

## NOTES

### *f. A Note on the Reverend Father Savina*

Elsewhere in this number Major Erik Seidenfaden contributes a review of Professor Okada's book on the *Li* tribes of Hainan Island. Major Seidenfaden has also written the following note regarding the Reverend Father Savina who once lived on Hainan Island and wrote among other things a *Monographie de Hainan* :

The late Reverend Father F.M. Savina lived in Hainan for more than four years (1924-1928) and, like Steubel, travelled widely, visiting several of the *Li* tribes. We have not been able to obtain or read Fr. Savina's *Monographie de Hainan*, and the following is mainly based on a review written by the distinguished French orientalist M. Paul Mus.<sup>(1)</sup> Hainan is mentioned by ancient Chinese writers as being peopled by the "Barbarian" *Li* (the "boiled" and the "raw" *Li*). For example Ma Tuan Li in the 13th century A.D. speaks about the tattooed *Li* and the petrified crabs of the island. In the 12th century certain Chinese writers remarked that the Chinese settlers, transplanted among the *Li* of Hainan, were of the worst possible sort. In our days their quality is not too good either. Their communistic *pétroleuses* boast of having set fire to thousands of houses and burned alive an equal number of human beings, according to Fr. Savina writing in 1928. Are they better now ?

In his monograph Fr. Savina supplies much interesting information about the customs and manners of the *Li* tribes. In 1928 the population of Hainan numbered more than two millions divided into three main groups, *viz* : the Chinese *Hok-lo*, one and one-half million; the *Ong Bœor Bae*, a Thai people, 400,000 strong, and the so-called autochthonous *Hiao-ao* or *Day* (plus the *Li*, *Lai* and *Loi*) estimated at about 200,000. Add to these some 50,000 *Mao* or *Miao* people, descendants of soldiers brought from the mainland to the island by the Chinese. The *Hok-lo* occupy the northeastern part and all the coast line, the *Ong Bae* the north-

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(1) *Vide* Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, Vol. XXX, pp. 436-444.

western and the *Li* tribes the central parts of the island, while the *Mao* live in the hills. (Hainan is very hilly; its highest mountain, called The Five Dragon Peaks, reaches an altitude of 1970 metres.) Fr. Savina also mentions some Malay settlements on the coast. (Are they not descendants of former *Cham* colonists?) The Indonesians of Hainan call themselves *Hiao* in the centre and *Dai* in the southern part (*Li* and *Lai* in the southwestern part) and these groups speak different dialects. (This nomenclature for these people is different from that of Steubel.)

Fr. Savina also relates the myth according to which the *Hiao--Dai* are the descendants of a dog and a princess. *Hiao* women still tattoo their faces in memory of their ancestress who did so in order to deceive her son into marrying her after he had unwittingly killed his own father, the dog. As pointed out in the writer's *Un ancêtre de tribu: le chien*' the *Man* or *Yao* possess exactly the same tale which, as Mus says, goes to prove a former near contact of the *Yao* with the *Li* somewhere in South China. A dead *Hiao* is interred in a tree trunk hollowed out like a canoe. It will be remembered that on the famous bronze drums from Dong-son in Annam are seen pictures of the dead being sailed to the happy isles in canoes. The *Hiao* also build their houses on poles in the shape of an upturned boat.

Some persons who wrote about the autochthons of Hainan have given to them a number of various names such as *Lai*, *Le*, *Loi*, *Lao*, *Dlo*, *Li* and many more. In this matter, Fr. Savina, a real polyglot who was able to converse with the natives in their own tongue, seems to be the best guide. Mus says, after a profound examination of the vocabularies prepared by Fr. Savina, that the *Dai* or *Li* language contains many Thai elements While the Chinese are all loans from South Chinese; and adds that more than one-third of the words are of an unknown origin. (Possibly some of the Thai elements are due to the influence of the *Ong Bae* who in an economic sense dominate a large portion of *Die*; the Chinese words may have all come from the *Hok.lo*.) The great mass of words which to Mus present a "mystery" (*Strzoda Dai Li*) must belong to the original language of this people which Paul Benedict

includes in his *Kadai* group.<sup>(2)</sup> According to the researches of Benedict the *Kadai* languages seem to constitute a bridge between the Thai and Indonesian languages.

As regards the name *Dai* it is synonymous with *Tai* or Thai, says Professor Coedès, and it was probably adopted by the *Tai* prior to the separation of the three linguistically and ethnologically closely allied groups of the Thai, *Kadai* and Indonesians somewhere in Yunnan more than 3,000 years ago. Whether *Doi* or *Dioi*, as mentioned by Mus, is a form of *Dai* (which is most likely) we shall not discuss here. *Doi* means a hill in Northern Siamese language; Siam (pronounced Seeam) does mean the Western Hills, and was not Shen-si (Siem-sai) the original country of the Thai?

Fr. Savina has published in the Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient<sup>(3)</sup> a "Lexique *Day* Français", accompanied by a small French-*Day* dictionary as well as a comparative table of the two *Day* dialects, preceded by some remarks on the syntax, grammar and the numerals of the *Day*. A rapid survey of Fr. Savina's dictionaries shows the presence of many Thai words. The dialect as spoken by the *Li* group studied by Prof. Okada seems to differ much from those spoken by the *Day*. The late Father Savina was no doubt one of the foremost linguists of Indochina and South China, and his works on the languages of these parts are generally admitted to be of a superior quality. The dictionary of the Thai *Ong Bae* language, also compiled by Fr. Savina, has not yet been published but, if memory serves right, some Thai *Ong Bae* (what is their true Thai name?) more than twenty years ago visited Bangkok where the late General Prince Kamrob, at that time Director-General of the Police, succeeded with some difficulty in understanding them and conversing with them.

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*January 1952;*

(2) *Vide* P.B. "Thai, *Kadai* and Indonesian, a New Alignment in Southeast Asia" *op cit.*

(3) *Vide* B.E.F.E.O. Vol. XXXI pp. 103-109.

*II. Ethnic Groups of Northern Southeast Asia*

The above work is a gazetteer of the various ethnic groups of the northern parts of Southeast Asia, embracing those peopling Northern Burma, Northern Siam, Northern Indochina and South China. This tribal gazetteer runs to 175 pages in the text, including a very useful name index, and is provided with a large well executed and instructive map where the habitats of the different ethnic groups are marked in colours. Altogether it is a very meritorious piece of work that will fill a gap long felt in the tribal cartography of these regions, a gap which has hitherto made difficult any general survey of the habitats of that variegated multitude of human beings peopling this Southeast Asian Caucasus. The contents of the book were prepared by Mr. William L. Thomas Jr., as Associate Project Director, with the late Prof. John F. Embree as the Project Director, both of the Faculty of the Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University.

In the preface it is said that good source materials on the peoples of mainland Southeast Asia are scarce and often out of date though in the latter case there are some books, such as Davie's "Yunnan", Graham's "Siam, a Handbook", and Dignet's "Les Montagnards du Tonkin" which are still useful. We would add Lajonquière's "Ethnographie du Tonkin Septentrional"; Sir George Scotts' and Hardiman's "Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States" as well as the former's "Burma and Beyond", all because of their detailed descriptions of the various tribal costumes.

The authors say in the preface that the classification of the ethnic groups is primarily based on linguistic affiliation and, in some cases, on other cultural criteria. A linguistic classification is not sufficient for the ultimate definition of any human group unless accompanied by an anthropological one. However, anthropometric measurements of the inhabitants of the areas surveyed have, so far, only been undertaken in a few localities, recently in Tonkin by Dr. Maneffe and Bezacier for instance. Thorough anthropometric measurements of all the ethnic groups included in this gazetteer might well give cause for a somewhat altered classification of them.

Quite a number of people have assisted in assembling the material for the ethnological map, as well as for the gazetteer itself. Among those assisting was Mrs. Allison Butler Mathews, who compiled the material on Thailand and the various other Thai peoples. These data were supplemented by information from several leading authorities with first-hand knowledge of the areas in question, thus in the case of Siam from Mr. Deignan, Dr. Kenneth Wells and the undersigned. Besides this, native informants (Burmese, *Chin*, Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese, some of them studying in the United States of America) have also lent a helping hand in making the information as complete and up-to-date as possible. Both the admirable "Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient" and issues of the Journal of the Siam Society and Journal of the Burma Research Society have of course yielded valuable material for the gazetteer too. The Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient's ethno-linguistic map of French Indochina, as well as that of Assam by J.P. Mills, has been used as a base for the map of the gazetteer. As regards North Burma (the Shan States) and North Thailand no quite reliable maps exist as yet, still by help of local informants it has been possible to complete the map. In the case of South China so far the only good map is the old one of General Davies, and it covers only Yunnan and portions of the adjoining territories.

A praiseworthy step is the effort made to clarify the various tribal names. Much confusion exists here partly because of the various spellings (or mis-spellings) of European writers, partly because of the misnomers given so many tribes by their neighbours. The Chinese are the worst to dub all non-Chinese with the most impolite or even insulting nicknames. Thus the Thai of South China are called *Pai-yi* (barbarians); the *Yao* of Tonkin are called *Man*; the *Mhong* are dubbed *Miao* and so on. The numerous primitive Indonesian or *Môn-Khmer* tribes living in the backlands of Laos and Vietnam are called *Khã* and *Moi* respectively which names mean slaves. The data concerning the various tribes cover the following main topics: location, population, village sites, economy, language (including dialects), religion, contacts and names.

In the preface it is stated expressly that these data are not intended for culture summaries but rather as identifying features. For further data on any group the student is referred to the "Bibliography of the Mainland Southeast Asia", published by the Yale Southeast Asia studies.

The authors state that in general the peoples of the area surveyed fall into a number of major groups, *viz*: 1. "Indonesoid", 2. Mongoloid mountaineers, 3. Various major national groups speaking tonal languages, such as Burmese, Thai, Vietnamese and Yunnan Chinese. As regards group 1, "the Indonesoid", this seems a somewhat vague term. For example, while some, like the *Müong*, the proto-Vietnamese of Thanh-hoa, as well as some of the eastern *Moi* (*Rhade*, etc.) are Indonesians, other *Moi* or *Khã* in this jungle-covered Annamite Cordillera land are *Môn-Khmer* (the western and southern groups). The Indonesians most probably preceded the *Môn-Khmer*; however, the latter were themselves preceded by several waves of Negritos, Melanesians and Australoids (Weddids too) if one is to judge from the skeletal remains found by Mansui and Mille. Colani in the limestone caves in the North Annam.

The gazetteer states, "In some areas *Khã* are simply hill people of Thai culture and ethnic affiliation." Do the authors have in mind the Thai *Loi* or Kengtung? These Thai *Loi* have adopted Thai culture and Buddhism but ethnically they are *Môn-Khmer*. A similar change has made the *Lawa* of North Siam into Thai to the extent that they have forgotten their mother tongue.

If Paul Benedict's theory of a Thai, *Kadai* and Indonesian alignment<sup>(1)</sup> should be accepted, and much speaks in its favour, the Thai would, once and for all, be detached from any Sino-Tibetan-Burmese tonal and monosyllabic linguistic groups. (Was *Tai* not originally non-tonic and polysyllabic?) Examination of the blood groups both Thai and the Vietnamese (so far only in Tongkin) has shown that they are nearer to Indonesian than to the Mongoloids.

(1) *Vide* P. Benedict, "Thai, *Kadai* and Indonesian, a new Alignment in Southeast Asia", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 44, 1942.

However, no human groups of "pure" blood exist. As the Swedish anthropologist Dr. Rolf Nordenstreng of Upsala said at the meeting of the 2nd International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Copenhagen (August, 1938): "Man is of many stemmed origin and cross-bred since the oldest times... There are no originally pure races nor have there ever been." In his valuable work "*Lamet, Hill Peasants in French Indochina*" Dr. Izikowitz says that the *Lamet* resemble the Malay type, and that their resemblance to several Filipino tribes in Luzon is striking but also that there are Weddid types with fine features, large eyes and wavy hair among them. Still the *Lamet* speak a *Môn-Khmer* tongue (*Wa-Palaung*). One should, however, think that in their veins flows also blood of the *Môn-Khmer* since these (coming from India) swept over the Indonesian people of Further India less than 2,000 years before Christ. As regards the information concerning the ethnic groups of the four geographical sections into which the gazetteer is divided, this seems to be uniformly good and reliable with some exceptions which we shall treat below.

P. 12: the *Akha* or *Kô* at Phongsaly in the kingdom of Laos are called *Phu Noi* (small people) but dress and live like the other *Akha*.

P. 16: the *Chin*. The late Mr. F.H. Giles (whose Siamese title was Phya Indra Montri), from his long years of service in Burma knew the *Chin* well and used to say that *Chin* is a Burmese mis-pronunciation, their proper name being *Chang*.<sup>(2)</sup>

P. 27: the *Hpon* in the upper defile of the Irrawadi river. It is curious that the Thai elephant hunters of Chaiyaphum province in Northeast Siam are also called so. Could the explanation be that the *Hpon* of Burma received this name from the Shans (*Thai-Yai*) when these ruled Burma from 1287 to 1531?

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(2) *Vide* the writer's review of Sir George Scott's "Burma and Beyond", Journal of the Siam Society. Vol. XXIX, Part 1, p. 147.

- P. 42: the domestic bison (*bos frontalis*), called *mithan*, is not a bison but a *gaur*. In the whole of Asia bison are only found in the Caucasus.
- P. 50: economy of the Shans. The word *hai* (for wood clearing cultures) is synonymous with *vai* in Siamese, and does not mean "to cry" (*ronghai* in Siamese). The words for "to cry" and for cultivated wood clearing are spelt differently and pronounced with different tones. Thus a wood clearing is ໙<sup>໓</sup> (Siam ໙<sup>໓</sup>), while for crying it is ໙<sup>໔</sup>.
- P. 52: the meaning of the word *Tai* or Thai. I do not think that *Tai* is derived from the Chinese *T'a*=Great but from *Dai* (in *Kadai*) which name Coedès says is synonymous with *Tai* and Thai.<sup>(3)</sup> It seems to mean "the Free".
- P. 63: French Roman Catholic Mission. Among the Lao of Northeast Siam there are about 25,000 converts. Altogether there should be about a hundred thousand Christians in Siam (80,000 Catholics and 20,000 Protestants) of which, however, only half are Thai, the remainder being Chinese and Vietnamese.
- P. 70: the *Chaobon* or *Nia-kuol* are not living in the southeastern but in the western and southwestern section of the Khorat plateau.
- P. 80 *Lawù*: their proper name, and that by which they call themselves, is *Lavüa*. The *Chaobon* or *Nia-kuol* do not call themselves *Lawù* which name was given them officially, and wrongly, by the Government authorities.
- P. 87, *Meo*: The late Reverend Father Savina, an excellent connoisseur of their language and their culture, says that the *Meo* tribes in Upper Laos, as known personally

(3) Vide G. Coedès "Les langues de l'Indochine", 1948.



to him, possess certain Old Testament beliefs and that in fact they are Monotheists. This is denied by Bernatzik who, however, only knows the *Meo* of North-eastern Siam.

P. 92, Anonymous "Report of the Botanical Section of the Ministry of Commerce": the author is the late Dr. A. F.G. Kerr.

P. 101, *Hakka*: These people were originally Thai though they deny it. There are still some Thai-speaking *Hakka* in Northeastern Kwangtung.

P. 102, *Khã (Moi)*: to include the *Phu Noi* into the *Khã* group is wrong as the *Phu Noi* are Mongol *Akha* or *Kô*.

P. 104: to the bibliography on this page should now be added Izikowitz's "*Lumet*, Hill Peasants in French Indochina."

P. 107, second line from the bottom: Read Sip Song Panna for Sip Long Panna.

P. 111: to the bibliography should be added E. Seidenfaden "Un ancêtre de tribu: le chien", Bulletin de l'Institut Indochinois pour l'étude de l'homme, Vol. VI.

P. 116, Laotian Thai: This paragraph needs some clarification. The *Lü* are domiciled at the upper course of Nam U and in the former principality of Mang Sing. The Thai-(or Lao)-*Yuan* inhabit Northern Siam with some communities in Kengtung and in the former district of Houei Sai. The Thai, or Lao, around Luang Phrabang are not *Yuan* but so-called Lao *Sau Sau-Chava*, one of Luang Phrabang's old names.

In Siamese Laos, i.e. the provinces of Nakhon Phanom and Sakon Nakhon, there is a considerable population of *Nho* or *Yô Thai*.

The name of the capital of the new Kingdom of Laos should be spelt Wiengchan (dr) and not as the French do (Vientiane).

- P. 116: The Eastern Lao characters are called *doa tham* and are derived, like the Siamese, from the old Khmer-Indian alphabet while those of the *Yuan*, at first identical with the Sukhothai script of famous King Ramakhamheng, are derived from the Burmese (really *Môn*) cursive letters.
- P. 177: *Khôm* (not *Kawn*) are the *Khmer* letters used in the litanies (written on strips of palm leaves) sung by the Siamese monks.
- P. 120: Lao *phung khao* do tattoo their thighs but have white bellies. *Lu, Lou*. The name of this Thai people should be pronounced *Lü* or *Lou*.
- P. 121, Thai *Nüa*: the second word does not mean *superior* but *northern* Thai. *Yuan, Yuen, Yun, Eun, Phu Eun*: the latter two words have nothing to do with the Thai *Yuan* but are synonymous with *Phuan* or *Phuen*, the inhabitants of Chieng Kwang (wrongly called *Tranh-ninh*), a province of the Kingdom of Laos.
- P. 123, Tribal *Tai*: the name of the white *Tai* chief was Deo-van-tri, not Dieu-van-tri. The Thai of Tongkin were, prior to the communist rebellion, united in a Federated Thai State with their national flag and national hymn.
- P. 128, The Vietnamese: They are probably *au fond* Indonesians (blood groups); their language has in part *Môn-Khmer* roots, and its syntax and tonal system is Thai-influenced. There are many Chinese loan words in it too.

P. 156, *Tai Chung-chia* : the latter word is Chinese. These *Tai* call themselves *Dioy* or *Dioi*, a variant of *Dai*. *Tai Chawng* seems to be identical with *Chung-chia*, while *Tai Yoy* is a variant of *Dioi*.

That the above corrections and additions should be made does not of course detract from the general value of this extremely useful work which should be found on the book shelves of every student of any of the ethnic groups of Northern or Southern Southeast Asia. Its appearance means a real step forward in our approach to a deepened insight in to the origins, habitats, languages and cultures of these fascinating peoples.

It might be a good idea now to re-arrange the information given here and master the ethnic groups not in geographical order but according to the ethnic relations, and to include the groups of Southern Southeast Asia too. May one hope to see such a work carried out by that band of enthusiastic and diligent collaborators who so successfully have produced the survey described here!

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*February 1952.*

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