

REVIEW ARTICLE

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The Lua of Nan Province.

CHOLTHIRA SATYAWADHNA.
Bangkok: Muang Boran Publishing Co.,
1987.

This book is about the Lua, or Tin, a little-known hilltribe located in the northern part of Nan Province. The book is basically an anthropological description of six Lua villages located in Pua and Thung Chang Districts; however, a total of 23 Lua villages was surveyed. Data collection and surveying were done during the years 1976-1980, and again in 1986.

The book is well written; it is สนุก *sanuk* (fun) to read. Technical words and complicated grammatical patterns are kept to a minimum. The sentences and descriptions of Lua life and culture are straightforward. The book is professionally published with a good cover and clear photographs.

In addition to anthropology, the author also draws upon the disciplines of economics, sociology, linguistics and history to describe the Lua of Nan Province. In short, Ms. Cholthira has employed an interdisciplinary approach in her research and writing on Lua culture. This approach allows Ms. Cholthira to range far and wide in telling us about the Lua and is in turn a major reason why it is an interesting book to read. However, this strength places great demands on an author's ability. Unfor-

tunately, in this work, the combination of these various disciplines to describe the Lua has led to numerous mistakes in data collection (facts), interpretation and methodology.

History vs Anthropology

The disciplines of History and Anthropology have been "on-again, off-again" partners in describing the human situation in this world. During the 1800s scholars combined the two in constructing broad evolutionary schemes or theories depicting how the human race evolved from primitive or savage roots to the great civilizations of ancient Greece and modern Europe. However, a reaction against such schemes soon set in. As one scholar stated it, such schemes showed more about the mind of the theorists than of what actually happened in the history of mankind.

Yet, historical considerations in anthropological descriptions were not dead. Scholars came up with the idea of diffusion; i.e. when certain items of either material or mental culture were found to be similar from one society to another, the similarities were explained as diffusion from one society (as source or donor) to other societies (the recipients). Sometimes this process was described from the recipients' viewpoint: a cultural trait or material item was borrowed from another society. In either event, this process was described as having taken place over a period of time. It was, in other words, a way of keeping both history and anthropology together in describing the human condition.

Diffusion and borrowing likewise declined in popularity in anthropological descriptions. In their place came function, more precisely structure and function. Anthropologists now described the human situation on earth in terms of function, i.e. what function or functions did an item or structure perform in society and how did such help maintain society as a social system.

Ideas of diffusion and cultural borrowing, alongside of functional descriptions, have survived in anthropology while evolutionary theories (at least those of the 19th century type) have been rejected if not discredited in the social sciences. Diffusion and borrowing, especially of technology plus the new forms of behavior and thinking that follow, are clearly observable in today's world. We can also observe societies developing in economics and government as well as in other areas. But it is still an open question whether such diffusion and development, while obviously historical in nature, are evolutionary (civilizing, integrative, progressive) in character, or whether they are ultimately disintegrative and destructive to the recipient societies involved.

In my opinion the greatest weakness of Ms. Cholthira's book is the misuse of the historical approach in describing anthropologically the Lua of Nan Province. The major reason is that Ms. Cholthira draws too much from the evolutionary side of the historical approach and relies too little on diffusion and borrowing (with no mention whatsoever of function) in her description. That is, for aspects of Lua

culture and society that she describes, she often employs an outdated interpretation of historical development and change (often from a deep time frame of hundreds of years) from a common source. It would have been much better, as I shall point out in certain examples, to have described these aspects in terms of diffusion and borrowing. Of course, there is no discussion of what functions such aspects perform in Lua culture and society.

The most outstanding example of what I am talking about is found in Ms. Cholthira's classification of Lua society. Lua society is matrilineal in determining descent of its members. Mr. Cholthira declares,

ตามหลักพัฒนาการสังคม ตามแนว
ทัศนธาตุนิยมประวัติศาสตร์สังคม
บรรพกาลมาตาธิปไตย (matriarchal
primitive society) เป็นขั้นพัฒนาการ
ของสังคมมนุษย์ช่วงต้น

According to the principle of social development, [plus] according to the thinking in materialist history, matriarchal primitive society is the initial stage in human social development. (p. 58)

Ms. Cholthira goes on to outline step by step human social development from matriarchal primitive society to the next stage of patriarchal primitive society, then to the next stage of control by some over the labor of the majority, which in turn developed warfare, which led to slavery, which finally developed into private ownership of land and social stratification in society. Ms. Cholthira next applies all of this to the Lua of Nan Province by saying that Lua society exhibits traces of each of these stages of human development. This is especially true, she says, in the area of the Lua matrilineal descent which shows traces of matriarchal primitive society อย่างชัดเจน very clearly. Other aspects of Lua society, such as ทาษ or slaves and private ownership of fishing areas and dryland rice fields,

ก็แสดงวิวัฒนาการของสังคมชรมกรกสิกรรม
ยุคต้น ซึ่งพัฒนาเป็นสังคมศักดินาในขั้น
หลัง

also show traces of being a society of farming communities from a former era, which afterwards developed into feudal society. (p. 59)

There are two problems with applying the above evolutionary scheme to the Lua of Nan Province. First, although Ms. Cholthira cites no scholar or authority for the above scheme of social development, it is most evident that it came out of the writings of Lewis Henry Morgan, who proposed such a scheme in 1877 in his book *Ancient Society*. Morgan's views of evolutionary development have long been rejected in anthropology (cf Ralph L. Beals et al 1977). They were rejected because a) such stage-by-stage development could not be independently verified because b) no society investigated by anthropologists ever exhibited only and purely just the stage predicted by the theory. Every society investigated turned out to contain a mixture of all stages. In other words, there was and is no way of independently stating which step or stage is more primitive and which is more advanced or later.

This leads to the second problem with Ms. Cholthira's evolutionary description. That is, as she admits, Lua society today is a mixture of these various stages of human development or evolution. However, since there is no way of knowing or proving which aspect of Lua society may be primitive or which evolved later, it is impossible to try to break up Lua society into components that may be classified as emerging earlier or later in the evolution of Lua society. This is true of the matrilineal descent pattern found among the Lua. There is no way of proving that such is more primitive than the patrilineal descent pattern found among the Hmong of Thailand. Unless, of course, one adopts a male chauvinist view of the world (as was prevalent in Morgan's time) claiming that female descent is

somehow more primitive while male descent represents a higher and more civilized development among the human race!

In this regard, I was particularly distressed by Ms. Cholthira's use of the word บรรพกาล "primitive" in her description of the Lua ("primitive" referring to a previous, perhaps a less complicated time). This is an unacceptable term for a current anthropological description of any ethnic group. Culturally primitive can only mean "uncivilized," barbaric, etc. Of course, the Lua are not primitive in this sense. Her using the word บรรพกาล "primitive," however, leaves the impression that the Lua are uncivilized.

Instead of overrelying on an outdated theory, Ms. Cholthira should have made more use of the other disciplines mentioned in her book. One such discipline is economics, which would have given a better balance to her research and interpretation of her data. However, this is not pursued in that she does not give a good survey of the economics of Lua life. Much more along this line could have been said.

There are other weaknesses. For example, she makes comparisons between the Lua and the indigenous peoples of Africa, as well as between the Lua, Wa, Lahu, Karen and the Japanese. The latter is particularly problematic as it is a comparison between the type of housing known as กาล *kalae* which is found among the Lua, Wa (of China), Lawa, Lahu, Karen and the Japanese. Because of this she goes on to quote approvingly from a Japanese source that the *kalae* house

พิสูจน์ว่า ชนเผ่าวานั้น เป็นบรรพบุรุษ
ของชาติญี่ปุ่น

proves that the Wa people are the ancestors of the Japanese. (p. 94)

There are two difficulties here. First even if it is true that there are similarities, as in the case with Africa if not also with Japan, it is only a coincidence and is of no importance except for the curious. In other words, it adds nothing to our

knowledge about the Lua. Second, by again misusing the historical method at this point, it led her to posit a wrong relationship, that of one (the Wa) being the ancestors of the other (Japanese). In other words, such comparisons are unproductive if not misleading to readers, deceiving them to think that there is a historical connection when there is none.

Again, in a case where housing patterns are compared, it is much better to talk in terms of cultural diffusion of such patterns or similarities than in terms of historical or biological relationship. Anthropologically it is no great mystery that the *kalae* housing pattern is found in a wide area over Asia. For one thing, there is only a limited number of ways people can build a house out of bamboo and wooden poles. Because of this it is entirely possible these various ethnic groups could have independently invented the *kalae* pattern and what the outside investigator is discovering is nothing more than a convergence of human thinking and skill in building a bamboo house with thatch roofing. Or, the *kalae* pattern could have been invented in one or even two groups and from there it could have diffused to surrounding groups. Ethnic groups in Asia have been and are still in constant contact with each other. As a result cultural traits, skills, objects, etc. get borrowed and used first by one group then by another. It is no surprise, then, to find similarities throughout the area.

For example, there are a number of similarities in culture between the Lawa and the Lua. Ms. Cholthira has cited these as evidence of a common historical heritage between the Lawa and the Lua. However, this is not supported by any hard evidence such as should be found in historical records and linguistics. Better explanations of these similarities are that they are the result of cultural diffusion, or that they are the result of borrowing from one group to another. Similarities that are currently found among the Lua, Lawa and even the surrounding Thai are much more likely to be due to a diffusion of areal features among all groups involved than to inheritance from a common source.

Inadequate Research

Another weakness of Ms Cholthira's book is that she has not done adequate research in order to back up her many claims regarding the Lua of Nan province. For example, the author aligns the Lua of Nan Province too closely with the Lawa, who live in other parts of northern Thailand and who figure prominently in Thai historical records. That the Lua and Lawa are related is not in dispute. However, these early historical records do not and cannot show this. Only linguistic evidence can show this, but Ms. Cholthira does not employ this line of evidence. If she had employed linguistic comparisons of the Lua and Lawa languages, moreover, she would probably have seen that, even in historical times, the two were still distinct groups, i.e. when the Lawa are referred to in northern Thai historical records, the Lua were already a separate linguistic and cultural group and therefore could not have been included with the Lawa.

In reading through this book I was surprised to find that Ms. Cholthira apparently consulted only a few sources—and most of these are by now out-of-date—while she was doing her field work and writing her book on the Lua. Evidently she either overlooked or failed to consult a great number of other articles and monographs that have more recently been written and published on the Lua (Tin, Mal, Prai). For example, only one of my publications (David Filbeck 1976a) was cited in her book. There is no evidence that she consulted any of my other numerous publications (see references below) or that she did any research at the Tribal Research Institute at Chiang Mai University, where much of this material has been deposited along with the research that others have conducted on the Lua. If she had consulted these sources—and, more importantly, built on them—she would have been spared from many of the mistakes she made in her research and interpretation.

In comparing Ms. Cholthira's book with my knowledge of the Lua in Nan Province I find that she did not

adequately survey all the Lua. For example, in her list of 50 Lua villages, she failed to mention several additional villages located in Chiang Klang District, including the village of Pha Nam Yoy where I have done much of my research and on which I have written much. Another example of inadequate research is her listing of บ้านสกาดใต้ (Southern Skat village located in Pua District) as a Lua village. This village is a Northern Thai (Yuan) village—indeed it may never have been a Lua village, for its inhabitants have spoken the Northern Thai language for many generations. It should not be included in a list of Lua villages. Still a third example is the statement that she considers only the 23 Lua villages which she surveyed as "ลัวแท้" (True Lua) while the remaining 27 other villages (in her list above) :

พูด (ภาษา) ค่อนข้างทางขมุมากกว่า

speak [a language] much more like Khamu (language). (p. 27)

This statement, unfortunately, is grossly in error. It shows that she did not truly compare her linguistic data from these villages with the Khamu language to see if her statement is true. Moreover, if she had consulted my own Ph. D. research (David Filbeck 1971, 1978), she would have seen that the village of Ban Kwet in Chiang Klang District linguistically contains the oldest forms of the Lua language and dialects and on this basis should be considered the "truest" Lua of all.

The inadequate research mentioned above led her into making a number of incorrect generalizations regarding all the Lua when in fact she should have restricted them to Lua life and culture in only the six villages she studied in depth. Unfortunately I too have in my earlier years been guilty of engaging in generalizing from my experience in the village of Pha Nam Yoy to all the other Lua of Nan Province (cf David Filbeck 1973). But the Lua are not a homogeneous people, whether culturally or linguistically (David Filbeck 1987). In Thailand they are divided into two main groups, the Prai and the Mal. The

Prai are further divided into an "R" dialect and a "Y" dialect (e.g. the Prai and the Pyai). It appears that the "R" dialect-speaking people have retained many traditional customs while the "Y" speaking people have dispensed with the same customs. The Mal are also divided into three groups. In other words, generalizations about these groups and sub-groups should be avoided until each has been investigated separately to see what unique linguistic and cultural patterns each exhibits. Only then is it permissible to make generalizations about the Lua.

Parts I and II: Some Specifics

The book *ลัวะเมืองน่าน The Lua of Nan Province* is divided into four parts or sections containing a total of 18 chapters plus introductions and final remarks. For this section of my review I focus on some specific weaknesses and mistakes found in the chapters of Parts I and II. Part I is titled *ลัวะวันนี้* "The Lua Today," which gives an overview of the Lua in Nan Province, and Part II is titled *มรดกวัฒนธรรมลัวะ* "Cultural Inheritance of the Lua," which details from a historical perspective the culture of the Lua people.

The seven chapters of Part I are titled:

1. ชนกลุ่มน้อยในประเทศไทย "Minority Groups in Thailand" (an overview of the hilltribal groups, their populations and location in Thai provinces).
2. ถิ่น ลัวะ มาล ไพร คือใครแน่ "The Tin, Lua, Mal, Prai: Who Are They?" (a survey of the Lua and the ethnic names by which they are known).
3. หมู่บ้านลัวะบนภูตอยเมืองน่าน "Lua Villages on the Mountains of Nan Province" (a list and discussion of villages).
4. แบบวิถีการผลิตของสังคมลัวะเมืองน่าน "Production Patterns of Lua Society in Nan Province" (a brief description of the dry rice agriculture of the Lua).
5. โครงสร้างทางชนชั้นของสังคมลัวะเมืองน่าน "Social Class Structure in Lua Soci-

ety of Nan Province" (a characterization of Lua village society).

6. สถานภาพของหญิงลัวะ "The Status of Women Among the Lua" (a description and discussion of the relatively independent status that women enjoy in Lua Society).

7. ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างชุมชนลัวะกับสังคมแวดล้อม "Relationships Between the Lua and Surrounding Societies" (an overview of the social relationships between the Lua and the Northern Thai, Hmong and Thai peoples).

The first three chapters of Part I contain good information on the Lua with the exception of those weaknesses and errors noted in the previous sections of this review. Chapter 4 on production is an adequate treatment on dry rice cultivation among the Lua; however, it is lacking in that it does not discuss other means of producing wealth and income. For example, this chapter, as well as all the book, makes no mention of the production of *เมี่ยง miang* "pickled tea leaves," which is a major source of income in several Lua villages. In fact, the Lua are major suppliers of *miang* in the northeast section of Nan Province. Also there is no mention of young Lua men going to work in the corn fields of Phitsanuloke and Petchabun Provinces for a year in order to "get a stake" before marriage. The Lua also raise pigs, cows (วัว) and water buffalo (ควาย), which may be sold or bartered for other goods. Water buffalo may also be rented out to lowlanders during paddy plowing time, thus providing extra sources of income.

Chapter 5 is an interesting discussion of orphans in Lua village society. However unless the reader is well acquainted with Lua society in general, he or she may be left with the impression that all Lua villages contain a great number of orphans. While I have seen the condition that Ms. Cholthira describes, it seems not to be as common as this chapter indicates. My guess would be that the orphan condition she describes is valid mainly for the villages where her research was conducted. It

would still be an open question how widespread this condition is among the Lua.

Another interesting discussion in Chapter 5 is her emphasis on gourds in Lua village society. Again, however, her discussion leaves the impression that the Lua place a great deal of significance on gourds in their life and culture. Ms. Cholthira writes,

ชาวลัวะมีความรักหวงแหน "น้ำเต้า" ที่บรรจุน้ำไว้ในชีวิตประจำวัน ทั้งในครัวเรือนและยามไปไร่เป็นอย่างยิ่ง

The Lua have a devotion for the "gourds" which contain their daily supply of water, a devotion found both in their homes and especially on the way to their dryland rice fields. (p. 41)

I have not observed this ความรักหวงแหน or devotion for gourds among the Lua. Of course; it could be true for those villages where Ms. Cholthira did research and which I have never visited. However, my feeling is otherwise. That is, gourds are not objects of significance or devotion among the Lua; rather, they are convenient and quite inexpensive as containers of water. This feeling, furthermore, is reinforced by the picture chosen for the front cover of her book. It is a picture of a young Lua lady carrying a pack basket full of gourds, but in her right hand she is also holding a plastic oil "gallon" (it looks to be carrying the Esso brand). In other words, if gourds are as significant as she states, then why the gallon? If they are significant, then she overlooked an even more significant change in Lua culture as exhibited in this cover picture. Factually, however, aside from any imputed significance, these plastic oil containers are becoming popular among all the Lua in Nan Province. Indeed, they are rapidly replacing gourds and bamboo as containers of water because they are not only inexpensive but are also much more durable.

Still another oversight in Chapter 5 is the failure to mention the role and power of the headman in Lua village society. In this chapter Ms. Cholthira rightly discusses the power and influ-

ence that the village หมอผี "shaman" has in each Lua village. But from my observation the village headman has a similar amount of power and influence (cf David Filbeck 1973, forthcoming).

Chapter 6 in Part I is a delightful chapter on the role and independence of women in Lua village society. Ms. Cholthira is to be commended for discovering this and bringing it to the attention of the outside world. I have often observed this independent status of Lua women myself, and have marveled at it as Ms. Cholthira did. Yet, she probably overstated herself when she wrote that

อำนาจและบทบาทของผู้หญิงจึงมีเหนือกว่าผู้ชาย

The power and role of women are therefore greater than those of the men. (p. 57)

There is also no comparable discussion regarding men's role in Lua village society. Men also have power, but in different areas. Generally men deal with village-level decisions while women make decisions in the household.

Part II, which details cultural aspects of the Lua, contains five chapters (again numbered from one to five):

1. โลกทัศน์ชาวลัวะและพิธีกรรมเนื่องด้วยการผลิต "Worldview of the Lua and Rituals Due to Production Activities" (an overview of the two main traditions among the Lua, the Red Flower Tradition and the Salote Tradition).
2. พิธีกรรมเนื่องด้วยวงจรชีวิต "Rituals Due To Life Cycle" (an overview of rituals conducted during birth, marriage, and death).
3. ฟอสซิลทางวัฒนธรรม "Cultural Fossil" (a discussion of housing architecture and activities around the Lua household).
4. ลัวะ...ผู้ข้าน้อย ต้อยต่ำ "The Lua... Insignificant and Downtrodden!" (an overview of Lua folklore showing the low self-esteem of the Lua).
5. ภูมิปัญญาพื้นบ้านลัวะ "Conventional Wisdom of the Lua" (an overview of more Lua folklore which shows Lua conventional wisdom).

Chapter 1 in this section discusses the two main traditions among the Lua, the Red Flower and the Salote Traditions. The discussions, however, are quite brief. These two traditions are rich in detail, ceremony and meaning. They deserve to be described in detail (for the Salote Tradition, see David Filbeck 1973, forthcoming). Ms. Cholthira, in her discussion, often interjects her own interpretation to tell us the meaning of these two traditions. There is not much reporting on the meanings that the Lua themselves give to these traditions. Reporting on these meanings and interpretations would give us not only a description of the traditions but also a description of Lua cognition or way of thinking as they live in this world.

In discussing these two traditions Ms. Cholthira committed a grievous oversight. She failed to include any discussion of *ขวัญ* *khwǎn* "soul, life essence" in describing either the Red Flower or Salote Tradition. The *khwǎn* "soul" of rice, after all, is what the Salote Tradition is all about. While *khwǎn* may not be as crucial in the Red Flower Tradition, it is still important to those Lua who hold to this tradition as their rice is growing in the field.

It is to Ms. Cholthira's credit that in Chapter 1 she also discusses a type of musical instrument that apparently is unique to the Lua. The word in the Mal dialect (which I know the best) for this instrument is *pih*. A *pih* musical instrument is composed of two or three sections of bamboo. Small bamboo gives a higher pitch while large bamboo gives a bass pitch. These are then struck by a stick to produce a sound (see David Filbeck forthcoming for more details). The Mal state that the *pih* was given to them by พระเจ้า *phacao*, either God or King (it is not quite clear which is meant or known among the Mal), to use in feasting the Rice Soul during the Salote festival.

Chapter 2, a description of the life cycle among the Lua, however, contains a useless discussion on a false etymology. In this chapter Ms. Cholthira claims that the Lua expression *khwan bao*, which means "bridegroom, groom," is derived

etymologically from *ขวัญบ่าว* *khwǎn bàao*, which is a compound of the Thai words for "soul" and "young male person" respectively. While I am not sure if this compound would have any meaning in Thai, I doubt that it would mean bridegroom. The linguistic fact of the matter is this, however. The Lua word *khwan* is a true Mon-Khmer word meaning "child, son, daughter" and is equivalent to the Thai ลูก *luuk* of the same meanings. The word or its cognates are found in numerous Mon-Khmer languages ranging from northeast India to Burma, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. The other word in this Lua expression, *bao*, is a loanword from Thai, the word บ่าว *bàao*. It is unfortunate that this discussion was included in this book, for it could disseminate false information to a wide range of readers.

Chapter 3 contains another unfortunate word used to describe Lua culture. It is the word ฟอสซิล, which is borrowed from the English word "fossil." The choice of this word is probably meant to convey the idea that the Lua have retained from former times a number of things which are currently used in their culture. However, the *impression* obtained from reading this word in this context is something else. It implies that Lua culture is "fossilized," dead or dying, etc. Lua culture is far from dead. It is alive and changing to the demands of our current age. In my opinion, this word should not be used in an anthropological description such as this book.

Chapters 4 and 5 are about folklore among the Lua. They are delightful to read and Ms. Cholthira is to be commended for including them. There is, however, one interpretation regarding the Lua, and which is contained in Chapter 5, that is wrong. That is the conclusion, as based on the Lua language, on how far the Lua are able to count.

ลัวะที่นี้ถ้าพิจารณาจากการรู้จัก "ตัวเลข" จะเห็นได้ชัดว่า มีระดับวัฒนธรรมต่ำมาก ดังปรากฏว่า นับเลขแบบลัวะเพียง มิ-เบ็ยะ-แพะ (๑-๒-๓) และนับได้แต่วัน นับเดือนนับปีไม่เป็น

The Lua here, if considered from what we know about their "numbers," as can clearly be seen, have a level of culture that is very low. This can be demonstrated in that they are able to count only 1-2-3, and to count days. They are unable to count months and years. (p. 110)

This quote, if left unqualified, is wrong. It is true that the Lua language contain numerals only to three (or four in the case of the Mal dialect). But this means that Lua can count to three (or four) in *Lua only*. When they want to count higher they do one of two things: They either interject Thai numerals into their Lua speech, or just switch languages and speak Northern Thai only. The Lua are quite capable of counting as high and as long as anyone. The way it is done is by speaking Thai!

The Lua Language

Part III, on the Lua Language, is in my estimation the worst researched section of the whole book. Part III contains two chapters:

1. เสียงและระบบเสียงภาษาลัวะเมืองน่าน "Sounds and Sound System of the Lua Language in Nan Province" (an overview of the sounds, types of sounds and syllable structure of the Lua language).

2. ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างภาษาลัวะกับภาษาไทย "Relationships Between the Lua and Thai Languages" (a description of linguistic contact between the Thai and Lua languages).

There are several shortcomings in Ms. Cholthira's linguistic description of Lua. First of all, she confines her description to only the Prai branch of the Lua language; no data from the Mal branch is included. She implies, however, that her data represent the *total* Lua language. Next, she confuses and mixes two clearly distinct dialects of Prai in her linguistic description. Her data include examples from both the "R" dialect and the "Y" dialect of Prai.

Now it is a cardinal principle of Lua or Tin linguistics that the sounds /r/ and /y/ when pronounced *before* a vowel are mutually exclusive, i.e. if a dialect pronounces /r/ in this environment, /y/ is not pronounced; in fact, no /y/ will occur before a vowel in such a dialect (loanwords excepted). The converse is also true: a dialect that pronounces /y/ before a vowel will not pronounce /r/; in fact, such a dialect will not have an /r/ sound at all. (These linguistic facts have long been known, being first published in David Filbeck 1976b.)

Thirdly, her phonetic transcriptions of Lua words are often confusing and in many cases do not conform to what is known and has been published regarding the Lua language and dialects. Because of this, unfortunately, her data make no real contribution to the study of Lua linguistics. Some examples of what I am saying are the following:

/dy/ in /dyua/ "นิทาน story, legend" is not a known consonant cluster in Lua. This word was probably misheard for the Pyai word /ñcuah/ นัจวห "to tell."

/gŋ/ in /gŋiim/ "ลม wind" is another unknown cluster and phonologically is a highly unlikely consonant cluster. Yet the word is probably a cognant to the Mal word /ŋkiij/ "wind"

/-ñc/ in /graañc/ "อาย shy" is unlikely as well. The Mal cognant to this word is /kraañ/ "shy."

/-ll/ In /toll/ "คอ throat" is a sound difficult to figure out. From her description it is probably the same as [-dl] (as in "middle"); but then all final /-l/' s in Tin are pronounced this way.

/-lr/ in /phalr/ "ลูกเห็บ a type of mushroom" is phonetically unlikely. For the Prai dialect, from which this comes, it must be either a final /-l/ or /-r/.

/sl/ in /sleh/ "แน่แท้ true truly" is probably misheard from the Prai word /sale?/. It was probably pronounced so fast that the first syllable was not caught by the ear. /sl/ is not a valid consonant cluster for Tin.

/-wl/ in /kauwl dak/ "ต้นขา (beginning of) leg, hip, thigh" is impossible for me to figure out, unless it is from /kao ntak/ "hip, thigh."

/yw/ in /ywaal ʔck/ "รางน้ำ water trough" is unknown in my data on Tin dialects.

Ms. Cholthira's discussion on Lua syntax is too scanty. In one textual example, the one about premarital instuction to a bride and groom, the text is so short it provides no useful examples of Lua syntactical patterns, plus the text as given contains too many Thai loanwords to qualify as a source for Lua syntax.

The second chapter of Part III is very problematic because it claims a more ancient contact between Thai and Lua than is warranted, and because the evidence put forward to support this contact is misleading if not erroneous. The evidence Ms. Cholthira gives for this ancient contact is the many Thai loanwords found in everyday Lua speech.

การใช้คำประเทพท่อย่างสนทสนมกลมกลืนในภาษาพูดลัวะในชีวิตประจำวัน แสดงว่าถ้าเป็นคำยืมก็ต้องเป็นคำยืมที่ยืมมานานแล้ว อาจจะมีถึงหลายร้อยปี หรือ หนึ่งพันปีขึ้นไป

Using words of this category, which are now an integral part of everyday Lua speech, shows that since they are loanwords they must be loan words of long standing, for as long as several hundred years or even a thousand or more years. (p. 136)

Unfortunately, the Lua language, or dialects as we know them today, in all probability did not exist 500 years ago, let alone 1000 years ago. Lua was proba-

bly beginning its emergence as a separate language from a Proto-Khamu-Tin base some 300 to 600 years ago, and 1000 or more years ago Proto-Khamu-Tin was probably still a part of Proto-Khamuic (cf David Filbeck 1971, 1978). In other words, contact between Thai and Lua could have occurred, resulting in words being borrowed from Thai by the Lua, only in the past *few* hundred years.

Now let us look at some of the evidence—Thai loanwords found in Lua—put forward to substantiate the above claim. It must be remembered that the existence of Thai loanwords in Lua is not the issue here; there are abundant loanwords and I have discussed them at length in my Ph. D. dissertation and other works (David Filbeck 1971, 1978, forthcoming). The issue is over the choice of words claimed to be Thai loanwords in Lua and the claim that the words so chosen are now so integral a part of the Lua language that they are unrecognizable as loanwords.

Now Ms. Cholthira states that there were several ways in which Thai loanwords were brought into Lua. The first was คำกร่อน, or by a process of "erosion" from a fuller Thai form to a shorter Lua form. For example, Thai จมูก /camuuk/"nose" became Lua /muh/"nose." A second way is byคำกลายเสียง, i.e. words that are similar in sounds show evidence of being borrowed from Thai to Lua. For example, Thai เดิน /doen/"to walk" became Lua /loel/"to walk."

Ms. Cholthira claims that there are Lua loanwords in Thai as well. For example, there are คำสร้อย, couplets or compounds of which one part is a borrowed item from Lua: Thai คุดคู้ /khut khuu/"to fold, bend" is borrowed from Lua /khut/"to sit down" to make this compound.

Another way, she says, of discovering Lua loanwords in Thai is by คำกลายความหมาย, i.e. words that are similar in meaning. For example, Thai คาบ /khaap/"hold in mouth" is borrowed from Lua /gaap/"mouth."

Ms. Cholthira also claims that the Thai word โป๊ /poo/"pornographic pic-

ture" is from the Lua word /po?/"woman's breast, teats, to nurse."

The main thing to be said about the above examples is that they are the wrong set of words to show the type of relationship between Thai and Lua that Ms. Cholthira wishes to show. Moreover, the processes (erosion, similarities in sound and meaning, etc.) used to show such a relationship are either spurious or mean nothing. The best that can be said of these examples is that they exhibit only chance convergences between the two languages.

It should be reiterated that the Lua language and dialects contain many Thai loanwords that show that the two languages have been in contact for the past 300 or so years. Consider these examples from two dialects of Mal:

/hmoo / /mhoo / from Thai หมอ
/moo/"doctor"

/rak / /yak / from Thai รัก /rak/
"to love"

/laak / /laak / from Thai ลาก
/laak/"to drag"

There are many other such words. The point to be made is that Ms. Cholthira somehow missed the words in her research that truly count and used instead words that show nothing of the relationships she wanted to show. It is, unfortunately, an example of inadequate research.

Part IV

Part IV, The Lua in Times Past, contains six chapters:

1. สืบประวัติศาสตร์ลัวะจากประวัติศาสตร์ท้องถิ่น "Deriving Lua History from Local History" (a survey of local historical accounts from north Thailand that refer to the Lua).

2. สืบประวัติศาสตร์ลัวะจากหลักฐานทางโบราณคดี "Deriving Lua History from Archaeological Evidence" (a survey of archaeological evidence in Nan Province that may refer to the Lua in times past).

3. วัฒนธรรมชาวกรอม: ร่องรอยเมืองโบราณ "Culture of the Krom People: Traces of an Ancient Kingdom" (a discussion of ancient burial grounds in Nan Province in relation to the Lua of times past).

4. สถานภาพชาวลัวะในประวัติศาสตร์ "The Place of the Lua in History" (a historical survey to see where and how the Lua fit in the historical record of Thailand).

5. ลัวะในจารึกบนฐานพระอิศวร "The Lua in the Inscriptions of Pra Isuan" (a look at a 500-year-old stone inscription from Kamphaeng Phet to see if the words "พล โลว" in reality refer to the Lua people).

6. ลัวะในวรรณคดีล้านช้าง "The Lua in the Literature of the Million Elephants" (a survey of Laotian literature for reference to the Lua).

Ms. Cholthira is to be commended for surveying historical records in both Thailand and Laos for references to the Lua. This has long been needed and I am grateful to have this material at hand for my own use. Compiling this information is something very few of us could have done, and for this I am grateful to Ms. Cholthira.

While the above compilation is indeed useful, I am still skeptical about one aspect regarding the interpretation of most of these historical records. I have doubts that the historical records of Thailand, when referring to the Lua, really include the Tin (Mal, Prai) of Nan Province. It is true that the Tin were and are called Lua; but living in northeastern Nan, along the current Thai-Laotian border, they were a long way from the other Lua groups in north and north-west Thailand and which figured so prominently in Thai history. In other words, the Tin of Nan Province were probably too far "off the beaten track" to have been included. Consequently we probably should not put too much weight on these records when trying to determine the history of the Lua in Nan Province.

Another reason for my skepticism is that some of these records refer to a time in history when perhaps the Tin had not fully emerged as a separate ethnic

group. However, even this is highly speculative. All of which means that we should be extremely careful in trying to tie in the Lua of Nan Province with the Lua of other areas in Thailand in the historical records.

This is not to say that we should dismiss the Lua of Nan Province from all historical records. Certainly those records of Nan Province eastward into Laos, if referring to the Lua, should be considered as a record of the Tin (Mal, Prai). Ms. Cholthira cites several references to the "ลว" /lwa/ contained in the ท้าวฮุ่ง /thao hung/ story. She claims that

"ลว" ในวรรณคดีเรื่องท้าวฮุ่ง มีบทบาทเป็นผู้ชำนาญในการนำทาง ซึ่งสื่อความหมายว่าเป็นเจ้าถิ่นที่เดินเป็นขึ้นลงภูบริเวณนั้น คือจากบริเวณเมืองบัวไปเมืองเชียงรุ่ง

The "Lwa" in the Thao Hung story have the role of being expert guides, which shows that they are the owners of the land running through that mountainous area, i.e. from the area of Pua to Chiang Rung. (p. 194)

If it is true that the "Lwa" refer to the Lua (and there is some doubt that the word does), then the Thao Hung story could refer to the Tin/Lua of Nan Province.

There is another possible historical reference to the Lua of Nan Province. In Chapter I of this section Ms. Cholthira refers to a battle between the Thai and Burmese armies which is recorded in the Lan Na Thai records under the title ตีกม่าน "The Man [Burmese] Battle." This record states that the Lua helped the Thai in the battle. The interesting thing about this reference is that Ms. Cholthira discovered that the Lua, where she did her field work, remember stories of a time when there was such a battle between the local Thai inhabitants and Burma. Also, I have found that the Dis-

trict Office of Chiang Klang District, Nan Province, has published a brief history of this battle which took place in Chiang Klang District several generations ago (no date is given in the document). This of course would be only a few miles from where the Lua live in the nearby mountains. Therefore, it is highly possible that this reference in the Lan Na Thai records refers to the Lua of Nan Province.

Conclusion

Ms. Cholthira ends her book with a chapter summarizing her conclusions and hypotheses regarding the Lua of Nan Province. Generally she concludes that the Lua have resided in Nan since ancient times and that their culture reflects ancient customs (on which there is general agreement) but she also seeks to place the Lua of Nan Province in certain historical records (over which there is disagreement).

However, regardless of the points over which one may agree or disagree, writing and publishing this book on the Lua in Nan Province is of great value. For one thing, the book will help bring outside attention to the Lua of Nan. For too long these gentle hilltribe people have been neglected by both both government officials and scholars. I began my association and research among them in 1962, and for many years I felt I was the only outsider interested in their language and culture, plus concerned for their well-being and development.

Now, fortunately, Thai scholars are becoming interested in the Lua and other Mon-Khmer groups in Thailand. This book by Ms. Cholthira will go a long way in creating more interest. For this we owe our thanks to Ms. Cholthira for her research and publication on the Lua of Nan Province.

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