

# More Thoughts on the Ancient Culture of the Tai People: The Impact of the Hua Xia Culture

Cheah Yanchong\*

In "The Ancient Culture of the Tai People:<sup>1</sup> The Impact of the Hua Xia<sup>2</sup> Culture on It, and Its Implication,"<sup>3</sup> I have expressed the view that the Tai people bear a striking imprint of the Hua Xia culture on their ancient culture, which includes the god of the land, the god of the grain, the sexagenary cycle, names of places, the designation of administrative areas, and the political institutions. That paper also points out that the Thai-Tai people lived within the territory of China in ancient times. My present paper is intended as a supplement and continuation of the previous one. It will delve into and seek evidence for the influence of the Hua Xia culture on the religious beliefs, calendar making, political system, as well as the articles for cultural activities and daily use of the Thai-Tai people.

## *Liang Tay Liang Taen*, เลี้ยงไท้เลี้ยงแทน: The Worship of the Gods of Tay and Taen

In north and northeast Thailand, in Laos and north Vietnam, the Thai-Tai people have maintained an old custom known as *liang tay liang taen*.<sup>4</sup> In the Thai-Tai language, *liang* means to lay sacrifices to the gods and ancestors; *tay* is derived from the Chinese word "太", which means the remotest forefathers and elders, i.e., the earliest ancestors; *taen* is the homophone of the Chinese word "天", which refers to the deities.

The book, *A Chronicle of Lanchang: A Tale of Khun Borom* (นิทาน เรื่องขุนบรมราชาพงศาวดารเมืองลานช้าง), which is a record of the ancient history of Laos, holds that the father of Khun Borom, ขุนบรม, founder of the Lanchang Kingdom, was the chief god of the heaven named Taen Fa Khuen, แทนฟ้าขึ้น. *Taen* is a Chinese word, while *fa* is a Thai word. Both words mean heaven. *khuen* is his name. Under the chief god were the four main gods, who were Taen Taeng, Taen Khan, Taen Chang and Taen Therk (แทนแต่ง แทนคม แทนชั่ง แทนเอือก).<sup>5</sup> It is small wonder then

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\* The Institute for Southeast Asian Studies Yunnan, Kunming, China.

Visiting Researcher of Chinese Studies Center Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. (This article was submitted in May 1996.)

that the Tai people in the above-mentioned areas generally regard their forefathers as *pu taen ya taen*. *Pu*, 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫 means grandfather while *ya*, 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫 grandmother.<sup>6</sup> So, *pu taen ya taen* actually refers to the heavenly grandfather and grandmother. And *liang tay liang taen* involves offering sacrifices for the gods Tay and Taen, who are worshipped as the symbols of the ancestors. Since the ancient Thai people often referred to gods as ghosts, the Black Tai call the god Taen, *phi fa* 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫, meaning heavenly ghosts.<sup>7</sup>

In Laos and northeast Thailand, people still keep to the old custom, when they lay sacrifices for Tay and Taen in the month *Jieng* 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫 (pronounced 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫) or *Yee* 𑜀𑜢𑜤𑜰𑜫<sup>8</sup> of the lunar year. That is why the custom is sometimes mentioned as *len jieng len yee*, which means the celebration of the January and February Festival.<sup>9</sup> The ceremony to worship Tay and Taen is held in a shed that is erected for the occasion. In the shed people make altars and lay offerings and appoint someone the medium. After the ceremony, the medium dances for joy, saying that the spirit has made its presence in his body and predicts whether or not they will have favorable weather, or good or ill luck for the year. When everything is done, people gather together to have a dinner, and wear around their wrists the cotton thread that had been offered as a sacrifice for blessings. If anyone among the villagers falls sick, a ceremony called *song* is held in order to ask for medical advice. *Song* is the homophone of the Chinese word *sung* (送), meaning to drive away ghosts and avert disasters. The villagers do that by asking the medium about the cause of the disease and its treatment.<sup>10</sup>

The worship of gods has been practiced in China since the ancient times. The conception of the Kingdom of Heaven and God was formed as early as the Yin Dynasty (1300–1000 B.C.). In the Zhou Dynasty, (1000–771 B.C.) a systematic concept of destiny was brought forth and the god was called *tien di* (天帝) at that time. During the Eastern and Western Han dynasties (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), The god was addressed as *tay yi* (太一).<sup>11</sup> *The Records of the Historians*, written between 104 B.C. and 91 B.C., refers to the form of address of the god, as follows: “*Tay Yi*, another name of god, holds the supremacy among the heavenly gods.” That is to say, that *Tay Yi* or God is the dominant figure of the world in the imagination of the ancient people.

The original meaning of *tay* (太) is high, big, extreme and the best, while *taen* (天) means supreme or paramount. Since the ancient people, regardless of their ethnic identities, failed to understand the various natural phenomena, they held that nature was controlled by some mysterious forces. Finally, these unknown forces were personified and worshipped as gods. It is not surprising that the Tai people have the custom of worshipping the gods Tay and Taen. Considering the fact that people address their god in Chinese, it can be deduced that *tay* might

have originated from the Chinese word *tay yi* (太一), coined during the Han Dynasty, and *taen* from *tien di* (天帝) formed in the Zhou Dynasty.

### *Soo Khwan*, สู้ขวัญ : Soothing Spirits

Since ancient times, all the way from the Black Tai in the east to the Ahom Tai in the west, the Thai-Tai people have kept their customary practice of paying homage and bringing consolation to the spirits—for they hold that the mysterious and shapeless spirits are hidden in human bodies.<sup>12</sup> They explain various states of mind, such as panic, trance, fright, infatuation and even diseases, as the loss or the injury of the spirit.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, they insist that a ceremony be held to soothe the frightened spirit, to call back the lost one, to heal the injured, and to protect the unharmed and to express good wishes for them. It is quite customary that the Thai-Tai people often hold ceremonies to soothe the spirits when some of them fall ill, recover health, attain promotion, transfer to new posts, celebrate birthdays, perform marriages, take the tonsure, move houses, undertake journeys, and do honor to distinguished guests and elders.<sup>14</sup> The most important activity of the ceremony is to tie thread around the wrists of those to be soothed. In doing so, people give consolation and express good wishes to those whose spirits are either lost or injured. The Thai-Tai people still maintain this old custom even until today.

The term, soothing spirits, is expressed as *soo khwan*, สู้ขวัญ in the Thai language. *Soo* สู้ is a Tai word, meaning to welcome. By extension it has come to mean soothe or comfort. And *khwan* is an obvious homophone of the Chinese word for soul (魂). The term, soothing spirits, is also called *rong khwan* ร้องขวัญ (pronounced, *hong khwan* ฮ้องขวัญ). In the Tai language, *rong*, ร้อง means to shout or call back. Therefore, the essence of soothing spirits is to call back the lost spirits (招魂), which originated from the funerals of ancient China. Qu Yuan, a famous statesman and poet of the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.), composed poems on the topic of calling back the spirits. The ancient Chinese people thought that spirits were attached to the human body. People might die physically but never spiritually. When people die, the spirits leave the dead body and enter another world, transformed into either gods or ghosts. That is why it was so prevalent among the ancient people to hold ceremonies for the dead in order to call back their spirits.<sup>15</sup>

Although the ancient Chinese people held funerals while the Thai-Tai people hold celebrations, the primary purpose of both activities remains the

same. Since to soothe spirits means to call back spirits, the former may well be considered a free translation of the Chinese expression. Activities at ceremonies may differ from each other while the essence of both ceremonies lies in the worship of spirits. As the same sort of activities once emerged in many states all over the world in ancient past, the Thai-Tai people are no exception to the rule. Nevertheless, the fact that the Thai-Tai people call the spirits in ancient Chinese together with the close connection between the ceremony of soothing spirits and the ancient Chinese funerals of calling back spirits is sufficient evidence that the worship of spirits and the ceremony of soothing spirits were highly influenced by the Hua Xia culture.

### *Mod* มอด: sorcerers.

Among the Thai-Tai people there are some sorcerers known as *mod*, who are practitioners of an old religion. In the ancient times, *mod* appeared in various branches of the Thai-Tai people. Sorcerers are called *pho mod*, พ่อมอด, or *pu mod*, ปู่มอด, which means the father or grandfather of sorcerer. Sorceresses are called *mae mod*, แม่มอด, or *ya mod*, ย่ามอด, which means the mother or grandmother of a sorceress. The Black Tai living in northern Vietnam do not believe in Theravāda Buddhism and have a perfect system of *mod* and sorcery, which has existed even until today. The sorcerers of the Black Tai are addressed as *mod lao*, while the sorceresses, *mod ying*. The positions of sorcerers are passed down from generation to generation. Before the new *mod* begins his work, a senior *mod* must impart to him the knowledge of astrology and sorcery. A *mod*'s job is to tell fortunes with the knowledge of astrology, to worship and escort spirits, to drive away ghosts, and to cure diseases in accordance with sorcery.<sup>16</sup>

The Thai-Tai people address sorcerers as *mod*, for which Chinese equivalent is “巫”. The word is now pronounced as *wu* while its old pronunciation was *mu*, which is very similar to *mod*. Sorcerers and sorcery have a long history in China. It is said that Wu Xian, the minister of the Shang Dynasty (1500–1000 B.C.) was the founder of sorcery.<sup>17</sup> In ancient Chinese imperial courts, sorcerers enjoyed great powers. Their duties were to revere gods and ghosts, to pray for good harvests, to subdue disasters and to seek rains. They also practiced divination and astrology. Among common people, sorcerers welcomed the arrival of gods with a wizard dance, drove away ghosts with incantation and cured diseases with herbs and surgery.<sup>18</sup> Although sorcerers and sorcery exist among many peoples in the world, few countries have attached so much importance to them as the ancient Chinese did.<sup>19</sup> There is no doubt that *mod*, sorcerers of the Thai-Tai

people is a homophone of the Chinese word “巫”, which was pronounced as *mu* in ancient times. The functions of the Thai-Tai *mod* and the ancient Chinese sorcerers are very similar in many ways, even in detailed particulars. For example, while treating diseases, the Black Tai sorcerers dance and blow trumpets or play flutes and the ancient Chinese sorcerers also dance to the accompaniment of drums and flutes.<sup>20</sup> All these facts lead to the conclusion that the word *mod* of the Thai-Tai people owes its origin to the sorcerers of ancient China.

### *Dern Jieng*, เดือนเจียง: The First Month

The Thai-Tai people, although scattered in different branches, are all followers of Theravāda Buddhism and possess a most peculiar lunar calendar. It is fascinating that while arranging the order of the days of a month, they divide a whole month into two halves according to the rising and falling of the moon. The first half of the month is defined as a period that starts from the first day when the new moon begins to ascend and finishes on the fifteenth day of the process. The second half begins its journey from the first day when the moon begins to descend and ends with the fourteenth day (that makes a month of twenty nine days) or with the fifteenth day (that makes a month of thirty days). This is the way that the Indian people in south Asia calculate their days and months of the lunar year. However, the calculation of the Thai-Tai people is distinct from that of the Indians. It is a custom for the Theravāda Buddhists to celebrate the birthday of Sakayamuṇī on the Visākha Festival. It is also the time when people commemorate their achievements once they reach Enlightenment or Nirvāna. Visākha is the second month in the lunar calendar of the Indians,<sup>21</sup> while it is the sixth month in the calendar of the people in central Thailand. For the Thai-Tai people, the first month of the year is *dern jieng*. *Dern* เดือน means month in Thai, and *jieng* เจียง (pronounced เกียง), is a homophone of the Chinese word “正月”, which is now pronounced *zheng*. But in Cantonese, a dialect that has retained many traces of the Baiyue language, and shares the same origin with the Thai-Tai language,<sup>22</sup> the word is also pronounced as *jieng*. Therefore, *dern jieng* means the first month of the year in Chinese.<sup>23</sup> It is “正月”, read as *zhengyue*.

Why did the Thai-Tai people borrow the Chinese word *jieng* instead of calling it the first month of the year when arranging the order of their lunar year? In old Chinese, the beginning of the year is named *zheng* (正), which is the homophone of the Thai-Tai word *jieng*. It is obvious that the lunar calendar of the Thai-Tai

people was modeled on that of the ancient Chinese people. But the question is how they imitated the model.

The month *jieng* of Tai Lü, which is the calendar used in Sipsong Panna, is the tenth month in the modern Chinese lunar calendar. The Tai Lü calendar is thus found to be identical with the Zhuan Zu calendar of ancient China.<sup>24</sup> The month *jieng* for Lanna Thai and the Laotians refers to the eleventh month in the modern Chinese lunar calendar. The former is, therefore, considered to be similar to the Zhou calendar of ancient China. The Zhuan Zu and Zhou calendars are two of the six calendars that were used during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 25). It is said that these old calendars were composed in the late years of the Zhou Dynasty (300–200 B.C.).<sup>25</sup> The Zhuan Xu calendar was chosen and put into use by the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty after he unified China in 221 B.C. It is, therefore, mentioned as the Qin calendar as well. This was the first calendar that was issued for nationwide enforcement<sup>26</sup> and remained valid until the time when Emperor Wu Di of the Han Dynasty ascended the throne (104 B.C.). All the above facts inform us that it is possible that the peoples of Sipsong Panna, Lanna, and Laos might have chosen *jieng* as the name of the first month of their lunar year during the Western Han Dynasty, taking the Zhuan Xu and Zhou calendars as their models.

### *Khun*, ກຸນ : King

In the ancient books on the history of the Thai-Tai people, the supreme leader is often referred to as *khun*. Phongsawadan Muang Lanchang of Laos said that the first emperor of the Luang Prabang Kingdom was Khun Borom.<sup>27</sup> *Tamnan Tai Yai* of the Shan State said that the first kingship of Muang Mao, the first kingdom of the Tai people, was that of Khun Lu ກຸນລູ and Khun Lai ກຸນໄລ, who were brothers.<sup>28</sup> According to *Ahom–Buranji*, an ancient book on Assam, the ancestors of the Tai people were Khun Luang<sup>29</sup> and Khun Lay while *A Chronicle of Hsenwi*, a record about the border between Yunnan and the Shan State, makes a point of the fact that the ancestor of the Tai people was Khun Lai.<sup>30</sup> The kings of the early period of Sukhothai, during the thirteenth century, were also addressed as *khun*. For example, the founder of the kingdom was called Khun Sri Inthathit, the second king, Khun Banmuang, and the third king, Khun Ramkhamhaeng.<sup>31</sup> The word *khun* in the above names is a title, while Borom, Lu, Lai, are the names of these kings.

*Khun* is the title for feudal bureaucrats or petty aristocrats in the modern Thai-Tai language. Since *khun* meant king, the kings of the early period of

Sukhothai were all addressed as *khun*. It was the spread of the Indian Buddhism and Brahmanism in the later period that put the title into disuse. On the third inscription engraved during the Sukhothai period in A.D. 1357 are the following words: "The *khun* who conforms to Buddhism will *kin muang* eternally."<sup>32</sup> (*kin muang*, กิ่งเมือง means to rule). Thai dictionaries maintain that *khun luang* ขุนหลวง (the great *khun*) is defined as king. For evidence, it quotes some examples, such as Khun Siem, which refers to the king of Siam.<sup>33</sup> *Ahom-Burani*, an ancient book in Tai text, refers to the ascent to the throne as *hed chao-hed khun* เฮ็ดเจ้าเฮ็ดขุน,<sup>34</sup> and the Tai word *hed* means to make, the explanation can be understood as to make king where *khun* means king.

Owing to the fact that the pronunciation of *khun* is similar to the Chinese character "君" (*jun*), people could easily identify the two words, with a slight difference in pronunciation. After careful study, I have concluded that the deduction is correct. The Chinese word *jun* is an honorific title for people in everyday use. For instance, a person named Zhang can be addressed as Zhang Jun, meaning respected Mr. Zhang. But in the old times, according to ancient book only emperors, dukes, princes, ministers, nobles, and land owners were called *jun*,<sup>35</sup> *Li Ji* (*The Book of Rites*), written during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 15) states that the dukes of the states<sup>36</sup> were considered as *jun* and were called *guo jun* during the Zhou Dynasty. As *guo* refers to a state, *guo jun* must mean the king of the state. Considering the fact that the states at that time were either under the rule of the Zhou Dynasty or inferior in territory and power, those who possessed the title *guo jun* must have been lower in rank than kings or emperors. There were quite a few *guo jun* during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. For example, in the Spring and Autumn period there was Guo Jun Goujian<sup>37</sup> in the Yue State, Guo Jun Fuchai<sup>38</sup> in the Wu State, Guo Jun Weiwengong<sup>39</sup> in the Wei State, Guo Jun Jinhui-gong<sup>40</sup> in the Jin State, and Guo Jun Chuzhuangwang<sup>41</sup> in the Chu State. During the Warring States period, there lived Guo Jun Qinxiaogong<sup>42</sup> of the Qin State, Guo Jun Songwangyan<sup>43</sup> of the Song State, Guo Jun Tengwengong<sup>44</sup> of the Teng State, Guo Jun Qiweiwang<sup>45</sup> of the Qu State, and Guo Jun Zhao Wulingwang<sup>46</sup> of the Zhao State. During the Warring States period, *jun* was also an honorific title for nobles and heroes. For instance, Zhang Yi, a nobleman from the Wei State, was offered the title Wuxing Jun<sup>47</sup> and a fiefdom of five counties with the tax collected in those five counties as his salary owing to his outstanding service. Tian Wen, a noble from the Qu State, was given a fief town of a thousand households and was called Mengchang Jun.<sup>48</sup> General Yue Yi of the Yan State was crowned as the ruler of Chang Guo for his remarkable contribution in the defeat of the Qu State and was given the title or Chang Guo Jun.<sup>49</sup> Zhao Sheng, a noble from the Zhao State, was offered the fiefdom of

Dongwu City and the title of Pingyuan Jun.<sup>50</sup> Feng Ting from the Han State was awarded a fief town of three thousand households and was called Huayang Jun<sup>51</sup> for his success. Huang Xi, a nobleman of the Chu State, was honored as a ruler of twelve counties north of the Huai River and was offered the title of Chunshen Jun.<sup>52</sup> Obviously, the word *jun* in the above instances is distinct from the word *guo jun* mentioned previously. *Guo jun* is the king of a state while *jun*, as a title, refers to those who are either feudal aristocrats or the local feudal chieftains in a country. It can be found that many similarities lie between the ancient Thai-Tai *khun* and *jun* in the Chinese history if the two are compared with each other. Therefore, it is quite possible that *khun* might stem from *jun*.

The word “君” is read as *jun* in modern Chinese, but it is pronounced as *guen* in the Hakka dialect, a dialect spoken in eastern Guangdong, which has retained a considerable amount of old pronunciation and intonation.<sup>53</sup> And as for Cantonese, a dialect that maintains some elements of the ancient Baiyue language,<sup>54</sup> *jun* is given a peculiar pronunciation, whereby the consonant J [dʒ] is read as G [k].<sup>55</sup> Therefore in Cantonese the word “jun” is pronounced as *guan*. In the ancient dictionary *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, the word is given a Chinese phonetic symbol 君云切, that is, the pronunciation of the word is a sort of combination of the sound *ju* and *yun* because the old pronunciation for J is G, *jun* must be read as *gun* in old Chinese. As the sounds *guen-guan-gun* all bear strong resemblance to the Thai-Tai word *khun*, a sufficient proof has thus been brought about through phonology that *khun* has its origin in the ancient Chinese word *jun*.

### *Kin Muang* กินเมือง : Fief Town

During the early periods of the ancient Thai kingdoms of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, the kings used to assign the crowned princes, princes, or brothers and nephews to the important towns. The kings would also offer them the positions of prefects of the respective areas and the titles of nobility in order to ensure the royal family the control of these important strategic areas and safeguard the security of the capital and the entire country. Management of this kind is defined as *kin muang* in the books of the Thai-Tai history.<sup>56</sup> As *kin* กิน means to eat, and *muang* เมือง means towns, the phrase *kin muang* means to eat a town. When the above-mentioned princes were sent to the positions of prefects, they were called *kin muang*. The *kin muang* princes took gained their income by collecting taxes and laboring forces in the towns that were under their administration for they had no other means of doing so.<sup>57</sup>

*Kin muang* is also a symbol to show the orders and degrees of princes in the ancient feudal system of Thailand. According to the third item of *Kod Mon-Tian-Ban* (the rules of the court, laid down during the Ayutthaya period in A.D. 1450), the princes of the kings were divided into five degrees: sons of “queens” พระอัครมเหสี were “crowned princes” สมเด็จพระอนุชาธิราชเจ้า; sons of the highest-ranking imperial concubines แม่ท้าวเมือง were “deputy princes” พระมหาอุปราช; sons of princesses ลูกหลวง were first class *kin-muang* princes; sons of imperial nieces หลานหลวง were second class *kin-muang* princes; sons of imperial concubines พระสนม were “petty princes” พระเขวราช. According to the article number eight, the *kin-muang* princes had to salute the “crowned princes” and “petty princes” had to salute *kin-muang* princes.<sup>58</sup>

The *kin muang* system was an imitation of the ancient Chinese system of *shi yi* (食邑). After the founding of the Zhou Dynasty in the eleventh century B.C., the imperial court began to distribute land as well as the inhabitants thereon. Dozens of subordinate states were thus established. The dukes, namely, the chieftains of these states, assigned in turn the towns and areas to the heroes and descendants of nobles who would gain their salary through taxes and laboring forces in the towns under their rule. The system is named *shi yi*, since *shi* means to eat and *yi* means towns, which implies the source of the income of the chieftains. During the Qin and Han dynasties (221–220 B.C.), the first emperor of Qin introduced a system of administrative districts, but he still appointed nobles, and the towns offered were still called *shi yi*.<sup>59</sup>

The *kin-muang* system of the Thai-Tai people was modeled on the *shi yi* system that prevailed before the unification of China by the first emperor of Qin Dynasty (211 B.C.) and in the subsequent Eastern and Western dynasties (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). Nevertheless, the two systems were significantly different from each other. The Thai-Tai's *kin muang* was relatively simple. Furthermore, they used *kin muang* as the substitute for the words to ascend to the throne, to exercise power, to rule, and to be on the throne. That is why the old expression *kin muang* appeared in the historical records from time to time. For example, *A Tale of Khun Borom*, (a book about the first king of Laos, who was a descendent of the Fa-Ngum royal family and unified the country) states: “We will give a narrative of the successors of Luang-Ngon, who made the continuance of *kin muang* possible.”<sup>60</sup> *Tamnan Phung Muang Chaing Mai*, a book on Lanna history, mentions that, formally, the town Chiang Sän was called Muang Roy; it was named Chiang San when King San Phu went to *kin muang* there.<sup>61</sup> Inscription No. 3 engraved during the Sukhottai period in A.D. 1357 includes the following

sentence: "The *khun* who conforms to Buddhism will eternally *kin muang*."<sup>62</sup> The conclusion can be thus drawn that *kin muang* means "to rule."

### *Samud Thai* สมุดไทย: Book in Thai Style

*Samud Thai* is a hand-written, on mulberry paper, folded in accordion fashion. The book is hard-covered and the words are written on both sides of the paper so that people can read it in a revolving way. The people in Sipsong Panna have long been making books of this kind (even in the recent years) and the books are called *pab-laen* ปับແລ່ນ. Since *pab*, ปับ means book and *laen*, แล่ง, plastic or flexible, *pab-laen* refers to a book that can be folded and unfolded. A few *samud Thai* can be found in Thailand now, and the National Library has collected them as great rarities. *Samud* means book in Thai, and *samud Thai* means a book in Thai style.

It is commonly believed that books of this particular binding and layout are typically Thai. Nevertheless, as a result of textual research, I have found that they are an imitation of the Chinese *xuan feng zhuang* (旋风装) made during the late period of the Tang Dynasty (the ninth century A.D.). *Xuan feng* means whirlwind, and *zhuang*, binding. It is quite possible that the name of the book suggests an exaggeration that people can read it in a continuously revolving way as a whirlwind blows.

Papermaking was invented by the Chinese in A.D. 105. Before that, the Chinese made books of bamboo or silk. *Zhu jian* means books made from bamboo. Since they were bound with strings, a whole book is quite cumbersome. In spite of its great cost, silk is light in weight and long and broad in size and could be cut or extended at the will of the writer. The book made from silk is called *bo shu*, since *bo* means silk. *Bo shu* was first folded in a rectangular shape and later rolled up like a Chinese painting scroll. That is, the center of the scroll was bound with an axis made from a piece of fine wood so that the book was easy to roll and unroll. Although papermaking was invented as early as the second century, it took hundreds of years to popularize its use. It was not until the Northern and Southern Dynasties (A.D. 420–589) that the bamboo and silk books were replaced by paper books, which flourished in the subsequent Sui and Tang Dynasties (A.D. 589–907). A great number of paper books were found at Dunhuang. These books were made during the Tang Dynasty with a shape like that of painted scrolls. The sizes of books differ from one another, the longest being two or three *zhang*, and the shortest, two or three *chi*. The long scrolls were made up of several short pieces that were stuck together.

Because of the inconvenience of rolling and unrolling books, the scroll-shaped books were transformed into a folding shape in the late period of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618–907). The folded books were rectangular, in accordion form, and were called as *xuan feng zhuang*.<sup>63</sup> The way of binding and the layout of this kind of book was the same as that of the *samud Thai*, as they are called by the Thai and the *pab-laen* of the *Tai Lu*.

However, with the invention of printing and its wide application, *xuan feng zhuang* disappeared in China. During the middle and late period of the Tang Dynasty when woodblock printing was invented, printed books came out. As each printed sheet made a page at that time, the book appeared disorderly and loose after printing and it would take time and efforts to bind the book in the *xuan feng zhuang* way by sticking loose sheets together. So people began to gather the sheets and bind them in the shape of modern books. The invention of printing put an end to popular hand-written copies, and the *xuan feng zhuang* was thus replaced by the modern art of binding.<sup>64</sup> During the Song Dynasty in the eleventh century, movable-type printing emerged, and that was put into use in the Northern and Southern dynasties in the twelfth century. It was then that hand-written copies and binding in the *xuan feng zhuang* way met inevitable extinction.

However, folding books were still widely used among money lenders before the founding of the People's Republic of China as account books. These books were folded in the accordion form with hard covers at both ends and a hard case for storage. People called them *zhezi* (折子), for *zhe* means folding and *zi* means booklet. Recently it seems that the long disused *zhezi* have begun to reappear in towns in the east and south in China. Until now the account books given by China as the proof of savings are still called *cunzhe* (存折). *Gun* means savings, and *zhe* means folding, therefore *cunzhe* is a variation of *zhezi* that were used as the accounts for loans. The fact proves indirectly that *xuan feng zhuang*, a form of folding books, once existed in ancient China.

It is quite certain that *samud Thai* and *pab-laen* are imitations of *xuan feng zhuang*. The reason that the Thai people take it for granted that the form of folding books is a historical heritage of their own lies in the fact that they have accepted the Chinese *xuan feng zhuang* for so long a time that many Thai people are even ignorant of its foreign origin.

## *Din Kee* ดินคี: Unfired Bricks

Study of the ruins of ancient cities of the kingdoms of Sukhothai and Lanna has disclosed that some of their walls were made of unfired bricks.<sup>65</sup> The Thai-Tai people called them *din kee*, as *din* means earth; the meaning of *kee*, however, still is unknown. Some people think that *kee* คี is a variation of *jee* จี, meaning to bake or to burn. Therefore, *din kee* ดินคี can be understood as *din jee* ดินจี, which refers to burnt earth, namely, bricks. This is actually a misunderstanding. As a result of textual research, I have found out that *kee* is the name for unfired bricks in ancient China. The Chinese equivalent is "墼", with its entire name "土墼" (*tu ji*).<sup>66</sup>

*Ji* (unfired bricks) were used in making walls as early as the Zhou Dynasty, a remote age in Chinese history (before the eleventh century B.C. to 770 B.C.) while fired brick making began later. It was not until the Qin and Han dynasties (221 B.C.–A.D. 220) that fired bricks were used as building materials in northern China. The practice did not come into universal use in the south of the Yangtze River until the Three Kingdoms Period and the Jin Dynasty (A.D. 220–420). As both *ji* (unfired bricks) and bricks are made from earth, and the shapes are similar to each other, the word "墼" can be found engraved on some of the bricks made in the Eastern Han Dynasty presumably to distinguish them.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, it is quite certain that *ji* refers to unfired bricks.<sup>68</sup>

The word "墼" is read as *ji* in modern Chinese, yet its phonetic symbol in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, the earliest Chinese dictionary, is *ki*,<sup>69</sup> which bears strong resemblance to the Thai-Tai word *kee*. The facts accounted for the Chinese origin of the Tai word *kee*. Since *tu* means earth, the ancient Chinese word *tu ji* corresponds very closely to the Thai-Tai word *din kee*. A conclusion can thus be made that *din kee* stems from the Chinese word *tu ji* (with its ancient pronunciation *tu ki*).

## Chong จ้อง: Umbrella

In the central part of Thailand, an area that has undergone a great cultural change, people call umbrella *rom*. *Rom* ร่ม is a Thai word, meaning to shade. Thus the word *rom* is easily understood in the Thai language. However, in the areas of Laos, Lanna, and Sipsong Panna where more old traditions are retained people call umbrella *chong* จ้อง. As *chong* is not a native Tai word, the meaning

of *chong* has remained inexplicable so far. I think that *chong* is the pronunciation for the Chinese word “幢” (it is read as *chuang* in modern Chinese), which refers to one of the articles carried by a guard of honor for the ancient Chinese kings. In ancient China, when kings or nobles went out, it was quite customary that the guards would cluster around with various flags, umbrellas, and other articles to signify their honor and supremacy. The insignias of rank carried in the procession included all kinds of weapons, flags, umbrellas, streamers, fans, crane feathers,<sup>70</sup> and *chuang* (幢). *Han Shu*, a Chinese history book written in the first century A.D., mentions that a *chuang* was a flag carried in a procession,<sup>71</sup> its shape was like a cylinder, similar to that of a shroud or an umbrella. Therefore, the ancient Thai-Tai people called umbrella *chong*, as *chong* is a homophone of *chuang*. In addition, in the court ceremonies of the Thai-Tai people, *chong* was also an insignia of rank carried in a procession. In old Sipsong Panna, it once appeared in a title for nobility named as *Phya Chong Kam* พญาจ๋องคำ. The Tai word, *kam* คำ, means gold, so *chong kam* must mean golden umbrella. And *Phaya Chong Kam* refers to the nobility of golden umbrella, a nobleman who could be accorded golden umbrellas when going out. Owing to the double meaning of *chong*, we are able to reach the conclusion that *chong* (umbrella) stems from the Chinese word *chuang*, which refers to the insignia of rank carried in a procession in ancient China.

### Kerb เกิบ : Shoes

Shoes were called *khaeb* แขนบ by the Tai people in Yunnan, and *kerb* เกิบ by Laotians, and *kerk* เกือก by the ancient Thai people. These three names are homophones of the Chinese word “屐”, which is read as *ji* 屐 in modern Chinese and *khi* 屐 in old Chinese, *khaek* แขนก in Cantonese, and *khiak* เขี้ยก in Hakka.

“屐” (*ji*) usually refers to “木屐”, that is, shoes made from wood. Since ancient times, *ji* has been used as rain gear. Till the late Eastern Han Dynasty (the early 3rd century A.D.), more and more people began to take an interest in *ji*. At first, only the poor people from the bottom of the society wore them, but in the Wei and Jin dynasties (A.D. 220–420), it became the ordinary wear not only for intellectuals and common people, but also for kings and nobles. *Ji* went out of fashion in the late period of the Northern and Southern dynasties (the sixth century A.D.). But in southern China, as in the present-day Guangdong province, people have continued to use *ji* due to the hot and damp weather there.<sup>72</sup>

The areas inhabited by the Thai-Tai are equally hot and wet, and the common people used to wear no shoes. Several decades ago, in the Thai-Tai villages which were backward in social and economic development, such as in southern Yunnan of China, the Shan State of Burma, northern Thailand, and northern Laos, people made shoes with bamboo (a sort of *ji*) because of the muddy roads there. Shoes of this kind were called *kerb*. When going out in the dry season, the simple and rough shoes made from oxhide were worn and these shoes were called *khaeb* or *kerb*. Thirty years ago, I once saw with my own eyes bamboo shoes and home-made leather shoes, which were also called *khaeb*.

It is beyond doubt that the Thai-Tai word *khaeb* or *kerb* stems from the ancient Chinese word *ji* (wooden shoes), but the former refers not only to wooden shoes, but all kinds of shoes, as well.

In the modern language of the Thai-Tai, leather shoes are pronounced *khaeb* (or *kreb*, *kerk*) *nang*. *Nang* นนึ่ง signifies skin or leather, so *khaeb nang* are shoes made from leather; cotton shoes are pronounced as *khaeb fai*. *Fai* ฝ้าย signifies cotton, so *khaeb fai* means shoes made from cotton; rubber-soled shoes are pronounced *khaeb yang*. *Yang* ยาง signifies rubber, so *khaeb yang* are shoes made from rubber; wooden sandals are pronounced as *khaeb mai*. *Mai* ไม้ signifies wood (or bamboo), so *khaeb mai* are shoes made from wood or bamboo.

### Thoo, 箸 : Chopsticks

Since ancient times, the Tai people in Yunnan, and those in northern Vietnam and Laos have used both chopsticks and fingers when having meals. That is, they eat the rice with one hand and use chopsticks to pick up food from dishes with the other hand. It is generally acknowledged that chopsticks were invented and widely used by the Chinese people. The Chinese word for chopsticks is *kuai*, while the same thing is called *thoo* in the Tai language. But why so? The question has never been explained by anyone so far. And I hold that *thoo* might be a homophone of *Zhu* (箸), an old name for chopsticks.

Chopsticks have a long history in China. They were originally called *zhu* instead of *kuai*. *Shi ji* (*The Historical Records*), which was the first general history book in China and was written between 104 B.C. and 91 B.C., mentions that King Zhou of the late Shang Dynasty (the eleventh century B.C.) possessed *xiang zhu*. *Xiang* means elephant, and here it refers to the tusk. *Zhu* means chopsticks, therefore, *xiang zhu* refers to ivory chopsticks.<sup>73</sup> These facts have proved that, the

word chopsticks first appeared in records three thousand years ago, and that it had an old name *zhu*, at first, instead of *kuai*.

But why was the name of chopsticks changed into *kuai*? According to a book written by Lu Rong<sup>74</sup> of the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), the people of the Wu Kingdom during the Three Kingdoms period, made a point of avoiding words with superstitious connotations. For example, while sailing at sea, they would abstain from mentioning *zhu* (住), which means to stop; the word “箸” for chopsticks and “住” meaning to stop are identical in pronunciation, “箸” so it was considered to be an unlucky word. And as the people at that time generally hoped for a safe sailing, the word *zhu* with an alternate meaning of stopping was changed into *Kuai*, meaning quick, a word which is the exact opposite of *zhu*, as a sign of good luck. And because chopsticks are made from bamboo, the name of chopsticks was changed into “筷”, a combination of “竹” (bamboo) and “快” (quick).

As the change of the name of chopsticks took place more than a thousand years ago, many are ignorant of its original name, *zhu*. Although the Thai people call them *thoo*, the word is by no means one of their own. It is obvious that the word has other meanings in Thai and thus can be regarded as a word of foreign origin. Therefore, the word *thoo* must have stemmed from the ancient Chinese word *zhu*.

## Conclusion

In his article on the study of the beliefs and religious ceremonies of the Assam Thai based on the research of ancient literature, Dr. Chatthip Nartsupha, the famous Thai economist, stated that after the introduction of Buddhism the Thai culture began to be mixed with the elements of Mon-Khmer so that the pure and primitive Thai culture was submerged in a modern culture. Furthermore, he says that the old language can be considered the base of the primitive culture, for a phrase or sentence might imply certain ideas, thoughts or even social formation. Therefore, the most effective way to find out the society and culture of the Thai people before the introduction of Buddhism is to go through the ancient Thai literature.<sup>75</sup>

I absolutely agree with the point made by Professor Chatthip. As a matter of fact, the present paper, as well as the one entitled “The Ancient Culture of the Thai people: The Impact of the Hua Xia Culture on It and Its Implications” are my attempts to put the idea into practice. That is, I have tried to carry out textual

research on the traces of the ancient Thai-Tai culture and find out the ethnic origin of the Thai-Tai people through the study of the ancient language. One point has been made clear in the two papers—the ancient Thai-Tai culture once received the influence of the Hua Xia culture. The traces I found are only a small portion of the proof of the impact of the Hua Xia culture, and the larger part remains to be explored. These traces, however, are hidden in the bright-colored Buddhist culture so that only careful and thorough-going pursuit and preparation can bring about the revelation of clues in a multitude of items.

I have pointed out in my previous paper that “if we could find out the relationship between the ancestors of the Thai-Tai and the Hua Xia peoples through a study of the ancient culture of the Thai-Tai people, it would probably be a great help in exploring the origins of the Thai-Tai people.”<sup>76</sup> The result of textual research of the paper shows that the Hua Xia culture that once influenced the Thai-Tai people was God Tai Yi of the Han Dynasty (205 B.C.–A.D. 220), the practice of calling back the spirit during the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.), the calendar making of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 25), the chopsticks used before the Three Kingdoms Period (A.D. 220–265), the wooden shoes of the Wei and Jin dynasties (A.D. 220–420), and the *Xuan Feng Zhuang* books of the late Tang Dynasty (the ninth century). All these are dated back in a remote age and have confirmed the conclusion of the previous paper, which runs that “In ancient times, the Thai-Tai people must have been nurtured by the Hua Xia culture and the nurture must have been a protracted, systematic and direct one, otherwise, the result of the nurture wouldn't be embodied in so many aspects. Any given culture is a reflection of a given social history. I believe that the reason why the ancient culture of the Tai people is possessed of such pronounced Hua Xia color might be that ancestors of the Tai people had once lived within China's domain in as much as they were under the direct rule of Chinese feudal dynasties.” and “if ancestors of the Tai people had lived outside of China's domain, the spread and impact of the Hua Xia culture to and on the ancient culture of the Tai people only through paying tribute, coming and going of diplomatic envoys and the economic and cultural exchange across border among the people wouldn't have been so systematic and penetrating.”<sup>77</sup>

In a word, it is clear and definite that the impact of Hua Xia culture on the ancient Thai-Tai culture indicates that the Thai-Tai people in the Southeast Asia and Yunnan Province moved there from southern China over a thousand years ago.

## Notes

1. The Tai of Thai-Tai people in this paper refers, in general, to ethnic groups of the Thai-Tai family, who are Thais in Thailand, Laotians in Laos, Tais in Vietnam, Shans in Burma, Tais in Assam, India, Dais in Yunnan, China.
2. Hua Xia or Cathaysian of Cathay refers to the Han people in ancient China.
3. The paper was submitted in 1987 to the Third International Conference on Thai Studies held in Canberra. It is carried in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 76, Bangkok, 1988, pp. 227-244.
4. Sa-nguan Chotisukaratana: *The Customs of the Thai People in Northern Thailand*, Odien Store Publishing House, Bangkok, second edition, 1959, p. 269.  
Mance Phayomyong: *The Customs of the Twelve Months Across Lanna Thai*, Vol. 2, Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture Project, Chiangmai University, Chiangmai, 1986, pp. 266-267.  
Prinyan Bhikkhu: *The Ancient Customs of the Northeastern Thai People*, Siritham Printing House, Bangkok, 1982, p. 221.  
Sumitr Pitiphat: "The Religion and Belief of the Black Tai, and a Note on the Study of Culture Origins", the *Journal of the Siam Society*, January, Bangkok, 1980, Vol. 68, pt. 1, pp. 30-31.
5. *Prachum Phongsawadan*, Vol. 43, pt. 69-70, Sueksaphanpha-nich, Bangkok, 1969, pp. 255-256.
6. Mance Phayomyong: *The Customs of the Twelve Months Across Lanna Thai*, Vol. 2, Center for the Promotion of Art and Culture Project, Chiangmai University, Chiangmai, 1986, pp. 266-267.
7. Sumitr Pitiphat: "The Religion and Belief of the Black Tai, and a Note on the Study of Culture Origins", the *Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok, Jan., 1980, Vol. 68, pt. 1, pp. 30.
8. *Jieng* and *Yee* originate from the Chinese words 正 and 二, meaning January and February. A discussion on the origin of the month *Jieng* can be found in the later part of the present paper.
9. Jarubutr Ruangsawan: "The Customs of the Twelve Months, Fourteen Conventions: The Ancient Ruling Systems of Laotian and Northeastern Thai People", in *The Heritage of the Ailao People: The Memory of the Funerals of the Sureme Monk*, Bangkok, 1985, p. 290.  
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10. Prinyan Bhikkhu: *The Ancient Customs of The Northeastern Thai People*, Siritham Printing House, Bangkok, 1982, pp. 221-222.
11. Zhang Xiuping and Wang Naizhuang: *A Survey of the Chinese Culture*, The East Publishing House, Beijing, 1988, pp. 225-226.
12. Mance Phayomyong: *The Customs of the Twelve Months Across Lanna Thai*, Vol. 2, Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture Project, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, 1986, p. 206.  
Prinyan Bhikkju: *The Ancient Customs of the Northeastern Thai People*, Srithasm Printing House, Bangkok, 1982, p. 250.  
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- Sumitr Pitiphat: "The Religion and Belief of the Black Tai, and a Note on Study of Culture Origins," *Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok, Jan., 1980, Vol. 68, pt. 1, pp. 31-32.
13. Sathirakoses: *Khwan and the Ceremony*, Progress Publishing House, Bangkok, 1963.
  14. Prinyan Bhikkhu: *The Ancient Customs of the Northeastern Thai People*, Sirtham Printing House, Bangkok, 1982, p. 250.
  15. *Ci Hai (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary)*, Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 1680.
  16. Montri Sribusra: *Black Tai Be Wail*, Bannakij Publishing House, Bangkok 1979, p. 25.
  17. *Shuo Wen Jie Zi (A Talk on Writing and Explanation of Characters)*, Zhonghua Press, Beijing, copied in 1963 from the block-printed, ed. in 1873 p. 100.  
*Ci Hai (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary)*, Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 510.
  18. *Ci Hai (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary)*, Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 510.
  19. Zhang Xiuping and Wang Naishuang: *A Survey of the Chinese Culture*, the East Publishing House, Beijing, 1988, p. 225.
  20. Sumitr Pitiphat: "The Religion and Belief of the Black Tai, and a Note on the Study of Culture Origins", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok Jan. 1980, Vol. 68, pt. 1, p. 33.  
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  21. *A Dictionary of Buddhism, Chinese-Sanskrit-English-Thai*, The Chinese Buddhist Order of Sangha in Thailand, Bangkok, 1976, p. 340.
  22. Yuan Jiahua: *Essentials of the Chinese Dialect*, The Word Reform Press, Beijing, the second edition in 1982, pp. 177-179.
  23. Zhang Gongjing: *The Culture of The Tai People*, Jilin Educational Press, Changchun, 1986, pp. 108-109.
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  25. *Ci Hai (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary)*, Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 837.
  26. *Ci Hai (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary)*, Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 1850.
  27. *Prachum Phongsawadan*: Suksaphan Phanich, Bangkok, 1969, Vol. 43, parts. 69-70, p. 256.
  28. Banchob Bhandhamedha: *Tamnan Muang Mao in Yunnan* (edited by H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana), Bangkok, 1986, p. 221.
  29. Chatthip Nartsupha and Renoo Wichasilp: "The Belief and Ceremonies of Ahom Thai: On Reading Ahom-Buranji in Thai Text", *Thammasat University Journal*, Bangkok, Dec. 1985. Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 81.
  30. Prince Naratipa Praphanphong: *Phongsawadan Tai Yai*, Suksaphan Phanich, Bangkok, 1983, Vol. 1, p. 94.
  31. *Prachum Sila Charuk*, the Prime Minister's Office, Bangkok, 1978, Vol. 1, p. 18.
  32. *Prachum Sila Charuk*, the Prime Minister's Office, Bangkok, 1978, Vol. 1, p. 64.
  33. Manit Manitcharoen: *A Thai Dictionary*, Bamrungsan Publishing House, Bangkok, 1976, the fifth edition, p. 170.
  34. Chatthip Nartsupha and Renoo Wichasilp: "The Belief and Ceremonies of Ahom Thai:

- On Reading Ahom-Buranji, in Thai Text", *Thammasat University Journal*, Bangkok, Dec. 1985, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 83, 88, 90.
35. The book *Yi Li* (Etiquette) written about the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) states: "Jun, the supreme." Zheng Xuan, a scholar of the Eastern Han Dynasty (127-200 A.D.) supplied the above explanation when he annotated *Yi Li*.
  36. During the Western Zhou Dynasty (1000-771 B.C.) the kingdom was divided into many states, which were brought under the rule of the Zhou Dynasty. The sovereigns of these states were dukes. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, the number of the states were drastically reduced as a result of the constant wars and annexation. It is known that there existed twelve states in the Spring and Autumn Period and seven powerful states in the Warring States Period.
  37. *Ci Hai* (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary), Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, p. 328.
  38. *Ibid.* p. 638.
  39. *Ibid.* p. 404.
  40. *Ibid.* p. 1808.
  41. *Ibid.* p. 1808.
  42. *Ibid.* p. 1613.
  43. *Ibid.* p. 1007.
  44. *Ibid.* p. 1522.
  45. *Ibid.* p. 1914.
  46. *Ibid.* p. 1946.
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  48. *Shi Ji* (Historical Records, Biography of Mengchang Jun).
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  62. *Prachum Sila Charuk*, the Prime Minister's Office, Bangkok, 1978, Vol. 1, p. 64.
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  66. *Ci Hai* (A Chinese Word-Ocean Dictionary), Shanghai Dictionary Press, condensed edition, Shanghai, 1980, pp. 549.
  67. Yang Jinding ed.: *A Dictionary of the Chinese Cultural History*, Zhejiang Ancient Book Press, Hangzhou, 1987, pp. 189.
  68. *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (A Talk on Writing and Explanation of Characters), Zhonghua Press, Beijing, copied in 1963 from a block-print of 1873 p. 287.
  69. Ibid.
  70. *Three Hundred Problems about the Chinese Cultural History*, Shanghai Ancient Book Press, Shanghai, 1987, pp. 373-375.
  71. *Han Shu* (The Book of Han, Biography of Han Yanshou).
  72. *Three Hundred Problems about the Chinese Cultural History*, Shanghai Ancient Book Press, Shanghai, 1987, pp. 259-260.
  73. *Shi Ji* (The Historical Records: Chronicles of the Twelve Dukes).
  74. Lu Rong: *Shu Yuan Zha Ji* (Miscellanies in the Bean Garden), Vol. 1.
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  76. Cheah Yanchong: "The Ancient Culture of the Tai People: The Impacts of the Hua Xia Culture on It, and Its Implication", *Journal of the Siam Society*, Bangkok, 1988, Vol. 76.
  77. Ibid.