

THE HISTORY OF THE THAI IN YUNNAN

2205 B.C.—1253 A.D.

By

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There are no Thai records of the history of the Thai race during the many centuries it lived in South China in what is now known as the province of Yunnan, and such records as exist only commence in the 13th century A.D. after the establishment of the Thai Kingdom of Sukhodaya.

To obtain information on this subject one has to refer to Chinese records, local legends and customs in Yunnan and from those a rather sketchy history has been built up since the beginning of this century by Europeans (usually French) who have patiently translated some of these records. Much credit must also be given to the investigations by Gerini of these translations. He has collated this information and was I believe the first person to connect the Kingdom of Nan Chao with the Thai of Thailand. The best known translation, I understand, is that of Monsieur Camille Sanson of Yang Shen's "Romance of the Kingdom of Nan Chao". He was a customs officer in the Chinese service stationed at Yunnan for many years. Unfortunately his knowledge of Chinese was not profound and his translation has been found to be full of errors.

Towards the end of the last century an English missionary named G.W. Clark was stationed in Tali-fu and Yunnan-fu for many years. He was something of a sinologue, was interested in local history, the local tribes, their customs, languages and legends and with the assistance of a local Chinese scholar he translated a Chinese manuscript he found at Tali-fu called a "History of the Southern Princes". It was written in 1537 A.D. by Yang-tsai of Chen-t'u fu in Szuchuan and re-edited by Hu-yu of Wuchang-fu in Hupeh in 1776. Both of these men were classical scholars of the first grade with the high degree of *Chang Wien* so it is presumable that their account is as authentic as any other ancient history.

G.W. Clark published several papers on the tribes of Yunnan together with his translation of Yang-tsai's "History of the Southern Princes" in a small book printed at the Shanghai Mercury Press in 1894 in a very limited edition for distribution to his friends. Very few copies appear to have been sold as no Europeans had much interest in Yunnan in those days. At any rate at the present date this book is unknown in the libraries of Europe and America. Only four copies are now known to exist and they are all in the hands of one owner.

The "History of the Southern Princes" gives a detailed account of the Thai race in Yunnan from the earliest times. The beginning is compiled from local legends, and recorded history commences in 280 B.C. G.W. Clark has investigated these legends and discovered that they still existed at the end of the last century and that several local customs and ceremonies were associated with them, thus tending to show that they have a basis of truth. This record relates how the Kingdom of Nan Chao came into being; it gives the name of every king who ruled it and the chief events of each reign until that Kingdom ceased to exist as such after its conquest by Kublai Khan in 1253 A.D. What was of special interest to me, it clothed the bare bones of history with interesting narratives which showed clearly what the Thai were like in those far off days thus enabling one to compare them with the Thai of today. From the very way he writes it is quite evident that Yang-tsai was sympathetic towards the Thai (if one takes into account that, to him, they were barbarians) and he appears to give full credit to their virtues.

In the whole history there is no single trace of a Thai name with the exception of the word "Chao" or chief. Every name sounds like a Chinese name. If however one examines the Chinese records of pilgrimages, embassies etc. to foreign countries from the beginning of the Christian era down to the end of the 19th century, all names, even English names, are made to sound as if they were Chinese.

Last March I had the rare fortune to be lent a copy of G.W. Clark's book and was allowed to take full notes from it; it is these notes that I propose to read to you tonight. It is no original work of mine; I am just a copyist. As after considerable investigation I had been unable to discover any work which gave such a detailed account of the early history of the Thai race, I felt that I ought to share my luck with my Thai friends, being under the impression that they might even be more interested in it than I am.

Yunnan is first mentioned in Chinese history in 2205-2198 B.C. as a country lying to the south and not included in any Chinese Kingdom. It was then known to the Chinese historians as "The Territory of the Hsi-nan"—meaning the southern Barbarians—and its inhabitants were called "ungovernable vermin". Local legend asserts that the Thai of Nan Chao were of Indian origin coming originally from the valley of the Indus. From the first mention in Chinese history up to modern times the Thai have never been called Chinese nor have they been claimed to be Chinese either by themselves or by the Chinese and to this day the Thai in Yunnan are called "Pa-yi" by the Chinese. Throughout Chinese history their name has constantly been changed. For many centuries they were called Hsi-nan. In 225 B.C. they were called P'u-jen and the term "vermin" dropped though they were always called ungovernable. Later they were called Tien-jen and then Luchao, i.e. the inhabitants of Nan Chao. From 225 B.C. up to the 17th century when Yunnan was finally incorporated in the Chinese Empire Yunnan was called by many different names by the Chinese historians but they state quite clearly that the Thai themselves always referred to their country as Nan Chao.

It is stated in the "History of the Southern Princes" that King Asoka of Magada (now called Bihar) lived for a time at Tali-fu then ruled over by an Indian prince, and that he there married a princess from Tali-fu called Ch'ien-meng-kui. By her he had three sons, the eldest being called Ti-meng-ch'ien-fu-le. The latter's eldest son was called Meng-cu-fu and he became the

ancestor of the sixteen kingdoms. One of his descendants in the direct line, Prince Jen-kue, became King of Tien, 122-117 B.C., and from the latter was descended the long line of kings of Nan Chao.

The country around Tali-fu to this day (1890) is full of legends of King Asoka and his three sons and there are still many annual ceremonies carried out by the local Thai in memory of his sons thus suggesting that this land was ruled over by Indian princes two thousand years ago.

The legend as it is nowadays related states that many centuries before the founding of the Kingdom of Tien at Tali in 280 B.C. a prince of the Indian dynasty named Prince Ah-in then ruling at Tali was caught up into the clouds and there married a heavenly virgin by whom he had three sons. The oldest was called Kin Mah (Golden Horse), the second son Pichi (Jade Fowl), and the third was named Peh-fan (meaning "Plain Rice") because he was such a strict Buddhist and ate only plain rice. He lived at Tali. There are still memorials to these three princes at Tali. Prince Peh-fan is now known as Prince Peh-wang (White Prince). His tomb is situated at the entrance to a cave at the foot of the Ti-shi mountain behind the village of Shwang-iten which is about 12 *li*, (3 Chinese *li* = 1 English mile?) from the north gate of Tali-fu. His palace stood on the main street of Tali and was destroyed after the capitulation of Tali to the Chinese and a Confucian temple erected on the site. On the 16th day of the 3rd moon every year (this being the first day of the great fair at Tali-fu) a ceremony is held attended by all the high officials, in which two hundred soldiers fire off three volleys in order to appease the soul of the White Prince so that he may not incite the people to rebellion.

The names of the first and second princes are perpetuated in the names of two mountains which lie to the west of Yunnan-fu. One is called Kin-mah-shan and the other Pi-chi-shan. (The private names of these three princes were Fu-pan, Uen-teh and Ci-teh.) The names of the mountains originated in the following manner. Their father Prince Ah-in whilst living at Yunnan-fu

had a very fine golden coloured (chestnut) stallion which both Fu-pan and Uen-teh wanted and they were constantly quarrelling about it. Their father in order to settle their bickerings said: "Whosoever can catch it, it shall be his." So he let the stallion loose. Prince Ci-teh caught it on the east hill so that hill was called ever after Kin-mah-shan. One day Fu-pan and Uen-teh were strolling upon the west hill and saw a very beautiful bird which was unknown to the farmers. They called it the Jade Fowl, hence the name of the mountain.

Prince Ah-in—otherwise King Asoka—the father of these three sons, after the duration of some years at Tali returned to India leaving his wife and sons behind. After a lapse of two or three years he sent his mother-in-law accompanied by soldiers as an escort to bring his wife and sons to India. When they reached Yang-ch'ang-fu the barbarians refused them passage so they returned to India while the sons remained in Yunnan as ruling princes and died there. Their father then sent orders to Yunnan from India that their spirits should be made the tutelary deities of these two mountains in their memory. In 73 A.D. it is recorded that the Emperor Suien-ti, hearing of this legend, sent a high official to make a sacrifice to their spirits in his name and this is recorded in the Chinese history of that period.

The foundation of the Tien Dynasty.

After a long interval records of this part of Yunnan begin to appear in Chinese historical manuscripts. Under the Chou Dynasty 1112 B.C. Yunnan appears under the name of Shan-tsan. Only the name is known and no account of its rulers is given.

In 280-220 B.C. General Chuan-Chao was sent by the Chinese Emperor to conquer Szu-chuan and to explore the Yangtze River. He arrived on the shores of Yunnan Lake but his road back to China was blocked by a war between two neighbouring kingdoms therefore he stayed there and made himself king of all that land, calling it Tien Kuo; and thus was founded the dynasty of Tien. However, the western part of Yunnan around the shores of Tali Lake was still ruled over by the descendants of the Indian princes.

187-140 B.C. The Emperor Wu-ti sent messages to the King of Tien to seek a road to Shen-ta-ku (in India; the region of the basin of the Indus) to make enquiries regarding the Buddhist religion from a noted Buddhist monk who lived at Tien. The King of Tien asked these messengers "Which is the greater, the Kingdom of Han or my Kingdom?" This was reported to the Emperor on their return and it enraged him so he sent troops to attack Tien and conquered it.

122-117 B.C. The foundation of the Pai-tzu-kuo Kingdom.

In 122-117 B.C. Prince Jen Kuo, a descendant in the direct line from King Asoka, ruled over the western portion of Tien and Prince Ch'ang-ch'eng, a descendant of General Chuan-ch'ia, ruled over the eastern part around Yunman Lake. It is stated that both these princes were called by the title of *chao*.

A quarrel arose between them and they fought. The Emperor Wu-ti of the Han Dynasty favoured and assisted Prince Jen Kuo and Prince Ch'ang-ch'eng was defeated. Prince Jen Kuo was then elected by the people to rule over both Eastern and Western Tien. He called his kingdom Pai-tzu-kuo and changed his capital from Tali to Ch'ang-ch'eng southeast of Yunnan-fu.

At this date and for some centuries earlier, the religion of the people of Pai-tzu-kuo had been Buddhism, introduced direct from India, and it is recorded in Chinese history that in 20 A.D. a certain Chang-chiang, King of Pai-tzu-kuo, was such a devoted Buddhist that he completely neglected his duties as a ruler; the people therefore deposed him and invited a member of the Peh-nai family—a direct descendant of the Indian rulers of Tali—to rule over them.

From 122 B.C. to 225 A.D. the records are very few and the Kingdom of Pai-tzu-kuo is seldom mentioned in Chinese history.

208 A.D. The foundation of the Ailo-kuo Kingdom.

The founder of the Ailo Kingdom was Prince Chin-lung (descended in direct line from King Asoka) with his Tali wife,

Ch'ien-meng-kui, through his son Ti-meng-ch'ien-fu-le, to Meng-chu who was the ancestor of Prince Chin-lung and so also of the celebrated Meng family which ruled at Nan Chao from 649 A.D. to 902. In 69 A.D. the King of Ailo submitted to the Imperial rule.

The Kingdom of Ailo was the name given to that country by the barbarians who ruled it. The Chinese called it Jung Chow or Shen-to-kuo. The name Shen-tu-kuo, however, was considered by other Chinese historians to be a name for that part of India in the basin of the Indus. These latter say that Chin-lung ruled over it and that it had no intercourse with China.

58 A.D. The foundation of the Six Kingdoms of Nan Chao.

In 50 A.D. the Kingdom of Ailo combined with the neighbouring tribes and revolted against Chinese suzerainty. These tribes then divided themselves up into six kingdoms called "The Six Kingdoms of Nan Chao". Each kingdom was quite independent of the others and was ruled over by its own hereditary prince. Five of these kingdoms were Thai in race while the sixth was called the Na-khi with its capital at Li Chiang. The Na-khi was a Mongolian tribe of Tibeto-Burman stock; they were hill-dwellers, and in no way related to the Thai.

In 225 A.D. the Emperor Hou-ti attacked the state of Shu in Yunnan. He stopped at Pai-ngai and found reigning there Prince Lu-yu-na, a descendant from Prince Jen-Kuo in the 18th generation.

226 A.D. The true history of the Nan Chao Kingdom.

In 226 A.D. the Marquis Chu-ko-liang of Shantung was sent by the Emperor Wu-ti to quell a rebellion against Chinese authority at Ailo. This rebellion was started by a Chinese official called Yang-kai and he was joined by Prince Meng-kuo, a hereditary prince of one of the six Nan Chao Kingdoms. He was a descendant in the direct line from King Asoka of the 38th generation. At this period of history Prince Lung-ya-na—also a descendant from King Asoka through Prince Jen-Kuo—was king of the region south of Tali and his kingdom was called Petzu.

Marquis Chu-ko-liang defeated and killed Yang-kai. He captured Prince Meng-kuo seven times and each time released him in admiration of his bravery and finally re-installed him as hereditary prince of his former kingdom. The Marquis has left a detailed record of this campaign and set up an iron pillar in Mitu, 30 *li* from Heng-ai, commemorating his victories. This column was destroyed in 870 A.D. and Prince Shi-long then caused a copy to be cast. This later column is still preserved in the Tieh-en-mai village of Heng-ai.

The narration of the captures of Prince Meng-kuo by the Marquis Chu-ko-liang is the epic of Thai history in Yunnan and cannot be beaten for sheer drama in the history of any race. In this respect it is equal to the story of King Robert Bruce of Scotland or Hereward the Wake of England, both national heroes who fought persistently and in spite of defeat to preserve their national and individual freedom.

This narrative has appealed to me so much that I have copied out much of it, only omitting what appeared to be rather wearisome repetition. In my humble opinion Prince Meng-kuo should be placed in Thai history on a level with Chao Meng-rai, Phra Chao Ruang and Phra Chao Ram-kam-heng to form ideals for Thai youth to try and live up to.

The Narration of Meng-kuo

At the commencement of the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien-hsin 223 A.D. the Thai inhabitants of the kingdom of Tien round about the shores of Tali Lake lived in great peace and prosperity. In 226 A.D. a special courier arrived at the Imperial court carrying despatches from the Resident at Tali stating that Prince Meng-kuo (a descendant in the direct line from King Asoka who had ruled at Tali many centuries before) had led a rebellion against Chinese suzerainty and that Yang-kai, Prefect of Ch'ien-sing, and Intendant Chu-pae and Officer Kao-tang had joined him. The Emperor Ch'ien-hsin then sent the Marquis Chu-ko-liang from Shantung with 500,000 soldiers to quell the rebellion. (Translator's note:— The Marquis Chu-ko-liang was a man of humble birth, who owing to his

virtue, wisdom and courage had risen to great eminence, under the Emperor's father; and, by him, had been appointed guardian to Chien-hsin in his youth.)

When Yang-kai heard of the approach of the Imperial army he asked his friends Prince Meng-kuo of Tien, Chin-pae and Kao-tang to join him in resisting the Chinese troops. Between them they collected an army of four divisions, each division consisting of 50,000 men.

The Marquis attacked, defeated and killed Yang-kai. He also captured Prince Meng-kuo. Shortly after this General Mah-tse arrived from the Imperial court with despatches and presents for the Marquis. In conversation Chu-ko-liang asked Mah-tse for his opinion as to the best method of introducing and preserving peace in this rebellious country.

Mah-tse replied: "Though I may be prejudiced in my opinion, nevertheless, think over my words. These Tai are a self-confident and lawless race; the distant position of their country from ours, the high mountains, the dangerous roads, only encourage their rebellious ideas. If you crush them today, then tomorrow they will rally and rebel again. Doubtless, your army will be able to crush them again, but to keep them in permanent subjection and preserve order you would have to keep a large standing army in the country; and then, as soon as you removed it rebellion would at once recur. I strongly advise you to contend with their minds rather than with their bodies or their cities. First govern their hearts and then you will without trouble be able to govern their bodies and their cities. Conquest of their reason is all important and their loyalty will follow after it."

Marquis Chu-ko-liang replied: "You see through my body (literally, into my most intimate thoughts). I agree with you fully." Chinese classical scholars affirm that the Marquis Chu-ko-liang was the finest strategist and statesman in the history of China (and that was his opinion of the Tai 1700 years ago).

After killing Yang-kai and capturing Prince Meng-kuo for

the first time, the latter was escorted as a prisoner to the Marquis's tent. The Marquis dressed in full uniform was waiting to receive him. After saluting his prisoner, Chu-ko-liang said: "My late master treated you most graciously, for what reason therefore have you rebelled against his son, my present master?"

Prince Meng-kuo replied: "All eastern and western Szu-chuan at one time belonged to others; now it belongs to your Emperor, but he took it by force. My country of Tien belongs to me and my people, as it did to my ancestors for many generations, and then you, in the name of your Emperor, come with an army to seize it. Why should I not rebel?"

The Marquis replied: "You are my prisoner, my captive. Will you or will you not submit to the Imperial ruler?"

The Prince answered: "Alas, you only captured me by a trick and good luck. I refuse to submit or to owe allegiance to your Emperor. Though you call us barbarians and say that we are savages living beyond the bounds of civilization, nevertheless, my people have perfect confidence in fighting you until at last we are victorious. Why should we be your slaves? Only if my people are conquered will I submit. I personally might perhaps be willing to surrender but my people never."

The Marquis was so pleased with the defiant answer of this courageous man that he released the Prince, gave him a banquet, presented him with a horse magnificently caparisoned, bestowed many valuable presents on him and provided him with an escort so that he might reach home safely.

The above is the story of the first occasion on which the Marquis Chu-ko-liang captured Prince Meng-kuo. How he captured him by strategy on five further occasions is related in detail in Yang-tsai's narrative. He did not conquer him in battle. Each time he captured him, the Marquis asked the Prince to recognise the Emperor's authority and each time the Prince refused with a defiant answer and each time the Marquis released him. Finally Prince Meng-kuo was defeated in battle and captured for the seventh time.

The Marquis ordered the Prince to be brought before him, told the escort to unbind him and invited him to a sumptuous feast. The day after this an officer came to the Prince's tent and said: "The Marquis does not wish to see you again—I am sent to set you free so that you may fight him again. Here is a saddled horse so that you may ride away." The Prince burst into tears saying: "Seven times now have I been mercifully released by my captor. Surely the like of this has never been known in history. I should be a most wicked and ungrateful man if I ever rebelled again."

The Prince then sent messengers for his wife, children and relatives and led them with partly uncovered bodies and bowed heads to the Marquis's tent. They all bowed their heads to the ground and the Prince said: "Your mercy and kindness is like that of Heaven. We will never rebel again." Marquis Chu-ko-liang then asked: "Will Your Excellency now submit to my Emperor's authority?" Prince Meng-kuo with the tears streaming down his face said: "I and my sons will forever remember your mercy and for all time will remain loyal to your Master the Emperor." The Marquis then gave him another banquet and returned him to his Kingdom of Tien to rule again.

One day soon after the above occurrence the Chief Secretary in conversation with the Marquis remarked: "Now that this difficult campaign is over and Prince Meng-kuo restored to his kingdom would it not be advisable to appoint a representative of the Emperor to live here and maintain our prestige?" The Marquis replied: "There are three important objections to your idea. Firstly, if such an official is appointed we must leave a large body of troops here to protect him and maintain his prestige and these troops will have to be paid and fed. Secondly, the *Tai* value their lives very lightly for they are always killing their fathers, their brothers and one another. Thirdly, they would not submit to any punishment by a Chinese official. If I leave no officials behind me when I go I shall be saved an infinity of future trouble. As they are *Tai* they can best manage their own affairs themselves."

The *T'ai* men were not the only ones who fought for their freedom, for their women were just the same. Prince Meng-kuo had been captured and released five times by the Marquis Chu-ko-liang. He was now fighting the Marquis for the sixth time and his troops had just been defeated. He was sitting in his tent when the fugitives arrived, told him of their defeat and that the Chinese army was close upon him. He was greatly agitated over the news and sat thinking of what he could do. In his reverie he heard a light laugh behind him and a voice saying: "Do you call yourself a man that you sit there and do nothing? If I were not a woman I would lead your troops against them myself." He looked round and saw that the speaker was his wife Chu-yong. She was a descendant of a prince who lived before the Emperor Yao B.C. 2300. She was an expert in throwing knives.

Upon this Prince Meng-kuo entrusted her with one hundred of his bravest officers and five thousand of his best troops. She led them through the Yui-kon Pass and attacked Chang-in, the Marquis-General. She had five sharp knives strapped in a case on her back and held a long lance in her right hand. General Chang-in was surprised to see a woman leading the *T'ai* troops and closed up to them. Chu-yong then suddenly retreated and was at once followed by Chang-in. She turned round and threw a knife at him which stuck in his left shoulder. He fell from his horse and her soldiers took him prisoner. Ma-chong, another general, was also captured.

Prince Meng-kuo was overjoyed to see these two prisoners and entertained his wife to a banquet. While feasting she ordered the two prisoners to be led in with the intention of beheading them. Prince Meng-kuo however strongly objected. He spared their lives because the Marquis had spared his on five occasions, and to execute them would therefore be most ungrateful. He proposed however to hold them prisoner until he had captured the Marquis; and to this his wife agreed.

The defeated Chinese troops returned and reported full particulars to the Marquis, who, the following day, led out his

troops in person to attack. Chu-yong met him and engaged him. After a few rounds he appeared to retreat; Chu-yong refused to follow him. The next day the two armies again fought, the Marquis retreated, and again Chu-yong refused to follow him; she stuck her lance upright in the ground and returned home. General Wei followed her with his Chinese troops and cursed her in most abusive language calling her a coward. She thereupon turned her horse and attacked him furiously. He had previously prepared a trap for her by stretching ropes across the road. Chu-yong's horse stumbled over these ropes, fell, and threw her. She was at once captured, bound and led before the Marquis. Her troops made a brave attempt to rescue her but were repulsed.

The Marquis was sitting in his tent when Chu-yong was brought in. He at once ordered that she should be unbound, gave her a tent for her private use and a feast to dispel her fears. He then sent an officer to Prince Meng-kuo to arrange an exchange of prisoners and to exchange his generals Chang-in and Ma-chong for Chu-yong.

The following narration of an incident in Marquis Chu-ko-liang's campaign is of interest because it tells of the first detailed and authentic use of gunpowder and cannon in warfare. The Chinese classics relate that gunpowder had been used by the Chinese for centuries before this but for fireworks; and Europe has always prided itself on being the first to use it in warfare in the 12th century A. D.

This narrative also describes the use of a small cannon which fired many balls simultaneously. This therefore should be the precursor of the French *mitrailleuse* invented in the early 19th century and closely followed by the Gatling and Maxim guns. The idea therefore seems to have lain dormant in China for 1700 years. (226 A.D.!).

It is related that during the war carried on by the Marquis Chu-ko-liang against Prince Meng-kuo of Tien the former arranged

an ambush in a ravine for Meng-kuo's troops. Prince Wu, who was Prince Meng-kuo's general, was advancing to attack. "There was not a single Chinese soldier in sight. The entrance to the ravine had been blocked with felled trees and rocks, so Prince Wu ordered his troops to clear away the obstacle. Suddenly in front of them several large heaps of brush wood blazed up and this made Prince Wu suspicious, so he ordered a retreat.

"It was at once reported to him however that even larger fires were now burning in his rear and that gunpowder was exploding at the lower entrance to the ravine. As he could see neither grass nor brushwood in the ravine he was not frightened of the fire spreading. When however the troops tried to escape, the Chinese threw flaming torches from the sides of the ravine. The oiled rush armour of Prince Wu's troops soon caught fire and the flames spread rapidly. The lighted torches set fire to trains of gunpowder laid in bamboo poles; and these exploding, ignited buried cannon which fired in all directions. Soon the whole ravine was full of flames and smoke and that day Prince Wu and his whole army perished."

As the Marquis standing on a high place watched the carnage, the smell of burning flesh was unbearable. He wept saying: "Although this has been necessary in order that I might finish what I set out to do for my Emperor and the country, yet an enormous sacrifice of life has been involved and for that reason my life will be cut short. I was obliged to use this last scheme as all the others had failed, the enemy refusing to be conquered. My virtue and my good name however are blemished because of the great sacrifice of life. The enemy thought I lay in ambush for them but they were wrong for I hoisted my flag and led the van myself and not a man nor beast of ours has been lost. Every officer has done his duty most faithfully. The cannon were each composed of nine small ones, bound together with strips of brass and were fired by trains of gunpowder. The oiled rush armour of the enemy though sword and waterproof had to yield to fire.

Alas ! not one is saved to have a son and my sin is great. All my success is due to the accurate way in which my officers have carried out my orders."

All his officers and men bowed complimenting him and saying : "Your tactics were inspired by Heaven, the very Gods and demons cannot stand up against you."

From 230 A. D. until 649 the western part of Yunnan was governed by the six hereditary princes of the Six Kingdoms of Nan Chao. They comprised an area of four thousand *li* from east to west and two thousand *li* from north to south.

The form of government in these six kingdoms appears to have been in a very advanced state if compared with Europe of that time.

The Six Kingdoms of Nan Chao

As to when these were first settled no date is given. Prince Hsi-ne-le ruled the land south of the other five kingdoms from Yung-chang-fu to Yao-chew. Prince Ten-shing resided at Ten-c'wan-chew. Prince Shi-lang resided at Ch'ien-c'wan-chew. Prince Tieh-chieh ruled at Li-chiang-fu (Na-khi). Prince Meng-shi ruled at Ming-nen-fu now called Szu-chuan. Prince Lan-kong ruled at Lan-kong-hsien.

The historian Yang-rzsi says: "The time covered by these six kingdoms is so long and the records so scarce that I have not been able to collect any more information."

In 649 A. D. Chang-le-chin, King of Ailo, abdicated in favour of Prince Hsi-ne-le, a member of the Meng family descended in direct line from Prince Jen-kuo. He was a descendant of the celebrated Prince Meng-kuo. This Kingdom of Ailo was the most southern one of the Six Kingdoms. The six princes of Nan Chao each ruled his own kingdom till 731 A.D. but the Meng princes of Ailo were always the most important.

In 729 Prince Pi-lo-ke came to the throne of Ailo when he was 31 years old. He was soon dissatisfied however that there

should be five other princes of rank equal to himself. So he made a plan to murder them and then himself to combine the Six Kingdoms into one and rule over it himself. He then enlisted the sympathy of a high official named Wong who was stationed at Ch'ien-c'wan-fu, Szu-chuan, and through him suggested to the Emperor that if there was only one prince to deal with in that part of the country it would be of great advantage to the Imperial government, as one ruler could keep much better order than six. This suggestion received the approval and sanction of the Emperor.

Prince Pi-lo-ke then sent invitations to the other five Nan Chao princes and their sons to meet him at Meng-wha-ting on the 24th day of the 6th Moon of the year 731 A. D. in order to sacrifice to the spirits of their Indian ancestors. The Prince of Li-chiang-a Na-Khi refused the invitation. Prince U-tsen of Ten-c'wan-chew at first demurred and hesitated but finally accepted. His wife Tsi-shan however was suspicious of Prince Pi-lo-ke's intentions and persuaded her husband to wear an iron bracelet as an amulet supposed to render him sword and daggerproof. Prince Pi-lo-ke erected a large hall made of pitch pine for the celebrations. The Princes and their sons met and performed the sacrifice. After it Prince Pi-lo-ke entertained them to a feast in the pitch pine hall and there made them drunk and insensible. After dark he surrounded the hall with soldiers, set it on fire and the four Tsi princes and their sons perished in the flames.

Prince Pi-lo-ke then sent a message to their wives to come and remove any remains of their husbands' corpses that they could find. Tsi-shan was the only one who found anything recognizable, namely, an iron bracelet round a charred arm bone which she took home with her.

Pi-lo-ke then thought it a good opportunity to increase his harem by taking these four widows into it. Tsi-shan was a very beautiful and intelligent woman. He sent a troop of soldiers to capture her, but she reached her city in time, shut the gates and called upon her people to save her. "Can I ever forget my

husband's cruel death? No, never! I will die first." The soldiers besieged the city and soon the provisions failed so rather than give herself up, she took poison and died on the 23rd day of the 7th moon at a place now called Ten-rien-cen which is 20 *li* north-east of Ten-c'wan-chew.

Both these historical events are celebrated nowadays (1890) by local customs and ceremonies. To this day on the 24th day of the 6th Moon each year all the people in the district round Tali hold the "He-pa-chieh" or "Firebrand Feast". The farmers in the evening run round the boundaries of their fields with lighted torches. In some villages they erect long stacks of straw and in the evening set fire to them. When the fire is well alight the young married men try to seize the topmost flag. He who gets it will have a son within the year and be prosperous. In the city of Tali-fu the majority of the people run about their compounds with a lighted bundle of bamboos and this action is said to preserve the family from sickness till the next celebrations. So through the centuries they have given this cold blooded murder a lucky significance. In many of the villages along the Tali Lake they have societies whose members celebrate a feast on the 23rd day of the 7th moon, the day of the tragic end of Tsi-shan.

From 729 A.D. till 902 the Six Kingdoms of Nan Chao were ruled by one king as one kingdom and the kings were all members of the Meng family. There were 13 generations and they ruled for 173 years. The words Nan Chao mean the Southern Kingdom. The word Chao means king.

In 739 some of the *Man-tsi* clans rebelled but Prince Pi-lo-ke soon reduced them to submission. Taking some of them as prisoners with him he journeyed northwards to interview the Emperor K'ai-uien. The Emperor received him very graciously, bestowed high titles upon him, gave him many presents, and requested him to build many cities in his kingdom.

Upon his return to Nan Chao Prince Pi-lo-ke used his *Man-tsi* prisoners to build the city of T'ai-he. Its present site is the village of the same name near the Kwan-in-tang 15 *li* south of

Tali-fu. He also built the town of Tali which is now the large village of Shi-chew 40 *li* north of the present Tali-fu. The Emperor K'ai-nein made Pi-lo-ke's son a general and stationed him at Meng-hwa.

In 740 a man named Meu-chao rebelled and captured the cities of Ch'ien-c'wan-lau-kong and Yong-changfu. In 741 King Pi-lo-ke recaptured these cities. In 742 he moved from Meng-hwa and lived at Tai-he. He also built the Hsia and Shan Kwans calling them the Long-tow and Leng-wi: i.e. the dragon's head and tail. In 746 he built the city of Tali-fu. He died in 749 having ruled 20 years and was succeeded by his son Ko-le-fung.

At the time of the death of Prince Pi-lo-ke the government of Nan Chao was in an advanced state of efficiency for those days as compared with Europe. There were eight ministers to manage the legislation, civil and military affairs, nine executive officers, a president over the mandarins, an officer for the census, military instructors, judges, commissioners of works and of the Board of Trade, three officers to take charge of the government granaries, one superintendent of horses and one also for cattle, a commander in chief, a commissariat officer and eight prefects; two brigadier-generals, one stationed at Hwu-li-ch'ee Si-l' wein and the other at Tong-hai-hsien. There were 35 military officers in command of troops, stationed in various places east of Tali but only two west of this city. Brave deeds and efficient administration were rewarded by gifts of gorgeous clothes.

The Imperial government of China does not seem to have exercised much power either in Yunnan or in Szu-chuan till the 12th century. The usual order of things was as follows. Sometimes the aboriginal rulers of these provinces visited the Emperor by whom they were received and given presents and honours. The Imperial government sometimes sent a Resident, and a military administration was frequently made in order to overawe the natives, but such a weak system of supervision had little durable effect.

Prince Ko-le-fung.

He began to rule in 749 A.D. when he was 36 years old. The Emperor Tien-pao sent Li-kiu-ih to install him as King of Nan Chao.

In 751 the Prince took his wife on a visit to General Li-mi. Whilst on the journey the people complained against two Chinese officers Chang and Chia for base conduct. Prince Ko-le-fung sent Captain Yang to inform the Emperor who refused to listen to the charge. This enraged Prince Ko-le-fung so he took affairs into his own hands. He sent General Wang with troops against Chang who was defeated and afterwards poisoned himself. The Emperor then decided to punish Prince Ko-le-fung and sent 80,000 men under Generals Suen and Chang for that purpose. This frightened Prince Ko-le-fung so he met these officers on the way, acknowledged his fault and requested them to disband their troops. This they refused to do and the Chinese army entered Yunnan. Prince Ko-le-fung then sent two officers to negotiate, but General Suen made them prisoners and forwarded them to the Emperor. General Wang with several thousand troops was sent to attack Tali as Prince Ko-le-fung despatched his son Fung-cia-ih and General Twan to resist the Imperial army.

A great battle was fought near Hsia-kwan, the Chinese being badly defeated and 60,000 of their troops being killed. Ko-le-fung then caused an enormous grave pit (a *wang sai-fen* or myriad tomb) to be dug with this inscription beside it, "The Tomb of the Chinese". This grave is still to be seen near the east entrance to the Hsia-kwan.

In the last moon of 753 the Emperor T'ien-pao tried to buy over Prince Ko-le-fung. He sent Commissioners Ih and Lo with costly embroidered silk robes and various presents, styled him brother and gave him a gold seal. He also sent robes to Fung-cia-ih and made him a general. In the 6th moon of 755 A.D. the Emperor T'ien-pao sent another army under General Li and Ho to subjugate

Nan Chao. Prince Ko-le-fung again sent Fung-cia-ih and General Twan against them and again the Imperial army was annihilated. The Chinese historians estimate that the losses of the Imperial troops in their various battles against Prince Ko-le-fung were not less than 2,000,000 men.

In 765 Fung-cia-ih built the city of Yunnan-fu. The walls of this city still stood in 1383 when they were rebuilt.

Prince Ko-le-fung died in the year 799 having ruled 30 years. His son Fung-cia-ih died before him so his grandson Ih-me-su-in succeeded him. When Prince Ko-le-fung so successfully threw off the Imperial yoke he set up a large tablet to commemorate the event. The draft of the inscription was drawn up by Ch'en-hwei and engraved on the statue by U-shih. This tablet of stone is probably the largest in South China. It is still to be seen on the road from Hsia-kwan to Tali about 8 *li* from Hsia-kwan on the west side of the road. The tablet has fallen and now lies on its side. It is engraved on both sides and many characters can still be deciphered. The local name for it is Mau-chow-pei; i.e. the Tablet of the Southern Princes.

Prince Ih-me-su-in.

He was 24 years old when he began to reign. Shortly after coming to the throne he raised an army of 30,000 men to attack Szu-chuan. The Emperor sent General Li to resist him but he was badly defeated. In 784 he divided Nan Chao into nine provinces, the area of his kingdom at that time being roughly the same as that of Yunnan at the present time.

At about this date he decided to join his kingdom with China. This greatly enraged the Tu-fan or Tibetans who rebuked him and persuaded him from doing so.

The Emperor appointed one Kao as Resident of Nan Chao. In 794 A.D. Kao was appointed governor. In 795 the Tibetans waged war against Nan Chao. They fought a battle near the river

bridge and brass column which marked the boundary between Nan Chao and Tibet about 250 *li* north of Likiang-fu. The Tibetans were thoroughly defeated, a great number of prisoners and much spoil being captured. Prince Ih-me-su-in then sent his brother Prince Tse and an officer to the Emperor with a despatch announcing his victory and also forwarded a map of the conquered country which the Emperor Chen-tien acknowledged sending in return gold and silver seals.

During the eight years following 796 Prince Ih-me-su-in waged continuous warfare with the Tibetans on his northern frontier. He obtained help from Governor Kao and severely defeated the Tibetans. He captured five Tibetan Princes and sent them as prisoners to the Imperial court.

He died in the 7th Moon of 809 having reigned 30 years. The Emperor U-ien sent an officer to sacrifice to his spirit. His son Su-in-ke-cwien succeeded him.

809 A.D. Prince Su-in-ke-cwien.

He was 31 years old when he came to the throne. Upon his coronation, the Emperor U-ien-he gave him a gold seal and a very high honorific title. It was during his reign at Nan Chao that Yunnan-fu was called the Eastern Capital and Tali-fu the Western Capital.

He died on the 11th moon of 809 having ruled only one year and was succeeded by his son C'wien-long-chen.

810. A.D. Prince C'wien-long-chen.

He was 12 years old when he came to the throne. In the following year he used 3,000 ounces of gold to make three Buddhas which he placed in a temple at Tali-fu. In 815 he attacked Kia-ting-chew, Szu-chuan, and was unsuccessful as his troops were scattered being frightened by a vision of troops fighting in the air. The inhabitants afterwards built a temple in Kia-ting-chew called the Fu-t'ien-shonmiao to commemorate this event.

Prince C'wien-long-chen grew up into a very wicked man and at his 19th year was murdered by one of his officials named Wang-kia and was succeeded by his brother C'wien-li.

817 A.D. Prince C'wien-li.

He was 15 years old when he succeeded.

In 820 the Emperor U-ien-he forgave Wang-kia for murdering Prince C'wien-long-chen but reduced him several grades in rank.

In 821 Prince C'wien-li repaired the San-lali-si the Three Pagodas northwest of Tali. During that year there was a great rise in the waters of the lake, as had been predicted many years before, caused, it was said, by an enormous serpent or dragon. The Prince offered a large reward to anyone who would kill it. A man named Twan-ci undertook the task. He bound knives round his body with the points projecting outward and jumped into the lake. He was promptly swallowed by the dragon and the high waters at once subsided. The monster was caught and killed and Twan-ci's body extracted from its stomach. Prince C'wien-li then had Twan-ci's corpse buried with great honour and erected a pagoda over his grave. In the Dragon Temple at the lake, east of Tali, there is a stone tablet recording the event. The dragon's bones were burnt in a pagoda erected on the spot. It is called the Ling-tali and is situated in the rear of Yang-pi village at the Hsia-kwan. It is still standing about $\frac{3}{4}$ li west of the road to Tali.

The Emperor Chang-kui gave Prince C'wien-li a gold seal in 825 A. D.. In the same year Prince C'wien-li died in Yunnan-fu, having ruled for 8 years. He was succeeded by his brother Fong-yeh.

825 A.D. Prince Fong-yeh.

He came to the throne when only 7 years old. The Emperor Chang-kin sent an officer called Wai to represent him at the Coronation. In the same year the work of building temples and restoring the Three Pagodas was completed. These pagodas

still remain and also the two pagodas built originally in 631 A.D. They stand on the east side of the Wu-hwa-shan in Yunnan-fu. These also he repaired.

In 827 his mother became a Buddhist nun and she and others of her rank lived in the San-ta-si. She used 5,000 ounces of silver to decorate a room in the temple with little Buddhas. In this same year Prince Fong-yeh sent all the Taoist priests out of his kingdom of Wan Chao. Buddhism now had a tremendous revival and large sums of money were devoted to the temples. It is probable that about this date the very famous temples on the Chi mountains were built (100 *li* north-east of the lake) which are visited each year by many Tibetan pilgrims.

A Chinese mandarin named Tu, stationed at Chen-tu Szu-chuan, treated his Chinese troops so badly that many deserted and took refuge at Nan Chao. Prince Fong-yeh sent General Wang-kia with his army to investigate. They were attacked by Tu but Wang-Kia defeated him, held him for a time and then returned to Nan Chao with many prisoners and much spoil. Prince Fong-yeh then wrote to the Emperor T' ai-he in 831 advising him to punish Tu. The Emperor degraded Tu and appointed General Li-teh in his place. Some of General Li-teh's soldiers ... (insulted?) Prince Fong-yeh. So in the 5th moon of 832 he led 400 soldiers into Szu-chuan to attack General Li-teh. From this date and onwards until 1600 there is frequent mention of military operation against the Chan (Chan?) who then occupied what is now Annam.

Prince Fong-yeh appears to have studied the interests of his people. He drained large areas of marsh land into the lake. In one place in the Li-hu ravine about 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ south of Tali he built a strong dam forming a large reservoir so that in dry season the water could be led off by canals to irrigate the rice fields. This work still exists and its local name is "Kao-no" i.e. "The High Pool."

In the 6th moon of 843 Prince Fong-yeh was very anxious because of a long draught which caused his people much suffering.

He went to an old Buddhist monk for advice. The monk reproved him for his excessive love of wine and women and told him to repent. He at once amended his ways and rain then fell in abundance.

In 859 Prince Fong-yeh sent help to the King of Burma to assist him in resisting an attack made on Burma by the Lion Kingdom (possibly the Mon Kingdom of Siam). In the Han Dynasty Burma was called "T'an" and during the T'ang Dynasty "Piao".

The year 860 A.D. was very eventful. Governor Li-teh of Szu-chuan invaded Nan Chao with an army of 100,000 men. Prince Fong-yeh routed that army near Ch'ien-chang-fu in Szu-chuan. Soon after this General Li-teh was beheaded by Imperial order.

About this time some Imperial troops in Szu-chuan rebelled, joined the Tibetans and attacked Nan Chao. General Wang-kia fought them near the iron bridge on the Tibetan frontier and slaughtered 10,000 Chinese.

After a very useful reign of 35 years Prince Fong-yeh died in Yunnan-fu in 860 and was succeeded by his son Shi-leng. Because Prince Shi-leng was only in his 16th year General Wang-kia acted as Regent. Prince Fong-yeh in 859 had sent General Twan-seng to help the Burmese against an attack by the Lion Kingdom. The Burmese with this assistance were successful and on General Twan-seng's setting out to return to Nan Chao they presented him with a gold Buddha. General Wang-kia went to welcome Twan-seng on his return from Burma and as a compliment to him worshipped his golden Buddha. Whilst in the act of presentation General Twan-seng beheaded General Wang-kia because he had murdered Prince O'wien-leng-chen in 817 A. D. This was a very critical time for Prince Shi-leng for an influential minister named Chen-nai-i tried to murder him but did not succeed.

860 A.D. Prince Shi-leng.

The mother of Prince Shi-leng was a fisherman's daughter of extraordinary beauty. An account of his conception is given in

the "History" but is not fit to be recorded. The Emperor Ta-chang proposed to give Prince Shi-leng a wife from the Imperial Household, but when he heard of the low birth of the Prince's mother, he consulted soothsayers and had Prince Shi-leng's future forecast and after that refused to send the lady. At this time the Prince's mother had become a nun.

During the Meng Dynasty at Nan Chao several of the Kings had sent tribute to the Imperial government, but Prince C'wien-long-chan and Fong-yeh had not done so and neither did Prince Shi-leng. The Emperor therefore sent an army to demand the tribute but Prince Shi-leng attacked and thoroughly defeated it. In 863 he fought the Chinese in Szu-chuan and there he took a stone Buddha very much revered by the natives, as a prize.

Soon after this great discontent reigned amongst his troops because the stores of food had failed and general desertion was threatened. Prince Shi-leng sought the advice of a Buddhist monk called Song who, by invoking the sand of the river bank, changed it into rice and the water of the river into wine, so each man was filled to repletion.

During one of his excursions into Szu-chuan one of his generals named Tong-chon was taken prisoner by the Chinese. Prince Shi-leng then requested the Emperor to order his release; and, on this being done, an embassy was sent in 870 to the Emperor to thank him.

In 871 he made another raid upon Szu-chuan and after taking several cities attacked Chen-tu. Governor Lu sent a party of officers to try and arrange matters, and meanwhile the Emperor sent Generals Jen and Seng with an army to assist him. These officers attacked Prince Shi-leng and repulsed him.

In 874 he did some fighting in Kweichow and again in Szu-chuan. His general named Hwang was defeated and returned to Nan Chao for more men. This time he sent an officer named Wang with forty men to Governor Lu conveying a letter to be forwarded

to the Emperor. Governor Lu imprisoned 38 of the party. Prince Shi-leng with his army then retreated to Nan Chao.

In 876 he again attacked Yah-Choo but Governor Kao repulsed him killing fifty of his men, retook the cities and drove the Prince down the Yangtse River. In 877 A.D. Prince Shi-leng received an Imperial officer with peace negotiations but he would only negotiate with a Buddhist monk as an intermediary. Governor Kao sent a monk with proposals which however were not acceptable. In this year the Prince made his last attack on Szu-chuan and was defeated by Governor Kao.

He fell sick with a virulent fever and died in the Kui-tsin Temple in Ueh-shi-ting in Szu-chuan after an eventful reign of 18 years. He was succeeded by his son Leng-shwen. Prince Shi-leng after his death was given the posthumous title of Emperor and this was done to all the following Kings of Nan Chao for nearly 44 years until Kublai Khan conquered Nan Chao in 1253. The title, however was never given to them during their life time so evidently the Emperor of China did not object (?)

878 A.D. Prince Leng-shwen.

He was 17 years old when he began to rule. Fearing the Emperor's displeasure he sent an embassy to sue for peace and it was granted. In 880 he wrote a letter to the Emperor using an improper address. This caused much amusement at the Imperial Court when it was read and a struggle occurred between the members of the Court and the embassy which objected to being laughed at. The Emperor had to part them.

There was a great deal of trouble at Nan Chao at this time and, as a politic move, the Emperor, Cheng-he, sent a very friendly letter to Prince Leng-shwen. In 884 the Emperor sent a princess of the Royal Household as a wife.

The next year King Chi-uien suggested that he would also provide him with a princess for a wife. Prince Leng-shwen approved of the idea and sent three of his chief officials to escort

her to Nan Chao. Emperor Kao hearing of this sent a secret letter by fast couriers to King Chi-uein telling him not to allow the princess to leave and advising him to poison the three officials. King Chi-uein received the officials with great courtesy, invited them to a banquet and then poisoned them.

In 887 the Hisia and Shan Kwans were greatly damaged by a serious earthquake.

Prince Leng-shwen was a most sensual and dissipated man, useless as a ruler, leaving the whole of the administration of Nan Chao entirely to his officials. He was therefore greatly disliked by his people. In 898 he murdered several of his servants, being instigated to do so by some of his concubines. He was hated by his servants and one of them named Yang murdered him at Yunnan-fu. He reigned for 20 years, was given posthumous honours as an Emperor and was succeeded by his son Shwen-hwa.

898 A.D. Prince Shwen-hwa.

He was 21 years old when he came to the throne. In 900 the Emperor Kang-ming established five colleges in Nan Chao. In the 11th moon of this year Prince Shwen-hwa executed Yang and all his family to avenge his father's murder.

In 901 he cast a very large figure of Kwan-in sixteen feet high and sent Chen-nai to collect copper for it from sixteen different mines. He ruled for five years and died in 903.

Prince Shwen-hwa left a small son only eight months old to succeed him and this child fell a victim to court intrigues. Cheng-mai-su, a cruel and ambitious man, took charge of the government of Nan Chao. He advised Prince Shwen-hwa's widow to leave the infant prince under his charge until he was of age and able to govern. She complied and gave the child into his care. Cheng-mai-su then injured the child's testicles by crushing them. As it then cried unceasingly the mother asked for its return suspecting foul play. That same evening the infant prince died. Cheng-mai-su then became frightened that the mother would

revenge herself on him so, to save himself and in order to secure the throne of Nan Chao for himself, he gathered some soldiers and murdered all the Meng family and their relations that he could find. In all he murdered over 800 of Meng family beneath "The Five Glory" tower in Tali-fu. This ended the Meng family which had ruled at Nan Chao for 225 years from Prince Hsi-me-le in 694 A.D. until the death of Prince Shwen-hwa in 903.

There were 13 generations of the Meng Dynasty.

903 A.D. The Tu-chang-me-kuo Dynasty of Nan Chao.

This dynasty was founded by Cheng-mai-su. He was a Chinese and formerly held office at Ueh-chew Szu-chuan. Because of his evil deeds and peculations he had to flee to Nan Chao where he obtained employment under Prince Leng-shwen. He soon gained influence and power under that prince who, as a ruler, did not bother to control Cheng-mai-su. During Prince Shwen-hwa's reign he was appointed First Grand Secretary. Cheng-mai-su began his reign in the 11th moon of 903 A.D. being 42 years old. He made Tali-fu his capital.

In 910 he built a temple in San-tah-su and decorated it with 10,000 Buddhas as a thank offering for having exterminated the House of Meng.

He died in the 4th moon of 911 having ruled 8 years and was succeeded by his son Ren-ming.

911 A.D. Prince Ren-ming.

He was 22 years old when he came to the throne.

In 913 he made an attack on Szu-chuan but was severely defeated and lost several thousand soldiers in the attempt.

In the 8th moon of 926 an abscess formed in his ear. It was excruciatingly painful so that it nearly drove him mad and at such times he would kill one of his servants. He died from the abscess in the same year. He ruled for 16 years and was succeeded by his son Long-tang.

926 A.D. *Prince Long-tang.*

He was 12 years old when he came to the throne.

In 929 General Yan-kan-cheng of Tong-c'wab killed him and made Chao-shan-cheng King of Nan Chao. General Yan-kan-cheng was a grandson of Cheng-mai-su who started the Ta-chang-no-kuo Dynasty in 903. This dynasty consisted of three generations and only ruled for 26 years.

929 A.D. *The Ta-tien-shing Dynasty.*

Chao-shan-cheng was born of very poor parents. On one occasion when he was gathering firewood on the hill side, being very tired, he fell asleep. He dreamt he saw a god who told him to awake as he had gathered the firewood for him. He awoke and saw ten bundles of firewood lying beside him. He became frightened, ran home and told his mother. She did not believe him, so took him by the hand and went to the place where he had slept and there saw the ten bundles of firewood lying on the ground. At once on returning home she consulted a soothsayer who told her it was a very good omen. Chao-shan-cheng then became an official under Cheng-mai-su. On one occasion when carrying out his official duties a large stone dropped from the sky and broke into two halves. Upon one piece his name was inscribed in red letters and there was an inscription saying that one day he would be king of Nan Chao. General Yan-kan-cheng heard this story and believed in the omen so he murdered Prince Long-tang and placed Chao-shan-cheng on the throne.

In 930 Prince Chao-shan-cheng began to treat General Yan-kan-cheng with great coolness and ignored him. This want of gratitude angered the General who consulted with his friends and then murdered Prince Chao-shan-cheng after he had only ruled for ten months. He then seized the throne for himself and ruled as King of Nan Chao calling his dynasty the Ta-i-ming Dynasty which lasted only until 937.

930 A.D. The Ta-i-ming.

Prince Yan-kan-cheng was a native of Ping-O'wan-chew. He was an illegitimate son of Prince Leng-shwen of the Meng Dynasty. He held office at Ten-c'wan-chew under Prince Cheng-mai-su. He was a bad ruler and was hated both by the officials and the people of his Kingdom.

In 935 General Twan-Ssu-ping of Teng-hai-hsien rebelled and led an army against Prince Yan-kan-cheng who was defeated and fled to escape capture. General Twan-Ssu-ping then made himself King of Nan Chao and changed the name of the dynasty to "Tali". The Nan Chao Yeh-sih states that Prince Twan-ssu-ping eventually captured Prince Yan-kan-cheng and did not kill him but forgave him. The latter then entered a monastery and became a Buddhist monk.

The Twan family was related to the Meng family and under that dynasty had been generals and high officers of state for many generations. Thus it could also trace its descent from King Asoka. Prince Twan-ssu-ping was the 6th generation after Twan-chien, a general of the Meng Dynasty of Nan Chao who fought under Prince Pi-lo-ke and thrice defeated the Chinese troops of the Emperor of the Han Dynasty in 525 A.D. near Tali Lake.

936 A.D. The Tali Dynasty.

This dynasty had fourteen rulers, holding the throne of Nan Chao from 936 to 1236.

The account of the conception of Prince Twan-ssu-ping is given in the "History" but it is too indecent and too ridiculous to record here. He had an eventful and adventurous life. He defeated Prince Yan-kan-cheng's brother at the Haei Kwan with the greatest ease and then captured Tali-fu. He ascended the throne of Nan Chao in 938 being then 44 years of age. He freely rewarded those who helped him to gain the throne. He was a very devoted Buddhist, was continually building temples and decorating them with brass Buddhas.

He died in 944 having ruled six years and was succeeded by his son Si-in.

944 A.D. Prince Si-in.

He came to the throne in 944. It was soon evident however that as a most devoted Buddhist he was more fitted for a monastery than to rule the turbulent kingdom of Nan Chao. He ruled about a year and then abdicated in favour of his nephew Si-liang. He then entered a monastery and became a monk.

It was to this period that the temples of San-ta-si owed so much of their magnificence. Nowadays, that immense site is covered with a great heap of ruins. The Three Pagodas still remain however. The Great Pagoda is square and is built of huge bricks accurately cemented together.

The base is 11 yards on each side. There are sixteen caves tapering from the tenth cave up to the pinnacle. At the top is a spiral staircase surmounted by a huge globe gilded with gold leaf. The sides are thickly plastered and are decorated with hundreds of niches containing small Buddhas. This pagoda is about 300 feet high. After a walk through the ruins one comes to the remains of the large brass Kwan-in (already mentioned). The head is missing. The trunk is six feet high, across the breast it is four feet and the arm stumps are one foot wide.

945 A.D. Prince Si-liang.

He ruled for seven years and was succeeded by his son Si-tong. He died in 953.

953 A.D. Prince Si-tong.

He ruled for 17 years and died in 970. His son Shu-shwen succeeded him.

970 A.D. Prince Shu-shwen.

In 978 General Wang-chaun-pin after restoring peace in Szu-chuan made a map of Nan Chao and presented it to the Emperor for him to fix the frontiers between it and Szu-chuan.

The Emperor laid his jade axe on the line made by the Ta-tu River and said that all the land beyond this river should remain under the rule of the Southern Princes of Nan Chao.

Prince Shu-shwen died in 986 having ruled 16 years and was succeeded by his son Shu-yin.

986 A.D. Prince Shu-yin.

There is no other record of his reign. He died in 1010 having ruled 24 years and was succeeded by his son Shu-lien.

1010 A.D. Prince Shu-lien.

He ruled for 13 years and died in 1023 and was succeeded by his nephew Shu-long.

1023 A.D. Prince Shu-long.

After a rule of four years he became a Buddhist monk and abdicated in favour of his nephew.

1027 A.D. Prince Shu-chen.

He was a very sensual and licentious prince. He made a gorgeous flower garden in the grounds of his palace in Yunnan-fu. He kept a large harem with many concubines and encouraged prostitutes to frequent the palace grounds to dance and drink.

His officials and the people became so disgusted with his rule that they forced him to abdicate in favour of his cousin Si-lien.

1045 A.D. Prince Si-lien.

A *Man-tsi* prince named Beng-kao living near the Annam frontier rebelled and styled himself king of these regions. One of Prince Si-lien's generals, called Swai joined by a Chinese official, Governor Ti-a, attacked Beng-kao and defeated him. He fled to Tali-fu to sue for mercy; Prince Si-lien refused to grant it, beheaded him and sent his head to the Emperor Hwang-yeh. In 1064 another rebellion occurred headed by a person called Yang. A general called Kao quelled this rebellion and as a reward received a present of land at Hong-si.

In 1076 Prince Si-lien became a Buddhist monk and abdicated in favour of his son.

1076 A.D. Prince Lien-i.

He sent tribute to the Emperor Shi-ming. In the 5th year of his reign in 1081 he was murdered by Yang-i-chen who usurped the throne and reigned as King of Nan Chao for four months. General Kao then raised troops in the eastern part of the kingdom, put them in charge of his son Kai-shen-tai, attacked Yang-i-chen and killed him. He then placed Shee-hwei, a nephew of Prince Lien-i, on the throne. Descendants of Marquis Kao are still living in Yong-he-peh-ting. They are *Tu-si* or Hereditary Mandarins.

1081 A.D. Prince Shee-hwei.

He made Marquis Kao, his chief counsellor, Minister of State and gave him the title of Marquis. In this year there was an eclipse of the sun and stars were visible in the daytime. The Prince regarded this as a sign that he should no longer reign, so he abdicated in favour of Si-lien's grandson Chen-ming.

1082 A.D. Prince Chen-ming.

He was a very bad king and useless as a ruler. This disgusted his people, not only against himself but against his whole house. The officials and people therefore forced him to abdicate after 13 years of unpopular rule. He became a Buddhist monk and Marquis Kao-shen-tai was elected king in his stead.

With the abdication of Prince Chen-ming the Ta-i-ming Dynasty ended after lasting 158 years with 14 generations of rulers of Nan Chao.

1094 A.D. Ta-cheng Dynasty.

Prince Kao-shen-tai was a native of Tali-fu. As he grew up he showed great intelligence and obtained an official position under Prince Si-lien. As related he rose to high rank and favour

both with that and succeeding princes, also being much loved and respected by the people.

In 1097 he fell sick and died. Just before he died he called his son Kao-tai-ming to him and said: "Because of the great weakness of the Twan family I was elected by the people to rule Nan Chao. Now, after my death do not take the throne but choose a member of the Twan family to succeed me. Do not forget and choose carefully." Kao-tai-ming took an oath to do as his father asked him. Shortly after this Prince Kao-shen-tai died and Kao-tai-ming selected Chen-shwen to succeed him. He was brother to Chen-ming.

1097 A.D. The Later or Second Tali Dynasty.

After Prince Chen-shwen came to the throne he made Kao-tai-ming his Grand Secretary of State and Chief Counsellor. He also made Kao-tai-ming's brother Kao-tai-uen his Premier. He abolished the system of *corvée* which had been in force from the earlier times. He built the city of T'su-hsieng-fu.

In 1104 he sent Kao-tai-uen to the Emperor Tseng-ming with despatches and eighty gold spear heads as a present and mentioned a number of Nan Chao families that he recommended should receive Imperial honours. Burma and two other states sent tribute to Prince Chen-shwen which included white elephants and a large variety of spices.

In 1104 a comet was seen in the west and much sickness followed.

In 1109 he became a Buddhist monk and abdicated in favour of his son Ho-u after a reign of 12 years.

1109 A.D. Prince Ho-u.

In the 7th moon of 1109 all the countries adjacent to the Kingdom of Nan Chao sent tribute to Prince Ho-u comprising gold, silver, precious stones, elephants, a rhinoceros, together with thousands of horses and head of cattle.

In 1111 a serious earthquake destroyed 16 temples. The *Man-tsi* rebelled but were subdued by Kao-tai-ming. In 1116 the King of Burma sent tribute of gold and silver flowers, elephants and a rhinoceros. In 1117 the Emperor Chen-he sent Councillors Cheng and Wang to Yunnan-fu with despatches and friendly messages bestowing an Imperial title on Kao-tai-ming; but he died soon after receiving it and foul play was suspected. In this same year Prince Ho-u sent his son Tsi-tseng with tribute to the Emperor Chen-he who in return bestowed many honourable titles on him.

In the 1st moon of 1119 a comet appeared in the sky. In the 3rd moon of that year the people of Ming-uen-fu in Szu-chuan rebelled and drove back the troops sent to quell them. Then they attacked and captured Yunnan-fu and killed Kao-ming-tsieng who was governor there. During the 5th moon of 1126 there was a transit of Venus across the moon. In the same month a great fire occurred in Yunnan-fu destroying 3,900 houses. A dense fog set in on the 11th day of the 3rd moon of 1147 and continued for 24 days and during this time the sun was never seen once. In Prince Ho-u's old age his son was anxious to rule, various troubles broke out in different parts of the Kingdom; so being tired of reigning he abdicated in favour of his son Chien-shin and became a Buddhist monk after a very useful reign of 39 years.

1148 A.D. Prince Chien-shin.

He appears to have had a very peaceful reign. After ruling for 25 years he became a Buddhist monk and abdicated in favour of his son Ci-shein and sought a pleasant retirement in a monastery.

1173 A.D. Prince Ci-shein.

His reign commenced with much trouble owing to officiousness on the part of his ministers and quarrels between them. In 1195 he repaired the walls of the Hsia and Shan Kwans. He died in the year 1201 having ruled 28 years and was succeeded by his son Ci-hsiang.

1201 A.D. Prince Ci-hsiang.

He set out with an army to subdue the *Man-tsi* but owing to the flooded state of the country was compelled to return. In 1237 he raised Kao-long to the position of Hereditary Prince of Yunnan and gave Kao-kwang the rank of general. During this reign many brilliant men rose to prominence and the administration of Nan Chao was very good. The harvests were good, the people prosperous and peace ruled throughout the kingdom. Towards the end of his life however he wished for retirement and a peaceful end so became a Buddhist monk and abdicated in the year 1239 in favour of his son Hsian-hsin.

1239 A.D. Prince Hsian-hsin.

About this time the Mongol Emperor Hsien-hseng determined to subdue the Kingdom of Nan Chao and bring it completely under his rule. He therefore sent an army to take Tali-fu. In 1245 the Mongol army was nearing Tali under the command of Hsien-hseng's brother Hu-pi-li. Prince Hsian-hsin sent General Kao-he to oppose him near the River of Golden Sand but he was killed in the battle that ensued. The succeeding Emperor Swen-yeh sent an officer to sacrifice to General Kao-he's spirit — a mark of signal honour. Prince Hsian-hsin died in 1252 having reigned 15 years and was succeeded by his son Hsin-ci.

The independence of the Kingdom of Nan Chao was now drawing to a close as the Mongols approached Tali. Kublai Khan's victories in China overthrew the Sung Dynasty and then he started to consolidate China as his empire and after that extended his authority in all directions. The Kingdom of Nan Chao could not withstand his brilliant generals and enormous armies so with the next prince, Prince Hsin-ci, the Kingdom of the Southern Princes at last fell. It was then established under Imperial rule and had no more independent hereditary rulers. It was however not formally annexed to the Chinese Empire and taxed for the Imperial Treasury till the 15th century.

1252 A.D. *Prince Hsin-ci.*

The Mongol Emperor Hsien-tseng sent his brother Hu-pi-li in command of an army assisted by Generals Wu and Ho to attack Nan Chao. They had a most difficult march of 2,000 *li* much of it lying across the mountainous country of Eastern Tibet, across many rivers and marshes. At last after many months the army arrived at the frontiers of Nan Chao but could advance no further owing to the impassable condition of the roads and rivers from continuous rain.

Prince Hu-pi-li then sent three officers to Prince Hsin-ci demanding his submission. Prince Hsin-ci refused and killed the officers who bore the message. He then sent troops to oppose the Mongols but they were defeated and the Mongols took the Shan-kwan. Prince Hsin-ci had hoped that the *Man-tsi* troops would join him at Tali to strengthen his opposition, but they did not arrive; in despair he fled to Yunnan-fu. General Kao-fai-chang with his small force defended the city with great bravery, but he was defeated and killed beneath the Great Tower. With his dying breath he said: "Alas, the House of Twan has come to an end, though members of that House still live. Thus ends the Kingdom of Nan Chao." As he died black clouds gathered and heavy peals of thunder shook the sky. Prince Hu-pi-li heard of this and said: "Behold a loyal and devoted minister has died."

General Kao-fai-chang's widow and two sons were brought before Prince Hu-pi-li in fear and trembling, beseeching him to spare their lives. The Prince was moved with pity and said to the officers who stood around him: "Behold the widow and sons of a most faithful and brave soldier. Take good care of them and when the boys are old enough give them a position in the Government."

The slaughter during the fighting was tremendous, the Nan Chao troops defending themselves with the greatest determination and courage; but superior numbers won the day. Both Chinese and Tai were buried together in a huge grave at the back of the Great Pagoda. It was called forever after "The Myriad Tomb"

and a tablet was erected there commemorating the event. That tablet remains to this day. Every year to this day hundreds of people prostrate themselves before this grave and tablet praying to be cured of sickness. Prince Hu-pi-li then took three cities and the 37 clans of *Man-tsi* submitted to him.

In 1253 Prince Hu-pi-li sent Generals Hu and Ho to capture Yunnan-fu. They did so and at the same time captured Prince Hsin-ci, the last King of Nan Chao. He only ruled for two years and with him the Later Tali Dynasty ended.

There were in all eight kings who ruled for 157 years and the two Tali Dynasties combined had 22 kings ruling for a total of 315 years.

After Prince Hsin-ci's capture the Emperor Hsien-hseng forgave him and gave him a hereditary office in the province but with no power to rule. He placed Tali-fu under Generals Hu and Ho. In 1260 Hsin-ci and his brother started a journey to visit the Mongol Emperor Cheng-teng but Hsin-ci died on the journey having held his hereditary office for 7 years. From this date onwards successive Mongol Emperors of China always appointed members of the Twan family as Hereditary Governors.

At this point ends the history of the *Tai* as a free nation in Southern China. From now onwards for a period of 687 years their history is associated with Siam and the Thai are still free.

Extracts from this paper were delivered at the Siam Society, August 1951, by Luang Suriyabongs Bisuddhi Baedya,