangkok. The Phuan traders brought down some high value export goods, such as, ivory, gold, cinnamon, gum benjamin, cardamom and rhinoceros horn. In return, salt was perhaps the most precious imported item for they had no salt-works. Salt was brought overland by Phuan porters from the coast of Annam and from various Lao salt-works in Luang Phrabang territory. It was also purchased from Vietnamese traders who carried salt on their backs across the cordillera and sold it on the banks of the Mekong to the south of the Plateau area.

Imports from Bangkok, including Chinese, European, Indian, and even Siamese manufactures, reached the Phuan State indirectly by way of the Lao towns. George Vinal Smith refers to the Lao traders coming to trade with Ayudhya. It was they who supplied the export goods, such as benzoin, gumlac and gold for Ayudhya, and in return they carried Indian cloth, red yarn, and opium back.

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Traders from Laos and the Khorat Plateau to Bangkok always travelled through the passes - Chong Chom, Chong Tago, and Chong Samet - in the Dongrek Range via Prachinburi, instead of crossing the Dong Phrayayen Range in the central Northeast which was a malaria-infested and deserted area. Chong Samet was the usual route used by people carrying tribute to Bangkok.4

Apart from Siam, Cambodia was an alternative route by which merchandise from the middle Mekong basin went down to the sea. The account by Wuysthoff tells of local trade along the Mekong river between Laos and Cambodia. In this border region between Laos and Cambodia in the seventeenth century was situated the commercial town of Sombok, which was also the major place from which Cambodia could obtain goods from the uplanders.5 Traders usually transported goods down river by boat or a twenty-six-metre-long bamboo raft, until they arrived at the impassable Khone falls in southern Laos, where they would abandon the river route and continue by cart to Cambodia. It took three months to go upstream to Vientiane.6 This trading traffic continued at least until the late nineteenth century.7 Laotian and uplanders' goods continued to meet other Cambodian goods at Phnom Penh before they reached foreign vessels at Hatien or Saigon-Cholon8 (see Chapter Two for the description of Cambodian trade with the


8 After the establishment of Saigon-Cholon in 1778, they became another destinations for products of Cambodia. See William Willmott, "History and Sociology of the Chinese in Cambodia Prior to the French Protectorate," JSEACh, 7,1 (March 1966), p. 27.
uplanders, and with Hatien).

The Vietnamese were the other key traders in the region. Since the Vietnamese southward movement had begun, the uplanders in the central upland area around the present day borders of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were significant to the Nguyen empire as the major suppliers of forest products for Vietnam's foreign trade. The export goods supplied by the uplanders included eaglewood, cinnamon, ebony and other precious woods. The significance of the area prompted the Nguyen rulers to assert their influence over the area. The Nguyen Lord Vo Vuong (r. 1738-65) demanded a submission of tribute from the uplanders of present Suvannakhet province in Laos, west of the Ai Lao pass, which at the time was under Vientiane's authority. Probably at the same time Vo Vuong initiated tributary relations with the Jarai rulers, the King of Fire and the King of Water, so that the two latter would help them protect the routes and forests. The Ai Lao Pass was likely to be the most important trade route in early Cochin China, connecting Vietnam with Suvannakhet, and Vientiane. The Nguyen created a tollgate at Khang Yen, from where traders had to get a certificate and pay tax before they continued to trade upstream. The uplanders were also subject to pay a kind of head tax to the Nguyen.

Northwestern Cambodia was another alternative route for Laotian and uplanders' goods, some of which were carried further to northeastern and central Siam. Wuysthoff witnessed that twenty six carts came from Angkor to purchase cotton in


La Khon (Nakhon Phnom). Cattle seemed to be one of the significant goods imported from northeastern Siam to Cambodia. In 1778, thirty Vietnamese traders came to purchase cattle at Khukhan, and from there they returned to Phnom Penh. Despite the existence of the Khone falls, the route Bangkok-Prachin Buri-northwestern Cambodia-southern Laos was favoured by travellers, who wanted to avoid the route across the Dong Phrayayen range. On the contrary, the route through Cambodia could furnish travellers with an abundance of food. An instance of this is that, in 1775, the Siamese army passed through northwestern Cambodia in order to collect food supplies, before continuing on to attack Champassak and Vientiane.

Products from western Cambodia could also reach Chanthaburi and Trad overland through two border outposts at Dan Pong and Dan Chongkhaep. Chanthaburi and Trad were a collection centres for forest products coming from Cambodia and Vietnam for the Chinese market.

The connection with the overland routes seems to have activated the trade in the coastal area. According to John Crawfurd, there was a distinct trading network along the Siamese Gulf in the early nineteenth century. There existed several ports such as Bang Plasoi, Bang Pakong, Bang Lamung, Rayong, Chanthaburi, Thung Yai or Trad, Kampong Som and Kampot of Cambodia, Hatien, Rach Gia, Ca Mau

(Long-Xuyen) and Saigon.\textsuperscript{15} The network involved the Siamese, Cambodian, Cochin Chinese, Chinese, and western traders. A number of vessels from Cochin China came to Hatien to purchase rice, wax, ivory, and other forest goods. Pepper, which apparently was in high value in Cochin China, was the major product of Kampot that attracted the Cochin Chinese traders to visit. They brought salt to sell at Kampot in turn.\textsuperscript{16} The Siamese junks on the way to China often visited those ports, including Fai-fo and Huê. The purpose of this coasting trade was to collect products consisting of gamboge, cardamom, ivory, hides, horns, dried deer's skin, and salted fish for the Chinese market. In return, some of the imported Chinese, western and Indian goods were re-exported to Cambodia and Vietnam by the Siamese junks visiting those ports. Also exported were Siamese manufactured goods such as metal, sappan wood, iron pans, tobacco, opium, and rice. The number of Siamese junks conducting this traffic was estimated at between forty and fifty, but mostly they were small junks with carrying capacity of sixty to one hundred and eighty tons.\textsuperscript{17}

Based on the above accounts, products from the hinterland had access to several different ports both in the Thai and the Vietnamese influenced areas. Both the Thai and the Vietnamese states had access to the procurements from this interconnected overland and coastal trading network. Peace seems to have been a major factor that attracted local traders to come to trade. For example, the Lao traders shifted their destination from Ayudhya to Cambodia because they were troubled by Siamese


\textsuperscript{16} TNL, CMH, R III C.S. 1204/1/kho/6.

\textsuperscript{17} Crawfurd, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 413-14; Henry Burney, \textit{The Burney Papers}, Vol. II (Bangkok, The Vajirayana National Library, 1911), p. 82.
officials who tried to conscript them into the army. The French missionaries recorded that during the Tay Son revolt in Vietnam, the Vietnamese traders in Tonkin were adversely affected by the turmoil, resulting in shifting their trade to Laos. Hickey also mentions the disruption of trade between the lowland Vietnamese and the uplanders during the Tay Son revolt. However, by the late eighteenth century the changing politico-economic conditions compelled Siam and Vietnam to tighten up their control over the trading networks. The two rivals were determined to monopolise the source of wealth. The ability to control the region's resources was therefore a struggle for power, a struggle which was highly intense for the last part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries.

Early Encroachment

Although Taksin had attained his supremacy by subduing his internal rivals, Siam's political security in relation to the surrounding states was still in danger. The Burmese remained a serious threat to Siam until the 1820s. Apart from the western threat, the Siamese also worried about political security on the eastern side. It appears that the Burmese had been manoeuvring to expand their power into the central Chaophraya basin. Meantime, Burma was expanding its domination over the Lao states. Vientiane and Luang Prabang had been under Burmese suzerainty since 1764, and had assisted Burma in its wars against Siam in 1765. Later, in 1779, Vientiane called upon Burma for aid against the Thai.

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In the lower Mekong basin, Taksin confronted an adversary in Cambodia, as Ang Ton refused to send tribute to Thonburi. However, the most serious threat to Taksin came from Hatien, although the first contact between Taksin and the lord of Hatien, Mac Thien-tu, was not entirely antagonistic. In May 1767, when Taksin and his troops fled from Ayudhya to Rayong, he requested military assistance from Thien-tu to fight against the Burmese, and the latter promised to provide such assistance. But after Taksin's troop advanced to seize Chanthaburi in June 1767, their relations began to deteriorate. Thien-tu allowed Hatien to be an asylum for the governor of Chanthaburi, who had refused to provide co-operation to Taksin. The two Ayudhyan princes, Chao Srisang and Chao Tuy, also fled Cambodia to seek Thien-tu's protection. Taksin had requested Thien-tu to escort the princes back to Siam, but the latter declined to do so. Instead, Thien-tu showed his intention of supporting one of the princes, Chao Srisang to be a candidate for king. He probably considered that he could have played an influential role in the Siamese court if his protege could become king. In 1768, Thien-tu began a conspiracy against Taksin by pretending to agree to send the princes back to Siam. He sent his son-in-law Tu Dung to Siam with a ship loaded with rice, claiming it was for famine relief in Siam. The real objective was in fact to capture Taksin, but the plot was uncovered and Tu Dung was executed. Furthermore, in 1769, Thien-tu dispatched a naval force to attack Chanthaburi and Trad, which was a major base of Thonburi's seaborne commerce. Hatien's troops were defeated.22

Thien-tu's antagonism to Taksin critically obstructed Taksin's endeavour to rebuild the disrupted economy of the kingdom. First, Thien-tu had dispatched a letter to the

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Chinese court in order to discourage it from granting recognition to Taksin as the new Siamese king. He claimed that he was assisting the legitimate Ayudhyan princes to the throne, and that Taksin was without blood ties to the Ayudhyan royal family. Without the recognition of the Chinese court, the Thonburi regime would certainly not have been able to reestablish the Sino-Siamese trade, which had to be conducted on a state-to-state basis within the tributary system. Without establishing this commercial intercourse, Siam's disrupted economy could hardly revive, since it was a major source of state revenue, and contributed all essential goods for the reconstruction of the kingdom. In the early stages, the Chinese court was inclined to believe Thien-tu. But after Taksin had demonstrated his supremacy, they overturned the decision and granted recognition for Taksin.

Another act of aggression was carried out by Thien-tu after his son-in-law, Tu Dung, had been executed by Taksin's army. Thien-tu banned all trade junks sailing from Hatien to Siam. The blockade would more or less exacerbate the famine which was widespread in Siam after the fall of Ayudhya. It is evident that Siam at the time relied on rice imported from Hatien and Cambodia. It possibly also affected the commerce of Chanthaburi and Trad, since their supply and demand of goods were significantly connected with the adjacent interior and ports. The coastal area had been remarkably important for Siam since the Thonburi period, as it was the political and economic base of Taksin, with Chanthaburi being the centre. The Chinese in Chanthaburi and Trad played a significant role in assisting Taksin to consolidate power after the fall of Ayudhya. Moreover, when economic activities in other areas of the kingdom were disrupted, Chanthaburi and Trad were great assets.

23 Chen, op.cit., p. 1549.

24 Dhiravat Na Pombejra (trans.), "Ekasan holanda ruang chumchon thonburi nai pi kho.so.1767-1768" (Dutch Documents about the Thonburi Community in 1767-1768), in Ruam bot khwam prawattisat, 10 (February 1988), pp. 103-13.
for Taksin to be able to secure essential goods from overseas, since they continued to carry on the junk trade with China. Therefore, the security of the eastern coast towns was crucial for Siam's economic revival. But this security also covered the ability to maintain stable relations with the surrounding area since a substantial part of the exports of Chanthaburi and Trad was possibly obtained from Cambodia by overland route from the Battambang region, and from small junks conducted by local traders along the Gulf. It was natural that the Thai must have turned to the prosperity of Cambodia when Siam's agricultural activities and system of revenue collection were yet to work efficiently. It is also evident that during the time of famine, Cambodia and Hatien were the major suppliers of rice for Thonburi. Rice, once an export product during the Ayudhyan period, had to be purchased from ships coming from Hatien and Cambodia. Again, Rama I requested Prince Nguyen Anh to provide rice for Bangkok when Siam was facing drought.

The significance of Chanthaburi greatly increased in the early Bangkok period when the foreign trade of Siam was expanding. Pallegoix recorded that in 1838 twelve Chinese junks visited the port of Chanthaburi. It was the most important centre of pepper plantation in Siam. Pepper was of course in high demand on the Chinese and European markets. Other exports of Chanthaburi included cardamom, gamboge, eaglewood, animal skins, sugar, ivory, wax, tobacco, and salted fish, some of which came from Battambang. Chanthaburi also had its own junk to trade

25 Chen, op.cit., p. 1551; Nidhi, Kan muang thai...thonburi, pp. 68-71.
27 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR I, p. 117.
28 Pallegoix, op.cit., p. 73.
29 Adisorn, Krom Tha kap rabop setthakit thai (Department of Port Authority and the Thai Economy), (1988), pp. 246, 301, 309.
with China. Besides, Chanthaburi became a centre of Siamese ship building. Its importance was reflected in the appointment of the head of the Krom Tha (Department of Port Authority). They always held family ties or other forms of close relationship with the kings. After Rama I had ascended the throne, he replaced the governor of Chanthaburi who was a supporter of Taksin with his own man. Rama III himself, when he had been Krom Mun Jetsadabodin, used to administer the Krom Tha during the reign of Rama II. The governors of Chanthaburi were also nobles experienced in trade, such as Phraya Chodoc Ratchasetthi, the former Minister of Krom Tha. The active commerce of Chanthaburi can be seen by its population which consisted of a large number of Chinese and Cochin Chinese.

The east coast of Siam meant a great deal to trade profitability for the Siamese ruling class. Crawfurd indicates that a considerable number of junks involved in this trading traffic belonged to the Siamese kings and nobles. It was quite common for the Siamese nobles to have local people who knew the local conditions to conduct trade for them. For example, in 1821 Luang Phakdiwanit, a Vietnamese born in Bangkok, served in the field of trade for the Siamese court, carrying out trade between Bangkok, Hatien, Chaudoc, and Saigon twice every year. Phraya Kosathipbodi, the Samuha Kalahom, minister of Defence, also had a Cambodian who had migrated to Bangkok to conduct trade between Bangkok and Kampong Som for him. Some Siamese nobles conducted both maritime and overland trade;

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31 Adisom, op.cit., pp. 115-117.  
32 Pallegoix, op.cit., p. 73; Terwiel, op.cit., 186.  
33 Crawfurd, op.cit., p. 413.  
34 TNL, CMH, R.II C.S. 1183/4.  
35 TNL, CMH, R.III C.S. 1209/7.
for example, Phraya Chodoc Ratchasetthi, the governor of Chanthaburi during the
Second Reign, had the Chinese conduct trade for him between Bangkok and
Battambang. Phraya Chodoc also owned the customs post at Chachoengsao for he
served as the tax farmer of sugar and sugar cane.

The great importance of the trans-Mekong region made it indispensable for Siam to
urgently consolidate domination over the area. Taksin first responded to Thien-tu's
aggressive policy by encouraging the Teochiu adventurers settled along the east
coast of Siam proper down to southern Vietnam to provoke a revolt against Thien-
tu and seize Hatien. The conspiracy failed. Finally, he decided to launch a
campaign against Hatien and Cambodia. Taksin himself led a naval attack on Hatien
and Udong in 1771, while another expedition went overland through northwestern
Cambodia. Hatien and Cambodia were seized by the Siamese troops. The Thai
installed the Cambodian pretender Ang Non on the throne, meanwhile Thien-tu
was compelled to take refuge in southern Vietnam.

Siamese seizure of Hatien, nevertheless, was momentary. In March 1773, peace
talk between Taksin and Thien-tu took place. The agreement was that Thien-tu
ceased to proclaim himself the Cambodian king and handed over the Ayudhyan
prince Chao Srisang to Taksin; in return, Thien-tu received his wives and children
who were captive in Thonburi and the return of Hatien. The rapid Tay Son
expansion to the Mekong Delta subsequently forced Thien-tu to seek asylum in
Thonburi in 1777, leaving the city under the control of the rebellion. In 1782, the
Mac family accompanied Nguyen Anh on his return to fight the Tay Son, and

36 Chen, op.cit., pp. 1550, 1552.

37 “Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi” (Records Concerning the Expeditions in the
Thonburi Period), in PP 66, pp. 134-164.

Hatien was again under the government of members of the Mac family: Mac Tu Sanh (1782-90), Mac Cong Binh (r.1790-1800), Mac Tu Thiem (r.1802-9).  

Although the Thai seizure of Hatien in 1771 did not last long, it is interesting to see that instead of evacuating and resettling people from Hatien, as the Thai always did to other areas in order to increase manpower for Siam, Taksin put out an order to the Siamese troops stationed in Hatien that:

(The Siamese troops) must neither capture nor kill the Chinese and Vietnamese travelling to trade in Hatien, but should seek to persuade people to settle and continue working. Those who violate the order will be punished by death.

The above passage is clear evidence that the attempt to control Hatien was influenced by the trade interests of Siam. It is noteworthy that Taksin appointed a fellow Teochiu, Phraya Phiphit as the governor of Hatien with the rank and title of Phraya Rachasetthi. Phraya Phiphit was well-versed in commerce in this area since he formerly served as a high-ranking official of the Krom Tha. Chen Chingho suggests that Phraya Phiphit was probably a leader of the Teochiu in the area and had undertaken an unsuccessful plot against Hatien in 1769.

Chen's speculation suggests that there was a conflict between the two ethnic Chinese groups. One was the Teochiu in Chanthaburi and its adjacent area, who were supporters of Taksin's regime. The other was the Cantonese, who were in the majority at Hatien. The leaders of the Teochiu in the area had a hostile attitude.

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41 Ibid., p. 143; Narintharathewi, Krom Luang, Chotmaihet khwam songcham khong krom luang Narintharathewi (Memoir of Krom Luang Narintharathewi), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for Princess Wapi Busabakon, 1983), pp. 5, 91.
42 Chen, op.cit., p. 1552-53.
toward Thien-tu. They had unsuccessfully manoeuvred at least two times to seize the city of Hatien. However, I believe that the conflict between the two Chinese ethnicities was based on competition for trade rather than on ethnic difference as emphasised by Chen. Both Taksin and his supporters certainly recognised the bustling trade and prosperity of Hatien, and thus wished to control it.

In Cambodia, while Taksin led the Thai troops from Hatien to attack Phnom Penh, another Siamese army went overland to occupy Battambang, Siemreap, and Pursat. Taksin placed his Cambodian protege Ang Non on the throne, and had the Khmer okya, Ta-la-ha Baen control Battambang and Pursat. With respect to the wealth of the Battambang region, the Thai knew very well that the Great Lake area was rich in food product. The records of French missionaries residing in Thonburi indicate that before Taksin decided to launch a campaign against Hatien and Cambodia in 1771-72, an army of 15,000-20,000 had proceeded in advance to Cambodia in order to prepare rice cultivation for the following army. The area was no doubt the Battambang region. In addition, the Thai records clearly indicate that the reason for the Thai occupation of Battambang during the 1771-72 expedition was its wealth of rice and food products which could well serve their logistical needs. Thus, during the campaign against Laos in 1778, part of the Thonburi army went overland via Cambodia, from where it continued along the Mekong river to raid southern Laos. The Siamese army commander demanded that the Cambodian court of Ang Non mobilise men as well as rice supplies for the Siamese troops. The Khmers in Kampong Svai and Kampong Thom were forced to mill rice for the

43 Ibid., pp. 1550-53.
46 "Chotmaihet raiwan thap," in PP 66, p. 158.
The intensive imposition of rice levies appeared to provoke unrest against the Siamese demands. Furthermore, the Battambang region was an important rice supply for the resettlement area of the forced Lao migrants after the Chao Anu revolt in the 1830s. Rice from Battambang was purchased by using the suai money collected from the northeastern Siamese towns and sent to Nakhon Phnom, Roi-et, Ubon, Yasothon, Khon Kaen, and Suwannaphum. By the 1840s, it appears that Bangkok's concern over the rice supply from Cambodia increased, as Bangkok demanded Duang to dispatch reports of annual rainfall in Cambodia to Bangkok.

The control of the Battambang region would be of great important for the politico-economic security of Siam as well. Its location could make it a buffer zone for the Northeast, the eastern coastal towns, and southern Laos, most of which were increasingly significant for the Siamese economy in the early nineteenth century. The Northeast and southern Laos were the major suppliers of forest products in the forms of suai payment and trade. Therefore, it was necessary to hold the Battambang region under effective Thai control (see discussion on the role of the Khmer elites Battambang and Siemreap in serving the Thai in Chapter Six).

Between the periods of Taksin and Rama I, the Thai successfully consolidated their political power throughout the trans-Mekong region. The major commercial centres of Vientiane, Champassak, Battambang and Phnom Penh came under Siamese domination. Although Thai influence in Cambodia was challenged when Ang Non was executed by the anti-Thai nobility in 1779, the Thai soon recovered their power

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47 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR I, pp. 22-23.


49 TNL, CMH R.II C.S. 1206/193.
when political turmoil occurred in 1782 and subsequently forced Prince Eng to seek refuge in Bangkok. Eng stayed there until 1794, when Rama I crowned him king. Cambodia under the reign of King Eng was strongly dominated by the Thai. In the middle Mekong basin, the kingdoms of Vientiane and Champassak were attacked and brought under Siamese suzerainty in 1779, and Luang Prabang followed soon after. The three Lao kingdoms were then reduced to the status of principalities.50

The Thai seem to have benefited from the political turmoil in Vietnam. Despite the scarcity of documentation, some factors indicate troubles over the overland route in Vietnam during the Tay Son revolt. One instance of this can be seen in the culmination of Tay Son control from North to South Vietnam, including Hatien. In 1774, the Tay Son forces advanced to take control of the port town of Qui Nhon, and subsequently cut off the transport route between Gia Dinh and Hué. As a result, Cochinchina faced a serious famine since the food supply from the Mekong Delta area could not reach there.51 Hickey mentions the disruption of trading activities between the Vietnamese and highlanders who supplied forest products for the former's foreign trade.52 The French missionaries' records explicitly indicate that the Vietnamese traders in Tonkin wanted to avoid the route to the turbulent area of Vietnam. They then had to shift their trade activities to Laos. Unfortunately, those Vietnamese traders were captured and sent to Bangkok.53 It can be discerned that similar effects occurred to trade between Vietnam and the Mekong basin. Local traders from Laos and Cambodia were naturally discouraged from going to Vietnam, but were attracted to carry their products to the Chaophraya basin. Siam

50 Breazeale, The Integration of the Lao States, p. 5.
51 Li, "The Inner Region", p. 161.
52 Hickey, Son of the Mountains, pp. 164-67.
consequently had an opportunity of retaining a monopoly on forest products coming from the trans-Mekong area.

**The Intensification of Conflict**

Conditions ceased to favour the Thai after the rise of Emperor Gia Long in 1802. Thai domination over Cambodia as well as Laos began to be challenged. After three decades of political unrest in Vietnam, the need for economic recovery must have been of the greatest urgency, bringing back into effect the local and foreign trades. The Vietnamese began to make great efforts to re-establish their power, and consequently the economic interests of the Thai in the area deteriorated.

Although Hatien had been under Vietnamese domination since 1782, there is an indication that Hatien remained a vassal of Bangkok, as it appears that in 1809, the governor of Hatien, together with the Lao prince, the governor of Battambang, and Ang Chan, were present at Rama I’s court in order to attend the ceremony of the Emerald Buddha Temple. Bangkok continually attempted to reassert its suzerainty over Hatien. Sellers indicates that after Mac Tu Thiem had died in 1809, Gia Long appointed his own mandarin Ngiem, instead of a member of the Mac family. The Thai court soon dispatched a protest to Gia Long on behalf of the Mac members. The protest was in vain as Gia Long insisted on appointing Ngiem. In 1810, he dispatched a Vietnamese embassy to present tributary gifts to Rama II and to inform the latter that he had already appointed his own mandarin to govern Hatien, giving as a reason that the Mac descendent was an incapable ruler. Rama II was apparently unable to refuse such an arrangement, but could only maintain the Siamese symbols

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54 Narintharathewi, *Chotmaihet khwam songcham*, p. 316.

of suzerainty over Hatien by granting the newly appointed Vietnamese governor a set of insignia. This insignia in fact had been granted by Rama I to the former governor of Hatien, who had passed away. The existence of the insignia and Gia Long's informing of the appointment of the new governor to the Thai court suggest that at least the Thai retained their claim of suzerainty over Hatien until the early period of Rama II. However, after a short time Gia Long decided to turn Hatien from an autonomous entity into a genuine part of the Nguyen empire, and cut off Hatien's tributary relations with Siam. He issued a royal edict announcing that Hatien was a part of the Vietnamese empire and rule, and confirming Ngiem's governorship. However, Ngiem died before he arrived to take his position in Hatien.

Gia Long tried to nurse Hatien back to health as the civil war had ruined its main city and disrupted its socio-economic activities. In 1810, he allowed Hatien to be exempted from all kinds of taxes and to be the only duty-free port of Vietnam. Hatien seems to have been involved in the maritime trade again. Although by the early nineteenth century foreign vessels were attracted by the rise of Saigon-Cholon, Hatien remained a place for obtaining Cambodian products by Siamese junks in the 1820s.

Vietnam's success in depriving Siam from Hatien was a disadvantage to Siamese

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56 Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho.so. 1173 (Records in the Second Reign, Lessor Era 1173 (AD 1811), (1971), p. 60. Interestingly, the Dynastic Chronicle of the Second Reign composed by Prince Damrong states that Gia Long's dispatch to Rama II was to request the return of Hatien to Vietnam. But the document above does not show a sense of request at all. See, Damrongrachanuphap, PKRR II. pp. 78-79.

57 Sellers, op.cit., p. 129.

58 Ibid., p. 130.

ventures in the area. In the 1830s the Vietnamese reimposed a custom post in Hatien. The regulation was directed especially against the Southeast Asian vessels, together with those of Canton, Shanghai, and Macau, all of which were obliged to pay the highest duties, while junks from Ch'aochou paid less, and those of Hainan paid the least.\textsuperscript{60} Foreign vessels were no longer allowed to sail up to Cambodia, but they had to trade through the Vietnamese agents.\textsuperscript{61} French document states that in 1862, for all exported goods from Phnom Penh ten percent of their value had to be paid to the Cambodian government and another ten percent to the Vietnamese customs post at Chaudoc.\textsuperscript{62} As a result the Siamese ventures were confronted with higher costs for Cambodian and Laotian merchandise coming through Hatien.

The Vietnamese appear to have been increasingly concerned over the security of Hatien and the Mekong Delta. Hatien became more important in terms of being a strategic military area. In 1818, Gia Long ordered the southern Vietnamese officials to dig the Vinh Te Canal in order to connect Hatien to Chaudoc and hence to the western part of Saigon. As the natural link between the Vinh Te and Bassac rivers was possible only in the monsoon season, the Vinh Te project facilitated the much easier route between the two rivers so that traders did not have to tranship the goods across the land. Several thousand Cambodians and Vietnamese labourers were forced to carry out the work.\textsuperscript{63} Though it was designed to provide convenient access for the Vietnamese warships to reach Phnom Penh, it could serve Vietnam's

\textsuperscript{60} Sarasin, \textit{Tribute and Profit}, (1977), p. 203 and footnote 82, p. 332.; Woodside, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 258, refers to the Vietnamese annals which indicate that Siamese junks visiting Hatien had to pay tax to the Vietnamese official, except those whose cargo contained eighty percent or more of rice. But he did not provide the exact amount of tax.

\textsuperscript{61} AOM, (Indochine), \textit{Amiraux 10144}, "Rapport du M. Aubaret à M. le Vice Amiral de la Grandière Gouverneur et Commandant au chef en Cochinchine, 9 juillet 1867."

\textsuperscript{62} AOM, (Indochine), \textit{Amiraux 12705}, "Rapport sur le Cambodge, Voyage de Sai-gon à Battambang par Spooner, 30 décembre 1862".

\textsuperscript{63} "Nong Chronicle," in \textit{PP 1}, p. 300.
economic purpose as well: to fortify the Mekong Delta would aid Vietnam's absolute control over the Cambodian resources and economy.

While the Vietnamese reinstalled their administration in Hatien, they advanced to occupy the Phnom Penh region. Due to the conflict between Chan and his half brothers, in 1812 Chan moved from Udong to reside in Phnom Penh, which the Vietnamese warships could approach more easily than Udong. Udong was rather accessible to the Siamese army stationed in Battambang. The Vietnamese strengthened the city of Phnom Penh by building a citadel and storehouses. They began to intrude into and monopolise Cambodian affairs. After Chan died in 1835, Queen Mei (r. 1835-40) and her younger sisters were under full custody in South Vietnam. By the reign of Minh Mang, Cambodia was divided into more than thirty Sino-Vietnamese prefectures and districts, abolishing the provinces. Cambodian okya were named by Sino-Vietnamese titles and grades. The Vietnamese controlled important administrative decisions such as personnel postings, salaries, military affairs, and the control of rice surpluses. A Vietnamese taxation system was introduced. Minh Mang's polity also sought to Vietnamise the practices of the people, patterns of measurement, mobilisation, and food supplies for military reasons.

Meanwhile in the middle Mekong basin, the Vietnamese began to restore tributary relations with Vientiane. In 1801, Chao Inthavongse, Chao Ann's brother, sent a tribute mission to Huế to resume a status of vassalage with Vietnam. After Inthavongse had died in 1804, Anu consistently pursued such duties.

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64 Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho so. 1173, pp. 132-37.


Furthermore, the Vietnamese renewed their efforts to reassert their administrative control over the uplanders with the purposes of effective control of trade and resettlement of the Vietnamese in the upland area. Tributary relations with the uplanders' rulers, the King of Fire and King of Water, were made to work again. Hickey indicates that in 1802 and 1803, the former tax on trade with the uplanders was restored. The political and military administration in the upland area was reorganised. In 1804 Huế created a special province in the highland area from Quang Nam to Binh Dinh, and restored previous commercial administration in the area so that only the commercial agents could carry on trade with the uplanders. Up until the reign of Minh Mang (r.1819-41), Vietnamese penetration into the upland area was increased greatly. In the Lao area, Vietnamese military organisation was imposed over the east bank from the sixteenth to the seventeenth parallel in the basin of the Bang Hien river - an important river route. They then reorganised the tribute from the towns in the area and administrative posts in the Lao area of Tchepone, Lao Bao (in the Ai Lao pass) and Lang Co. Small military posts were created throughout to supervise the timber trade.67

Therefore, in the early nineteenth century the Mekong region became an area of competition between the Thai and the Vietnamese. It is interesting to see that the early tension between Bangkok and Huế arose in the border region. Bangkok apparently took an interest in what was going on in the region after Gia Long had ascended the throne and began to survey the overland route between the Northeast, Laos, and Central Vietnam at the same time. The incident took place in 1806, when Siamese troops under Phraya Chieng Ngoen clashed with Vietnamese forces who had accused him of evacuating people in the Vietnamese dominated area. The

Vietnamese put Phraya Chieng Ngoen and his followers into custody and reported the matter to Bangkok. Bangkok provided Huế with an explanation that Phraya Chieng Ngoen had acted independently, since Rama I had only ordered him to escort to Bangkok two Siamese in northern Laos. Rama I decided to dispatch an embassy to Huế, in an effort to demonstrate his good will to Gia Long, but in an astonishing way. Usually, the communication route that both the Siamese and Vietnamese embassies employed was the maritime route, but this time he sent a sizeable embassy, comprising three high ranking officials, ninety five commoners, and sixteen Lao interpreters from Vientiane, overland to Huế via Laos. Unfortunately, the mission lost two of the high ranking officials and twenty commoners because of malaria. Huế then sent the survivors back to Bangkok by sea with a letter advising Bangkok that they should have known that the overland route was too difficult to send the survivors back, conceivably meaning that they should have not come by the overland route.68

The above incident might have had some relation to Huế’s treatment of future diplomatic missions in the following year. In 1807 Huế imposed a limitation on the size of embassies to and from Vietnam. At first Huế imposed this rule only upon the Siamese mission, but in 1811 it was applied to the Khmer and other foreigners, except the Chinese. For the Siamese mission, the limit for travelling by sea was fifty people, and fourteen for overland route; however, they had to stop at Gia Dinh before continuing to Huế. Only five people were allowed to transmit a letter to Gia Dinh where local officials could forward a letter to Huế themselves. A Vietnamese embassy travelling by sea was allowed to be up to fifty persons; those travelling overland were not to be over twelve. If they only wanted to transmit a letter, they

would forward it through the Khmer. Although the Vietnamese had adopted such practices from the Chinese "Forbidden City" model, they no doubt wanted to restrict the mobility of outsiders, probably the Thai in particular, in their domain.

The area from the middle Mekong basin to the Delta was now under Vietnamese domination. The Phnom Penh region and Hatien in particular were under the effective control of Vietnam. This situation must have reduced the benefits to the Thai. Although the evidence is limited, it can be deduced that a political settlement in Vietnam, followed by the reestablishment of tributary relations with Laos, Cambodia and the uplanders, would have contributed to the growth of trade relations between Vietnam and the left bank area. The stability on the trade routes between Vietnam and the left bank area naturally attracted an increasing number of local traders to come eastward, and brought the Vietnamese to trade in the other direction. The account of Charles Gutzlaff gives a hint of the effect of this trade on the Thai. His record tells us that the war between Siam and Vientiane in 1827-28 was caused by a very brisk trade in southern Laos, of which the Siamese governor in the Northeast was attempting to gain control. Gutzlaff travelled to Laos in 1830, just two years after the Chao Anu revolt. He was therefore likely to receive information from the local people in Vientiane who had recently suffered by the war. His account appears to conform with the Lao document Phun Wiang (a history of Vientiane), which is concerned with the roots of the Chao Anu revolt in 1827-28.

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70 It is likely that Gutzlaff received this view from the local people who had just experienced the immediate revolt. See Gutzlaff, Journal of Two Voyages Along the Coast of China in 1831 & 1832, (1833), p. 35.

The story of Phun Wiang has proposed a new interpretation of the cause of the Chao Anu revolt. Phun Wiang attributes the cause of the revolt to the Siamese attempt to appropriate manpower in the Champassak principality, including Sithandon, Saenpang, Saravane, Attapeu, Khamthong Yai, Chieng Taeng, and Khong (this issue will be discussed further in Chapter Five). With respect to trade, Phun Wiang states that Bangkok authorised the Siamese authority, the Yokrabat of Khorat, to pursue conscription in the Northeast and southern Laos. During this conscription, the Siamese conscription unit based itself at Ban Don Khong (now in Sithandon), impeding the river route through which local traders usually travelled. The Thai authorities even captured and conscripted the travelling traders. The harshness of this measure caused tremendous suffering for the people in the area as traders no longer dared to come.\textsuperscript{72} Although the above accounts do not say anything about changes in the trade route, there is enough evidence here to assume to say that the Siamese authorities in the Northeast wanted to control the Champassak principality because they did not gain substantial benefit from a lucrative trade in the southern Lao towns. The disadvantage of the Thai was possibly due to the change in the trade route of local traders, since stability and Vietnamese influence is likely to have attracted traders to travel eastward to Vietnam or southward to Cambodia and the Mekong Delta, instead of heading westward to the Khorat Plateau. The decline in trade would have resulted in a loss of importance for both the local and central Siamese authorities.

The most serious threat against the Thai came from the Chao Anu revolt. The revolt was joined by the Vientiane and Champassak principalities, the latter governed by Anu’s son, Chao Yo. The revolt caused tremendous anxiety for the Thai, especially

\textsuperscript{72} Pratheep, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 75-76.
when the Vientiane troops raided unopposed as far as Saraburi, so close to the heartland of the kingdom. This was the first time since the establishment of Thai domination there that the Khorat Plateau had been invaded by a neighbour. Moreover, the Champassak army led by Chao Yo continued from Sisaket to attack Battambang. The revolt thus exposed the fact that Thai power was deteriorating in most of the trans-Mekong basin; the long eastern frontier of Siam was in real danger from the expansion of Vietnamese domination, although the Vietnamese were not directly involved in the Chao Anu revolt. The asylum given to Chao Anu and his son, and Hué’s intercession in requesting Rama III to grant Anu a pardon, certainly caused Bangkok to be suspicious of the Vietnamese. Consequently, the Thai were compelled to reassert themselves in order to restore their control of the trans-Mekong region. Vientiane was demolished, its population was evacuated to Siam, and its former territories fell under the direct control of the Thai provincial administration. In Champassak, the Thai installed a new line of rulers. Both Vientiane and Champassak together with their subordinate towns were drawn under direct and firmer control of the Thai administrative system in the Northeast.

Although the Chao Anu war ended in early 1828, a series of expeditions as well as depopulation campaigns were launched along the whole left bank area from the Phuan State in northern Laos to Cambodia. Intensive warfare between Siam and Vietnam in Cambodia broke out in 1833, when the news of the Le Van Khoi revolt in southern Vietnam against Minh Mang reached Bangkok. Rama III decided that it was time to launch a series of expeditions in Cambodia.


74 Wyatt, Thailand. A Short History. pp. 31-32.

75 For the Thai warfare and depopulation campaigns in the Phuan State, see Breazeale and Sanit, The Phuan, chapter 3.
Devastation versus Construction

The strategic objective of the Thai expedition in Cambodia was to destroy the Vietnamese garrison and to besiege as many Cambodian towns as possible, particularly in the vicinity of Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese garrisons in Cambodia on the west bank of the Mekong river included Kampong Svai, Kampong Thom, Staung, Pursat, and Kampong Chnang; on the east bank were Phnom Penh, Sombok, Sombor, Thbong Khmoum, Chaudoc, and Bassac; along the Gulf of Siam were Kampong Som, Kampot, and Hatien. The Thai expedition formed two land columns and a naval force. From Siam, one column moved overland toward Battambang; the other went through the Champassak territory in southern Laos and then to northern Cambodia. The naval force moved to attack the Vietnamese stations along the Gulf of Siam, and continued to Phnom Penh from Hatien. However, as the east bank and the coastal areas were major Vietnamese strongholds which were difficult for the Thai to besiege, Thai troops were continually involved in burning down villages, and the full-scale deportation of local population and Vietnamese soldiers. Thai records of the fourteen-year war are filled with the devastation in Cambodia, and Phnom Penh, Hatien, and probably Sombok were the worst devastated areas. The most furious fighting was concentrated in the areas under strong Vietnamese influence, the east bank and coastal areas.

The Vinh Te canal was also a major military target of the Thai campaigns. The Thai

76 Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan khrang ratchakan this sam, (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (1933), p. 9.


78 For accounts showing devastation and famine in Cambodia, see Ibid., pp. 611-13, 618, 658, 857-58, 967, 990-91; Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan, pp. 7-28, 34; "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in PP 67/42, pp. 36, 42-43, 56.
made an unsuccessful endeavour to fill up the canal in order to obstruct the access of the Vietnamese naval forces, but they were confronted with massive numbers of Vietnamese troops protecting the canal.\textsuperscript{79}

While the Thai tried to demolish the Vietnamese bases, they did not want the Vietnamese from the Mekong Delta to move into the devastated area. It is evident that Vietnamese officials took the opportunity to encourage thousands of Vietnamese to come up to trade and permanently settle in Phnom Penh.\textsuperscript{80} Bangkok sent an order to the local officials to prevent resettlement or trade by the Vietnamese there and to capture and send to Bangkok any Vietnamese who came to settle or trade with Cambodia.\textsuperscript{81} In other words, the Thai considered that if they were not able to control the area, they should destroy it so that the Vietnamese could not obtain any benefit from the area either. Evidence for this attitude is clearly expressed in Bodin's command to the Thai military chiefs in Hatien, Kampot and Kampong Som, "to evacuate the people, to burn down the houses in every town, and to demolish the town, so that only the forest and the rivers are left."\textsuperscript{82} A similar orders were sent to the troops of Im and Duang, temporarily capturing Phnom Penh. At the time Bodin found that Khmer unrest was helping the Vietnamese against the Thai, so he dispatched an order to Im and Duang:

\begin{quote}
Now the Khmers are revolting in many towns; therefore, it is difficult to retain Cambodia. The army commanders in Phnom Penh must demolish all ramparts, and turn Phnom Penh into a charnel ground. Do not allow the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{79} K.S.L. Kulap, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 966-67, 971, 981, 991-1011.


\textsuperscript{81} TNL, CMH, R III C.S. 1204/2/cho/12. The same order was implemented in the left bank Lao towns. See, Breazeale and Sanit, \textit{The Phuan}, pp. 20-21.

\textsuperscript{82} K.S.L. Kulap, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 612.
Khmer rebellions to use it as a base. Then, you must transport the Khmer, Indian (Cham), Chinese, and others in Phnom Penh to Battambang.  

Breazeale and Sanit suggest that the purpose of the Thai depopulation campaigns in Laos was to prevent the area from being used by Vietnamese troops, as the deserted area was not able to serve logistical services. This was no doubt the case in Cambodia. But I believe that there was another reason behind the Thai campaigns, that is, the attempt to control trade and acquire resources (products and manpower) in the area. The devastated area certainly could not sustain its commercial activities. Traders would naturally try to avoid routes across the area, and shift their trade to the more secure routes. In this context, trade between Laos and Phnom Penh must have been interrupted, and there remained three alternative routes for traders from Laos to go. First was eastward to Vietnam; the second was westward to the Khorat Plateau and the Chao Phraya basin; the third was southwestward to the Battambang region and through to central Siam. As mentioned above, after the Chao Anu revolt both the Vientiane and Champassak principalities were tied more firmly into the Thai administrative system in the Northeast, and their economies would have been increasingly drawn towards the Thai side. Besides, since the Second Reign the area under the Thai occupation in northwestern Cambodia had been expanded to cover Mlou Prei and Tonle Ropeou (known in Thai as Manophrai and Tharaboriwat respectively). French officials reported that there were roads and sala (shelters) built by the Thai along the way from the two provinces to Champassak. Besides, the governors of Pursat and Kampong Svai had already submitted to an alliance with Bangkok. Therefore, the Thai were able to secure the major routes Laos-Siam.

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83 Ibid., pp. 657-58.
84 Breazeale and Sanit, *The Phuan*, p. 20.
85 AOM, (Indochine), Gouvernement Général 14474, "Le Chargé de la Résidence à M. le Résident Supérieur de France au Cambodge, 20 juin 1892."
86 Chormaihet ratchakan thi song cho.so, 1173, pp. 57-61.
and Laos-Cambodia-Siam. The Thai seem to have been so secure in the area between southern Laos and the northwestern Cambodia that during the Third Reign, suai from the southern Lao towns - Champassak, Sithandon, Attapeu, Chieng Taeng (present day Stung Treng), Saenpang, Saravane, Khamthong Yai - were sent to Bangkok via Battambang and Prachinburi.87 The reader is reminded that this route was more favourable for travellers than the route across the dangerous Dong Phrayayen range on the Khorat Plateau, so the security of the route certainly facilitated trades towards Siam. On the other hand, it is discernible why the Thai needed to advance their control over northwestern Cambodia.

Although it might not have been possible for the Thai to monopolise every single trader from Laos and Cambodia to travel westward, the opportunity to influence and manipulate more effectively the itinerary of local traders by exercising of power by local officials was one which the Thai certainly took advantage of. Moreover, as local officials often participated in trade, they must have been compelled by Bangkok’s influence. The caravan of suai payment was usually associated with the royal trade. Bangkok also often ordered officials in charge of suai collection to purchase extra local goods, usually with the suai money collected in that area, and send them together with the suai caravan to Bangkok. The purchased local goods were valuable export items of Siam. As early as 1831, the tax farmer of Sithandon in southern Laos was responsible for purchase of ivory and bastard cardamom for Bangkok.88 The tax farmer of Champassak also performed the task of purchasing local products from Champassak for Bangkok.89

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89 TNL, CMH, R. III C.S. 1200/68.
It is evident that the Thai attempted to prevent local trade between Laos and the Vietnamese controlled area in Cambodia so that they could secure the maximum profit in the trans-Mekong basin. Before Chaophraya Bodin left Cambodia, he decided to impose a trade embargo between the lower Lao towns - Champassak, Sithandon, and Saenpang - and Cambodia, the reason being, as a Thai document states, that

The Cambodian and Vietnamese goods are to be sold to foreign countries, not to Bangkok. There are also many Lao goods. So if we lift the barrier, the Chinese Laotians would become bold enough to bring valuable goods to sell in Cambodia and Vietnam. Bangkok would thus gain less goods.\(^0\)

Although the official embargo was imposed after the end of the war in 1847, it probably had been implemented during the 14-year war. The arrests of local traders travelling between Cambodia and southern Laos during the war by the Siamese army shows that the Thai indeed kept the area under surveillance.\(^1\)

While the Thai were manoeuvring to destroy and obstruct trade in the Vietnamese bases in Cambodia, they apparently made an effort to strengthen commercial links between Siam and their own base in Cambodia. Given such an objective, what took place in the Battambang region was entirely different from what happened in the Vietnamese bases. Thai policy was in fact to strengthen and build up the Battambang region as their politico-economic base. Although the Thai had controlled Battambang and Siemreap since the Thonburi period, only in the Third Reign was a systematic policy towards Battambang put into effect. During the

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\(^0\) TNA, R.5 M.2.12ko/3.

fourteen-year war we can see the subsequent increasing economic interest of the Thai in the Battambang region. The evidence indicating such ambition is as follows.

Firstly, in the early stages of the war, Thai troops appear to have lost the battle and retreated. Conditions in Cambodia, however, became favourable for the Thai when King Chan died unexpectedly in 1835. Chan left four daughters, but no son, while the Thai still held two Cambodian princes under their custody, Im and Duang. It is likely that the okya in the capital preferred a prince to a princess. Although Cambodia had a bilateral kinship system and no strict rule of succession, men had dominated the kingship and no woman had been crowned before.\textsuperscript{92} Rama III received a report that the okya now wanted the Thai to beat off the Vietnamese and send Im and Duang to rule Cambodia.\textsuperscript{93} Rama III quickly seized this an auspicious condition: it was time to strike back at the Vietnamese. He ordered Chaophraya Bodin to go up to northeastern Siam in order to take a census, and mobilise more than ten thousand men for a new series of Thai campaigns in the coming dry season. In 1837 Bodin returned to Battambang with the first duty of building up the city of Battambang. He supervised the construction of new fortifications, including a fort with a chain stretched across the river in order to obstruct any Vietnamese naval invasion, ramparts, embankments, and the diversion of a part of the river into a moat around the town. A new city post and a walled palace for Im and Duang were also installed.\textsuperscript{94} The purpose of building up Battambang was "that (Battambang) would be stronger and more prosperous; this would glorify the status of Prince Im, who rules Battambang, and it would also be convenient for the

\textsuperscript{92} May Ebihara, "Societal Organization in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Cambodia", JSEAS, XV, 2 (September 1984), p. 283.


\textsuperscript{94} \textit{PP 67/42}, pp. 130-36.
Khmers to flee to a more peaceful place."95

The city of Siemreap was also strengthened in the following year with new fortifications and a moat around the town.96 Later, the Thai established a new town in the North of Battambang. Ban (village) Mongkolborei (or Mongkolburi in Thai) was raised to a status of a Muang (town), for "Rama III wanted the news to be spread to the Vietnamese that this side (Battambang) was well populated."97

Secondly, I found that there was no forced migration from Battambang and Siemreap during the protracted war in Cambodia, but only the areas under Vietnamese influence were depopulated. Instead, Battambang became a temporary detention camp for evacuees being deported further to Siam.98 The relative stability in the Battambang region is indicated by the on-going rice cultivation in the area. The 1834 report from Battambang to Bangkok states that "Battambang, Siemreap, Svaichit, Mongkolburi, Tanod, Hinrae have already transplanted two thirds of the rice-fields."99 But it is obvious that the Thai army did not allow the Khmers living out of Thai control to settle for cultivation. Although the Battambang region was inevitably affected by the war and had to purchase rice from northeastern and central Siam several times, the famine in the Battambang region was less severe that

95 Ibid., p. 119.

96 Thiphokorawongse, Ruamruang kieokap yuan lae khmen nai samai rattanakosin (Collected Dynastic Chronicles Concerning Vietnam and Cambodia During the Bangkok Period), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for Kosit Wetchachiwa, 1964), pp. 160-161.

97 TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1223/58.


in the devastated east bank of Cambodia, where People had to cross the river to the west bank to search for food.\textsuperscript{100}

Thirdly, it was obvious that the Thai tried to sustain contentment among Battambang's people. For instance, in 1827, a hundred able-bodied men, \textit{lek}, of Battambang and Siemreap escaped to Kampong Svai and Staung for the reason that the local officials had forced them to live in areas in which they did not want to. When Bangkok heard of the news, it dispatched an order to the local officials to search out and prevail upon those escapees to return to Battambang and Siemreap, and instructed the local authorities to allow people to settle where they wished.\textsuperscript{101} It was also explicitly indicated in Rama III's advice to Chaophraya Bodin that

\begin{quote}
(Bodin) should try to teach Prince Im to govern and nourish the people, nobles, monks, nuns, and Brahmans in Battambang and its subordinate towns with mercy. Tell Prince Im to rule with justice in accordance with the traditions and customs of Battambang. Do not damage the customs of Battambang and trouble the people.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

At this point it is necessary to clarify some points relating to Thai policy towards Battambang. In 1839, Prince Im, accompanied by 181 \textit{okya}, half of the \textit{okya} in Battambang, secretly fled from Battambang to Vietnam. Im probably expected that the Vietnamese, who at the time appeared to have gained the advantage in Cambodia, would have crowned him king. Im evacuated about five to six thousand people of Battambang down river to Phnom Penh. According to David Chandler, the result of the event was that "the buffer zone, patiently built up by the Thai around Battambang over the preceding forty years, was gone. Bodin reacted

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{100}] "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in \textit{PP 67/41}, p. 284.
\item[\textsuperscript{101}] TNL, \textit{CMH}, R.III C.S.1189/12, in \textit{Chotmaihet ratchakan thi sam}, Vol.4, pp.28-33.
\item[\textsuperscript{102}] "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in \textit{PP 67/42}, p. 12.
\end{itemize}
strongly, executing Cambodians as they came back into the empty city.\textsuperscript{103} However, I found no evidence that Bodin executed Khmers returning to Battambang. Besides, not all the refugees accompanied Im to Vietnam, only about three hundred had undertaken the journey, while the rest were left in various towns around Phnom Penh. The Thai officers undertook a search and then forced the rest back to Battambang.\textsuperscript{104} Furthermore, the suai accounts from Battambang reveal that only 236 cardamom payers had fled. Later, in 1840 and 1841, 167 of them returned to Battambang. They were placed to resume their duty in their former suai units.\textsuperscript{105} Though the Thai court was furious about Im's treason, the aim of building up the Battambang region as the base for the Thai did not cease. Instead, Prince Duang, being retained in Bangkok since 1837, since Im had reported that Duang had a plan to seek Vietnamese protection, was then sent to reside in Battambang.\textsuperscript{106} Though the Thai might still be suspicious of Duang, he was now obviously the only alternative they had. Besides, Rama III proposed to Bodin that the Cambodian royal capital be moved from Udong to Pursat, which was closer to the Thai base. If this were possible, Duang could reside in Pursat and Rama III would provide people to be resettled there.\textsuperscript{107} The idea of creating the new royal capital, however, was not implemented.

It is clear that while the Thai were manoeuvring to destroy the Vietnamese

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{103} Chandler, \textit{Cambodia Before the French}, p. 140.
\item \textsuperscript{104} "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in \textit{PP 67/42}, p. 156; \textit{Ruamruang kieokap yuan lae khmen}, pp. 163-169.
\item \textsuperscript{105} TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1202/43; CMH, R.III C.S.1202/160; CMH, R.III C.S.1203/51; "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in \textit{PP 67/42}, pp. 167-68.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Thiphakorawongse, \textit{Ruamruang kieokap yuan lae khmen}, p. 175.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan, p. 61; "Waduai hetkan muang khmen ton set songkhram thai kap yuan" (Records Concerning Cambodia After the End of the Thai-Vietnamese War), in \textit{PP 56}, p. 7.
\end{itemize}
controlled-area, they wanted to build up the Battambang region in competition with those areas under Vietnamese domination. By this means, the Battambang area could serve as an asylum for the influx of Khmers from the devastated area into the Thai controlled area.

**Appropriation of Battambang's Wealth**

Further evidence indicating the Thai objective of building up the Battambang region is related to the prospect of economic benefit derived from the area, namely, the suai payment and trade. The suai account of Battambang first appears in the 1830s and payment sent from Battambang to Bangkok shows little evidence of economic disruption around the Battambang region as the consequence of the protracted war. The existing records reveal that Battambang and Siemreap began their payments to Bangkok in the Third Reign (see table 4.1 and 4.2). Pursat, whose governor had been allied with the Thai since the Second Reign, also levied suai to Bangkok (table 4.3). The accounts show that the region paid suai fairly regularly throughout the 1830s and 1840s, and the size of Battambang's suai units was relatively constant. Suai payments from Battambang and Pursat were mostly composed of cardamom (krawan), a highly valuable forest product in the Chinese market. Siemreap, which was less fertile than Battambang, usually sent less valuable goods such as bastard cardamom (phon-reo), and beeswax (si-phung).

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108 Constance Wilson raises the contradiction between the disturbed conditions in Cambodia during the protracted 14-year war in Cambodia and the regular suai payment from Battambang. See Constance Wilson, "The Nai Kông of Battambang, 1824-1868", in *Contribution to Asian Studies*, XV, 1980, pp. 66-72.
### Table 4.1 Suai payment from Battambang, 1835-1847

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Payers</th>
<th>Cardamom (picul)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Payers</th>
<th>Cardamom (picul)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>65.36</td>
<td>1842</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>62.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>63.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>64.16</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>1,657</td>
<td>66.28</td>
<td>1845</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>40.00(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>52.68</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>66.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>60.04</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>61.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>63.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**  
TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1199/24; C.S.1200/69; C.S.1202/160; C.S.1203/51; C.S.1204/6; C.S.1205/56; C.S.1205/67; C.S.1206/120; C.S.1209/78; C.S.1212/1; CMH. R.IV C.S.1215/195; C.S.1218/195

**Note**  
One hap or picul is equivalent to 60 kilograms and has 100 catties. Each suai payer of Battambang was obliged to pay 4 catties (chang), equivalent to 2.4 kilograms.

\(^1\) The decrease was caused by epidemic.
Table 4.2  **Suai** payment from Siemreap, 1840-66

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bastard Cardamom (picul)</th>
<th>Beeswax (picul)</th>
<th>Money (baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>220.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>620.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>1,334.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source**  TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1203/42; C.S.1205/56; C.S.1205/67; C.S.1208/70; C.S.1209/81; C.S.1210/148; C.S.1212/143; CMH.R.IV C.S.1215,1217,1218/195; C.S.1223/323; C.S.1226/316; C.S.1228/250.

**Note**  The available records neither reveal the number of suai payers of Siemreap, nor the amount paid per person.
Table 4.3  **Suai payment from Pursat, 1842-1864**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>Cardamom (picul)</th>
<th>Gold (baht weight)</th>
<th>Money (baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>34.26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60.251</td>
<td>1,532.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>60.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>50.54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>49.70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>47.68</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>49.21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>50.54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>50.54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,080.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**  TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1202/83; C.S.1203/51; C.S.1204/63; C.S.1208/60; C.S.1211/2; CMH.R.IV C.S.1213/125; C.S.1215,1217,1218/195; C.S.1218/49; C.S.1219/154; C.S.1226/316

**Note**  Each suai payer of Pursat was obliged to pay 14 catties, equivalent to 8.40 kilograms.
Suai from Battambang was collected from a specific unit of people called the kong. People who were obliged to pay suai were known as lek suai. This group of montagnards known in Khmer as Por and in Thai as Chong. The lek suai of Battambang lived in the forest close to the Khao Krawan, Cardamom Mountain, on the border between Battambang and Pursat. However, the immediate flight of some suai payers with Prince Im in 1839 suggests that some of them lived near the town. Battambang held five suai units, each of which had its own chief called Nai kong suai, and all of them were under the supervision of the Changwang suai. Both the Nai kong suai and the Changwang suai lived in the town of Battambang, therefore, the five Nai kong suai needed to have assistants, the Kalabanchi, residing in the villages in order to keep the records and control of the lek suai. Each unit had four to five Kalabanchi. When it was cardamom collecting season, which was only once a year and in July-August or the raining season, the Kalabanchi appointed one of the villagers to be a Tangkhao, who had the duty of organising a group of lek suai to travel together to collect cardamom. It took about half a day or more to travel to the Cardamom Mountain and between twenty-thirty days to finish collecting cardamom. The Tangkhao received a certain amount of cardamom in return for their service. They appear to have been Chinese and involved in a trade between Battambang and Bangkok. They brought cardamom and possibly other Cambodian forest products as well to sell to the cardamom fax farmer in Bangkok.

109 For ethnographic study, see Jean Brengues, "Note sur les Populations de la Region des Montagnes," JSS, II (1905), (Kraus Reprint, 1969), pp. 19-47.

110 TNA, R.5 RL-MT vol. 6, (cho.so. 1234 - AD 1872), pp. 118-120.


Between the 1830s and 1840s, the chiefs of kong suai worked directly under Chaophraya Bodin until the war in Cambodia ended. Then, the governor of Battambang took responsibility for the suai system. No family relations between the Battambang governors' families and the nai kong suai were to be found.\(^{113}\) In fact, the nai kong suai were directly appointed by Bangkok. This was probably due to Bangkok's concern over collecting the complete quota of cardamom. Generally speaking, Bangkok basically accepted any products available in the locality, but they nevertheless were mainly important export products. Each suai payer (lek suai) of Battambang was obliged to pay four catties (chang) or 2.4 kilograms of cardamom.

Regarding Siemreap, which paid little suai in comparison to Battambang and Pursat, its governor, Phraya Nuphabtraiphob, was responsible for the suai collection, and also worked directly under Chaophraya Bodin. There is no information about the nai kong suai nor the amount paid by each person in Siemreap. In Pursat, which was rich in cardamom, each suai payer was obliged to pay fourteen catties of cardamom. No records refer to a nai kong suai of Pursat, but it did have one Changwang suai to supervise the collection, together with Pursat's governor, Phraya Sangkhalok, who also worked directly under Chaophraya Bodin until the latter left for Bangkok in 1847. Prince Duang then continued the responsibility of sending the payment to Bangkok. In addition, Pursat levied gold for Bangkok as early as 1842, and held three kong suai of gold payment.\(^{114}\) Suai from Battambang, Pursat and Siemreap were conveyed to Bangkok separately. The suai caravan of Battambang was led by the supervisor of the kong suai and/or the chiefs of the suai units, but not all the chiefs had to accompany the caravan. Suai

\(^{113}\) Wilson, op.cit., p. 69.

\(^{114}\) TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1204/63.
from Pursat was levied to Bangkok by the Changwang suai. The size of the suai caravan of Battambang was quite large: in 1842, it involved seven elephants, ninety bulls, thirty carts, and sixty seven people, but sometimes the caravan reached up to 182 people conveying 100.67 piculs (6040.20 kilograms) of cardamom to Bangkok. The suai caravan travelled overland from Battambang until Krabin, from where it continued by boats to Bangkok by way of the Bangpakong river. Carts, cattle, and some people were left under the care of Krabin's officials. The suai caravan of Battambang often brought back some goods either to sell or consume among the okya in Battambang. Metal work, metal ware, cloth, and salt appear to have been the main products that the Khmer Chinese traders brought to Battambang. The volume of goods brought back to Cambodia must have been sizeable. In one instance, 600 thang (9,000 kilograms) of salt was purchased by the suai caravan.

Cardamom was one of the most important forest goods, because of its high price on the Chinese market. It was monopolised by the Thai court until Rama III abandoned the royal monopoly system in 1826. Among Siamese export goods, the price of cardamom was rated at the fourth highest per picul (see table 4.4). The constant number of lek suai, and the regularity of payment in the Battambang region suggest that neither were the suai payers conscripted into military service, nor did the Thai force them to resettle in Siam as they did those living in the Vietnamese controlled area. The records of regular suai payment lead us to infer that the Thai policy of maintaining peaceful conditions in the Battambang region convinced the suai payers not to escape the authorities. They seem to have preferred living in the more secure

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Battambang to facing risks in the jungle or other devastated areas. Moreover, the regularity of suai payment explicitly demonstrates the capability of the Thai in controlling an efficient system of manpower in the region. The high value of cardamom would convince the Thai to maintain the lek suai at work. After the flight of Im, some of the lek kromakan, those who were subject to local officials, were transferred to be lek suai in order to substitute for those lost during the flight. The substitution indicates Bangkok's strict requirement of a substantial amount of suai to be levied.

118 Wilson, op. cit., p. 69.

### Table 4.4 Prices of Some Siamese Exports to China, 1800-1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prices in Siam Market:</th>
<th>Prices in Chinese Market:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-Low Cost</td>
<td>High-Low Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds' Nest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quality</td>
<td>8,000-3,000</td>
<td>8,000-6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quality</td>
<td>6,000-1,500</td>
<td>6,000-2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quality</td>
<td>4,000-1,000</td>
<td>4,000-1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agilawood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quality</td>
<td>1,000-350</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quality</td>
<td>400-250</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quality</td>
<td>200-50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhinoceros</td>
<td>500-50</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardamom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quality</td>
<td>400-200</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quality</td>
<td>200-100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quality</td>
<td>150-20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory</td>
<td>160-130</td>
<td>240-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamboge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quality</td>
<td>60-50</td>
<td>120-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quality</td>
<td>55-40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quality</td>
<td>40-30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjamin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st quality</td>
<td>60-50</td>
<td>200-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quality</td>
<td>45-40</td>
<td>90-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quality</td>
<td>25-20</td>
<td>40-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted only the seven highest prices of Siam's export products from Jennifer W. Cushman, *Fields From the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade With Siam During the Late Eighteenth And Early Nineteenth Centuries*, (Ithaca, Cornell University, Southeast Asian Program, 1993), Appendix A, pp.144-148
Table 4.5 gives an idea of the money value of the cardamom suai from Battambang and Pursat and the revenue expected to be gained by the royal trade from exporting cardamom suai. The value of the cardamom suai would be better understood when compared with the value of the annual suai Bangkok gained in the same period from the Eastern Lao provinces (huamuang lao fai tawan-ok) and the Forest Khmer provinces (huamuang khamen padong), including Champassak, Khamthongnoi, Khamthongyai, Khongchiam, Sithandon, Saravane, Chieng Taeng, Saenpang, Nongkhai, Mukdahan, Kalasin, Roi Et, Yasothon, Suwannaphum, Det Udom, Ubon, Khemarat, Khong, Samia, Khon Kaen, Chonlabot, Surin, Sangha, Khukhan (table 4.6). The comparison between tables 4.5 and 4.6 reveals that except the year 1845, the value of suai from Battambang and Pursat constituted about half of the total amount Bangkok was able to secure from various towns on the Khorat Plateau.
### Table 4.5 Profit from suai payment in cardamom from Battambang and Pursat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount of suai payment (picul)</th>
<th>Money value of suai payment (120 baht/picul)</th>
<th>Gross revenue from Export (220 baht/picul)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>87.36</td>
<td>10483.20</td>
<td>19219.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>9000.00</td>
<td>16500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>94.30</td>
<td>11316.00</td>
<td>20746.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>13200.00</td>
<td>24200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>136.16</td>
<td>16339.20</td>
<td>29955.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>122.21</td>
<td>14665.20</td>
<td>26886.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>99.54</td>
<td>11944.80</td>
<td>21898.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>100.77</td>
<td>12092.40</td>
<td>22169.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source** Amount of suai payment taken from tables 3.2, 3.4 and 3.9

**Note**

1 Conversion rate is based on official purchase rate
2 Based on export price to Canton in 1844, from TNL, CMH, R. III C.S.1206/49
Table 4.6 The money value of suai payment from Northeast Siam and Laos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (baht)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>13291.38</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>24838.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>28007.25</td>
<td>1848</td>
<td>31971.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>8682.25</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>11845.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>9683.78</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>54773.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>14677.50</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>16952.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>18670.00</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>38225.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>20429.76</td>
<td>1853</td>
<td>12101.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>21300.63</td>
<td>1854</td>
<td>26629.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>52485.63</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>27706.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>26949.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Kozumi, op. cit., pp. 91-93.

The Battambang region not only supplied cardamom in the form of suai payment, but it was also a centre of marketing of cardamom. Suai payment in money from the lower Lao towns and northeastern Siam was always sent to Battambang and Pursat for the purchase of cardamom, which was then sent to Bangkok together with the annual suai caravan (see table 4.7). The Changwang suai and/or Nai kong suai of Battambang and Pursat undertook the responsibility of purchasing cardamom from the chao pa (literally forest dwellers). Some of them appear to have been suai payers at the same time. Indeed, Bangkok apparently wanted to secure as much

120 TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1208/60.
cardamom as possible. The dispatch from Chaophraya Chakri to Chaophraya Bodin, who was stationed in Battambang in 1842 indicates that Rama III wanted Bodin to purchase cardamom with the suai money collected from Champassak and then send it to Bangkok. Also, Rama III ordered Bodin to press for suai arrears from the eastern Lao towns in order to have money for purchasing cardamom for Bangkok. If the money was not enough, Bodin was asked to reported the matter to Bangkok, which would then send him.\textsuperscript{121} The conversion of suai money to cardamom was based on the fact that Bangkok could obtain a higher profit from the further exportation of suai product. Tables 4.7 shows the gross profit expected to be gained from cardamom purchased from Battambang and Pursat.

\textsuperscript{121} TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1204/6.
Table 4.7 Cardamom purchased in Battambang and Pursat by Bangkok, 1833-1846

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Purchased from</th>
<th>Amount of cardamom (picul)</th>
<th>Money paid for cardamom (120 baht/picul)</th>
<th>Money expected to earn (220 baht/picul)</th>
<th>Profit (baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>(21.66)</td>
<td>2,597.50</td>
<td>4765.20</td>
<td>2167.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>(49.49)</td>
<td>5,939.00</td>
<td>10887.80</td>
<td>4948.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>(27.10)</td>
<td>3,251.75</td>
<td>5961.54</td>
<td>2709.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>(5.02)</td>
<td>602.50</td>
<td>1104.40</td>
<td>501.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>26.675</td>
<td>3,201.00</td>
<td>5868.50</td>
<td>2667.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>(26.67)</td>
<td>3,200.00</td>
<td>5867.40</td>
<td>2667.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>897.25</td>
<td>66610.60</td>
<td>3027.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>B'bang+Pursat</td>
<td>75.63</td>
<td>9095.37</td>
<td>16638.60</td>
<td>7543.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>8000.00</td>
<td>14667.40</td>
<td>6667.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8.79)</td>
<td>1055.25</td>
<td>1933.80</td>
<td>878.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>B'bang+Pursat</td>
<td>(30.28)</td>
<td>3,634.12</td>
<td>6661.60</td>
<td>3027.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>44.65</td>
<td>5358.12</td>
<td>9823</td>
<td>4464.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursat</td>
<td>36.22</td>
<td>4346.40</td>
<td>7968.40</td>
<td>3622.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>''</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1200.00</td>
<td>2200.00</td>
<td>1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>32.68</td>
<td>3913.75</td>
<td>7189.60</td>
<td>3275.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1199/24; C.S.1200/68; C.S.1200/69; C.S.1202/160; C.S.1203/51; C.S.1204/6; C.S.1205/56; C.S.1205/67; C.S.1206/120; C.S.1208/60; C.S.1208/70

Note Numbers in the brackets are calculated by the author and based on the price of 120 baht per picul.

1 The first amount of money came from the Northeast, and the latter came from Bangkok.

2 Based on the price sold to Canton in 1844, from TNL, CMH. R. III C.S.1206/49
The Battambang region is likely to have been the major source of cardamom for Siam since it was rare in Siam, appearing to have been available only in Chanthaburi, which also sent annual suai cardamom to Bangkok. But cardamom of Chanthaburi was reckoned to be of inferior quality when compared with that of Cambodia. The purchase price was quite constant between 1837 and 1846 at 120 bahts per picul for a superior grade of cardamom. Cardamom from the Battambang region, both in tax form and purchased by the royal treasury, contributed a high proportion to the estimated total amount Siam obtained each year. Henry Bumey indicates that Siam was able to secure about 800 piculs of cardamom each year, most of which was sold to China, with only 100 piculs being for domestic consumption. In 1846, the contribution of cardamom of Battambang and Pursat was 168.84 piculs, which is equivalent to one-fifth of the whole amount Siam could procure (see tables 4.1, 4.3, 4.7). However, the figure does not include what was purchased by the local traders travelling between the central Chaophraya basin and the Battambang region. The average annual amount of cardamom sold to China by Siam was valued at about 140,000 baht.

Evidence shows that the Thai nobles were involved in trade in the Battambang region. Phraya Chodoc Ratchasetthi appointed the Chinese, Chin Phae and Chin Kia, to conduct trade in Battambang for him. They carried cloth and iron wares to sell in Battambang, and in return cardamom was their main purchase. The list of

122 In 1876, Chanthaburi had three cardamom suai units. See, Chumnum ruang chanthaburi (Collected Works of Chanthaburi), (1971), p. 169.


125 Cushman, Fields From the Sea, (1993), pp. 144 and 148 note c.

126 TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1212/128.
goods in a junk to China which belonged to Phraya Chodoc also contained ten picul and four catties (602.4 kilograms) of cardamom from Pursat. Battambang's Chinese traders also travelled to purchase products from the cardamom tax farmer named Khun Theptiphol in Bangkok. They brought cardamom and possibly other Cambodian forest goods such as gamboge, stic-lac, varnish, raw hides, horns and ivory to sell in Bangkok using that money to purchase goods in Bangkok. Interestingly, the record notes that Khun Theptiphol also served a high-ranking official, Chaophraya Ratchasuphawadi, who participated in the Thai expedition in Cambodia. As Chaophraya Bodin held full responsibility for the commercial activities of the Thai court, he himself probably shared in the benefits of this venture. As one record shows suai that was sent to Bangkok from Saravane in lower Laos through Battambang included goods belonging to Bodin (five ivory tusks, and four rhinoceros horns). As Bodin had been involved in the Chinese trade with his own junk when he had been Phraya Kasetraksa, responsible for the royal ricefields, his background suggests the possibility that Bodin had a personal profit in local trade along the trans-Mekong basin.

Concerning the currency for purchasing cardamom, if the money was sent from Bangkok, it was usually in ngoen tra thai (Thai baht in silver coin). If the suai ngoen (suai in money/silver) was sent straight from the Northeast and Lao towns,

127 TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1206/49.
129 TNL, CMH. R.II C.S.1199/52.
130 Damrongrachanuphap, Prawat Chaophraya Mahasena (Bunnak) prawat Chaophraya Bodindecha (Singh Singhaseni) prawat Chaophraya Yommarat (Pan Sukhum) (Biographies of Chaophraya Mahasena, Chaophraya Bodindecha, Chaophraya Yommarat), (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1961), pp. 22-43.
apart from Thai baht, it contained various kinds of local silver coins including ngoen tra lao (Lao silver coin), ngoen nambok, ngoen naentu and ngoen naenrang, the last two of which originated from Vietnam.\textsuperscript{132} Thai officials usually had to compute them into Thai baht before they purchased the goods.\textsuperscript{133} Bangkok nevertheless preferred to have Thai baht in circulation to other local silver coins. In one instance, the suai money from the Northeast and Laos was sent to Bangkok in local silver coins. The Bangkok authorities melted them into Thai baht, before they were used further to purchase cardamom in Battambang. The value of local silver coins was usually decreased by the melting fee (kha sun phoeng).\textsuperscript{134} Local officials in Battambang and Siemreap, however, had no difficulty in accepting both Thai and other currencies, which seem to have been in common use among the local people. This suggests that the cross-border trade among Siam, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam had long been established.

The strategy of developing the Battambang region as a politico-economic base for Siam would certainly have allowed the growth of the area. Though there is no information concerning the volume of trade within the Battambang region during the war, the number of Chinese living in Battambang is an indication of the extent of the commercial activities in the area since the Chinese were always involved in the conduct of commerce. A Thai document of the Fifth Reign states that trade in Battambang was mainly conducted by the Chinese, as in other parts of Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{135} In 1838, Battambang alone had 557 Chinese, most of whom were levied

\textsuperscript{132} Phadung Khwaenprachan, Luang, "Ruang ngoen khong ratsadon phak isan" (Money Used by People in the Northeast), in Latthi thamniam tang tang (Beliefs and Traditions), (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1961), pp. 50-56.

\textsuperscript{133} TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1204/82.

\textsuperscript{134} TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1204/6.

\textsuperscript{135} TNA, R.5 M.2.2/ko/18.
tax (ngoen phukpi-chin) for Bangkok. Moreover, the number of Battambang's Chinese inhabitants was relatively high when compared with other major Siamese towns. For example, Suphanburi in 1834 held only 432 Chinese, while only Bangkok, Nakhon Chaisi, Chachoengsao, Phitsanulok and Ayudhya had more than one thousand Chinese (see table 4.8). Therefore, it is not groundless to believe that the region's economy was quite active even during that turbulent period.

Table 4.8 Number of Chinese in some Siamese towns in 1834

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Number of Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nakhon Chaisi</td>
<td>3,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uthai-thani</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suphanburi</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chachoengsao</td>
<td>1,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prachinburi</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraburi</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chai-nat</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angthong</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakhonsawan</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phitsanalok</td>
<td>1,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayudhya</td>
<td>1,161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source TNL, CMH, R.III C.S 1196/52.

The systematic administration of suai payment thus expresses the concern of the Bangkok court with its economic interest in the Battambang region. The high value of cardamom in the Siamese foreign trade would have been one of the reasons why the Thai wanted to develop and maintain the relatively peaceful conditions in the border region between Siam and Cambodia.

Change in the content of suai payment from Battambang occurred after the war had ended. After Bodin had left for Bangkok, and the governor of Battambang, Phraya Kathathorn was responsible for the matter, the suai became less constant (see table

136 TNL, CMH, R.III C.S 1200/68.
For many years the suai payment did not reach the requirement set by Bangkok, and sometimes payment in kind (cardamom) was replaced by payment in money. The change is interesting. The arrears of suai payment does not necessarily mean that it was easier in war time for Bangkok to levy the payment, but it was not possible for villagers to obtain cash because of the decline of commercial activities during war time. It was more convenient for them to supply suai in kind. The appearance of money therefore suggests that peace and stability after the end of the war revived the comical activity of Battambang, and consequently allowed people to have cash in their hands. Although I have argued that the Thai had tried to maintain stability and economic activities of the Battambang region, it was by no means the case that the region was able to escape all impacts of the war.

Besides, the presence of Chaophraya Bodin in the Battambang region during the war no doubt made local officials in charge of suai collection aware of Bangkok's power so that they would carry out their duty efficiently. It made the continuity of payment in kind last longer than in the more remote areas such as the Northeast. The looser control of the Thai after the end of the war began to allow local people, or more likely the local officials, to take advantage of their products. As the lek suai could alternatively pay four baht per person instead of four catties of cardamom, local officials probably preferred to sell cardamom to private traders who tended to offer a better price than the official rate. So if they gained more income, they could have sent part of the proceeds as suai money to Bangkok. For example, each lek suai of Battambang was obliged to pay four baht or otherwise four catties (chang), and the rate of official purchase was 120 baht per picul (100 catties). Therefore, the local people would be able to gain at least 4.8 baht for four catties of cardamom. The revived trade activities in the area were no doubt an important factor, which stimulated villagers and local officials to make profits from their products.
Bangkok no doubt preferred payment in kind over money, particularly when overseas market prices were high. On the contrary, if payment in money were made, Bangkok tended to gain less profit than payment in kind. At the rate of four baht per person instead of four catties of cardamom Bangkok would gain only one hundred baht, instead of one picul of cardamom, which could be exported at 220 baht per picul.

Nevertheless, it is also possible that the decline of Sino-Siamese trade from the mid-1840s seems to have led Bangkok to pay less attention to in obtaining suai in kind. Besides, the discovery of a gold mine in 1852 in Battambang seems to have attracted most of Bangkok's attention. Bangkok sent officials to investigate the mine and created a gold tax, levied on the villagers searching for gold. This gold tax was sent to Bangkok. Furthermore, the appearance of suai money is also interesting in suggesting that the peaceful conditions after the end of the war restored the trade activities of Cambodia. The circulation of money in people's hands indicates the liveliness of commercial activities in Battambang.

137 It was also the case in the Northeast. Ibid., p. 300.

138 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S. 1214/87; CMH. R.IV C.S. 1215/32.

139 The stable conditions in the Northeast Siam and Champassak territory since the early 1830s seems to have made the payment of suai money from these areas occurred much earlier than those from Battambang. See, Koizumi, op.cit., p. 285.
Table 4.9  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cardamom (picul)</th>
<th>Money (baht)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>44.16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>51.56</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,796.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>13.67</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>37.58</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>40.14</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources**  
TNL, CMH.R.IV C.S.1226/316; C.S.1215,1217,1218/195; C.S.1228/206; C.S.1228/235; C.S.1230/166

After Bangkok and Hué reached a peace settlement in 1847, it was essential for the Thai to arrange the administrative system of the Battambang region to provide for their political and economic interests before the Thai army left Cambodia. However, Thai influence in the region was not diminished, though the local administrative authority was transferred back to the governors of Battambang, Siemreap, and Pursat after Chaophraya Bodin left for Bangkok. The Thai attempted to minimise the possibility of the Vietnamese gaining benefit from the resources under their control, and tried to preserve both the loyalty the people and of the supply of resources of Battambang to the Thai side.

The Battambang region also had trade relations with Phnom Penh and Cochin
China. But since it was under Thai control, trade relations with both Phnom Penh, and Cochin China inevitably faced intervention from Bangkok. Sources from the 1860s indicate that while there was no customs duty on trade between Battambang and the Siamese side, exports from Battambang to Phnom Penh and Cochin China had to pay a duty of ten percent of the purchase value at Bac Prea (or known in Thai as Peam Sema) customs house in Battambang, also at the Cambodian customs house in Phnom Penh, and again at the Vietnamese one in Chaudoc. The revenue from import-export duties belonged to the governor of Battambang.\footnote{AOM, (Indochine) Amiraux 12705: Gouvernement Général 26143. "Rapport du Lieutenant Maitret sur sa mise à Battambang, 1897."; Garnier, D'Exploration en Indo-chine, p. 222; p. F. Méré, "Une promenade de Saigon à Battambang et aux ruines d'Angkor," BSE, (2e Semestre, 3e Fascicule, 1888), p. 15 (395).} Though transportation between Battambang and Bangkok was longer and more laborious, the duties made the general expenses of these two traffics almost the same.\footnote{It took about two weeks by cart between Battambang and Krabin and another three days by boat from Krabin to Bangkok, while it was only one week by boat from Battambang to Phnom Penh, and another five days from Phnom Penh to Saigon. See, TNL, CMH, R III C.S.1203/110; TNA, R V M.2.15/1.} These customs houses thus obstructed the flow of trade between Battambang and the Indochinese region, while the absence of a customs house between Battambang and Bangkok made the production and transport costs equivalent to those for products sold to Cochin China. Thai influence over the Battambang region would certainly be another effective means to stimulate local traders to come and trade with Siam.

**Conclusion**

The economic intervention of the Thai state, on the one hand, encouraged growing economic relations between Battambang and Siam, and tied up the former's economic life to the Siamese economic centre. The Thai used every possible means
to force and encourage the influx of people and wealth of Cambodia into their sphere of dominion. The dominant power thus could attract people to come to trade in its domain and rendered a higher concentration of resources from distant regions. In contrast the actions of the Thai brought disaster to the economic basis of the Cambodian state, for its major commercial area was destroyed, while the northwestern region was hindered from any potential socio-economic relations with the Cambodian centre of power. The advance of Thai control over the Battambang region can be perceived as a substitute for the loss of access to Cambodia by way of Hatien to the Vietnamese. It was an alternative route for securing Cambodian products at low expense, although Bangkok still saw the river route between Hatien and the Mekong river as an excellent channel for obtaining Cambodian products. Soon after the French moved to colonise Vietnam and Cambodia, Bangkok appealed to French colonial officials to open the Vinh Te canal at Hatien and allow their junks to sail up to Chaudoc. However, it seems that by the mid-nineteenth century, Hatien was no longer a significant port. The contest between the Thai and the Vietnamese eventually destroyed the prospective entrepôt of Cambodia. War, devastation and depopulation, particularly in 1833-1847, diminished the potential of Hatien to develop into a prosperous port city in the Indochinese Peninsula. For the Cambodian state, the inability to secure resources and make the trade cohere eventually undermined the state power. Without a basis for acquiring substantial revenue, it was not possible for the Cambodian government to strengthen its political and military power sufficiently to protect the kingdom from either external invasions or domestic rivals.

CHAPTER V
MANPOWER ACQUISITION

In Chapter Three I have argued that Siam's successful engagement in the overseas trade between the Thonburi and the Early Bangkok periods became possible only when Siam was able to retain its stability and role as the dominant power in the major trading networks, and to mobilise people to serve as suppliers of products for the expansion of trade. The dense population of the Siamese dominated area would stimulate economic activities and attract more traders to come. This chapter will discuss how manpower scarcity became a critical factor in the development of Siamese politics and economy after the Thonburi period. I will begin with an outline of the politico-economic conditions affecting Siam between the Thonburi and the early Bangkok periods, and thus the consolidation and contest for power in the trans-Mekong basin was indispensable. Then, I will discuss the importance of Cambodia as a source of manpower resources for the politico-economic development of Siam and the impact of the subsequent loss of Khmer manpower due to the successive depopulation campaigns in Cambodia. The demand for manpower subsequently intensified relations between Siam and its neighbouring states. The unstable conditions demanded that the Thai tighten control over the trans-Mekong region. The increasing tension finally led to warfare and successive depopulation campaigns in Cambodia.

Labour Deficiency

Manpower emerged as a prominent problem throughout the period between the reign of Taksin and the Third Reign of the Chakri Dynasty. By bringing the surrounding states under its domination, Siam was able to secure enormous
manpower for the country's economic reconstruction and subsequent expansion. Following each war, the Thai carried off people from the defeated states to be resettled in the areas where the evacuees were able to serve as producers of export products for Siam's foreign trade.

After Taksin had proclaimed himself king, he realised that the system of manpower control of Siam had been destroyed. In fact, the system had ceased to function even before the fall of Ayudhya in 1767. It is evident that since the early eighteenth century, the continuing loss of the king's sources of manpower, consequently increased the manpower of the princes and nobles. Basically, there were two categories of phrai (commoner): the phrai luang (able-bodied men belonged to a king) and the phrai som (able-bodied men belonged to the princes and nobles). Since the phrai som were likely to face less burden than the phrai luang, people preferred to become phrai som rather than phrai luang. They sometimes even bribed the officials in order to be registered as phrai som. The princes and nobles enjoyed their increasing power and economic interest. They often caused intense factional disputes and wars, especially at times of succession. By contrast, it deeply affected the king's power. The fall of Ayudhya was therefore a result of the inability of the royal power in Ayudhya to gain cooperation and mobilise troops from the princes and nobles in order to mount a defence against the Burmese incursions. The war with the Burmese exacerbated the problems in the manpower system of Siam. A substantial proportion of the population was evacuated by the Burmese army. People were dispersed or fled to hide in the jungle, and a large number died of famine after the end of the war. The accounts of registration of phrai - commoners - disappeared during the war. Those who were able to maintain effective control of people were the regional elites, namely the chaomuang or provincial governors. Thus, when the kingdom's administration had not yet reestablished effectively, it
was difficult for the government to secure cooperation from the regional elites in order for the latter to levy corvée labour and head tax for the government. The scarcity of manpower made the revival of agricultural activities, particularly in the central Chaophraya basin, more difficult. Throughout Taksin's period the country's capacity to produce rice was hardly able to meet domestic consumption, not to mention the export of rice, which had been carried out during the Ayudhyan period. The lack of a substantial population not only obstructed the revival of economic life in the kingdom, but it also weakened the power of the king vis-à-vis the princes and the nobles. It made Siam vulnerable to incursions from the neighbouring polity, as the seasonal Burmese attacks remained a threat to the country's security and demanded more labour for strengthening its defence.¹

The Thai rulers seem to have learnt the lesson from the fall of Ayudhya. The first task of Taksin after his accession was to subdue various political parties throughout the kingdom. Between the Thonburi and early Bangkok periods, the Thai rulers tried consistently to increase the number of phrai luang and prevent their loss. Several measures were taken, such as sending out the central officials to tattoo the phrai on a vast scale, granting tax exemptions on certain kinds of items such as market taxes, fishing taxes and land taxes, for the phrai luang. The period of corvée labour for the phrai luang was reduced from six months in the Ayudhyan period to four months in the Thonburi period and three months in the Second Reign of the Bangkok period. A royal decree in 1783 indicates that any phrai som who wished to institute a proceeding against his patron must be transferred to being phrai luang.²

² Akin, op.cit., p. 58.
One effective measure to increase manpower seems to have been evacuation of people from neighbouring polities. The task of populating the deserted areas was a primary objective of Taksin’s regime. The border regions and its neighbouring states appeared to have been the wealthy sources of manpower for Siam. After Taksin had defeated his political rivals in Phitsanulok and Nakhon Ratchasima, his army evacuated a large number of people from the two provinces to resettle in Thonburi. The Cambodian chronicle states that following Taksin’s campaign in Cambodia in 1771-72, Cambodia was depopulated by 10,000, with a large number of people dying during the war. The Thonburi expedition against Vientiane and Champassak in 1778 carried back about three thousand Laotians to resettle in the central Chaophraya region.

By the First Reign of the Chakri dynasty, an effort to enforce manpower mobilisation remained a major task of the king. Rama I tried to encourage the locally-based officials to carry out the sak lek, conscription by tattooing able-bodied men. In 1783, one year after Rama I had ascended the throne, Bangkok despatched an order to various chaomuangs to sak lek in their areas, for Bangkok needed to mobilise labour for the construction of the new capital.

Following the invasions in Laos and Cambodia an effort was made to expand the administrative links with the local elites in these border regions in order to ensure

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3 “Chotmaihet khong phuak bathluang farangset ton phandin phrachao ekkathat, khrang krung thonburi lae khrang krung rattanakosin ton ton” (Records of the French Missionaries During the Periods of King Ekkathat, Thonburi and the Early Bangkok), in PP 39, pp. 93-94.

4 “Nong Chronicle,” in PP 1, pp. 143-44; See also, “Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi” (Records Concerning the Expeditions in the Thonburi Period), in PP 66, p. 145.

5 “Chotmaihet khong phuak bathluang farangset,” in PP 39, pp. 149-50.

6 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR 1, pp. 44-45.
the supply of manpower for the Thai court. The successful consolidation of Thai hegemony over Laos and Cambodia allowed convenient access to corvée labour in these two tributary states. In 1783, about 10,000 Khmers and 5,000 Laotians were levied to dig the moat and build a city wall in Bangkok. In Cambodia, the Thai had the governor of Battambang and Siemreap Ta-la-ha Baen perform services for them. Bangkok ordered Baen to mobilise troops several times, for example in assisting Prince Nguyen Anh to combat the Tay Son rebellion.

The reigns of Taksin and Rama I saw the creation of various muang in the Northeast and lower Laos such as Attapeu, Chiang Taeng, Chonlabot, Kalasin, Khonkaen, Saenpang, Phutthaisong, Sapad, Khukhan, Sisaket, Sangkha, Surin and Ubon. Generally speaking, it was the Thai court's policy to encourage the local officials to create new muang by mobilising as much population as they could under their command, and then applying for royal permission to set up a new muang. In doing so, the local officials were promoted to higher administrative titles and ranks. The higher number of people they controlled meant the more power and wealth they gained from their subjects. At the same time, royal power was able to augment its source of manpower.

It is worth noting that the trans-Mekong area, particularly the border region between Laos and Cambodia, was a traditional source of manpower for the surrounding states. During the Angkor period, the uplanders were captured to be sold as slaves in Cambodia. These uplanders were locally known in Thai and Lao as "Kha"

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7 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
8 Ibid., pp. 46, 108.
meaning slaves; "Phnong" in Khmer and "Moi" in Vietnamese, meaning savage. According to Phongsawadan huamuang monthon isan, the creation of various muang in the lower Laos - Champassak, Attapeu, Saenpang, Sithandon, Khong, Saravane and Chiang Taeng - depended largely upon the mobilisation of the Mon-Khmer speaking uplanders. These uplanders became the source of power of the local elites in the Northeast in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

According to Amorawongwichit, the tradition of ti kha, raiding and capturing the "Kha", by Siamese officials began around 1797, when there was a rebellion led by Chiang Kaew in Champassak. The Yokrabat, deputy governor, of Khorat carried out Bangkok's order to suppress the rebellion. After accomplishing this duty, the Yokrabat's troops continued to raid and capture the uplanders in Champassak. Since then, when local officials in the Northeast wished to create a new muang, they raided and forcibly conscripted the uplanders from lower Laos. Such practices went on until 1884 when the French threatened Siamese suzerainty in the east bank area, and subsequently compelled King Chulalongkorn to dispatch an order to the governors in the Northeast and Champassak territory prohibiting local officials from capturing the uplanders for sale or exchange. Nevertheless, the intrusion of the Thai into these upland areas for the forced conscription of the local population began in the Second Reign. It caused tremendous trouble for the uplanders and resulted in a political crisis between Siam and its vassals which will be discussed below.

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11 Amorawongwichit, op. cit. pp. 188-222; Also, see the testimony of one of Attapeu's officials in 1886 in "Ruang muang nakhon champassak", (Story of the Champassak Principality) in PP 70, (Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1969), pp. 177-93.

12 "Ruang muang nakhon champassak," in PP 70, pp. 189-90.
Forced Conscription

The necessity of obtaining manpower from the time of the Second Reign was related to a new economic difficulty. I have discussed in Chapter Three how the shortage of state revenue and western pressure on the royal trading monopoly compelled Bangkok to improve its concentration of resources to substitute for what it had lost by giving up the royal monopoly system. Domestic production needed to be expanded in response to world market demand. In achieving such an aim, the country's labour system had to be improved and expanded. The increase of population in order to extend the production process was therefore imperative. Besides, the sak lek was another means of controlling the regular flow of local products to the centre, since the conscripts became suppliers of suai for the centre. This reveals the attempt of the central power to extract benefit from individuals in distant regions with the cooperation of local officials. The higher the number of people they tattooed, meant the greater network of product supply they controlled.

Manpower shortage remained a critical issue during the Second Reign. The 1810 royal decree of manpower conscription shows that the court found that manpower control was in administrative disarray. The lists of lek, able-bodied men, were inaccurate. The number of lek had decreased due to various reasons: death, old-age, disability, arbitrary changes to new platoons, and running away. Besides, some local officials tried to hide the actual number of lek under their command from Bangkok so that they could exploit the lek for their own benefit. Therefore, as soon as Rama II ascended the throne, in 1810 a conscription decree was promulgated so that local officials had to settle all problems relating to manpower.

According to the 1810 decree, the conscription units first began their missions
around the vicinity of Bangkok, and then continued to the distant regions where local officials were obliged to help and cooperate with the *kong sak lek*. Interestingly, this was the first time that Bangkok had high-ranking officials from the capital lead the *kong sak lek* into the countryside.\(^\text{13}\) It suggests that forced conscription occurred in a more systematic and widespread manner than during the previous period.

Although Siamese conscription was not carried out in Cambodia, one of the major factors aggravating the antagonism between Bangkok and Udong was Bangkok's attempt to mobilise the manpower of Cambodia. In 1810, Rama II had ordered the Cambodian court to levy troops to help the Thai campaign against the Burmese, but King Chan intentionally disregarded the request. The two Khmer okya allied with the Thai, Chakroei Baen and Kalahom Muang, arbitrarily raised the troops themselves without Chan's authorisation. Such non-compliance amounted to an act of rebellion against the royal power. As a result, Chan had Baen and Muang executed. Chan reported the matter to Bangkok with the excuse that the two okya intended to revolt against him.\(^\text{14}\)

Chan's refusal to comply with Bangkok's demand was understandable, since none of the rulers wanted to lose their manpower. Bangkok's requirement directly decreased the number of guards and revenue suppliers available for the Cambodian government. The lack of manpower was a key factor which hindered the Cambodian monarch from strengthening his power over local and external rivals. Therefore, the rise of Vietnamese power in the east offered the chance for Chan to decline such compulsory demands of Bangkok.

\(^\text{13}\) Damrongrachanuphap, *PKRR II*, pp. 43-46.

\(^\text{14}\) Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho.so.1173 [Records in the Second Reign, Lesser Era 1173 (AD 1811)] (1971), pp. 54-56.
The execution of Baen and Muang showed Rama II Chan's disdain for the Thai monarch. According to tradition, the vassal ruler was not allowed to execute high-ranking officials himself, but should have sent them for trial in Bangkok.\textsuperscript{15} Besides, from the point of view of Bangkok, the suzerain held the right to levy labour from his vassals. People in the vassal's lands were perceived as his own subjects, \textit{kha khopkhanthasima}. In other words, Bangkok considered Laos and Cambodia its legitimate sources of labour. Such a perception was explicitly expressed quite often in Bangkok's dispatches to the army chiefs while performing their mission in the Phuan state:

\begin{quote}
The Vietnamese have dominated and appropriated Cambodia and Laos from Bangkok, since Bangkok was involved in a protracted war against the Burmese. Since the Vientiane revolt, many Lao families in the east bank fled to hide in those \textit{muang} (in the Phuan state). So, the king (Rama III) wanted the army to attack and return the land and people to be subjects of Bangkok as they used to be.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The depopulation campaign was an alternative means to claim Bangkok's right over the vassal's resources. The refusal to comply with Bangkok's demand would lead to harsh measures as was the case in Cambodia between 1833-47, as will be discussed below.

After the Second Reign, Bangkok was concerned about the increasing difficulties it encountered in Cambodia. It was no longer able to exploit the manpower of Cambodia as long as Chan was on the throne and the Vietnamese influence remained there. The adverse conditions in Cambodia were possibly an impetus for


\textsuperscript{16} "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan nai ratchakan thi sam" (Records Concerning Cambodia and Vietnam During the Third Reign), in \textit{PP 67/41}, pp. 257, 266, 269.
Bangkok to advance and intensify its control over the border region in the Northeast and Laos. It appears that Bangkok's policy of labour mobilisation was actively enforced by local officials in the Northeast. It was undertaken extensively, and caused local people tremendous trouble with the result that they turned against Siamese authority. In 1819, a revolt of the uplanders in the Champassak territory broke out against the extensive conscription by the Siamese officials. The revolt was led by a solitary monk named Chao Sa, whom the uplanders believed was phra sri-ariya, a reborn Bodhisattva who was able to save mankind and liberate them from suffering. The Phun Wiang indicates that before the Chao Sa revolt took place, the conscription unit led by the Yokrabat of Khorat was active in the Khorat Plateau and Champassak territory. The governor of Khorat (Nakhon Ratchasima) himself wanted to govern Champassak. He wished to capture as much manpower as possible in order to gain the favour of the king who had given him the mandate to send out the conscription unit. The governor ordered the officials of Khamthong, Attapeu, Saenpang, Champassak, Ubon, and Srisaket to form the conscription units and to proceed altogether to ti kha, raiding and conscripting the "Kha".  

Although the Phun Wiang is the only document to relate this extensive conscription as a reason behind the revolt, the Phongsawadan huamuang monthon isan appears to confirm the account of Phun Wiang. It indicates that at the time of the revolt the conscription team led by the governor of Khorat was carrying out labour conscription in Khong in Champassak territory, and sent the news of the revolt to Bangkok.

The Phun Wiang points out that the harsh measures carried out by Siamese officials caused chaos among the local people. Those who disobeyed the authorities were

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18 Amarawongwichit, op.cit., p. 229.
executed, and many ran away to hide in the jungle. The conscription units even captured travelling traders.\textsuperscript{19} When the news of the magical power of the monk Chao Sa began to circulate, the people fled to join him. They formed a kind of army to fight the conscription units. After Sa had successfully gathered a force of about 8,000 people, they marched to attack the city of Champassak, which was rapidly defeated, because its ruler, Chao Manoi, soon abandoned the city and fled to Ubon without attempting to fight. When Bangkok received the news, Siamese troops from Ubon and Khorat immediately mobilised and recaptured the city. The monk Chao Sa was finally captured by the Vientiane forces led by Chao Anu and his son Yo, and was executed in Bangkok. Chao Manoi was also sent to Bangkok, where he later died.\textsuperscript{20}

After the defeat of the Chao Sa revolt, Rama II decided to reward Chao Anu's son, Yo, by appointing him ruler of Champassak principality. Prince Damrong pointed out that Rama III also threw his support behind the decision to appoint Yo. The decision was based on the fact that Bangkok was concerned about the encroachment of the Vietnamese in Cambodia and Laos. It was a primary necessity to strengthen Bangkok's base in Champassak territory, an abundant source of manpower and forest products. But Chao Manoi's successors had proved to be too weak to endure even a local revolt. With assistance from Chao Anu at Vientiane, Yo would be able to strengthen and secure Champassak.\textsuperscript{21}

By the Third Reign the mobilisation of manpower in the Northeast and Laos was well underway. One year after Rama III's succession, the court issued the royal


\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 66-69.
conscription decree of 1825. Bangkok failed to learn the lesson of the Chao Sa revolt, and again used force on the people of the trans-Mekong region. According to Phun Wiang, the governor of Khorat volunteered to carry out conscription in the Northeast and the left bank. Again, Phongsawadan huamuang monthon isan refers to the appearance of Siamese conscription units conducting their duties in the Northeast at the time of the revolt, and the killing of conscription officials at Suwannaphum by Champassak’s troops. In the first stage, the conscription took place in the Khorat Plateau. Local people there were in distress, and fled across the Mekong river to seek refuge in Vientiane’s territory. The conscription subsequently proceeded into Champassak territory.

The widespread conscription across the Mekong river provoked dissatisfaction from Chao Anu and his son. Yo immediately reported the event to Chao Anu. In conjunction with the rumours of conflict between the Bangkok court and the British who had sent a naval force against the former, Anu and Yo seized the chance to fight against the conscription team in 1827. The troops of Vientiane and Champassak raided unopposed as far as Saraburi with the main objective of bringing the Lao people back to the left bank. It is obvious that they had no intention at all to attack and occupy Bangkok, although the latter at the time was occupied with its conflict with the British, and was unprepared for the sudden attack from the east.

The revolt infuriated Rama III, who had previously favoured and supported Anu

23 Pratheep, op.cit., pp.97-98.
24 Amarawongwichit, op.cit., p. 232; Also, Thiphakorawongse, PKRR III, Vol. 1, p.44.
25 Thawat, op.cit., p. 78.
and Yo. When the news reached Bangkok, Rama III immediately dispatched troops to crush the revolt. Before the Thai army reached the princely house of Vientiane, Anu and his family had fled eastward to seek asylum in Vietnam. The Thai forces were impeded by the approaching monsoon, and had to wait for nearly a half year before furthering the expedition. The fighting broke out again after Anu returned to his capital with a Vietnamese escort, who hoped that Rama III would have granted him a pardon as requested by the Vietnamese emperor Minh Mang. Finally in early 1828, Anu was captured and ruthlessly executed in Bangkok, while Yo safely escaped to Vietnam. The Thai army led by Phraya Ratchasuphawadi, later Chaophraya Bodindecha, finally raided and burnt down Vientiane. Its villagers were forcibly evacuated to be resettled in Siam.

The Thai ruthlessness towards Vientiane reveals the extent of the anxiety which the revolt caused the Thai, based on their politico-economic security in the trans-Mekong basin. The Vientiane and Champassak principalities, which had been supposed to be Siam's bases, unexpectedly turned against it and sought protection from its rival. This was the first time since the establishment of Thai control that the Khorat Plateau had been invaded by a neighbour. It indeed shocked the Thai when Chao Anu's army launched an attack enroute to Khorat and Saraburi so close to the heartland of the kingdom. Together with the decline of Siamese influence in Cambodia since the Second Reign, the revolt exposed the fact that now the long eastern frontier of Siam was in real danger. The expansion of Vietnamese power and the antagonistic relationship with both Laos and Cambodia deprived the Thai of access to the sources of labour and products along the trans-Mekong basin. Consequently, Bangkok urgently manoeuvred to assert firm control on the right bank by creating new administrative centres. Chiang Khan was established to govern the area from the south of Luang Phrabang nearly to Vientiane. Nongkhai
was to look after the long but sparsely populated stretch of the Mekong until Nakhon Phanom. The area farther down-river was under the governments of Mukdahan and Khemmarat. Although the Thai had successfully put down the Chao Anu revolt in early 1828, a series of depopulation campaigns along the left bank continued until the 1840s with the purpose of removing as many people as possible to resettle in the area under effective Thai control on the right bank. The successive mass exoduses during this period contributed to the creation of forty new muang in Northeast Siam. The annual suai payment to Bangkok from the Northeast and east bank Lao towns, which became more systematically and regularly paid after 1830, was indeed the consequence of the mass exodus of the left bank people into the Siamese domain since the Vientiane war.

Depopulation Campaigns in Cambodia

In Cambodia, intensive warfare between Siam and Vietnam began in 1833, when the news of the Le Van Khoi revolt in southern Vietnam against Minh Mang reached Bangkok. A series of Siamese expeditions and depopulation campaigns in Cambodia was launched. As I have mentioned in Chapter Three, the areas under strong Vietnamese influence, the east bank and the coastal area, were the major targets of the Siamese military incursions. Full-scale deportation of the local population and Vietnamese soldiers in Cambodia also took place in these areas.

26 For discussion on the Thai depopulation campaigns in Laos, see Breazeale and Sanit, A Culture in Search of Survival: The Phuan of Thailand and Laos, (1988), chapter 3.

27 For extensive studies of the suai system, see Boonrod Kaewkanha, Kan kep suai nai samai rattanakosin ton ton (Suai Collection During the Early Bangkok Period), (MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1964), chapters 3 and 4; Theerachai Boonmatham, "Kan kep suai nai huamuan lao fai tawan-ok (Suai Collection in the Eastern Lao Provinces During the Early Bangkok Period), Warasan Thammasat, 12,4 (December 1983), pp. 158-64; Junko Koizumi, "The Commutation of Suai from Northeast Siam in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century," ISEAS, 23, 2 (September 1992), pp. 278-81.
Phnom Penh, Hatien and Sombok were probably the worst devastated areas. The Thai documents are filled with descriptions of famine, burning down villages and Vietnamese camps, deserted villages, people's flight into the jungle and numbers of war captives. The extent of the enmity against the dissident King Chan and the Vietnamese is explicitly expressed in Rama III's remark to Chaophraya Bodin:

You are to figure out a means of retiming Cambodia to Bangkok as it used to be. If this is not possible, you should turn Cambodia into forest, only the land, the mountains, the rivers, and the canals are to be left. You are to carry off Khmer families to be resettled in Thai territory, do not leave any behind. It would be good to treat Cambodia as we did Vientiane.

In contrast to the Thai depopulation policy, Vietnam encouraged its people to establish and trade in Cambodia (see Chapter Three). However, there were attempts by the Vietnamese to seize the captives and resettle them in the vicinity of Phnom Penh. Therefore, there was a series of evacuations by the Thai and counter evacuation by the Vietnamese.

The Khmer okya and Princes Im and Duang had to carry out the deportation of Khmer captives for Siam. However, Bangkok was concerned that the Khmer princes and okya would hide the actual number and make use of the evacuees themselves. When Bangkok heard that Im and Duang, while stationed in Battambang had received a large number of Vietnamese captives, an order was immediately dispatched, demanding that they were not to "hold a single Vietnamese

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30 Chotmaiheu ruang thap yuans khrang ratchakan thi sam. pp. 21, 26, 34.
(for their own use).\textsuperscript{31} Whether they were satisfied or not, they were apparently unable to resist Bangkok's demand.

A full-scale deportation was carried on throughout the fourteen-year war. The economic objective of the depopulation campaign was to fulfil the need for labour for the growing Siamese export production. This purpose was clearly revealed in the dispatches of Bangkok to the army commander in the battlefield. For example, a letter from the Thai court to Chaophraya Bodin states that "If Chaophraya Bodindecha has an idea what should be done, let him do it with success. Do not fail. You must try to bring more people for resettlement in the kingdom in order to serve as our manpower."\textsuperscript{32}

The ethnicity of the deportees referred to in Thai documents included Chinese, Chinese Khmer, Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese. Evidence indicates that the evacuees were placed in either the agricultural-base area of the central Chao Phraya basin or the forest product base in the Khorat Plateau (see table 5.1). Some of the Khmer manpower was put in the suai units in Chachoengsao. The deportation of Khmers in Chachoengsao allowed the creation of another four suai units in Chachoengsao in 1847. All of the lek suai under the suai units of Phra Kamphut Phakdi, Khun Rucha Decho, Khun Theppromma, and Phra Wichit Songkhrarn were Khmer.\textsuperscript{33}

Concerning those forced migrants who participated in the production process of

\textsuperscript{31} "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan," in PP 67/41, pp. 285-86.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 244, and also pp. 257, 260, 268.

staple crops, the Thai authorities often placed them in Nakhon Chaisi, Chachoengsao and Ratchaburi. These areas had served as the major sugar growing regions of Siam since the early nineteenth century.
Table 5.1 Forced Resettlement in the Central Agricultural Area and Khorat Plateau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Vientiane</td>
<td>Nakhon Chaisi</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Laos</td>
<td>Nakhon Chaisi, Suphanburi, Angthong, Lopburi, Phitsanulok Nakhon Nayok, Nakhon Phnom Ubon, Yasothon, Suwannaphum Chonlabot, Khonkaen, Roi-et, Nongkhai</td>
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<td>59-78, 92-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Cambodia, Hatien</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Nakhon Ratchasima, Surin, Sangkha</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Bangkok, Ratchaburi, Ubon, Chachoengsao</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>283</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Nakhon Chaisi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>614, 662-663, 869, 928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9-10, 69-70</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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<td>Phuan</td>
<td>Nakhon Chaisi, Bangkok</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>121-23</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Mekong Delta</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
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</table>

Note: The author selected only records that mention the new resettlement area of these deportees. In fact, the records showing deportations during the Third Reign are much more numerous.

Sources

The sugar industry became increasingly important in Siamese foreign trade in the Second Reign, and by the Third Reign sugar was Siam's highest value export item. Owing to the low price and relatively good quality of its sugar, Siam attracted a large number of western vessels to buy sugar at Bangkok's port. It is estimated that in 1821 Siam produced approximately 60,000 piculs of sugar and 110,000 piculs in 1844. The biggest markets for Siam's sugar were China and Singapore respectively.

Previous studies have emphasised only the role of the Chinese labourers in the notable expansion of Siam's sugar industry. Chinese labour was significant to the sugar industry. The Chinese migrants had first initiated the manufacture of sugar

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34 Adisom Muakphimai, Krom Tha kap rabop setthakit thai (Department of Port Authority and Thai Economy), (1988), pp. 132-34.
35 Ibid., p. 132.
from sugar cane in Siam in the early 1810s, and the influx of Chinese labour during the late eighteenth century stimulated the growth of Siam's sugar industry. But Chinese labour alone appeared not to be enough to fulfil the rapid growth of the world market's demand for sugar. In some years the amount of sugar cane produced was not sufficient to supply the sugar factories and led to conflict among the factory owners in attempting to secure the sugar cane supply. It is likely that the Chinese tended to be involved in the sugar processing industry, while the forced migrants served in the cultivation. It is evident that in 1847 in Nakhon Chaisi alone, about 2,302 rai of sugar plantation belonged to the Chinese, while about 7,322 rai belonged to the Thai. The need for labour supply in expanding agricultural production was reflected in the reduction of the period of annual corvée to three months in the Second Reign. It was essential to allow a more flexible movement of labour to make it available for the production process. Thus, the forced migration was designed to further the expanding agricultural production of Siam. A dispatch from Chaophraya Chakri to the governor of Nakhon Chaisi demonstrates the court's concern over effective labour management in sugar production: "[The governor of Nakhon Chaisi] should properly and effectively organise the Chinese, Laotian and Khmer people to grow more sugar cane than ever before."

Interestingly, a study on the history of Krom Tha (Department of Port Authority) by Adisorn reveals that the Thai nobles during the Third Reign were heavily involved in the sugar industry. Rama III owned two sugar factories in Nakhon Chaisi and one factory in Chachoengsao. Krom mun Surinthrarak, a royal family member in charge of the Krom Tha, co-invested with Chaophraya Phra Khlang

37 Adisorn, op.cit., pp. 282-83. Approximately, 2.5 rai are equivalent to 1 acre.
38 Hong, Thailand in the Nineteenth Century, (1984), p.55
(Dit), minister of Treasury and acting Kalahom (Defence), and his brother, Chaophraya Sriphiphat (That), the Changwang (supervisor) of Krom Tha. Dit and That owned the biggest sugar factory in Siam during the Third and Fourth Reigns. Other high-rank ing officials of Krom Tha who invested in sugar factories were: Phraya Chodoc Ratchasetthi, the minister of Krom Tha, who had one factory in Samutsakon; Phraya Sombatwanit and Phraya Ratchamontri who each owned one factory in Nakhon Chaisi.40

As a matter of fact, the areas under the control of Chaophraya Phra Khlang (Dit) and Chaophraya Sriphiphat (That) were the southern and eastern coasts of Siam. But they were apparently influential over the affairs of Nakhon Chaisi and Chachoengsao, both of which were under the administrative power of the Samuhanayok, minister of Krom Mahatthai (Interior). This is shown in a dispatch of the Krom Tha advising the governor of Chachoengsao to take care of and assist the Chinese who wished to establish a sugar factory there. Also, when there were revolts led by the Chinese in Nakhon Chaisi in 1847 and in Chachoengsao in 1848, Dit led an army to suppress the revolts.41 In fact, Dit and That were the most influential nobles in the court of Rama III, having formed an alliance to support Rama III’s succession. The accounts of Luang Udomsombat demonstrates that they retained a very good friendship with the king. Dit had been a business partner of Rama III in the junk trade with China when the latter had been Prince Chetsadabodin. These two brothers played essential roles in the court’s administrative decision making and responsibilities, for they were the most favoured nobles with whom Rama III liked to discuss the kingdom’s affairs. They

40 Adisorn, op. cit., pp. 291, 293.

seem to have influenced the court's policy on all important issues.\textsuperscript{42} The background of Dit and That therefore gives a clearer picture of the relationship between the economic interest of the Siamese ruling class and warfare. The pattern of forced resettlement was designed to meet the growing needs of agricultural production under the control of the nobles. Besides, the Thai nobles' active involvement in the country's foreign trade provided them with information on world market demand. So they were able to decide effectively where were the best places to resettle the new manpower in response to foreign trading prospects.

The forced migrants who resettled in Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Angthong, Suphanburi, Ayudhya, Lopburi, and Saraburi, tended to participate in rice cultivation. Since the Second Reign, there had been a large number of Lao, Khmer, Burmese and Mon migrants placed in those areas.\textsuperscript{43} Rice was very essential for both domestic consumption, including supplying the army, and export. By 1850, the value of rice exports was ranked fifth in value among Siam's export items.\textsuperscript{44}

With respect to Cambodia, the Thai depopulation campaigns had an enormous impact on Cambodia's demography, especially in areas close to Vietnamese domination. Some observations on the demography of Phnom Penh in comparison to that of Battambang are useful for examining the effect of the depopulation and devastation of Phnom Penh and the development of Battambang. From table 5.2, it is possible to make the general statement that before the twentieth century, Phnom Penh had a smaller population than Battambang. Although the numbers for 1862

\textsuperscript{42} Udomsombat, Luang, \textit{Chotmai luang udomsombat} (Letters of Luang Udomsombat), (Bangkok, Krom Sinlapakorn, 1987).

\textsuperscript{43} Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho.so.1173, p. 41.

given by Spooner seem to have been underestimated, at least they indicate that from Spooner's point of view Phnom Penh was less populated than Battambang.45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Battambang</th>
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<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,285</td>
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<tr>
<td>1862</td>
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<td>15-18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>44,819</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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</table>

Sources
2 AOM, (Indochine) Amiraux 12705, "Rapport...par Spooner, 30 décembre 1862".
3 AOM, (Indochine) A.F. Carton 111 dossier G 01(6), "Statistique population du Cambodge année 1907".
4 AOM, (Indochine) Residences Superieures du Cambodge 254, "Rapport de Monsieur Breucq, sur Battambang, 15 fevrier 1907".

It is noteworthy that in 1907, the population of Phnom Penh was ranked twelfth among Cambodian towns (excluding Battambang and Siemreap). Interestingly, about half of its population was Chinese and Vietnamese (see table 5.3). In fact, a large number of Chinese and Vietnamese migrated to Cambodia after Cambodia had become a French Protectorate in 1867 and they tended to resettle in the commercial cities like Phnom Penh.46 So, the population in Phnom Penh in the first half of the

45 Spooner was a French officer who was sent by the Vice-Amiral Gouverneur to survey the agricultural and commercial conditions in the area between Saigon and Battambang.
46 Only Kampot had a higher number of Chinese than Phnom Penh. There were 15,058. But the number of Vietnamese in Kampot was much smaller, at only 2,173. AOM, (Indochine), A.F. Carton 111 dossier G 01(6).
nineteenth century must have been much smaller than in 1907. The Thai depopulation of Cambodia in the 1830s and 1840s seems to have had a lasting impact on the under-population of Phnom Penh. In contrast to Phnom Penh, the Thai wanted to maintain the Battambang region for their political and economic base, as I have demonstrated in Chapter Four. Battambang did not suffer the destructive experiences of Phnom Penh. The denser population of Battambang was a result of the Thai manoeuvres to develop and strengthen it. Western explorers in Cambodia in the nineteenth century never failed to mention the prosperity and active commerce of Battambang.47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicities</th>
<th>Phnom Penh</th>
<th>Battambang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>21,903</td>
<td>154,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>9,489</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>12,533</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half caste (métis)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>30,000³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>419</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cham-Malay</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siamese</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplanders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44,819</strong></td>
<td><strong>200,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 For example, Henri Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts of Indochina (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos.* (1864), pp. 272-75; AOM, (Indochine) Amiraux 12705, "Rapport sur le Cambodge, Voyage du Saigon à Battambang par Spooner, 30 decembre 1862"; Gouvernement Général 26143, "Rapport du Lieutenant Maitret sur sa mise à Battambang, 1897".
Sources
1 AOM, (Indochine) A.F. Carton 111 dossier G 01(6), “Statistique population du Cambodge année 1907”.
2 AOM, (Indochine) Residences Superieures du Cambodge 254, "Rapport de Monsieur Breucq, sur Battambang, 15 février 1907".
3 Chinese and half-caste

Conclusion

Nowadays Cambodia is an underpopulated country, as a result of the Khmer Rouge regime in particular. However, before 1975 the population of Cambodia had never been high when compared with that of its neighbours. In 1886, the total population of Cambodia was just 678,200 (excluding Battambang and Siemreap), while Vietnam was 10,028,498 souls. It is possible to assert that the Thai depopulation campaigns in the early nineteenth century had remarkably diminished the size of Cambodia's population. The loss of enormous manpower consequently aggravated the power of the Cambodian rulers in all respects, for the basis to form an effective means to implement policy was destroyed. It automatically deteriorated state revenue, since the number of tax payers decreased, local and overseas trade was disrupted, and the deserted area was not worthwhile for traders to come. The capacity to build up military power for defending the country against the invasions of the Thai and the Vietnamese as well as local rivals was diminished. Cambodia's vulnerability was evident in the Thai and Vietnamese incursions. The Cambodian royal army never experienced any success in fighting off the invasions.

In contrast to Cambodia, the Thai depopulation campaign did not affect the population of the Battambang region. Compared to other devastated regions, the basis of power of the Battambang's rulers remain intact. They were therefore able

to continue their effective role in serving the Thai, and were strong enough to show their independence from the Cambodian rulers in Udong/Phnom Penh, as I will show in the following chapter.

For Siam, the large scale of the forced resettlement campaigns along the trans-Mekong basin not only enabled the Thai to populate their kingdom, deserted by the Burmese war, but also provided Siam with a basis for building up its economy which had been devastated since 1767. The mass exodus enabled the Thai elite to develop its production in response to changing world demand and to create a level of prosperity which enabled the consolidation of state power over a widening territory in mainland Southeast Asia.
CHAPTER VI
BATTAMBANG UNDER THAI RULE

In the preceding chapters, I have demonstrated that the occupation of Battambang and Siemreap was crucial for the trade and manpower acquisition of Siam. The value of products and trade from the Battambang region resulted in tighter control over the region by Siam, while a policy of strengthening the region to create a politico-economic base for Siam was undertaken extensively during the Third Reign. In this chapter, I will examine the Siamese administration in these two provinces and the roles and interests of the Khmer okya in the Battambang region in serving the Thai. These questions will reveal the significance of the region in the Thai-Cambodian relationship. They will also explain why the Khmer okya decided to work for the external power instead of serving the government at Udong/Phnom Penh. The role of the Khmer okya in the Battambang region was very crucial, as they assisted in sustaining Thai domination in Cambodia. In return for their services, the okya enjoyed relatively autonomous power and enormous economic benefit in the Battambang region. In addition, the examination of the development of Battambang and Siemreap under Thai rule will show a regional diversity in the history of Cambodia, since the two provinces had a different politico-economic system from other Cambodian regions and were entirely cut off from the jurisdiction of Udong/Phnom Penh from the late eighteenth century.

Before we look at the role of the Battambang okya, it is necessary to discuss first how the traditional administrative system of Cambodia operated, and the basis on which the king's power was exercised in relation to the okya. This will be the grounds for further discussion of how the alliance and betrayal of the okya aggravated the king's power.
Social and Administrative System of Cambodia

Theoretically, the power of post-Angkorean kingship in relation to his subjects was legitimised and reinforced by the Theravada Buddhist concepts of merit and power, and the king was a man of merit, a Bodhisattva, who surpassed all other people (see Chapter One for more discussion on the idea of statecraft). But in reality, the king's power depended on his relations with the royal family members and particularly the nobles who were responsible for all important administrative functions such as tax collection, manpower mobilisation, adjudication of legal cases. The role of the Cambodian royal family and nobility was critical for his power. The king's authority over the appointment of the nobles to titles and power was then a crucial means of enlisting and rewarding support and loyalty to the throne.¹

The design of the kingdom's administration was to fulfil the requirements of kingly power. The main objective of the Cambodian administrative structure was to place manpower under the effective control of the state, as was also the case elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia. The administration consisted of various hierarchical groups, at the apex of which was the king. Everyone in society belonged to a certain category and was related to each other, either as a patron or a client. Slave belonged to master; the prai, commoner, was subject to patron; the nobles owed loyalty and service to the king. In return for their service, the patron was supposed to provide protection. Perhaps the most important protection was that which dealt with legal affairs. A commoner without a patron could not take any legal action against anyone else. He required his patron's permission, otherwise he would be

treated as an outlaw.²

In addition to the prai, slaves were another important source of manpower in Cambodia. They were responsible for both domestic and agricultural work.³ There were three categories of slaves. First were the uplanders in the eastern region close to the Lao and Vietnamese borders. They were captured by private traders, mostly the Cham and the Vietnamese, in order to be sold to the wealthy and noble families. This mode of manpower acquisition can be traced back to the Angkorean period.⁴ The tradition of capturing uplanders as slaves in Cambodia reveals the attempt to assert the central power over individuals in the outlying areas. Apart from the uplanders, there were two other categories of slaves. One was the debt-slaves, who had to work for their master to pay off their debt. They also could redeem themselves from slavery. The other category included war prisoners, criminals, rebels and their families.⁵ This group of slaves seems to have been distributed among members of the royal families.⁶ As war prisoners usually came from the invasion of neighbouring polities, by the eighteenth century their number must have decreased because Cambodia had long since ceased to invade her neighbours.

There is no accurate information indicating the size of Cambodia's population during the first half of the nineteenth century. But the country during this time was

⁴ Ibid., pp. 44, 54.
⁵ Ibid., p. 54; Aymonier, Le Cambodge, Vol. 1, pp. 98-102.
⁶ Adhémard Leclère, Le Codes Cambodgiens, (Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1898), Vol. 1, Article 53, p. 102 indicates that rice and paddy taxes collected from prisoners of war belonged to the royal members.
underpopulated because of war and the extensive Thai depopulation campaigns. Cambodia's population before 1900 hardly reached a million and was much lesser than that of its neighbours. In 1886, the population, not including Battambang and Siemreap, was only 678,200 while Vietnam had about ten million. The majority of the population were ethnic Khmer, who mainly entered peasant and official classes, while marketing, market gardening, and foreign trade were run by the Chinese. The Muslim minority, the Chams and the Malays, usually worked in cattle trading, weaving, and fishing. The number of Vietnamese in Cambodia increased during the strong Vietnamese influence in Cambodia between 1806-1847, since the Vietnamese authorities encouraged their people to come to trade and settle around the Phnom Penh area and Hatien. The Thai records concerning the depopulation in Cambodia in the 1830s and 1840s show that the Thai army evacuated a substantial number of these Vietnamese to Siam. They also seem to have been scattered along the coast line from Hatien to Chanthaburi. The number of Vietnamese and Chinese residents greatly increased after French colonial officials tried to encourage them to resettle in Cambodia.

With respect to the system of dealing with foreigners, they were exempted from three months corvée labour. According to the Krom srok, law of the land, Cambodia established a congregation system in 1693 in order to allow foreign

7 AOM, (Indochine) A.F.Carton 111 dossier G.01(2), "Population de l'Indo-chine de 1886."
8 "Chotmaihet kieokap khmen lae yuan nai ratchakan thi sam" (Records Concerning Cambodia and Vietnam during the Third Reign), in PP 67/42, pp. 47, 82, 195-97.
communities to be governed by their own members. The head of a congregation was called chaôtêa. Europeans could be appointed as chaôtêa as well if they spoke Khmer fluently and were familiar with Khmer custom. Europeans who were born in Cambodia, had fluent Khmer and a knowledge of Khmer law and customs, were treated as Khmer and could become the chaôvay srok, provincial governor.

In the sixteenth century, King Borom Reachea II granted two Spaniards, Blas Ruiz and Diego de Veloso, titles and provinces to govern and princesses for wives. Le Codes Cambodgiennes does not provide much information of how the congregation system was monitored in relation to the general administration of the kingdom. Other evidence shows that the Chinese chaôtêa in Kampot also wielded judicial power over the Chinese community. Other ethnic chaôtêa possibly held such power as well. They were responsible for tax collection from their subjects for the king. A Thai record of 1860 indicates that the Cham-Malay chaôtêa, Tuan Li, handled tax payment for the court officials. The chaôtêa had influence over their people as shown by the flight of Tuan Li to southern Vietnam in 1860 because of his conflict with the court authorities. He had successfully convinced thousands from the Cham-Malay minorities to accompany him to Vietnam.

The Chinese appeared to take important economic positions in the Cambodian administration. The list of Cambodian okya indicates that there were seventeen Chinese okya in the capital. Their titles imply that they were mainly involved in the

13 Ibid., Article 44, pp. 99-100.
14 Chandler, A History, p. 86.
16 TNL, CMH, R, IV C.S. 1222/173.
treasury and in commercial activities of the kingdom. Khmer law gave the Chinese the privilege of occupying important positions such as the head of the Department of Port Authority. They were granted monopolies such as the tax farm on gambling. Apart from such privileges, they appear to have enjoyed the same rights given to other Khmers.

The villages where most Cambodians lived can be categorised into three types. The first were kampong, a Malay word meaning "landing-place", which were situated along navigable bodies of water. These were more heavily populated and prosperous than the other two types. People in the kampong were likely to have much experience with officials, trading, travel, and invasions. The ethnic minorities tended to live in the kampong. The second category was that of the rice-growing villages, which were located around the kampong. Most of the population here were ethnic Khmer. Rice-growing villagers had infrequent contact with those in the kampong through local trade, the exchange of products, and rice-tax collectors from the capital. The third category was the prai, or wilderness. Some of the population here were Mon-Khmer speaking tribal people. They were commonly raided and captured to serve as slaves. They had some contact with people outside the prai through the exchange of forest products, which they collected and exchanged, for other essential goods.

Traditionally, the Cambodians paid tax in kind, and the rice tax was probably the

18 Leclère, op.cit., Articles 103 and 104, p. 115.
19 Willmott, op.cit., p. 68. Willmott suggests that the law applied to the Chinese community placed the Chinese in a category different both from Khmers and from other foreign communities. But he does not elaborate on how they were different from other foreigners.
20 Chandler, A History, pp. 102-104.
The oldest and major revenue of the king and the okya. People had to pay ten percent of their rice production, and this rate was probably applied to other products.\textsuperscript{21} All able-bodied men were obliged to pay three months of corvée labour to their patrons.\textsuperscript{22} The amount of head tax which was paid in lieu of corvée is unknown, but it is likely that people paid tax in kind rather than in currency which was scarce at the time. Bouinais and Paulus indicate that the okya were entitled to take a quarter of the head tax of their subjects, with two thirds being sent to the royal treasury.\textsuperscript{23} Foreign and local trade was another source of benefit for the Khmer elites. The head tax in kind comprised valuable commodities for the foreign trade of the king, and the king also received the ten percent tax on the import and export products of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{24} Other Khmer nobles also appear to have participated in foreign and local trade.\textsuperscript{25}

The size of entourages under the control of the nobles depended on the sak or sakdi (authority, dignity, and honour) they were granted by the king. The higher the number they controlled meant the more prestige, wealth, and power they could

\textsuperscript{21} Leclère, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 89-122; Aymonier, \textit{Le Cambodge}, Vol. 1, p. 75. The ten percent rice tax remained during period of King Chan (r. 1806-35), and continued at least until the 1860s. See \textit{Nupporat Chronicle}, p. 232; AOM, (Indochine), Amiraux 12705, "Rapport sur le Cambodge Voyage de Sai-gon à Battambang par Spooner, 30 décembre 1862".

\textsuperscript{22} Aymonier, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 73, states that all able-bodied men paid ninety days of service to the king. But I am inclined to believe that they paid ninety days of corvée labour to their patrons, which could mean anyone in the classes of the okya, the royal family and the king.

\textsuperscript{23} A. Bouinais and A. Paulus, \textit{Le Royaume Du Cambodge}, (Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1884), p. 35. Bouinais and Paulus did not indicate what happened to the other one twelfth. The number given by Bouinais and Paulus was much higher than that in Leclère, \textit{Le Codes Cambodgiens}, Vol. 1, p. 101, which states that the governor and his assistants received the tenth of the tax collection. The other nine parts were treated as ten parts: nine of which were sent to the royal treasury, and the other part was given to the pol tep, the supervisor of agricultural works and guard.

\textsuperscript{24} AOM, Amiraux 12705; Francis Garnier, \textit{Voyage d' exploration en Indo-chine effectué pendant les année 1866, 1867, 1868}, (1873), p. 222.

\textsuperscript{25} For example, TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1209/7, indicates that the governor of Kampot had the Chinese conducted trade for him between Kampot and Kompong Som.
derive from their subjects. The sak which allowed the okya to enjoy power and interest over their subjects, was a substitute for the absence of fixed salary for officials who provided loyalty and services for the king. According to the Krom Srok, every able-bodied man aged between sixteen and sixty, had to register himself as a prai ngia under one of the patrons, and had an obligation of supplying services - corvée labour or tax - to his patrons.26 The patrons were those in the official class, royal members and the king. A population census was supposed to be carried out in the provinces triennially by a commission, formed by representatives from the court and the governor. These men would be called to form armies during wartime, as Cambodia had no standing army.27 It was a duty of the chaovay srok to keep the record of population census of their provinces.28 However, we should bear in mind that the traditional system of manpower control was not necessarily effective, especially in the context of frequent political turmoil and external invasions such as Cambodia experienced during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The tie between the central government and locally-based elites was not strong, particularly for those in the distant regions. It was difficult for the royal court to gain accurate information about villagers' lives and situation. The locally-based okya would naturally attempt to conceal the actual benefit they gained from the king. Besides, people tried to avoid their obligations by hiding in the jungle, particularly those who lived beyond the outskirts of villages. Individual flight appears to have been especially high during periods of protracted turmoil and wartime, for villagers were afraid of either being conscripted into the army by the authorities or being evacuated by the invading Siamese army.29

26 Leclère, op.cit., p. 103. Aymonier, op.cit., Vol.1, p. 73, proposes a different age for corvée labour; that is, between twenty-one and fifty years. This seems unlikely for the period of their work time was too short.

27 Aymonier, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 73-74.

28 Leclère, op.cit., p. 102.

29 For records of villagers' flight to the jungle in order to avoid conscription during the Thai-
Although the system was aimed at extracting resources from the bottom to the top, where the king resided, the king inevitably had to share the benefits with his relatives and nobles. Apart from the king, the most important royal family members who enjoyed enormous privileges from their status were the immediate members of the king's family: the Uppayoreat (frequently the heir to the throne), the Upparat (the second heir), and the Somdet Prea Tieo (the king's mother). These three royal members also received territorial appanages. The Uppayoreat and the Upparat each obtained authority over five towns, and the Somdet Prea Tieo held three towns. Most of them seem to have been small towns. Territorial appanages emerged as a crucial issue in the conflict between King Chan and his half-brother Prince Snguon, the Uppayoreat, in 1811. Snguon demanded that Chan grant him three srok north of Udong to be under his control. It is likely, however, that the princely power over their territorial appanages was confined to the rights of tax collection and corvée labour from the population in the area. They had their own courts and a number of entourages under their command. The numbers in the retinues of these three courts amounted to several thousands. When Prince Snguon

Vietnamese war in Cambodia, see, Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan krang ratchakan thi sam (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (1933), pp. 67, 78. See a discussion by David Chandler of how villagers' flight into the forest could be understood in terms of perception of moral order in early nineteenth century Cambodia, in "Song at the Edge of the Forest: Perception of Order in Three Cambodian Texts," in Wyatt and Woodside (eds.), Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought, (New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 1982), pp. 53-77.

30 The position of Uppayoreat was abolished during the reign of King Duang (r. 1848-1860). Toem Wiphak-photchanakit, "Thamniap khunnang kamphucha" (Directory of the Khmer Nobles), in Prawattisat isan (History of the Northeast), (Bangkok, Munnithi khrongkan tamra, 1987), pp. 676-679.


32 These three srok were Krakor, Khlong, and Krang. The reason for choosing these three srok was probably because they were close to the Thai controlled area, the Battambang region, from which Snguon was expecting military assistance to fight against his brother. See "Nong Chronicle," in PP I, p. 288.
fled to Siam in 1811, he took along about two hundred officials and two thousand five hundred prai with him. It is interesting to note that in the Thai administrative model there was only one "second king" - the Upparat, but in Cambodia the position was divided into two - the Uppavoreat and the Upparat. These roles were an important aspect of traditional Southeast Asian statecraft, for they show that the monarch's power was maintained in a divided fashion. Such a practice had been pursued since the Angkorean period. Mabbett suggests that the complexity of the administrative system was "to prevent the consolidation of power at any point by dispersing functions, creating overlapping roles, and fostering cross-cutting loyalties, rather than to define tasks for the purpose of administrative efficiency."  

An important aspect of traditional Cambodian administration was that the administrative responsibility of the nobles was based on territory rather than on definite function. There were no well-defined divisions of labour established. Officials' duties usually comprised both military and civilian functions. According to seventeenth century Cambodian law, the chaovay srok, were involved in all affairs in the area under their responsibility. Their duties included administering the kingdom, keeping peace and order in the area, suppression of crime, facilitating local trade, keeping population records, preventing people from emigrating, raising armies for defence, levying corvée labour for government construction works, and collecting tax for themselves and the king. The chaovay srok and their assistants were the nobles who retained closest relations with villagers, direct access to manpower control and economic resources in the province. The chaovay srok had

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33 The number did not include those of Prince Im and Prince Duang, who also fled to Bangkok at the same time as Snguon. Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song, cho, so, 1173 [Records in the Second Reign, Lesser Era 1173 (AD 1811)], (1971), p. 129.


a group of officials to assist him. Those were the Palat (deputy governor), the snong, the kalapeas (registrar), the chaomuang (district chief), the chaoban (assistant to the chaomuang), the me srok (village head), and the chumtup.\textsuperscript{37}

Some chaovay srok were more powerful than others, especially the five chaovay srok of Kampong Svai, Pursat, Ba Phnom, Thbaung Khmum and Treang. According to the French sources, these five governors also held the position of sdat tran (kings of the field), and their territorial responsibility was called dai (territory) covering the surrounding towns (see table 6.1). Cambodia in the nineteenth century had fifty-seven provinces, excluding Battambang and Siemreap. They were divided into six dai (territory), the division of which was simply based on geographical consideration. These were the dai of Kampong Svai, Pursat, Ba Phnom, Thbaung Khmum, Treang, and Chaturamuk.\textsuperscript{38} But the dai Chaturamuk, which comprised the area around Phnom Penh, did not have the sdat tran. The absence of the sdat tran for the dai Chaturamuk was probably because of security reasons since it was close to the royal court. More importantly, it was the core of economic life of Cambodia. The central authority, therefore, must have wanted to put it under direct court control.

\textsuperscript{37} See Leclère, op.cit., pp. 117, 231; TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1224/78.

Table 6.1 The compositions of five dai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The dai (territory)</th>
<th>Nos. of provinces</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dai Kampong Svai</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kampong Svai, Staung, Prei Kadi, Baray, Stung Trang, Kampong Siem, Choeung Prei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai Thbaung Khmum</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thbaung Khmum, Sombor, Sombok, Kreche (Kratie), Kanchor, Chhlong, Totung Thngay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai Ba Phnom</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ba Phnom, Prei Veng, Peam Chor, Rumduol, Svai Tep, Loeuk Dek,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai Pursat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pursat, Krakor, Krang or Kresa, Babaur, Rolea Paier, Thpong, Kampong Som</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai Treang</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Treang, Samre or Krange-Samre, Phnom Sruk, Kong Pisey, Bati, Banteay Meas, Peam (Hatien), Saang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai Chaturamuk</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Phnom Penh, Kampong Leng, Anlong-Reech, Muk Kompul, Kang-Meas, Krommomoong, Lovek, Kampong Luong, Samrong Tong, Ka-Sutin, Svai Romiht, Khsach Kandal, Lovea Em, Srei Santhor-Kandal, Srei Santhor-Sedam, Srei Santhor-Chhveng, Kien Svay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The centres of the other five dai were the most populated and rich in natural resources of each region. The significance of the area ruled was, therefore, a crucial factor in determining the power of each okya. Those who occupied the rich and heavily populated areas could certainly obtain stronger positions than those in the poorer regions. Although neither the Cambodian nor the Thai chronicles refer to the position of sdat tran, the Krom srok confirms the importance of these five governors. They retained the highest sak of ten thousand, while the sak of other chaovay srok varied from six thousand to nine thousand. The sdat tran carried out tasks of controlling and supervising the surrounding subordinate governors in the region. Moreover, they apparently played an influential and significant role in late eighteenth and nineteenth century Cambodian politics. For example, around 1779 the governor of Kampong Svai (the okya Decho Tan), the prime minister (the Ta-la-ha Mu) and the governor of Thbaung Khmum (the okya Orachun Long) successfully conspired to overthrow the Thai protege King Ang Ton. During the reign of King Chan (r.1806-1835), the governors of Pursat and Kampong Svai played a critical role in opposing Chan, but allied with the Thai.

Next to the chaovay srok were the most influential nobles in the Cambodian administration, the five ministers at the royal court: the Ta-la-ha, the prime minister; the Yommarat, minister of justice; the Viang, minister of palace; the Kalahom, minister of navy and foreign trade; the Chakroei, minister of war. These five okya held the sak of ten thousand. No royal family members appear to have held these

41 Chotmaihet ratchakan thi song cho. so. 1173, pp. 58-59.
42 "Nong Chronicle," in PP 1, pp. 267-69. Seventeenth-century Khmer law states that there were another two okya, the mahatep, and the maha montroeij, in the king's advisor. See Leclère, op.cit., Vol. 1, Article 41, p. 98.
five positions. There were another two important positions which were occupied only by the royal family members - the Somdet Chaopoyea and the Somdet Prea Kaew or Phra Ang Kaew in Thai. But they seem to have had no real power, or significantly less than the five ministers.

The Thai records and Cambodian Chronicles always mention the crucial roles of the five ministers in Cambodian politics and their alliances with the external powers. They formed an advisory team for the king for such actions as nominating officials or provincial governors for the king's approval. Although their positions were supposed to be based in the capital, their power was rooted outside court politics. They too held territorial administrative power, which was thus a basis of their tremendous power in terms of manpower control and revenue. Both the Nong and Nupporat Chronicles refer to the territorial power of the five minister in the periods of King Eng (r. 1794-96) and King Duang (r. 1848-60) respectively, although their designation of towns to each minister were different. Seventeenth century Cambodian law states that in wartime or emergency, the governors must carry out the orders to mobilise forces from the five ministers and the king. The king always ordered them to raise armies for defence or putting down local unrest. This indicates that they retained a source of manpower. Janneau indicates that some taxes on certain items belonged to the five minister, such as, the tax on fishing which was conducted in the canals and rivers within their territories. The Yommarat obtained the right to collect taxes on construction wood, torches, charcoal and casket; the

43 Leclère, *op. cit.*, Article 106, p. 115. The role of Somdet Prea Kaew as revealed in "Nong Chronicle," in *PP 1.*, pp. 246, 281, indicates his close relations with the king as the latter often had him to carry the royal missions to Bangkok.


Kalahom received taxes on boat construction, oars, paddles and wood oil. They had their agents in the provinces to collect taxes for them.\footnote{Gustave Janneau, “Le Cambodge d'autrefois,” \textit{RI}, XVII (1914), pp. 520-22.}

However, the territorial responsibilities of the five ministers appear to have overlapped and been linked with those of the five \textit{sdat tran} (see table 6.1 in comparison with table 6.2). The interconnections between these two groups are shown in table 6.3 below. They sometimes teamed up into a faction, as in the case mentioned above when the \textit{Ta-la-ha} Mu collaborated with the \textit{okya} Decho Tan, governor of Kampong Svai, in overthrowing Ang Ton in 1779. During Chan's reign both the \textit{Chakroei} and the governor of Pursat were ignored Chan's authority and were pro-Thai.\footnote{Leclère, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 284; \textit{Chotmaiht ratchakan thi song cho. so 1173}, p. 58.} They often provoked political unrest in Cambodia. The \textit{Chakroei}, the \textit{Kalahom}, the governors of Pursat and Kampong Svai all allied with the Thai. The \textit{Chakroei} and the \textit{Kalahom} were eventually put to death by Chan, while the other two governors sought asylum in Bangkok. Chan then replaced them with his own men.\footnote{\textit{Chotmaiht ratchakan thi song cho. so 1173}, pp. 58-59.} During the Thai-Vietnamese war in Cambodia, both the Thai and the Vietnamese were very concerned to procure their cooperation.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 57-61, 129-130; "Nong Chronicle," in \textit{PP 1}, pp. 243-304; \textit{Chotmaiht ruang thap yuan krang ratchakan thi sam} (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (1933); Damrongrachanuphap, \textit{PKRR II}, Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.} The original position of \textit{Ta-la-ha} Baen, later \textit{Chaophraya} Aphaiphubet, who helped transfer Battambang and Siemreap to Thai rule and became the governor of the two provinces, was in fact the \textit{yommarat}. 

\footnote{\textit{Nong Chronicle}, in \textit{PP 1}, pp. 243-304; \textit{Chotmaiht ruang thap yuan krang ratchakan thi sam} (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (1933); Damrongrachanuphap, \textit{PKRR II}, Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.}
Table 6.2 Territorial responsibilities of the five ministers

Table 6.3 Connections between the five ministers and the five sdat tran

Based on the above account, the traditional administrative system permitted the okya a relatively autonomous power over manpower, which generated them
military, political and economic power. It provoked conflict and competition among the *okya* in order to secure power and privilege. The positions of the ministers and governors of the major five towns were the objective of struggles among the *okya*. The five ministers and five *sdat tran* were evidently often involved in succession disputes and caused intense conflict with the king. At the end of the struggle the victors were usually able to place their men in these important positions. For instance, after overthrowing Ang Ton in 1779, Ta-la-ha Mu promoted his supporters to the positions of the *Viang*, the *Kalahom* and the *Chakroei*.51

The social and administrative organisation of Ayudhya also appears to have allowed for similar factionalism to that of the Cambodian system, although it might have been to a different degree. I have briefly mentioned in Chapter Five that the princes and nobles often exploited the system by expanding the size of the entourages under their control. Intense disputes among the princes in the time of succession were not unusual in the Ayudhyan dynastic history. The loss of manpower consequently led to the deterioration of kingly power. It seems that the manpower system of the late Ayudhya period had ceased to function, and that by the time of the Burmese invasion, the Ayudhyan court was unable to mobilise troops from the princes and nobles. It subsequently brought about the collapse of Ayudhya. Therefore, since the Thonburi period, several measures were implemented in order to tighten up and expand the manpower of the kings, and prevent the princes and nobles from becoming too powerful beyond the court’s control.52 One measure the Siamese kings undertook was to consolidate power over the neighbouring states so as to control their resources and population. Extensive conscription and evacuation in the border region and neighbouring states took place on an unprecedented scale. Mass


mobilisation occurred along with the process of centralisation in the border regions by creating new muang in the Northeast, Laos and northwestern Cambodia. Thonburi and Bangkok asserted their power through the local officials by granting them titles and ranks.

The interventions of the Thai and the Vietnamese therefore intensified the contention among the Khmer elites and the factional disputes with Cambodian royal power. Siam and Vietnam became the sources of effective support and protection for the Khmer elites to ward off each other and often royal power itself. In return for their support, the Khmer elites facilitated the external powers' intervention and manipulation of Cambodian affairs. The history of Battambang and Siemreap, which will be discussed in the following sections, proved to be such a case.

The Role of Battambang in Thai-Cambodian Relations

The attempt to take control over the Battambang region by the Thai began in the Thonburi dynasty, when Taksin led Thai troops to attack Hatien and Phnom Penh in 1771-1772. The Thai exerted their control over the Battambang region exclusively through a faction of Khmer okya based in northwestern Cambodia. The Khmer okya served as security guards for the Siamese base in western Cambodia. In return, they obtained an opportunity to exploit one of the wealthiest parts of Cambodia under the guaranteed protection of Bangkok.

Taksin allowed the Khmer high-ranking okya, Yommarat Baen to control the area and to work for the Thai.53 Later, Baen moved to the capital at Udong in order to suppress turmoil caused by the pro-Vietnamese okya in 1782. This turmoil

53 "Chotmaihet raiwan thap samai krung thonburi" (Records Concerning the Expeditions in the Thonburi Period) in PP 66, pp. 156-157.
compelled King Eng and his adopted father, Ta-la-ha Pok, to take refuge in Bangkok until 1794. After the suppression of the turmoil, Baen then had the opportunity to take a higher title, that of Ta-la-ha, and full control over Cambodian affairs with Bangkok's approval. Until Eng and Pok returned to reside in Udong in 1794, Baen had to move back to Battambang. His past involvement in the revolt against Eng's father, Ang Non, resulted in his incompatibility with Eng and Pok. Rama I then requested the two provinces from King Eng, and placed them under Baen's authority so that Baen could build up a stronghold for Siam as well as for himself. Thus, the Thai control of Battambang and Siemreap was legitimised in the reign of Rama I. Rama I bestowed on Baen the new Thai title of Chaophraya with the title name of Aphaiphubet, which meant that now the latter became a legitimate member of the Siamese nobility and a part of the Siamese administration.54

The selection of a person to administer the region was a fundamental key. The Thai preference for Baen was based on the fact that they knew very well that Baen had been involved in the fight against the group of Ta-la-ha Mu and King Ang Ton, who had gained the support of the Vietnamese.55 Baen had also proved to the Thai his antagonism towards the Nguyen court, as in 1790, Gia Long had dispatched a letter to Rama I accusing Baen of building ships in order to attack Vietnam.56 Such qualities would have confirmed to Bangkok his ability to serve as a watchdog for Siamese interests in Cambodia. The Thai nevertheless insured themselves against Baen's disloyalty by holding the latter's son, Ros, in Bangkok to serve as a royal page at the court of Rama I. The fourth Battambang governor, Phraya Aphaiphubet

54 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR 1, pp. 28, 42-43, 143-144; Also, Kathathon-thoranin (Yia), “Phongsawadan muang phratabong” (Chronicle of Battambang), in PP 16, pp. 124-25.

55 “Nong Chronicle” provides a full account of Baen's conflict with the pro-Vietnamese okya and Pok, in PP 1, pp. 253-299.

56 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR 1, pp.121-122.
(Ched)'s two sons were also royal pages in Bangkok. Besides, in so doing, Bangkok had an excellent opportunity to exercise its influence over future elites, as Ros became the second governor, and Ched's two sons served as his father assistants. Thus, it could be said that while the Thai appropriated the Battambang region to provide a base for controlling Cambodian politics and resources, the region initially became a shelter for Khmer dissidents against the Cambodian centre of power allied with the Thai. This role remained a prominent feature of Battambang throughout the history of Thai-Cambodian relations during the nineteenth century, as will be discussed below.

Nevertheless, the Battambang governor did not entirely ignore the existence of the Cambodian court at Udong, as he allowed one of his daughters, Thep, to be a concubine of King Chan. Thep bore Chan a daughter, Princess Paen. Also, Baen's son, Ma, was appointed as a page and later became Phra Ang Kaew at the court of Chan. Baen might have expected that creating a good relations rather than animosity with Udong would have resulted in the consolidation of his own power. However, when relations between the courts of Chan and Rama II deteriorated, Baen's relationship with Chan went in the same direction. In 1830, Ma finally escaped to reside in Battambang where he became governor of Svaichek, a subordinate town of Battambang. Later in 1840, Thep's daughter, Princess Paen, was executed by the Vietnamese officials who suspected her of a pro-Thai attitude. From that time, none of the subsequent governors of Battambang were

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57 Kathathon-thoranin (Yia), "Phongsawadan muang prhabong," in PP 16, pp. 125, 141-42.
58 Ibid., p. 140. The position Phra Ang Kaew was a high ranking okya at the royal court, but appears not to have had real military power. The person who held this position must share kinship with the king.
59 Ibid., pp. 142-43.
related to the Cambodian court. Instead, they increasingly leaned towards the Siamese side, and their family members married high-ranking Siamese officials. For instance, two daughters of the Third governor (Ros) married the governor of Nakhon Ratchasima and the Siamese high-ranking official, Phraya Ratchasuphawadi. A wife of the eighth governor (Yia) was a grand daughter of Chaophraya Bodin, and three of their children married members of the Siamese nobility (see the genealogies of Battambang's governors in Appendix).

Under Thai rule, the governor was required to levy rice when required by Bangkok. Battambang and Siemreap were an important source of rice supply for the new resettlement area for forced Lao migrants after the Chao Anu revolt. The region also performed the important task of mobilising Khmer troops as demanded by Bangkok several times. When Rama I decided to throw his support behind Prince Nguyen Anh against the Tay Son rebellion, Baen was ordered to mobilise troops to combat Tay Son supporters in Cambodia and southern Vietnam. During the fourteen-year war in Cambodia, Battambang became the major military and political base of the Siamese army against Vietnamese domination in Cambodia. The governors of Battambang and Siemreap helped facilitate the flow of the annual suai payment to Bangkok (see details in Chapter Three).

Retaining good relations with their powerful neighbours was perhaps less painful for the okya in the border regions. The geographical condition of the Battambang region, adjacent to Siam, was an important factor influencing the decision of the okya to serve the Thai. As it was the usual route of the Thai army marching into Cambodia, Battambang was easily attacked. The okya in the border region would


62 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR 1, pp. 46, 108.
have calculated that, had they refused to ally with the Thai, the Cambodian capital was certainly unable to protect them from devastation by the invading army. Conversely, they would have realised that their powerful neighbours were potential supporters for warring against their rivals. Even if they lost the fight, external support would give defiant okya confidence against Cambodian royal power as they could seek refuge in Siam. As a matter of fact, the same situation also applied to the okya in the border region close to Vietnam. An example of this is provided by the alliance of the Mac family of Hatien with Vietnam (see Chapters Two and Three). Also, the Cham-Malay okya, whose bases were often close to Vietnam tended to maintain alliances with the Vietnamese rather than the Thai. In 1782, the Cham-Malay minority, led by the okya Tuan Sed, collaborated with the governors of Kampong Svai and Thabaung Khmum, the okya Decho Tan and the okya Orachun respectively, to overthrow the Ta-la-ha Baen, who worked for the Thai.63 Later during the reign of Chan, the three closest aids to Chan against the pro-Thai okya were the Cham-Malay okya. Chan appointed them to the important positions of Yommarat (minister of justice), deputy governor and governor of Kampong Svai.64

While serving the Thai, the Battambang’s okya inevitably had to fight against the Cambodian royal power at Udong/Phnom Penh if the latter gave its allegiance to the Vietnamese. Moreover, Battambang was often used as a base for dissidents in countering royal power at the capital. During the reign of Chan, Battambang provided a base for the Cambodian pretenders and the pro-Thai okya in combating Chan’s army. In 1811, Chan’s half brothers, Snguon, Im and Duang, along with a hundred followers, secretly escaped from Udong and fled to Pursat. With Thai military support from the Northeast immediately arriving at Battambang and Pursat,

63 Ta-la-ha Baen later moved to be the governor of Battambang. See “Nong Chronicle,” in PP 1, p. 160.
64 Ibid., p. 297.
Snguon advanced to seize Sombor, Kampong Chhnang and Udong. Again, during the fourteen-year war, Bangkok sent Prince Im and Prince Duang to reside in Battambang, wishing that the princes could draw support from the okya. Bangkok instated Prince Im as the fourth governor of Battambang between 1834-39, before he turned his allegiance to Hué and fled to southern Vietnam.

With the Battambang region as a base, the Thai were able to expand their domination over the adjacent towns of Battambang and Siemreap. From the Second Reign of the Chakri Dynasty, the governors of Pursat and Kampong Svai also pledged their allegiance to Bangkok. The Thai advanced to occupy Mlou Prei and Tonle Ropeou (known in Thai as Manophraï and Tharaboriwat respectively). Rama III appointed Luang Phakdichamnong, the official of Khukhan and son in law of Kampong Svai's governor, Phraya Decho Main, to govern the two provinces.

From the 1830s the governor of Pursat, the okya Sangkhalok, undertook the responsibility of sending annual suai payment in cardamom to Bangkok. The okya Sangkhalok actively supported the military campaigns of the Thai against Vietnam during 1833-47. The presence of Thai authority in the Battambang region diminished royal Cambodian power over the okya in the Northwest but supported the defiant okya, as shown by the case of the okya Decho Main, governor of Kampong Svai. Main was antagonistic to Chan, and fled to seek protection in Bangkok. When Chan asked Rama I to return Main to Udong for punishment, Rama I turned down his request. Later, Main showed his defiance against Chan by

67 Chotmaihet ruang thap yuán, pp. 9, 19, 24, 30.
returning to Kampong Svai. He disregarded the traditional rule which required him immediately to travel to the capital in order to pay homage to the king. He seems to have gained confidence with the protection of the Thai situated close by his base. When the conflict between Chan and his half-brothers broke out in 1811, Main immediately mobilised troops to guard against Udong’s army.68

Siamese domination in Pursat and Kampong Svai was sustained until the 1860s, and it was thus difficult for Cambodian royal power to assert its control there. Pursat sent suai payment to Bangkok until the French established a protectorate in Cambodia in 1867. In 1862, there occurred a conflict between King Norodom and the governor of Pursat, Phraya Sangkhalok. The cause of tension derived from Norodom’s attempt to assert control over Pursat by appointing his own man from the centre to be Palat of Pursat. The newly arrived officials managed to put a part of the local manpower under their command, causing dissatisfaction among those who had enjoyed their privileges without Cambodian court interference for a long time. The conflict intensified when a revolt led by Ai Pasuthotsarat took place, and Phraya Sangkhalok refused to carry out Norodom’s order to mobilise troops in order to suppress the revolt. The new Palat then decided to mobilise troops himself. The increasing tension made Pursat’s governor and his assistants appeal to Bangkok, accusing Norodom of causing trouble for the local people. They requested Pursat to be transferred to Bangkok’s administration. Phraya Sangkhalok went further, trying to persuade the governor of Kampong Svai, Phraya Decho, to follow his path, but the latter decided to stay with Udong. When the case was considered by Rama IV, Norodom tried to show his loyalty by suggesting that if the Thai ruler wanted Pursat and Kampong Svai, he would be willing to give the two provinces away. However, Rama IV settled the conflict by

68 Damrongrachanuphap, PKRR II, vol. 1, p. 73.
ordering Phraya Sangkhalok and his assistants together with their families to move to Bangkok. He indicated in a letter to Norodom that he did not want the two provinces. But Rama IV seems to have changed his mind as French influence in Cambodia became increasingly apparent. The treaty of 1863, which Bangkok secretly forced Norodom to sign, indicates Bangkok's intention of retaining the two provinces under Thai control:

Article 11 ...In a dispatch of year of the dog (1862), Norodom and Hariratchadanai indicated that they wished to present the king (Rama IV) Pursat and Kampong Svai. The dispatch was kept in Bangkok. At the time the king considered that Pursat and Kampong Svai were very much beneficial to Cambodia. The king, therefore, did not accept the offer and gave them back to Cambodia. The king did not accept the two provinces for he has mercy on Norodom and Hariratchadanai, with both of whom the king is on intimate terms. The return of the two provinces was meant to consign them to the Cambodian ruler. In the future, if the ruler of Cambodia acts well and pleases the ruler of Bangkok, Pursat and Kampong Svai will remain with the Cambodian ruler. But if the Cambodian ruler does not conduct things properly and causes Bangkok's ruler to be dissatisfied, the king will request the return of Pursat and Kampong Svai and attach them to Battambang and Siemreap.

The treaty was, however, abolished in 1865 immediately after the French colonial officials discovered it. The Thai nevertheless occupied Tonle Ropeou and Mlou Prei until 1903, when they were ceded to Cambodia, although King Norodom had appealed to the French for return of the two provinces from the Thai since 1867.

An examination of Battambang's role is helpful for a better understanding of the reason behind King Chan's strong anti-Thai feeling in the early part of the century. Prince Damrong pointed out that Chan's animosity towards the Thai was based on

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69 TNL, CMH. R.IV. C.S.1224/74.
70 TNL, CMH. R.IV. C.S.1225/114.
the factionalism among the okya who had split into pro-Thai and pro-Vietnamese groups. Unlike his father, Eng, who had lived and been educated in Bangkok for twelve years between 1782 and 1794, Chan had left Bangkok when he was only six years old. His adulthood was influenced by the pro-Vietnamese faction in Udong. Chan and his okya wanted the return of Battambang and Siemreap under his jurisdiction. Therefore, after Emperor Gia Long came to power, Chan was able to gain Vietnamese support and act vigorously against Bangkok. Such an explanation is partly correct but seems to represent only the Thai court's point of view. From the beginning of his reign, Chan was doubtless able to perceive that most of the important towns and the okya in the Northwest - Battambang, Siemreap, Pursat and Kampong Svai - were out of his control, but under Thai power instead. There is no doubt that the Cambodian court wanted the return of the rich and fertile area of Battambang to its jurisdiction, but there was no sign of any intention by Bangkok to give up the Battambang region. Certainly, Chan was dissatisfied with the loss of an area which was fertile and rich in forest products, and had great potential for furnishing state revenue and trade. As I have noted above, the rice tax was an important revenue of Cambodia and the loss of the major ricefields to the Thai therefore brought about a decline in Cambodian state revenue. Besides, it seems to have resulted in the shortage of food supply for Cambodia. Rice shortage emerged as one of the most prominent troubles of Cambodia throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The Cambodian chronicle shows that both the Vietnamese and the Thai levied money and rice for the court of Chan. Whenever Cambodia faced famine, the government had to purchase rice

72 Damrongrachanuphap, PKRR II, Vol. 1, p. 76.

73 Apart from the wealth of forest products in Battambang and Pursat, which has been discussed in Chapter Four, Kampong Svai was an area of fine woods for construction and ivory. See AOM, (Indochine), Amiraux 12705, "Rapport sur le Cambodge, Voyage du Saigon à Battambang par Spooner," 30 decembre 1862.

from Battambang and Siemreap. In a letter of King Norodom to King Mongkut in 1860, King Norodom stated that one of the major problems of the Cambodian government in fighting the rebellions was that it lacked sufficient food supply.

Chan's desire to return Battambang and Siemreap to his control was expressed in the clash between Phnom Penh's troop and those of Battambang in 1815. The fight took place when a large Phnom Penh force invaded Battambang with the excuse of wanting to collect fertile soil made of bats' dung. The collection was traditional in Battambang. However, Phnom Penh's campaign failed absolutely, since the governor of Battambang, who was now Ros, formed a defence and quickly repelled the Phnom Penh troops. The result no doubt intensified Thai concern about Battambang's security.

Siamese Administration and the Interests of the Governors

It was not only less painful, but it was also more profitable for the okya in the border regions to ally with the external powers. I propose that the major factor influencing the submission of the Khmer okya to Siamese authority lay in the possibility of great advantage the okya expected to gain. Control over the richest and most fertile area no doubt generated a constant economic benefit for the governor and local officials. Besides, their interests would be more secure from other factions, for Bangkok guaranteed them protection. To understand the power and interests of the governor, it is necessary to examine them against the Siamese

75 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1217/7; CMH. R.IV C.S.1217/34.

76 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/23.

77 "Nong Chronicle," in PP 1, p. 299.
provincial administrative system in Battambang and Siemreap.78

Within the Siamese administrative system in the early nineteenth century, the provincial administration was under three territorial ministries which undertook both military and civil-type activities. Those were, the Krom Mahatthai (Interior) responsible for the North, Northeast, Laos and the Battambang region, and under the authority of the Samuha Nayok, head of Krom Mahatthai; the Krom Kalahom (Defence) responsible for the southern region, and under the authority of the Samuha Phra Kalahom, head of the Krom Kalahom; and the Phra Klang (the Royal Treasury) responsible for the eastern coast region, and under the control of the Phra Klang (head of the Phra Klang).

The Thai administrative model mainly divided towns into two categories: the huamuang chan-nai (the Inner townships), and the huamuang chan-nok (the Outer townships). In theory, the location of the Inner townships was within a short distance of the capital and these towns held a status of the fourth class. They were under the administration of governors or magistrates (phu rang). The Outer townships, which were more distant from the capital, were classified into first, second, the third classes. The classification was based on their strategic importance and population. The first class townships were the most important areas in the eyes of Bangkok. The Outer townships were directly dependent on Bangkok, and under the supervision of the three territorial ministries. Another category of town in the Outer townships: the subordinate township, was subject to major townships nearby.

78 For detail of the Siamese administrative system in general, see Akin, The Organisation of Thai Society, chapter 4.
Battambang and Siemreap were in the category of Outer townships and were under the authority of the Krom Mahatthai. Siemreap was originally a subordinate town of Battambang, but in 1834, Chaophraya Bodin, the Samuha Nayok and at the same time the military commander of the Siamese expedition in Cambodia, removed Siemreap to be under the direct authority of Bangkok and raised it to equal status with Battambang. The governor of Siemreap usually held the Thai rank and title name of Phraya Nuphaptraiphop. The governors of Battambang and Siemreap were granted ranks, titles, and sakdina, by the Thai king as were other nobles in Siam proper, while the appointment of other high ranking officials of the two provinces were at the will of the Samuha Nayok.

As in the Outer townships, the governors were obliged to oversee the administration of the provinces and to provide reports of local conditions and events for the Samuha Nayok. Although I have demonstrated in the previous chapters that the wealth of Battambang had induced tighter control by Bangkok, due to nineteenth century Siamese provincial administration the governor was nevertheless relatively independent within his own jurisdictions: he held the authority over administration, the judiciary, and defence within his area. Only the power to execute wrongdoers, to appoint high-ranking officials within the towns, and to make war belonged to Bangkok. Such independence, however, has produced a misconception of the status of Battambang and Siemreap in one previous study which states that "although Battambang and Siemreap were officially in the category of hua-muang channok (the Outer townships) and governed by Bangkok, in practice their status was close to muang prathetsarat (tributary state), for they were independent from Bangkok both economically and politically. The governors obtained most benefit, while Bangkok did not receive any economic interest from
the two provinces."79 This conclusion represents an anachronistic imposition of the twentieth century framework of the nation-state, which assumes an effective control over territory, onto nineteenth century history. The relative independence of the governors of Battambang and Siem Reap was in fact based on the nineteenth century Siamese administrative system, which permitted flexible relations between the centre and the peripheral area. The difficulty of communication and transport allowed far away governors to obtain greater politico-economic autarky.

Another previous study is mistaken in saying that the succession of Battambang's governors was held by a single family, and thus all subsequent governors were descendants of the first governor, Chaophraya Aphaiphubet Baen.80 The governor's position was in fact non-hereditary. The position could go to another family if a governor had committed any wrongdoing, and/or in conjunction with his colleagues' attempts to displace him. This is shown by the case of the third governor of Battambang, a son of the first governor (Baen), Phraya Aphaiphubes (Ros), who was accused of impropriety by a group of Battambang officials led by his own deputy in 1827. Rama III ordered Ros to travel to Bangkok where he was placed in a new position, while his former deputy, Phraya Aphaiphubes (Ched), took over the governorship.81 However, in practice the position did tend to pass to descendants. For example, the third Battambang governor, Ros, was a son of the first governor (Baen); Som, the sixth governor was a son of Ched, the fourth governor; and Nong, the seventh governor, had his son and grandson become the

eighth and the ninth governors respectively. Their family members often held important administrative positions in the town (see the genealogies of Battambang's governors in Appendix).

Apart from the governors, the important officials in Battambang and Siemreap were the Palat, deputy governor, and the Phuchuai, the chief assistant to the governor, the Phra Wang, or magistrate; the Phra Klang, or treasurer; two Achya Luang, one of which was responsible for the collection of tax on paddy, and the other for the collection of the head tax; the Changwang were responsible for the collection of tax on specific items, for instance, the Changwang suai krawan (supervisor of cardamom tax collection) and Changwang suai thong (supervisor of gold tax collection). The Changwang suai krawan seems to have been particularly important from the point of view of Bangkok, since he was directly responsible for conveying local wealth to the Thai capital (see discussion of the suai system in Chapter Four). However, we should keep in mind that the division of labour might not have been a purely functional one; for example, all officials had to be involved in military duty in time of war.

Below the officials were the phrai or commoners, who were obliged to perform services for the state. Generally speaking, only adult males were liable to corvée labour or head tax payment. There were two major categories of phrai (commoner): the phrai luang belonging to the king, and the phrai som belonging to the princes and nobles. They were also referred as lek, able-bodied men. Not all the phrai had to render corvée labour or pay head tax; they were exempted if they were disabled.

82 The above positions are scattered in several documents concerning Battambang: Kathathon-thoradin (Yia), op.cit., pp. 123-149; TNL, CMH. R.III.C.S.1200/69; CMH. R.VI.C.S.1223/58; AOM, (Indochine) Gouvernement Général 15679, "Renseignements pris dans la province de Battambang, 1907". For detail discussion of the category of these positions in Constance Wilson, "Nineteenth-Century Thai Administration: Are Our Models Adequate?," Contributions to Asian Studies, XV (1980), pp. 29-40.
aged, physically or mentally ill and dead. Exemption was also granted for monks, novices, slaves, local officials on any level, and those who had three or more sons paying services. There were many sub-categories of lek. Some were involved in the official tasks of a town such as lek thanai, legal officers; lek samian, clerks; and lek samun, attendants to high-ranking officials. Some were subject to work for local temples and known as lek wat. Those performing corvée labour or paying head tax were categorised as lek som or lek phrai som. In Battambang and Siemreap, lek som subject to local officials were referred to as lek phonlamuang, the civilian registrants of the township. Lek who paid suai for the Thai kings were referred to as lek suai or lek suai kong nok, able-bodied men subject to the suai units. So, lek suai was in category of phrai luang.

In theory, suai was a substitute for the corvée labour that a certain number of able-bodied men were obliged to render to the royal court. But as Battambang was too far away from Bangkok, it was more convenient for both sides to accept suai payment as a substitute. Lek suai of Battambang were organised into a special unit, the kong suai. Battambang had five kong suai and thus five Nai kong suai, chiefs of the suai units. Most of them were under the supervision of the Changwang suai. They held responsibility for collecting head tax in cardamom and for purchasing and handling cardamom for Bangkok. The suai units of Battambang appeared in the early 1830s and primarily worked directly under the authority of Chaophraya Bodindecha, the Thai army commander in Cambodia. Until the end of the war, the Changwang suai and the Nai kong suai were under the command of the governor. Although Siemreap also paid suai to Bangkok, the available records do not have any reference to the suai units of Siemreap.

The major economic interests of the governor and his assistants consisted of all
kinds of local taxes and fees. There was no exact regulation of how the number of lek was divided between Bangkok and the officials in the towns. In some northeastern towns of Siam, the numbers of lek subject to towns were double or at least higher than those of lek suai. In Battambang, lek phonlamuang were the main source of profit for the governors. A record of Battambang's population in 1830 provides a rough idea of how large the sources of wealth of the Battambang governor were. Table 6.4 shows that the number of able-bodied men subject to the town, lek phonlamuang, were the highest portion of Battambang's population: 78.93%. Concerning Siemreap, its governor obtained the same kinds of taxes and fees but to a lesser extent than the Battambang governor since the population of Siemreap was much lower than that of Battambang. Around 1847, Siemreap had only 3678 lek.

As the traditional administrative system allowed the Battambang and Siemreap governors to hold complete control over the population in their areas, they were able to gain benefits from the local residents in the forms of corvée labour and taxes. They could have their subjects work for them on both the official and their own business, such as road and wall construction or cultivation in their own rice fields. Other high ranking officials of the town also had a certain number of phrai, or commoners, to serve them.

83 Theerachai Boonmatham, "Kan kep suai nai hua muang lao fai tawan-ok nai chuang ton samai rattanakosin" (Suai Collection in the Eastern Lao Provinces During the Early Bangkok Period), Warasan Thammagasat, 12,4 (December 1983), p. 162.

84 TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1215/72.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Officials (khun mûn)</th>
<th>Commoners (phrai)</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilian men subject to town (lek phonlamuang)</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>8,564</td>
<td>8,834</td>
<td>78.931%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able-bodied men subject to suai payment (lek suai)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>8.738%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able-bodied men subject to temple (lek wat)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>4.315%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able-bodied men belonging to Prince Im and Prince Duang</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>5.575%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able-bodied men subject to the suai units (lek kong nok)(^a)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2.439%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 11,192\(^b\)


**Note** \(^a\)**: The kong nok of Battambang was responsible for sending suai cardamom to Bangkok, but the document states "lek kong nok fakwai" (let the lek of the kong nok stand for the time being), the reason for which is unclear.

\(^b\)**: The original document states 11,285. It is likely that one of the above numbers is misrecorded.
Since manpower was a precious resource, the attempt to acquire as many people as possible to live in one domain became a source of conflict among the nobles of different towns. In 1853, the governor of Siemreap appealed to Bangkok alleging Battambang's governor, Phraya Aphaiphubet Nong, was taking a number of lek from Siemreap and collecting tax from Siemreap's subjects.85 Again in 1861, the same problem occurred in Mongkolborei (or Mongkolburi in Thai), a subordinate town of Battambang, with the governor of Battambang, Phraya Aphaiphubet (Yia), being accused. The petition from a group of officials of Mongkolborei to Bangkok indicates that Yia and his assistants extensively levied head tax payment in timber on lek of Mongkolborei, and caused difficulties for the people. Besides, it appears that some of Mongkolborei's lek had moved to resettle in Battambang, which meant that the Battambang governor had already gained benefit from those lek. But Yia still demanded the same amount of tax from Mongkolborei to be sent to Battambang. In fact, the payment of tax demanded should have been reduced in accordance with the actual number of lek who left Mongkolborei.86

In the early nineteenth century, the period of annual corvée labour that people in Battambang and Siemreap had to perform for the governors was probably three months, as for those living in Siam proper. Tax in kind or money as a substitution for corvée labour was an important source of profit of the governors. Taxes on production constituted the major revenue for the governors of Battambang and Siemreap. There were taxes from opium, liquor, paddy, gambling, lotto, cattle, fishing in the Great Lake, customs duty from import and export goods, and phasi krawan, which comprised various goods: cardamom (krawan), bastard cardamom

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85 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1215/72.
86 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1223/58.
(phon-reo), ivory, suppan wood, beeswax, and animal skins. Rice tax or phasi hang khao was a kind of land tax which demanded ten percent of the quantity of rice produced. This proportion could be paid either in rice or in money. But it had to be paid before the rice was sold by its first owner.

Tax collection on some items such as opium, gambling, liquor and lottery were operated by the Chinese tax farmers appointed by the governor. The governors also earned fees by performing duties such as dispute settlement, land registration and registration of the able-bodied men. Although they certainly had to put aside part of the benefit for salaries of their assistants, the governors nevertheless earned the largest amount of profit.

Opium tax constituted the highest profit of the Battambang governor. According to the Thai law, only the Chinese were allowed to purchase and consume opium. The fishing tax was another significant source of revenue for the Battambang governor, its value being second only to the opium tax (see table 6.5). It was applied to fishing activities in the Great Lake. Again, fishermen could pay their tax either in fish or in money. The fishing appeared to cause great expense for the fishermen, since many of them sailed up from other Cambodian towns and Cochin China. On their return, they were subjected to another duty by the Cambodian government. In 1868, King Norodom appealed to the French to abandon fishing tax on the Battambang side for the reason that it caused higher costs for the fishermen.

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87 TNA, R.V M.41/59; R.V M.41/5/20; R.V Kh.14.4/10; R.V Kh. 17.2. Th.2; R.V Ph.20/9.
88 TNA, R.V F.20/19. This rate remained until 1907. AOM, (Indochine) Résidence supérieure au Cambodge 254, "Rapport de M. Breucq sur Battambang, 15 février 1907."
89 TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1215/10; CMH, R.IV C.S.1215/72; TNA, R.V M.41/42.
merchants and consumers. Then, in 1870 a new regulation was introduced in the Additional Article to the Siamese-French Treaty of 15th July 1867, indicating that fishermen should only pay 1/12 tax to the authorities in the territories where the fishing activities took place.

Table 6.5 Tax revenue collected in Battambang in 1892

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Value in baht</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opium tax</td>
<td>22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor tax</td>
<td>10,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice tax</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardamom tax</td>
<td>3,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling tax</td>
<td>3,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lottery tax</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing tax</td>
<td>17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63,564</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TNA, R.V.M.41/50.

Although I am aware that tax revenue in Battambang during the first half of the nineteenth century was probably lower than in 1892, table 6.5 is useful in giving an idea of the amount of revenue gained by the Battambang governor. It is noteworthy that apart from the suai payment in cardamom, Bangkok did not have any share in these local tax collections. It was not until direct provincial administration was


91 Ratchasena, Phraya, Pramuan nangsu sanyayai laeanusanya rawang krung sayam kap pratet farangset (Collected Treaties and Sub-Treaties between Siam and France), (Bangkok, Cremation volume for Phin Aiamsuttha, 1973), pp. 30-33.
imposed in Battambang and Siemreap in 1891 that Bangkok began to increase its share in local tax revenue. Therefore, 1892 was the first year that the Battambang governor had to divide part of the local tax income, 8,000 baht, and send it to Bangkok.

Slavery was another significant source of manpower for the officials. Most slaves in Battambang were debt-slaves. Interestingly, they comprised Vietnamese, Chinese and Khmers. There is no information on the number of slaves in Battambang during the first half of the nineteenth century, but the record in 1904 indicates that Phraya Kathathom (Chum Aphaiwongse) and his assistants each retained hundreds of slaves.\(^{92}\)

The control of manpower permitted the governor and his assistants to turn the vast land of Battambang to their constant benefit, since they had substantial numbers of people working in the rice fields for them. The average land holding of peasants in the region around the Great Lake (Battambang and Kampong Svai) was larger than those in other Cambodian regions. But the big landlords were officials and Chinese traders.\(^{93}\) It is also likely that the most fertile rice fields in Battambang were occupied by the governor, his assistants and the Chinese. The interviews with local people living in Battambang in the second half of the nineteenth century by Tauch Chhuong indicates that few of the commoners had their own rice fields and they had to rent fields for their own cultivation.\(^{94}\) Before Battambang and Siemreap were ceded to the French Protectorate in 1907, the French had to compensate the governor Chum, who moved his family to resettle in Prachinburi, for his

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92 Suphastri Vorasayan, Panha monthon burapha, pp. 269-270.


94 Tauch Chhuong, op.cit., p. 60.
properties. The French found that all the buildings and major lands in the town area belonged to Chum. The buildings were rented to the shop keepers. Chum also owned an alcohol distillery and a rice-mill. Apart from the compensation for his properties, the French also paid Chum one hundred thousand baht a year until the latter died.\footnote{Suphatsri, op.cit., p. 284-85; AOM, (Indochine) Gouvernement Général 25714, "Légation de France à Bangkok. Création à Battambang d'une usine pour la décoration du riz, 1887."}

As the Battambang governor was so powerful in the town, he treated the tax revenue as his family treasury. Phraya Kathathom (Yia), the eighth governor of Battambang, gave his children the right to collect tax on certain items. Immediately after Yia died, conflict broke out among his children over their respective economic interests. The dispute was taken to Bangkok by Yia's eldest sister, Khlip and her sons, alleging that their brother Phraya Aphaiphithak, who had succeeded his father as governor, had deprived them of the tax revenue. The case was settled by Bangkok's intervention.\footnote{TNA, R.V.M.41/5.}

**Conclusion**

The interventions of the Thai and the Vietnamese in Cambodian affairs not only provided the ambitious okya protection but also aggravated the factionalism in Cambodia.

The development of Battambang and Siemreap reveals that economic conditions were key factors determining the relations between the okya and the kings, and among the powerful okya. The contest for power was essential for maintaining their economic interest. Any attempt by the Cambodian rulers to change conditions by
asserting court control would lead to increasing conflict between the okya and the king. In such a situation, the okya situated in the border and wealthy regions often sought relations with external powers, even though they were aware of the objectives of external powers and what task they had to perform in return for protection. Under Thai protection, the regional Khmer okya enjoyed the occupation of the wealthy region of Cambodia without interruption or threat from other factions. The region became a sphere of autonomous politico-economic power existing beyond the reach of the Cambodian court.

Moreover, from the beginning of its control by the Thai, the region maintained a character of being opposed to the Cambodian centre. Their governors tended to be antagonistic to Cambodian royal power, sometimes because they were in conflict with another faction more favoured by the court, sometimes because their sovereign, the Thai king, was in conflict with the Cambodian court. I demonstrated in Chapter Four that Bangkok attempted to attract products and trade from the Battambang region to Siam and to impede its trade relations with Phnom Penh and Vietnam. The obstruction was, however, by no means implemented entirely. But the political life of the region as discussed in this chapter apparently had no link with Udong/Phnom Penh. The divide and rule policy employed by the Thai in Cambodia with the Battambang region as its base, effectively strengthened their political power and economic interest in Cambodia. On the other hand, it ensured that Cambodia could never become strong enough to resist Thai encroachment by strengthening the power of a certain faction in Cambodia. The presence of Thai power in the region prolonged factionalism in Cambodian politics. The increasingly independent power of the regional okya developed into a degree that destroyed the balance of political and economic power of the Cambodian rulers in Udong/Phnom Penh vis-a-vis the powerful okya. The loss of control over the economic basis to
the powerful neighbours and regional okya significantly brought about the collapse of Cambodia as a political entity by the mid-nineteenth century, as I will discuss in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION: SUSTAINING DEPENDENCE

Following the peace settlement between Bangkok and Hué in 1847, Prince Duang ascended the Cambodian throne with consent from both Bangkok and Hué, under the condition that he was obliged to send annual tribute to Bangkok and triennial tribute to Hué. The Vietnamese handed over the Cambodian royal regalia and sent back members of the royal family, including Queen Mei, to Udong. All the Vietnamese troops were withdrawn from Cambodia, while the Thai political advisers remained in Udong. While the Vietnamese were preoccupied by increasing tensions with the French, the Thai were allowed to enjoy their dominant position in Cambodia. The long period of turbulence ended. The reign of King Duang (r. 1848-60) has been appreciated in previous studies as a "renaissance" and a return of "independence" to Cambodia. For most of his reign, Cambodia was at peace and the king enjoyed a relative degree of freedom in dealing with his kingdom's administration. He was able to make independent decisions, such as bestowing titles on the okya. The restoration of the kingdom involved various reformations of political, cultural and religious institutions and revision of laws. If we compare it with the conditions during King Chan's reign, when the Vietnamese moved to control most of the kingdom's administrative affairs, Cambodia under King Duang was more independent in managing its own affairs. Nevertheless, to use the term "independence" to describe immediate post-war Cambodia seems to fail to evaluate the actual consequences of the sustained foreign exploitation of

1 Thiphakorawongse, PKRR III, pp. 121-23.


3 For further detail of laws introduced during Duang's reign, see Adhmémard Leclère, Les Codes Cambodgiens, (1898). Vol. 1, pp. 223-34.
Cambodia's resources and the economic condition in which Cambodia stood by the mid-nineteenth century. More importantly, it would lead to a misunderstanding of Cambodia's post-war relations with the external powers.

This thesis argues that economic factors, trade and manpower, were the basis of the polity's existence, and the absence of economic power thus meant the collapse of the polity. In other words, the prevailing economic conditions significantly determined the political configuration of Cambodia in the mid-nineteenth century. As I have demonstrated in Chapters Four and Five, Cambodia between the late eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century had experienced protracted war, extraction of its resources, depopulation and devastation. The economic basis of the Cambodian polity was greatly destroyed. It resulted in the lack of effective means for the rulers to implement policy and control the loyalty of the okya. The weakness of the Cambodian state prevailed in its vulnerability to the Thai and Vietnamese incursions.

Such conditions further allowed the creation of factions in Cambodian politics. In Chapter Six, I have shown that the chaovay srok situated in the border regions often carried on their own relations with the external powers. While serving the external powers, those regional elites eventually built up an autonomous politico-economic sphere outside the king's power in Udong or Phnom Penh. They were sometimes more independent in managing their local affairs than the king whose power over the kingdom's administration was compromised by the external powers, such as the Vietnamese manipulation of Cambodian administration in the period of King Chan. Apart from the okya in the border regions, the weakness and frequent absence of central power at the capital created an opportunity for other local okya to develop and enjoy independent power which largely remained intact.
by the mid-nineteenth century. The command over economic resources allowed the chaovay srok to play a significant role in determining the fate of nineteenth century Cambodia. Any attempt by the kings to change that condition led to increasing conflict among the powerful okya or between the okya and the kings. The interventions of the Thai and the Vietnamese in Cambodian affairs not only provided the ambitious okya with protection but also aggravated the factionalism in Cambodia, which was in a degree that destroyed a balance of political and economic power of the Cambodian rulers in Udong/Phnom Penh, with the result that Cambodia ceased to exist as a political entity. The ability to cut off all ties with the external powers and restore its independence was thus impossible, as will be shown below.

Destitution

In Chapters Four and Five, I have demonstrated that after having lost the fertile Mekong Delta to the Vietnamese in the late seventeenth century, again in the early nineteenth Cambodia lost the wealthy region of Battambang, which potentially could have provided manpower, rice supply and forest products for foreign trade. Battambang and Siemreap were completely removed from Cambodian into Thai control. Cambodia had lost an enormous number of its people to the Thai depopulation campaigns. Its local and overseas trade were disrupted for more than a decade as a result of interventions, wars and massive evacuation. The potentially important port of Hatien became an integrated part of the Vietnamese empire, while trade in the northwestern region was controlled and diverted to the Thai domain. By the end of the war, the economic functioning of the kingdom had been almost entirely disrupted. The ricefields, particularly in the Vietnamese dominated zones, were all abandoned. The country was faced with a serious famine. Even the well-
protected Battambang region had to rely on food supplies from Siam, while people in the Phnom Penh vicinity were rescued from hunger by many Vietnamese trading boats coming up from the Mekong Delta. Therefore, after Duang ascended the throne, his urgent task was to reconstruct the kingdom's economic base. But the achievement proved not very great.

According to Leclère, during Duang's reign, two roads which linked the port of Kampot with Phnom Penh and Udong were built. Such a project was an attempt to promote Kampot as a new port for Cambodia. It allowed Cambodian goods to gain access to foreign trade without relying solely upon the Vietnamese controlled Mekong Delta. Unfortunately, Kampot did not appear to be a vigorous port at all. Its links with the central part of the country, whose supply and demand for goods were crucial for foreign trade, were entirely impractical during the rainy season. But to travel by cart to Kampot in the dry season was not a favourable means for local traders either, for it was much more laborious than the river route from Phnom Penh to the Mekong Delta. Thus, as we know from Mouhot's account of 1859, the volume of foreign trade of Kampot was very limited, if compared with that of Bangkok. The town comprised only 300 houses at most. Although it was the sole channel through which the king's revenue from foreign trade came, the king had only one junk with which to trade with Singapore.

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7 Mouhot, *Travels in the Central Parts of Indo-China (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos*, (1864), Vol. 1, p. 180.
Besides, the port of Kampot seems to have been partly dominated by Siam. Bangkok appears to have been very concerned with trade activities and sometimes exercised its control over Kampot. The record reveals that when there was a revolt of Pou Kombo in Cambodia in 1860 and the rebellion rapidly moved to seize many towns, King Mongkut of Siam (r. 1851-1868) worried that the revolt would have disturbed the commerce and safety of foreign merchants in Kampot. He ordered the Siamese officers to keep Kampot in peace and order. In the Thai and Cambodian Treaty of 1863, the Thai demanded that the Cambodian court should welcome all the foreign nations which had amiable relations with Siam, and would provide them with facilities such as land tenure. The control of Kampot might have been another channel to secure Cambodian products, apart from the inland route between Battambang and Bangkok. It allowed the Siamese junks to obtain products at a lower price than at the ports of Cochin China.

Apart from foreign trade, the government obtained revenue from a ten percent tax collected from goods coming down from the Battambang region and Laos to Phnom Penh, and from goods exported to Vietnam. Although Phnom Penh had been devastated by the Thai army several times and many of its people had been evacuated to Siam by the 1850s, it had revived sufficiently to become the biggest market of Cambodia (not including Battambang). However, as I have revealed in Chapter Four, the Thai had attempted to shift local products from the Laos and Battambang regions into their hands instead of allowing them to pass to Vietnam, via Phnom Penh. The volume of local trade passing through the Cambodian customs post was probably not very fruitful, and thus must have affected the

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8 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/75; CMH. R.IV C.S.1223/139.
9 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1225/114.
revenue of the Cambodian government. A French explorer's report indicates that traders from Laos preferred to travel to Bangkok via Khorat rather than to Phnom Penh because of a tax barrier in Cambodia.\textsuperscript{11}

Local tax revenue can be an indication of the country's prosperity or otherwise poverty. In his first year on the throne, Duang probably realised the harsh conditions of the country and he must have wished to encourage those people hiding in the forests to settle for cultivation. He decided to reduce taxes on peasants and sometimes exempted them. More importantly, the demographic effect of the extensive Thai depopulation campaigns did not allow the government to gain substantial income from the people. Despite all manoeuvres, the king's revenue was so small that Duang claimed that it could only sustain the survival of the court, the palace and the royal family.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Factionalism}

The control of manpower and local resources by the local okya, especially the chaovay srok, was a crucial factor impeding the king's efforts to revive the kingdom. Thai records between the 1830s and the 1840s provide a good picture of how people responded to wartime conditions. They tried to escape the invading army by scattering and hiding in the jungle. Many of them were led by their local okya, who would be afraid of either losing their people to the invading army or being conscripted by the government.\textsuperscript{13} Some local okya formed their able-bodied

\textsuperscript{11} ibid., p. 222.


\textsuperscript{13} Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan khrang ratchakan thi sam (Records Concerning the Expeditions against Vietnam during the Third Reign), (1933), pp. 48, 67, 78, 81-82.; K.S.L. Kulap, \textit{Annam savamyuth}, pp. 663-64, 733-74.
men into guerilla groups which frequently attacked the unprepared Thai and Vietnamese armies. It is clear from the sources that most of the able-bodied men were under the decentralised control of the local okya or chaovay srok. On the other hand, the power of the latter also caused tremendous trouble for the central government, which had to rely heavily on the supply of men from the chaovay srok, since Cambodia in the early nineteenth century did not have a standing army. The king appears to have been unable to obtain a supply of men for the central army, which in fact seems not to have existed throughout the war because of the unwillingness of the local okya to cooperate.

Both the Thai and the Vietnamese realised that without the collaboration of the chaovay srok, their domination over Cambodia could hardly be securely established. The decision to send Prince Duang to reside in Pursat in fact shows the attempts of the Thai to persuade the okya. As for the Vietnamese by the 1840s, they had become concerned that the okya were opposing them. They ordered Prince Im and Queen Mei, both held in custody in southern Vietnam, to write letters to the okya requesting their support. But the Vietnamese efforts were in vain. It could be said that the decisive factor which brought political and military advantages to the Thai in Cambodia from 1840 was that the enormous support the Thai gained from the chaovay srok. The okya's experience of the subversive treatment by the

14 For the attacks on the Thai troops, see K.S.L. Kulap, op. cit., pp. 663-64, 669; for the attacks on the Vietnamese troops, see Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan, pp. 37, 44-47, 51-53, 59-63, 68-69

15 The high-ranking Khmer okya, the Somdet Chaopraya, who carried out the order from the Thai commander to form an army to fight the Vietnamese, complained that he and his assistants were unable to mobilise men because the Khmer okya took their people into hiding in the jungle. Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan, p. 48.


Vietnamese during the period of King Chan was a decisive factor which made many okya throw in their support for the Thai. Many chaovay srok and their assistants came to pay homage to Duang, who later moved to reside in Udong. They promised to provide Duang with an army of able-bodied men totalling 32,861. The number of men contributed by the okya was very high. In fact, such an army might have successfully fought off the foreign invasions if the central government had been able to command them. Therefore, it was the forces of the local okya which played the decisive role in both bringing the foreign invaders into the kingdom and fighting them off.

However, the manpower under the control of the chaovay srok was not well-organised. Thai officials complained of the difficulty in mobilising men and the lack of discipline of the Khmer soldiers: "They took turns at returning home to see their families, but the Khmer officials dared not do anything. Instead, they had to please their men if they wanted to get any work out of them." The lack of discipline was due to the poor conditions of Cambodia. The okya did not have enough food to feed their armies. So the best way to survive was to let the soldiers go home often.

Also, the more coercion they imposed on their men, the higher the possibility they would have lost them, that they would take refuge in the jungle.

After Duang's accession, he tried to restore and secure the king's power by creating a new circle of okya around the king. Duang also employed symbolic means to

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18 Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan provides letters from okya, pledging to fight against the Vietnamese for the Thai and Duang. Those included the governors of Bati, Kampong Som, Treang, Kampot, Chaudoc, Somrong Tong, Ba Phnom, Sombor, Stung Trang, Chhlong, and Kratie. The okya who remained serving the Vietnamese at the time were the governors of Sombok, Choeung Prei, Kampong Siem, Babour, Prei Krabas, and forty-eight okya of Phnom Penh. See pp. 2-8, 15-16, 21-24, 30-32, 39-42, 48-49; TNL, CMH. R.III C.S.1202/42.

19 Chandler, Cambodia Before the French, p. 161.

20 Chotmaihet ruang thap yuan, p. 78.
persuade his okya his fund of merit by organising royal ceremonies, restoring the
monasteries, palace decoration and linguistic reforms. Duang exercised his power
by appointing the chaovay srok of fifty provinces. However, this does not
necessarily mean that Duang's power over the okya was great. His relations with
the okya seem to have been smooth as long as he did not impose too many demands
on them. Chandler indicates that the court seems to have received a smaller surplus
from the people than from the regional elites. Therefore, when Duang tried to
increase his demand for resources from the regional okya, a crisis arose. In 1855,
the governors of Kampong Svai and Stung came into conflict with Duang, because
"they were angry that Duang demanded from them much more than in the past." The
two officials fled to seek asylum in Vietnam. The pressure would probably
have been for the supply of manpower to work for the government, or for local
products. It is worth noting that the newly appointed officials were possibly the
same group of okya who had pledged to provide Duang with their men to fight
against the Vietnamese in 1840. It means that they had already commanded the
country's politico-economic strength before Duang's accession. They were
accustomed to be independent from the central government, and thus unwilling to
share their surplus with the king.

Significantly, Thai influence was felt strongly over a section of the high-ranking
okya of Duang. The key positions in Duang's court were held by those who were
accepted by the Thai court. In 1848, under the supervision of Bodin, Duang
requested Rama III's permission to appoint two highest-ranking positions in the

21 Chandler, "Going Through the Motions: Ritual Aspects of the Reign of King Duang of
Cambodia (1848-1860)," in L. Gesick (ed.), Centers, Symbols and Hierarchies: Essays on the
Classical States of Southeast Asia, (New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1983),
pp. 106-124.

22 Ibid., p. 117.

23 TNL, CMH, R.III.C.S.1217/7
Cambodian court: the Ta-la-ha, and the Somdet Chaophraya.\(^{24}\) The Ta-ta-la-ha was granted to a former official of Battambang, Phraya Phichai Ronnarong Sitthisongkram. He was a relative of Duang’s wife, Norodom’s mother, and also a son-in-law of the eighth governor of Battambang. The other position was held by a former governor of Pursat, who had apparently served the Thai military campaigns in Cambodia. The continual interference of the Thai resulted in the king’s powerlessness over his own men. It permitted a section of high-ranking officials to take advantage of their dual overlordship: to the Cambodian king and to the Thai king. Later Bangkok sent the Siamese official in Aranyaprathet to be the governor of Pursat.\(^{25}\) After Duang died in 1860, the governor of Pursat was evidently in conflict with Norodom on the issue of manpower. In 1862, the former appealed to King Mongkut that he and his assistants wanted to have Pursat transferred to Bangkok’s suzerainty, instead of that of Udong. The trouble derived from Norodom’s attempt to assert control over Pursat by appointing his own men from the capital to be Palat (deputy governor) of Pursat. The newly arrived official managed to divide a number of manpower to be under his command, thus causing dissatisfaction on the part of the governor and his assistants. The conflict intensified when a revolt led by Ai Pasuthotsarat or Phraya Chetthamontri, the governor of Somrong Tong, took place.\(^{26}\) The governor of Pursat refused to give cooperation by providing men for the army. The new Palat then decided to mobilise troops himself. In the end, the governor of Pursat, his assistants and their families moved to stay in Battambang.\(^{27}\)

\(^{24}\) TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1210/15/2; Nupparot Chronicle, p.301.

\(^{25}\) TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1212/1ko.

\(^{26}\) TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1224/67.

\(^{27}\) TNL, CMH, R.III C.S.1224/74.
The need for manpower and revenue again brought trouble to the government in 1859-60. This time it was with the Cham-Malay minority in the vicinity of Phnom Penh. The revolt was led by a group of Cham brothers, one of which was the okya, named Tuan Li or Somdet Phra Bowon Prathet, who was in charge of the Cham-Malay minority. The testimonies of the Thai official and a monk from Cambodia to the Thai court reveal that the conflict began when Phravya Montri Ratcharit, an official in Udong, was sent to collect tax from the Cham-Malay minority near Phnom Penh. The action provoked dissatisfaction among the Cham and their leaders who accused Phravya Montri of being abusive to the villagers. Phravya Montri was abruptly executed. Fearing punishment from the central government, Tuan Li and his brothers decided to lead the Cham villagers to resettle in Chaudoc so as to seek Vietnamese protection. About 1,000 Cham villagers fled with their leaders, and Duang was entirely powerless to do anything against the revolt. He appeared to fear that the Khmer forces might have clashed with the Vietnamese if they were sent to take the Cham villagers back to Cambodia. The Cambodian government was only able to ask the Vietnamese to deport the revolt leaders to Cambodia for punishment. But the Vietnamese never considered the request. Duang's inability to suppress the revolt brought him another contempt a few month later. A small group of Tuan Li's followers secretly penetrated as far as Kampong Luang and Udong and successfully evacuated the rest of the Chams to Chaudoc.

The Cham revolt inevitably jeopardised relations between Cambodia and Vietnam.

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28 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/173; CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/27. But Moura in his Le Royaume du Cambodge, Vol. II, p. 133, indicates that the revolt took place in Thbaung Khmum, because its governor was oppressive towards the villagers. But from its location, which is much further north of Phnom Penh, it is unlikely that the revolt took place there, for it would be more difficult to carry the villagers down river to Chaudoc within so short a time that the Udong forces could not reach them.

29 TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/23.
The rumour that Cambodian forces were going to attack the Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta spread throughout the area and incited the Khmers in the Delta to rise up and kill the Vietnamese there. However, the revolt was soon suppressed by the Vietnamese army. Duang was obviously anxious that the Vietnamese might come up and attack Cambodia again. Royal despatches were immediately forwarded to the okya to mobilise troops in order to set up military camps from Kampong Luang to Ba Phnom and Treang. Unfortunately, the sustained politico-economic weakness of Cambodia would not allow such an order to be implemented efficiently. The king was evidently unable to command the regional okya to levy men for the army, as shown by Duang's complaint about the conditions in Cambodia in a letter to King Mongkut:

Now the Khmers wish to make a reputation for themselves to the Vietnamese that Cambodia can mobilise a massive army of 60,000-70,000 men.... But Cambodia lacks three to four important things. We have no provisions of food and weapons, and cannot mobilise people for the army. Also, the Khmer okya do not have solidarity among themselves. We have a register of able-bodied men, but we are never able to mobilise them. In one military camp which was expected to have 1,000-2,000 men stationed there, we could find only 200-300 men. Moreover, they began to disperse after one or two months for lack of provisions.

The vulnerability of the Cambodian state was increasingly revealed by the okya from time to time. It was particularly discernible in a revolt led by Snong So, a deputy governor of Ba Phnom, in 1860. Snong So was a maternal uncle of Prince Votha, a son of Duang, who was in conflict with his half-brother Norodom, the successor to the Cambodian throne.

Immediately after Duang had died of illness in 1860, a conflict among his sons

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30 TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1222/72.
31 TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1222/23.
broke out. Norodom and his half-brother Sisowath were educated in Bangkok where they had been taken as hostages after the peace settlement in Cambodia. They returned to Cambodia in 1857 after their father sent a plea to King Mongkut that he needed the two princes to help with the administration.³² Before their return, King Mongkut bestowed upon Norodom, who at the time held the name Rachawadi, the title Maha Uppayoreat, and upon Sisowath the title Phra Kaew Fa. In exchange for the two princes, Duang sent Votha to live at the Bangkok court, where he became addicted to opium and had a disgraceful affair with a woman in the Thai court. His infamy made his father furious. After Duang passed away, Votha found out that his father had left him no bequest, unlike other members of the family.³³ Votha and his full-brother Siriwong started to create a disturbance around Udong and Phnom Penh by recruiting as many followers as possible. Votha's dissidence could not have been a real threat to Norodom, however, unless he received support from Snong So, who had begun a revolt in Ba Phnom, where Votha rushed to join him. The rebellious forces immediately penetrated and besieged Udong. Without showing any attempt to fight, Norodom and his followers suddenly abandoned the capital to seek refuge in Battambang, while Sisowath remained behind. The latter appeared to have no conflict with Votha and was able to command respect from the okya. The rebel leader showed no hostility towards Sisowath at all, and let him stay safely at court. However, the situation surrounding Udong became chaotic. The rebels threatened people with tax demands and also plundered traders and travellers. Such were the goings on in the absence of the government forces. Sisowath and the okya in the capital could do nothing more than keep their families safe.³⁴


³³ TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1222/155

³⁴ TNL, CMH, R.IV C.S.1222/110
short period, the rebellion successfully obtained support from many local officials. Snong So gained control of eighteen towns: from Ba Phnom northward to Sombor near the Laotian border, and northwest to Kampong Svai, near the Battambang region border.\textsuperscript{35} The rebel leader apparently did not want to get involved in a conflict with the Thai authority, whose forces was certainly the most concerned. Snong So managed to strengthen his new base in Phnom Penh, where he began to manipulate the kingdom's administration by appointing his own followers to various positions. He also enlisted support for crowning Votha from many high-ranking officials.\textsuperscript{36} Meanwhile, Norodom and his followers were completely unable to defeat the rebellion and only awaited the arrival of the Thai troops to rescue them. Ultimately, the Thai troops put down the rebellion, but Snong So escaped down river to southern Vietnam.\textsuperscript{37}

A number of further revolts succeeded this one in Cambodia. In 1862, there was a revolt led by the governor of Somrong Tong, Ai Pasuthotsarat, in central Cambodia (see discussion above). In 1864, two revolts took place: one led by Ai Nori in an area in the northwest, and the other in the area around Treang and Kampot.\textsuperscript{38}

Compared to the earlier period, crises in Cambodia in the nineteenth century seem to have been perpetual and more widespread. The government was hardly able to put down the rebellion itself unless external powers intervened. In the seventeenth century, on the other hand, Chandler and Vickery indicate that crises were rather intermittent and the Cambodian government showed its capability to beat off the

\textsuperscript{35} TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/75.

\textsuperscript{36} TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1223/174/3.

\textsuperscript{37} TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/75; Mongkut, Phraratchahatthalekha, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{38} TNL, CMH. R.IV C.S.1226/286; CMH. R.IV C.S.1226/289.
revolts and sometimes even to defeat the invading Siamese army.\(^{39}\) This was a sign of the increasing vulnerability of Cambodian polity in the mid-nineteenth century. The polity was so fragmented that the rulers were unable to reorganise their suzerainty, and become a meaningful political entity.

The history of Battambang and Siemreap was particularly important to the issue of political entity of Cambodia, since the two provinces continued to be under Thai administration until 1907. A study of the Thai rule in the Battambang region during the Fourth and the Fifth Reigns of the Chakri dynasty as well as the Vietnamese role in the eastern part of Cambodia are potential areas for future research to show the whole picture of regional diversities in Cambodian history. Prince Damrong’s opinion of the two western provinces in 1907 is interesting. It is contained in an advice given to a French official, since the French encountered several difficulties in governing the two provinces, such as the continuous migration of villagers of Battambang and Siemreap to Thailand. That is:

> Je ne prendrais pas pour cet emplir un Cambodgien de Phnom Penh, parce que, pendant plusieurs générations, c’est-à-dire depuis des centaines d’années, les gens de Battambang se sont soustraits à l'influence de cette capitale. Quelles que soient ses qualités un homme de Phnom Penh ne connaît pas les habitants de Battambang et il ne saura pas leur imposer le respect.^^

Although the above passage shows the Thai elite’s point of view, and was expressed about half a century after the period of this study, the conditions in the Battambang region in the first half of nineteenth century had a significant influence on the subsequent development of the region. These two provinces had been


\(^{40}\) AOM, *Gouvernement Général 15679,* "M. Collin, Min. de la République Française à Bangkok, à M. le Gouverneur Général de l'Indo-Chine, 29 mai 1907."
excluded from Cambodian administration for a century. Their present-day assignation to Cambodia was rather a product of French colonialism and nationalism. Without French intervention, it seems likely that these two provinces would have been integrated into present-day Thailand. In other words, the present-day state of Cambodia as a political entity was maintained artificially after the French intervention. However, my argument here should not be seen as a pretext for any Thai nationalist movement claiming a return of the two provinces to Thailand. The rise of Cambodian nationalism in the twentieth century obviates any such conclusion.

The fragmentation of the polity not only weakened the Cambodian rulers vis-à-vis its domestic rivals, but also prevented post-war Cambodia from gaining a basis to achieve real independence from its powerful neighbours. Their weakness compelled the Cambodian rulers to invite further external interference in their affairs. It seems not to have been possible for such a weak polity to manoeuvre for the independence they wished. In other words, by the mid-nineteenth century, Cambodia was no longer a viable polity. So it is not surprising then, that when Cambodia wished to relinquish all ties with Siam and Vietnam, the only course its ruler could imagine was to seek protection from the even more powerful French. This was the way Cambodia sustained its existence. Being under the colonial rule nevertheless did not mean, however, that the Cambodian state could achieve an independent entity. It is by no means clear that French protection was directed towards restoring the economic base of the Cambodian polity any more than the Thai and the Vietnamese had done before.
Table 1 List of Battambang's Governors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank and Title</th>
<th>Former Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Baen (r.1794-1810)</td>
<td>Chaophraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phraya Yommarat, Ta-la-ha Baen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Baen (r.1810-1814)</td>
<td>Phraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phraya Phibunrat, Assistant to 1st governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ros (r.1814-1827)</td>
<td>Phraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phra Wisetsunthon, Assistant to 2nd governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ched (r.1827-1835)</td>
<td>Phraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phraya Udomphakdi, Official of 3rd governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Prince Im (r.1835-1839)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Som (r.1839-1840 or 1848?)a</td>
<td>Phraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phra Phithakbodin, Assistant to 5th governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Nong (r.1848-1860)</td>
<td>Phraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phra Narintharayotha, Assistant to 6th governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Yia (r.1860-1892)</td>
<td>Chaophraya Kathathon-thoranin</td>
<td>Luang Aphaiphithak, Assistant to 7th governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Chum (r.1892-1907)</td>
<td>Phraya Kathathon-thoranin, Later in 1896 became Chaophraya Aphaiphubet</td>
<td>Phra Aphaiphithak, Assistant to 8th governor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note a The period of the sixth governor, Som, appears to be confused. The Battambang Chronicle states that Som became a governor after Im's flight to seek the Vietnamese protection in 1839, and died after his two years in office. Bangkok then appointed Nong to be the governor. But the chronicle states that Nong governed Battambang for twelve years until 1860. Therefore, Nong's office should be between 1848-1860 (pp. 143-144). Furthermore, in page 148 the composer of the Chronicle failed to include Som in the genealogies.
Chart 1  Family succesion of Battambang's governors

Baen  
1st Governor  →  Ros  
3rd Governor

Ched  
4th Governor  →  Som  
6th Governor

Nong  
7th Governor  →  Yia  
8th Governor  →  Chum  
9th Governor

Chart 2  Family of Baen, 1st Governor

Baen

sons
Ros  Ma  Uni  Dom  Maw  Sachakhom  Kong  Ket

daughters
Yu  Thep  Mee  Pok  Paen  Nuam  Mied  Kaew

Baen  Chaophraya Aphaiphubet (in the First Reign of the Chakri Dynasty)
Ros  Phraya Aphaiphubet, 3rd governor of Battambang (in the Second Reign)
Ma  Phra Ang Kaew in the reign of King Chan
Um  Phra Narintheraborirak, official of Battambang
Dom Phra Yokrabat, official of Battambang
Maw Luang Muang, official of Battambang
Sachakhom Luang Sachakhom, official of Muang Tanod, subordinate town of Battambang
Yu  Mom Yu, married a Siamese, a member of royal family
Thep Naek Thep, married King Chan

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Chart 3  Family of Baen, 2nd Governor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>sons</th>
<th>Baen</th>
<th>daughters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiang</td>
<td>Sri</td>
<td>Ang Asapratet Sua Ampha Paen</td>
<td>Mok Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baen  Phraya Phibunrat, official of Battambang; Phraya Aphaiphubet
       (the Second Reign)
Tieng Phra Wisetsunthorn, official of Battambang; Governor of Aranyaprathet
Sri  Phra Phakdiborirak, official of Battambang
Ang  Phraya Nuphaphraiphop, governor of Siemreap; Adopted son of Baen
Asa-prathet Luang Asaprathet, official of Battambang
Ampha Serving in the Bangkok court
Chart 4 Family of Ros, 3rd Governor

- **Ros**
  - Royal page at Rama I's court; **Phra** Wisetsunthon, assistant to the Second Governor; **Phraya** Aphaiphubet (in the Second and the Third Reigns)

- **Phithak**
  - **Phra** Phithaksorakrai, official of Nakhon Ratchasima

- **Am**
  - Married **Phraya** Nuphaptraiphop, governor of Siemreap

- **Kong**
  - Married governor of Nakhon Ratchasima

- **Paen**
  - Married the Siamese military commander, **Phraya** Ratchasuphawadi

- **Thap**
  - Married the Khmer high-ranking official in Udong, **Phraya** Yommarat
Chart 5  Family of Ched, 4th Governor

Ched

Phraya Udomphakdi, official of Battambang; Phraya Aphaiphubet
(in the Third Reign)

Suk
Royal page at Rama III's court; Phra Phakdiborirak, official of
Battambang

Som
Phra Phithakbodin; Phraya Aphaiphubet, the sixth governor of
Battambang

Kaew
Married Phra Rattanawathi (Kaew), official of Battambang, who
used to serve as a royal page at Rama III's court, and later became
Phra Phithakbodin.

Kong
Married Phra Senathibodi, official of Battambang

Genealogy of Som, 6th governor, is not available
Chart 6  Family of Nong, 7th Governor

Nong  A son of Phraya Thiratwongsa, a Khmer high-ranking official; Phra Narintharayotha, the Palat, assistant to the sixth governor; Phraya Aphaiphubet (the Third and the Fourth Reigns)

Yia  Luang Aphaiphithak, official of Battambang; Chaophraya Kathathon-thoranin, the eighth governor of Battambang; Married Tim, a grand-daughter of Chaophraya Bodindecha.¹

Chart 7  Family of Yia, 8th Governor

Chum  Chaophraya Aphaiphubet, the ninth governor of Battambang

Khlib  Married Phraya Narongruangrit, a grandson of Chaophraya Aphaiphubet, and a son of Chaophraya Mukhamontri, a Siamese official.

Thes  Married Phra Yothathirat, a grandson of Chaophraya Aphaiphubet and a son of Chaophraya Mukhamontri

Sombun  Married M.R. Daeng Israsena, a member of the Thai royal family

Chart 8  Family of Chum, 9th Governor

Chum

The ninth and the last governor of Battambang. He moved to resettle in Prachinburi after Battambang and Siemreap were ceded to the French Protectorate in 1907.

Luam

Phra Aphaiphithak, official of Battambang. He married a daughter of Khlib and Phraya Narongruangrit, who was a grandson of Chaophraya Bodindecha.

Chuam

A concubine of Prince Jaroonsakdi Kridakorn, a son of King Chulalongkorn.

Run

Married a Siamese official, Phra Sawankhalok.
Note on References

1. **Documents in the Thai National Library, Bangkok** (cited as TNL)

The documents in the National Library include manuscripts of the first four reigns of the Chakri dynasty. The references include:

- **CMH.** cited for Chotmaihet (Official records)
- **R.III** Ratchakan thi sam (the Third Reign of the Chakri dynasty)
- **R.IV** Ratchakan thi si (the Fourth Reign of the Chakri dynasty)
- **C.S.** Jula sakkarat (Lesser era), C.S. + 638 = AD, which is followed by the number of document.

2. **Documents in the Thai National Archives, Bangkok** (cited as TNA)

The documents I consulted in the Thai National Archives are those of the Fifth Reign (King Chulalongkorn) of the Chakri Dynasty. The references for this section contain, for example, **R.V M.41/50** denote: the reign, ministry of department, the number of bundle, the number of item.

- **F.** Documents in a section of France and England
- **Kh.** Documents of Phra Khlang mahasombat (The Great Trearury)
- **M.** Documents of Krusuang Mahatthai (Ministry of Interior)
- **RL-MT** Ekasan yeplem, krusuang mahatthai (Bound documents of the Ministry of Interior)
- **R.V** Ekasan krom ratchalekhathikan ratchakan thi ha (Documents of the Royal Secretary of the Fifth Reign)

3. **Prachum Phongsawadan** (Collected Chronicles),

A series of historical documents and essays of various types, of the Khurusapha edition, comprised of eighty parts which were divided into fifty volumes,
regardless of the beginning and end of each part. But I will give only the number of part, so it will always be PP (part). Exception is part 67 (1969), which is divided for volumes 41 and 42. Therefore, I will cite both part and volume as PP 67/41 and PP 67/42. In most case, title of each part will be given in the same form of an article in journal.

4. Thai References

As Thai people are usually referred to their first names rather than surname, therefore, the first names will entered in footnotes as well as in the bibliography.
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___, **CMH. R.III C.S.1197/3**, Chaophraya Chakri to Phraya Nakhon Chaisi.

___, **CMH. R.III C.S.1199/24**, Bodin sent cardamom suai of Battambang to Bangkok.

___, **CMH. R.III C.S.1199/52**, Dispatch of Chachoengsao, sending beeswax and ivory from Saravane.


___, **CMH. R.III C.S.1202/43**, Testimony of Tangkhao Rod on the flight of Prince Im to Pursat.

___, **CMH. R.III C.S.1202/83**, Dispatch of Chaophraya Bodin concerning the payment of suai cardamom.

CMH. R.III C.S.1203/42. Dispatch of Chaophraya Bodin concerning payment of suai bastard cardamom and beeswax.


CMH. R.III C.S.1203/55. Dispatch of Prachin concerning payment of suai cardamom.


CMH. R.III C.S.1204/1/cho/9, 11, 12, 17. Phraya Mahasongkhram, the governor of Yasothon.

CMH. R.III C.S.1204/6. Dispatch from Chaophraya Chakri to Phraya Ratchayotha in Prachin.


CMH. R.III C.S.1204/82. Chaophraya Chakri to Chaophraya Bodin.


CMH. R.III C.S.1206/120. Dispatch from Bodin sending suai cardamom.

CMH. R.III C.S.1206/153. Correspondence concerning salt and account of rice stock in Mongkolburi.

CMH. R.III C.S.1206/193. Dispatch from Prince Duang sending suai cardamom and the list of Khmer officials coming to Bangkok.

CMH. R.III C.S.1208/60. Dispatch from Chaophraya Bodin sending suai cardamom of Pursat.

CMH. R.III C.S.1208/70. Dispatch from Chaophraya Bodin sending suai bastard cardamom of Siemreap.

CMH. R.III C.S.1209/7. Dispatch from Phraya Mahathirat to Phraya Yommarat.

CMH. R.III C.S.1209/78. Dispatch from Chaophraya Bodin to Phraya Maha-amat concerning payment of suai cardamom.
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, CMH. R.III C.S.1210/15/2, Royal dispatch to Udong concerning the appointing of Phraya Phol of Battambang to be the Ta-la-ha, and Phraya Sangkhalok to be the Somdet Chaophraya.

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, CMH. R.III C.S.1211/2, Letter from Phraya Ratchanikul to King Duang.

, CMH. R.III C.S.1212/1, Dispatch concerning able-bodied men of Phra Phakdi and of Aran, Mongkolburi, Svaichit and Phnom Srok.

, CMH. R.III C.S.1212/1ko, Letter from Chaophraya Chakri to Udong.


, CMH. R.III C.S.1212/143, Letter from Chaophraya Chakri to Phra Wichitsongkhram, official of Siemreap.

, CMH. R.IV C.S.1213/125, Royal dispatch from King Mongkut to King Duang.

, CMH. R.IV C.S.1214/87, Concerning Phraya Aphaiphubet and Phra Palat.

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, CMH. R.IV C.S.1217/7, Dispatch from Chanthaburi concerning events in Udong and Vietnam.

, CMH. R.IV C.S.1217/34, Dispatch of King Duang concerning money sent from Udong to purchase rice in Siemreap.

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CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/68. Letter of King Duang to Bangkok requesting for arms for fighting against the Vietnamese.

CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/72. Tuan Li, the Cham, evacuated 3,000 villagers from Chaudoc.

CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/75. Records of 43 events in Cambodia.

CMH. R.IV C.S.1222/173. Royal demand for inquiry about event in Cambodia from the monk Phrakhru Thepsithithepbodi.

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GLOSSARY

Thai

biawat
chakravatin
changwang suai
chaomuang
krawan
Krom Kalahom
Krom Phra Khlang Sinkha
Krom Mahatthai
Krom Muang
Krom Na
Krom Tha
muang song fai fa
nai kong suai
lek
lek suai
Palat
phon reo
phrai luang
phrai som
Phra Khlang
Samuha Nayok
Samuha Kalahom
Suai

salary of the king's servants
the Buddhist universal monarch
supervisor of the suai units
provincial governor
cardamom
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Royal Treasury
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Capital
Ministry of Land
Department of Port Authority
a state with dual overlordship
chief of the suai unit
able-bodied man
able-bodied man liable for suai payment
deputy governor
bastard cardamom
commoners subjected to a king
commoners subjected to princes or nobles
minister of Treasury
minister of Interior
minister of Defence
head tax
Khmer

the Chakroei — minister of war
chaovay srok — provincial governor
dai — territory
the Kalahom — minister of navy and foreign trade
okya — nobles
prai — commoner, wilderness
prai ngia — able-bodied man
sak or sakdi — authority, dignity and honour
sdat tran — regional governor
Somdet Preah Teav srok — the king's mother
Ta-la-ha — the prime minister
Uppayoreat — the first heir to the throne
Upparat — the second heir to the throne
the Viang — minister of Palace
the Yommarat — minister of Justice

Siamese Weights

1 chang = 1.66 kilograms
100 chang (catties) = 1 hap = 1 picul = 60 kilograms