

UNDER DURESS: LAO WAR CAPTIVES AT BANGKOK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract

Over the course of the Thonburi period and the first five reigns of the Bangkok era, large numbers of Lao war captives were transported to Siam. While most of those prisoners were settled as slaves in the outlying provinces, the core of the captive Lao aristocracy along with their retinues of nobles and craftsmen were settled in Bangkok. This article examines the history of seven of the Lao settlements in Bangkok: first, the Vientiane royal compound at Bang Yi-khan and the Lao Phuan and Champasak communities at Bang Khun Phrom and Thewet, both upstream of the walled city of Bangkok; second, the Lao commoner communities at Bang Sai Kai and Ban Kruai downstream from the city; and third, Ban Lao Phuan, Ban Kraba, and Ban Ti Thong within the city. Clarification of the history of those communities provides a number of insights into the changing spatial structure and social organization of nineteenth-century Bangkok.

Love and loathing

Relations between Siam and the Lao states of the Mekong watershed soured during the Thonburi period (1767–1782). Whether that was primarily due to the dynamics of Burmese influence in the Lao country, the newly-found might and exuberant expansionism of the Thonburi regime, or personal animosities between Thonburi's King Taksin and King Si Bunyan of Vientiane remains a moot point. What is beyond dispute, however, is the decline in power of the Lao states and their reduced capacity to withstand pressure from their neighbors following the 1707 fragmentation of the kingdom of Lan Chang into the rival states of Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champasak. The result was a process of growing humiliation for the Lao at the hands of their Thai ethnic cousins. A respected pair of Lao scholars has succinctly expressed the lingering emotions as “the Lao-Thai saga of love and loathing” (Mayoury and Pheuipanh, 1994: vii).

The tensions between Thonburi and the Lao states culminated in 1778–1779 in a massive Thai military campaign against the Mekong riparian states, leading to the conquest of the Lao capital of Vientiane and the capture and transport to Thai territory of large numbers of war prisoners (*chaloei soek*), including many members of the Vientiane royal family and its entourage. Si Bunyan and his personal retinue, including several of his sons, managed to escape the fall of his capital. But his eldest son and viceroy (*uparat*), Nanthasen, and other members of the royal family were caught and carried off to Siam along with masses of war captives and other booty, including the Phra Kaew and Phra Bang Buddha images, the chief palladia of the ancient kingdom of Lan Chang. That conquest marked a historic transition of the Lao states from political independence to tributary status to Siam, immortalized, to the lasting chagrin of the Lao, by the installation of the Phra Kaew Buddha image at the spiritual center of the Thai kingdom.

The 1779 debacle set off a series of forced migrations from the Lao states into Siamese territory. Tens of thousands of captives were marched to Saraburi, and from there many were sent further afield – to Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi, and Nakhon Chaisi in the southwest and to Prachinburi and Chanthaburi in the southeast. Over the following century, several further waves of forced migration moved the bulk of the Lao population south from the Mekong watershed onto the Khorat plateau. The most dramatic march followed the crushing defeat of the Lao rebellion of 1827–1828. “The massive deportation in the wake of 1827 resulted in a five-fold disparity between the population of Laos and Thailand’s northeast (Isan). The estimated magnitude of this displacement ranges from one hundred thousand people to . . . more than three hundred thousand” (Mayoury and Pheuiphanh, 1998: 49, n. 100). A third wave followed the Thai response to the Ho incursions into the Lao states in the 1870s. It resulted in the relocation to Thai territory of lesser contingents of Phuan and Song Dam war captives from the Lao uplands bordering Vietnamese territory (Snit and Breazeale, 1988: 31).

The Lao migrations and resettlement programs caused “profound human suffering” (Snit and Breazeale, 1988: 29). “Fully two-thirds died during their journey to Siam” (Mayoury and Pheuiphanh, 1998: 42). While the three eighteenth-nineteenth century waves of Lao migration extensively depopulated and impoverished the left bank of the Mekong, they transformed the demographic face of Siam and contributed immeasurably to its long-term development. In each case those who were “swept up” (*kwat*) and carried off into Siamese captivity consisted of three groups. The largest group were common folk, who were settled as virtual serfs in under-populated provinces and districts, ever available, as war slaves (*that chaloei*), to serve the Thai elite well beyond the limits of the annual corvée that was imposed on the kingdom’s freemen (*phrai*) (Ishii, 1986b: 173-174; Chatchai, 1982).

“Captives” (*chaloei*) and “slaves” (*that*) here become virtually interchangeable terms.

The other two groups of war captives – aristocrats and artisans – were much smaller and were accorded far better treatment. Both groups were settled in close proximity to the Thai capital and placed under the protection of the Thai king (at the Grand Palace) and his viceroy (at the Front Palace). The Lao aristocracy in Bangkok were held hostage to the fidelity of their close kin who had been permitted to retain their positions as vassal rulers and ranking officials of the respective Lao principalities. They also played a useful role as intermediaries between the Thai provincial administration and the Lao communities dispersed about Siam. Similarly, the captive Lao craftsmen were valued for their contribution to the skills base of the royal artisans’ departments (*Krom Sip Mu*) serving the courts of both the Thai king and his viceroy, in particular gold- and silversmiths, bronze-casters, woodworkers, and architects and engineers. The Lao were also esteemed for their court dancers and musicians as well as for the spiritual eminence of their forest monk (*aranyawasi*) tradition.

Under traditional Siamese legal precepts all those captive people were considered royal or state slaves (*that luang, kha luang*). As property of the king, their legal status was, in effect, extra-legal. Unlike debt slaves, they lived in perpetual bondage (Ishii, 1986b: 173-174).¹ Even where they were assigned or given by the king to his loyal subordinates it was understood that they would in due course revert to the Privy Purse. Because of their status as royal property, the series of decrees issued during the Fifth Reign to free the slaves did not clarify the anomalous position of those who had been acquired by capture (permanent, or hereditary slaves) but dealt instead with the problem of debt slavery (redeemable slaves, or indentured bondsmen).²

Relatively little is known of the nineteenth century presence of Lao war captives at Bangkok for several reasons. First, communities of inferior status in the social hierarchy did not warrant documentary attention in the Thai court archives (*chotmai het*) or annals (*phongsawadan*). Second, the forced residency of Lao aristocrats as war captives at the Thai capital carried a stigma among the Lao themselves, which did not favor close documentation or long memories.³ Third, the

¹Chatchai (1982: 39) refers to the body price (*kha tua*) at which war captives could presumably free themselves under the legal code of 1805, but it was set at a rate that could not be met.

²The first of those acts, promulgated in 1874, identified seven classes of slaves: debt-slaves, the offspring of debt-slaves, children sold into slavery by their parents, slaves sold by their owners, those who entered into slavery to escape debt or other trouble, those who entered slavery to escape famine, those captured in war. But implementation – as distinct from legislation – of that and subsequent acts does not appear to have taken war slaves into specific account (Chatchai, 1982: 202ff).

³An exception is *Nirat bang yi-khan* (Travel Reminiscence on Bang Yi-khan), by Khun Phum, a lesser member of the Vientiane aristocracy and native of Bangkok’s Bang Yi-khan Lao community.

records of the Front Palace, which had special responsibility for the Lao captives, did not long survive the late nineteenth century abolition of the viceroyalty. Lastly, the gradual easing of the “slave” status of particular communities was deliberately kept off-the-record to avoid invidious comparisons and unrest in other, less favored communities, and to forestall diplomatic unpleasanties with the Western powers. But enough information has filtered through, much of it from temple records and some of it circumstantial, to permit a brief review of the histories of two Lao communities (Bang Yi-khan and Bang Khun Phrom) upstream from the walled city of Bangkok, two communities (Bang Sai Kai and Ban Kruai) downstream, and three (Ban Lao Phuan, Ban Kraba, and Ban Ti Thong) within the city itself.

Upstream

One of the many striking parallels between the Siamese and Lao political systems to the end of the Vientiane dynasty in 1828 was the administrative role assigned to the viceroy (*uparat*, nearly always the king’s senior son). The viceroy of Vientiane was accorded responsibility for oversight of the subject principalities to the north, including Chiang Khwang and Sip Song Chu Thai, home of the Phuan and Song Dam ethnic groups. Correspondingly, the king of Siam traditionally assigned his viceroy special authority in dealing with the northern territories of Lan Na and Lan Chang. That explains why at Bangkok both the Lao royal compound at Bang Yi-khan and the cross-river Lao Phuan settlement at Bang Khun Phrom were located just north of the walled city, a short distance from the Front Palace.⁴

Bang Yi-khan (see Map 1)

The Lao royal captives of the 1779 conquest of Vientiane – headed by Si Bunyasan’s eldest son, Nanthasen, his eldest daughter, Khiawkhom, and a younger son, Anuwong – arrived at Thonburi around 1780. They were settled along the right bank of the Chao Phraya River upstream from the walled city, at Bang Yi-khan, under close oversight from the fortified compound of the conquering general, Chaophraya Surasi, situated at Bang Lamphu directly across the river. Nanthasen did not stay at Thonburi long. He was appointed king of Vientiane in 1781 and immediately returned home to take up his post as vassal ruler. Upon his arrival at Vientiane in 1782 his brothers Inthawong (the new viceroy) and Phromwong were dispatched

⁴Similarly, the residences that the Chiangmai (Lan Na) aristocracy maintained for their frequent ceremonial visits to Bangkok were situated at the mouth of Khlong Samsen, 3.4 kilometers upriver from the Front Palace. In the early 1890s a new mansion was built for Chao Inthanon, the chief of Chiangmai, along the river at Bangkok Noi, directly across from the Front Palace (Sarassawadee, 2005: 242).

to join Anuwong at Bangkok as royal hostages. For that and several subsequent reigns the Lao royal compound at Bang Yi-khan remained the Bangkok residence of Vientiane's royal hostages and their retinues, and therefore it came to be called Wang Lao (S. Plainoi, 2002: 101).

Inthawong, accompanied by Phromwong, arrived at Bangkok in 1783. When, after the death of Nanthasen, Inthawong ascended to the throne of Vientiane in 1797, Anuwong was appointed his viceroy. And then, when Inthawong died in 1804, Anuwong succeeded him. Thus, three sons of Si Bunyan in turn served as viceroy of Vientiane and each of them in turn succeeded to the throne. In each instance the Lao viceroy spent much of his time at Bang Yi-khan representing the interests of Vientiane at the court of Bangkok. That tradition continued with the appointment of Anuwong's son Khli as viceroy in 1804. However, when Anuwong started plotting rebellion against Rama III around 1825, Khli quietly withdrew from the vicerealty and was replaced by Anuwong's half-brother Tissa.

The Thai-Lao war of 1827-1828 was lost by Anuwong, with tragic consequences. Not only was Vientiane looted and razed to the ground, but tens of thousands of Lao peasants were removed from their homeland and forcibly resettled as war slaves in the Thai provinces. Anuwong and many members of his household, including several of his wives and a number of his 23 children, were tortured and executed at Bangkok. Included in the booty brought to Bangkok in 1828 was the Phra Bang Buddha image, which had been returned to Vientiane in 1782 upon the elevation of Nanthasen. Rubbing salt into the Lao wounds, Rama III had the Phra Bang image installed in a special pavilion at Wat Samploem, near the site of Anuwong's execution.⁵ Tissa, Anuwong's half-brother and viceroy, responsible for the eastern flank of the Lao military campaign, opted at the last moment to defect to the Thai cause. His desertion left Anuwong at a fatal disadvantage at the decisive battles of Sompoi and Khaosan. For his loyalty to the Siamese throne Tissa was designated chief Lao representative at Bangkok, though he was despised by his own people and largely written out of history. He was eventually awarded the Bangkok monopoly (*akon*) on alcoholic beverages and established a distillery along the river at Bang Yi-khan, on the former site of Wang Lao (Pramuan, 1939: 78).⁶

Of the survivors of the royal culling of 1828, a number of the daughters of Bang Yi-khan were absorbed into the Thai elite as wives and consorts. Many of the surviving sons found their way into government service in the Fourth and Fifth Reigns, and some rose to high rank as provincial governors and lesser officials in

⁵Among his efforts to redress the excesses of the Third Reign, Rama IV in 1867 returned the palladium, this time to Luang Prabang, as Vientiane had been utterly destroyed.

⁶The distillery site, today near the foot of the Rama VIII Bridge, has been designated to become a music conservatory dedicated to the memory of Princess Galyani Vadhana, the recently deceased elder sister of Rama IX.

the Thai Northeast. Stemming from those survivors of the Vientiane dynasty today are the Chaliwan, Chanthanakon, and Sithisaribut lineages (Pramuan, 1939: 78-80), but no Lao remnants are evident any longer at Bang Yi-khan.

The Bang Yi-khan community maintained a direct presence at the Siamese court through a series of remarkable women. Si Bunyasan's eldest daughter, Khiawkhom, had been a cause of dissent between Vientiane and Siam when negotiations concerning an inter-dynastic marriage in 1771 and again in 1775 were bogged down (Wyatt, 1994: 187, 190-191). In the 1779 conquest of Vientiane she was among the royal family members captured and transported to Bangkok. She was installed in the royal harem during the First Reign, but there is no indication that any amorous relationship ever developed between her and Rama I. Another member of the Lao royal family, Thongsuk, daughter of Inthawong, did bear a child by Rama I. Her daughter, Princess Kunthon Thipayawadi, was raised to the rank of celestial princess (*chao fa*) because of her dual royal lineage. She had the further distinction of being raised to a queen of Rama II and bore four children, of whom Prince Bamrap Porapak, popularly known as Prince Maha Mala and forebear of the Malakul lineage, later played an important role as patron of the Lao communities at Bangkok and Saraburi.

In addition to these political alliances, Rama I succumbed to a romance with Khamwaen (otherwise known as Waen), the daughter of a Lao nobleman and herself a lady-in-waiting to Princess Khiawkhom. Despite her relatively low status within the ruling class, the king raised her to First-Class Royal Consort (*chaochom chan ek*). She came to wield great influence as a confidant of the king and capable representative of the Lao cause. None of the other Lao royal and noble women taken into the palace in that or subsequent reigns ever managed to equal her achievement. Nevertheless, Waen did suffer one great disappointment in failing to bear a child. She sought to overcome that misfortune through numerous meritorious acts, including the establishment of two important Lao-affiliated temples at Bangkok (Sansani, 2007: 3-10).

One of those merit-making projects was pursued by her at Bang Yi-khan. In the later years of the First Reign she founded Wat Khrua In, situated in the orchards behind the riverside settlement, along a branch of Khlong Bang Yi-khan. The temple was named after Phra Achan In, a renowned Lao meditation practitioner who was installed as its first abbot. After an auspicious beginning, the temple was expanded and upgraded in the Second Reign by Princess Kunthon Thipayawadi, a granddaughter of Inthawong, and was renamed Wat Dawadoeng-sawan (referring to Indra's heaven). Late in the Third Reign it was rebuilt on an expanded scale and formally raised to royal patronage as Wat Dawadoeng-saram – the suffix *aram*

referring to its royal status.⁷ But with the decline of the local Lao royal community the temple gradually deteriorated. By the later years of the Fifth Reign it had been abandoned by all its resident monks but the abbot (Wat Dawadoeng, 2004: 54–58). Meager local support during the Sixth and Seventh Reigns was barely sufficient to keep the temple afloat.⁸

Bang Khun Phrom (see Map 1)

Under the vigorous rule of Nanthasen, resurgent Vientiane in 1786 and again in 1794 invaded Chiang Khwang, capital of the recalcitrant Phuan state in the Lao uplands north of Vientiane. Thousands of Lao Phuan captives were carried off to the Thai hinterlands (Breazeale, 2002: 265; Bung-on, 1998: 40–42). Several contingents arrived at Bangkok around 1789 as tribute and were settled upstream from the walled city, directly across the river from Bang Yi-khan. There they were set to work fashioning pirogues (*roea phai*), massive hollowed-out logs fashioned into fresh-water naval craft, the lesser cousins of the magnificent royal barges for which Thailand is renowned today. At the mouth of the canal flowing through their settlement they dug a boat basin (*khung*) for storing and turning their boats.⁹ Inthawong, at that time the Vientiane viceroy and ranking member of Bangkok's Lao establishment, assumed the role of patron to the community. The new community came to be known as Bang Lao Phuan. The origin of its later name, Bang Khun Phrom, is unknown, though it may derive from Phromwong, the younger brother of Nanthasen and Inthawong, who has left no other trace.

⁷Around the same time, two other temples closely associated with the Lao royal settlement were built at Bang Yi-khan. Wat Khroehabodi was established shortly after 1824 on the former residential site of a Chinese merchant and confidant of Rama III recently promoted to Phraya Racha-montri Borirak. As a conciliatory gesture to the neighboring Lao community at Bang Yi-khan, Rama III contributed to the new temple the Phra Saek Kham Buddha image, which had been among the plunder carried off from Vientiane in 1779. The other temple, Wat Phraya Siri Aisawan, situated alongside Wat Dawadoeng, was founded in the late Third Reign by the head of the Front Palace treasury, who had been assigned to collaborate with Tissa in administering the alcohol monopoly and Bang Yi-khan distillery.

⁸In recent years, with rising commercial prosperity in the shadow of the newly-built Pin Klao and Rama VIII bridges in the area, the temple has experienced a revival. With that transformation, virtually no local memory of any past association with the Lao royal family lingers on, other than the formal record of the temple's establishment by Chaochom Waen and its renovation by Princess Kunthon.

⁹The former *khung* is now buried beneath a massive annex to the Bank of Thailand.

A cluster of temples marks the site of the original Lao Phuan settlement, including Wat Worammat (rebuilt and renamed Wat Mai Amatarot), Wat Woranut (today Wat Iam Woranut), and Wat Intharam (today Wat Inthara-wihan, popularly referred to as Wat In). Of particular interest is Wat In, which had originally been founded by Chinese settlers during the Ayutthaya era, about 1752, as Wat Rai Prik (Temple in the Pepper Fields) and had apparently been abandoned following the collapse of Ayutthaya. The Lao Phuan captives revived the dilapidated temple for their own use. As overseer of the Phuan community during his tenure as Lao viceroy residing at Bangkok, Inthawong sponsored the temple's reconstruction and appointed a renowned meditation master from Vientiane to serve as its first abbot. Upon Inthawong's installation as ruler of Vientiane the temple was reconsecrated as Wat Intharam in his honor (O'Connor, 1978: 124; Wat Inthara-wihan, 1994: 25, 87–88). Its Lao royal sponsorship was affirmed by the incorporation of the honorific suffix, *aram*, in its name. That the Siamese Crown, too, patronized the temple is affirmed by the order of Rama II in 1817 including Wat In among the 33 royal temples of Bangkok to receive lanterns and lantern poles as a meritorious offering (Wat Inthara-wihan, 2001: 44–46). However, in the wake of the 1827–1828 Lao rebellion and the subsequent loss of royal patronage, the temple fell upon hard times.

Instead, Wat In and the surrounding Lao community found a powerful benefactor in a charismatic monk, Somdet Phra Phuthachan (To Phrom-rangsi, 1787–1871). His parents had been early residents of the Lao Phuan settlement. In his youth he had studied at Wat In as a disciple of its first abbot, and he had gone on to monastic ordination and advanced meditation studies with other masters, gaining such esteem that he was eventually appointed abbot of Wat Rakhang Kositaram, one of Bangkok's most prestigious temples, located at the center of Thonburi directly across the river from the Grand Palace. Despite his rise in the clergy he maintained lifelong contact with Bang Khun Phrom and Wat In. In 1867, at the advanced age of 80, he decided to commemorate his origins with the construction at Wat In of a gigantic standing Buddha image (32 meters tall, not completed until 1926), murals on the ordination hall walls depicting his biography, a reputedly magic well dispensing holy water, and a shrine memorializing his parents (Wat Inthara-wihan, 1994: 40–43). His sponsorship of the temple's revival is today well-remembered, though the community's memory of its Lao Phuan ancestry has faded.

Another temple associated with the nineteenth century Lao Phuan settlement was Wat Saraphat Chang (Temple of Assorted Artisans). After Champasak was taken by the Thai in 1827, its ruler, Yo, a faithful son of the rebellious Anuwong, was dethroned and a new ruler, more trusted by Bangkok, was installed. "Yo, his family, his goldsmiths, and his blacksmiths were conducted to Bangkok" (Mayoury and Pheuiphanh, 1998: 221). Yo and his family were disposed of, but his captive retainers were settled alongside Bang Khun Phrom, in the neighborhood later

known as Thewet.¹⁰ There they built Wat Saraphat Chang, which fell into decline and was abandoned during the course of the Fifth Reign. In the early 1900s the site was razed and incorporated into a palace for Prince Nakhon Sawan, a son of Rama V, leaving no trace of its earlier presence. The possessions of Wat Saraphat Chang were removed, with the main Buddha image being transferred to the congregation hall of Wat Iam Woranut, where it remains today, revered as Luang Pho Saraphat Chang.

In 1898 Bang Khun Phrom was bisected with the construction of a major new thoroughfare, Samsen Road, running north from the walled city. Samsen Road was initially planned as a royal passage from the Grand Palace to the Suan Dusit district, where a great new royal palace complex was to be laid out for Rama V. That plan was soon revised with the construction of the far grander Rachadamnoen Avenue, but Samsen Road remained an important route, opening Bangkok's northern suburbs to vehicular traffic. As a straight, broad thoroughfare intended for royal use, the right-of-way of Samsen Road required the severe truncating of Wat Woranut. That moved the center of community life fully to Wat In, which had formerly stood at the settlement's periphery as an important but socially distant monastic sanctuary.

Wang Bang Khun Phrom, the palace of Prince Nakhon Sawan, was planned around the same time as the construction of Samsen Road. Its layout directly across Samsen Road from Wat In required the acquisition of two parcels of temple land – the site of the abandoned Wat Saraphat Chang and the strip of land cut off from the rear of Wat In by the construction of Samsen Road. Ancient tradition decreed the sacrosanct status of monastic land, but after lengthy negotiations between the Privy Purse and the ecclesiastical authorities it was agreed in 1904 that a 100-*rai* plot of Crown Property at Minburi, a district northeast of Bangkok populated by many Lao villages, would be ceded to Wat In for the Wat Saraphat Chang site. It took until 1914 to transfer possession of the Wat In temple strip along Samsen Road in exchange for the then-substantial sum of 9,590 baht (Wat Inthara-wihan, 1994: 192-206).¹¹

¹⁰The riverside tract comprising Thewet stretched from Wat Saraphat Chang to Wat Thepaya Phli (later re-established as Wat Noranat Sunthon). In 1895 Wang Thewet, the palace of Prince Chanthaburi Naroenat, was built at the mouth of Khlong Phadung Krung Kasem, and in 1918 Wang Thewawet, given by Rama VI to Prince Thewawong Waropakan, was installed between Wang Thewet and Wang Bang Khun Phrom, completing the transformation of the Thewet riverfront from a commoners' community to a palatial neighborhood.

¹¹Wang Bang Khun Phrom was in 1933 converted to the Army Headquarters and in 1946 to the Bank of Thailand (established 1942), which continues to occupy the site today.

In the Sixth Reign the name of Wat Intharam was changed to Wat Inthara-wihan to eliminate confusion with another Wat Intharam, located along Khlong Bangkok Yai, Thonburi. With that name change, any lingering association of the temple with royal patronage (including the suffix *aram*) was eliminated. That change had little local significance, however, as the temple had long been popularly known as Wat Bang Khun Phrom Nai – as distinct from Wat Bang Khun Phrom Nok, or Wat Mai Amatarot. Only in recent decades has it become common once again to refer to the temple as Wat In.¹²

Downstream

While Bangkok's upstream communities were assigned to the oversight of the Front Palace, the bulk of the walled city and the districts downstream were retained under the direct supervision of the Grand Palace. That north-south symmetry complemented Bangkok's inner-outer structuring as a basic spatial ordering principle of nineteenth century Thai society. Thus, the contingents of war slaves brought to Bangkok to serve the respective courts occupied separate zones of habitation. The royal chronicles (Thipakorawong, 1978: 58–60) record that for the construction of the new capital in 1783/84, the king conscripted 10,000 Cambodians to dig a new city moat and several related canals. In addition, he mobilized 5,000 Lao from the principalities along the west bank of the Mekong River to erect the city wall and its bastions as well as the Grand Palace and Front Palace. The Cambodians were settled outside the city wall and city moat due east of the Grand Palace, in the tract between Wat Samploem and Wat Saket later known as Ban Khmer. The Lao conscripts were consigned to an isolated tract across the river, along the outer bank of Khlong Bangkok Yai (popularly known as Khlong Bang Luang), beyond the Thonburi precincts.

Bang Sai Kai (see Map 3)

The king's Lao conscripts who settled at the confluence of Khlong Bang Luang and Khlong Bang Sai Kai served as manual labor in the construction of the new city. In addition to the city wall and bastions they probably helped build Wat Phra Chetuphon and Wat Mahathat, and subsequently Wat Suthat, and they may have dug Khlong Khanon (later renamed Khlong Ban Somdet Chaophraya, or Khlong Talat Somdet) and Khlong San, both on the Thonburi side of the river not far distant

¹²Over the course of the Ninth Reign, Wat Inthara-wihan has regained royal patronage, with the king or his designated representatives officiating at a number of renovation ceremonies and making generous donations.

from their settlement. They may also have participated in the Second Reign project to extend the rear wall and reposition the bastions of the Grand Palace.

The settlement at Khlong Bang Luang was originally known as Ban Lao, or Ban Lao Siphum, after Khun Siphum, its Lao headman. Many decades later, after most of the Lao had moved elsewhere, the village name was revised to Bang Sai Kai, merging with a neighboring Thai village of that name. Alongside the community the settlers dug Khlong Lat Ban Lao Siphum, a shortcut canal reaching to the older Khlong Wat Hiran Ruchi downstream. An adjoining canal, Khlong Suan Lao, took its name from the sprawling fruit orchards (*suan*) that the Lao planted behind their settlement. They also built a village temple, Wat Ban Lao, which was eventually renamed Wat Bang Sai Kai (S. Plainoi, 2002: 102; Wat Bang Sai Kai, n.d.: 2–3).

Local legend has it that the construction of Wat Bang Sai Kai was initially sponsored by Nanthasen and Inthawong but that the two princes argued and then abandoned the project. Actually, Nanthasen had departed for Vientiane before the settlement was founded. It appears, therefore, that Inthawong alone was the original sponsor while serving as the Lao viceroy and that he abandoned the project to build Wat Intharam following the 1789 arrival of the Lao Phuan at Bang Khun Phrom. It is said that a pious Sino-Thai tradeswoman, Yai Choen, was then prevailed upon to sponsor the completion of the temple (Wat Bang Sai Kai, n.d.: 3).

Directly across Khlong Bang Luang from Bang Sai Kai, Chaochom Waen during the First Reign sponsored the reconstruction of an old temple later renamed Wat Sangkrachai. The parallels between that merit-making project and Waen's sponsorship of Wat Dawadoeng at Bang Yi-khan are self-evident. The original temple, name unknown, dates to the closing years of the Ayutthaya period but apparently remained incomplete into the First Reign. Rama I joined Waen in sponsoring the construction of the ordination hall. In preparing the structure's foundation the builders unearthed a conch (*sang[kh]*) and a small gilded-bronze image of Phra Kachai (or Phra Sangkachai, a revered disciple of the Buddha himself destined for a future incarnation as Buddha). The king then formally established the temple as Wat Sangkachai (Sang[kh]-kachai, later revised to Sangkrachai). Waen retained a close association with the temple, sponsoring the renovation of its ordination hall during the Second Reign. Following her death shortly thereafter and the bequest of her estate to Princess Kunthon Thiphayawadi, a garden tract she owned directly alongside was donated to the temple in her memory (Wat Sangkrachai, 1990: 1–8; Royal Institute, 2007: 3–5).

As will be seen below, Bang Sai Kai lost the bulk of its Lao population around 1828 upon the decision of Rama III to establish royal shipyards along the river at Yannawa and provide them with a labor force of Lao war captives. In the wake of the removal of most of the Lao captives to Yannawa, Bang Sai Kai reverted

to the inconsequential Thai peasant village that it had formerly been, its Lao temple fell into disrepair, and its surroundings are said to have gradually declined into a trackless jungle inhabited by poisonous snakes and giant trees (Wat Bang Sai Kai, n.d.: 3–4).

A decade later, toward the end of the Third Reign, the area encountered a sudden revival upon the decision of Chamoen Waiworanat (Chuang Bunnag), a leading military officer destined to rise to Minister of the South (*Kalahom*) as Chaophraya Si Suriyawong, to establish a naval shipyard along Khlong Bang Luang, directly across from Wat Sangkhrachai, on the site of the former Lao settlement (Thipakorawong, 1995: 38). In the new shipyard Chaophraya Si Suriyawong directed the construction and outfitting of some of Siam's first small steamboats, which he placed at the disposal of Rama IV. To man the new facility a body of Mon shipwrights was brought from the naval base at Paknam. They established a permanent community neighboring the shipyard and built there a Mon temple, Wat Pradit. A neighboring canal, Khlong Ban Somdet, was rechanneled from Khlong Bang Luang to discharge into Khlong Bang Sai Kai. That changed course demarcated the shipyard and Mon settlement from the Bunnag family estates that were introduced into the area in the Fourth and Fifth Reigns (Anon., 1999: 348).¹³

The tract across Khlong Ban Somdet from the naval shipyard, containing Wat Bang Sai Kai and remnants of the former Lao community as well as a cluster of noblemen's mansions, was gradually repopulated over the course of the Fifth Reign by Thai and Chinese market gardeners as the Bangkok metropolis prospered and expanded. The village of Bang Sai Kai and its temple revived, but under a new ethnic label. In 1890 the consecrated area of Wat Bang Sai Kai was clarified and confirmed by the local authorities. With the monastic (*sangha*) administrative reforms of the 1890s and Sangha Act of 1902, the temple was formally upgraded from an unregistered monastery (*samnak song*) to an officially recognized temple (*aram*, a term no longer restricted only to royal temples) designated as a legitimate venue for the ordination of monks (Wat Bang Sai Kai, n.d.: 5–6; Ishii, 1986a: 69–70). A shadow of the former Lao presence at Bang Sai Kai lingers on today in folk memories of the community's past and in the continuing local handicraft industry of Lao musical instrument production (Phromphong, 2004: 45–57).

¹³The two aforementioned sources have left a confused record. Thipakorawong (1995) deceptively includes the establishment of the Khlong Bang Luang shipyard under the chronology of events for 1828 though it happened many years later, perhaps in 1848. Anon. (1999) misplaces the shipyard alongside Wat Anongkaram, at Ban Somdet (the mansion of Chaophraya Si Suriyawong) rather than at the identically named Ban Somdet (the cluster of Bunnag homes built in the Fifth Reign at the confluence of Khlong Ban Somdet and Khlong Bang Sai Kai which is today the site of the sprawling Ban Somdet Chaophraya Rachapat University).

Ban Kruai (see Map 4)

In 1769 King Taskin led a naval expedition to the South to conquer Nakhon Si Thammarat, which had been a tributary state (*prathet rat*) of Ayutthaya but had claimed independence after the fall of the Siamese kingdom. The ruler of that small state, Chao Nakhon (Nu), and his family were carried off to Thonburi. In 1776 the court favorite who had been installed by King Taksin as vassal ruler of the conquered state died, and Nu was then permitted to return home and resume his reign, having provided Taksin with three of his daughters as consorts – and, in effect, hostages.

During their seven-year exile at Thonburi, Chao Nakhon (Nu) and his household were initially placed under virtual house arrest within the city walls. After about two years they were allowed to establish an independent residential compound on a 200-*rai* tract some four kilometers downstream from the walled city, along the left bank of the river neighboring Ban Tawai, at the mouth of Khlong Kruai (*kruai* means “funnel” and apparently refers here to the gaping mouth and fine anchorage of the canal passing alongside the residential tract).¹⁴ Chao Nakhon also received permission to build a temple along the river near his residence. It was built in 1771–1772 as one of his first projects upon moving to the downriver tract; no record of its name survives (Suthiwarapiwat, 2006: 11). Over the ensuing decades the compound at Khlong Kruai remained a minor presence along the lower reaches of the Chaophraya River, serving as the Bangkok quarters of the Nakhon Si Thammarat ruling elite during their frequent visits to the capital.

In 1833 Siam mounted the first of a series of attacks on Vietnamese territory with the dispatch of a 10,000-man naval flotilla against Ha Tien and Saigon. Preparations for that expedition began in 1828 with the requisitioning and refitting of many Chinese junks to serve as troop carriers and the construction of a fleet of marine barges to ensure adequate food and munitions. That preparatory work was conducted in secrecy under the supervision of the Minister of Finance and Foreign Affairs (*Phra Khlang*, also supervising the Ministry of the South), Chaophraya Prayurawong (Dit Bunnag), in cooperation with Chao Nakhon (Noi, the successor to Nu). The work was carried out along the shoreline fronting the Chao Nakhon residential compound, a river stretch that came to be known as Yannawa (*yan nawa*, the Maritime District) (Thipakorawong, 1995: 37–38). To man the sawmills and shipyards at Yannawa, Rama III ordered the resettlement of the able-bodied Lao war captives from Bang Sai Kai. They established their new community at Ban Kruai, neighboring the residential compound of Chao Nakhon, and adopted

¹⁴ That residence is today commemorated in the name of Phraya Nakhon Lane (Soi 69 along Charoen Krung Road).

the local temple for their own use, leading to its vernacular renaming as Wat Lao, reminiscent of the Wat Lao that they had left behind at Bang Sai Kai.

Writing of his arrival at Bangkok in 1840, a British mariner recalled some years later that the Bangkok dockyards were situated downriver from the Roman Catholic Mission (Assumption Cathedral), three miles below the walled city. “Here those splendid ships which compose the King of Siam’s navy, and which would do credit to any nation, were constructed, under the immediate supervision of an English shipwright; and here vessels of any other nation, that may have met with damage at sea, are thoroughly, and at a very cheap outlay, repaired. There are also one or two dry docks” (Neale, 1852: 25). Toward the close of his reign, Rama III commemorated those royal shipyards in his renaming of the nearby temple, Wat Khok Kraboe, as Wat Yannawa, and in his construction at that temple of a large stupa with its base in the shape of a Chinese junk. The continuing presence of the Lao community at Yannawa is referred to in a *fin-de-siècle* Bangkok memoir that recalls Wat Lao and the village of Lao immigrants who settled the area during the Third Reign (Sthirakoses, 1992: 26, 27).

In 1864 Rama IV decided to build the city’s first major thoroughfare, Charoen Krung Road. It stretched southward parallel with the river, passing directly behind the old royal shipyards and sawmills at Yannawa. The right-of-way ran through the midst of Wat Lao, leaving the temple severely truncated (Suthiwarapiwat, 2006: 1–2). No longer interested in maintaining the old royal shipyards, the king decided to rent the riverside property to commercial interests. The first leaseholder was Captain John Bush, a British seafarer serving as Bangkok Harbormaster with the title Luang (later Phraya) Wisut Sakhondit. His firm, the Bangkok Dock Company, located adjacent to Wat Yannawa, survives to this day. Additional parcels of the Yannawa waterfront were later leased to a line of Western agency houses – Markwald and Company (German), Windsor Rose and Company (German), and the Borneo Company (British) – which established their docks and warehouses there, eventually controlling a substantial portion of Siam’s rice export trade and passenger liner transport (Wilson, 1978: 247–250, 254; Suthiwarapiwat, 2006: 2). Rama IV also donated a plot of Yannawa waterfront land to the British community for the erection of their Anglican church, the Union Chapel.¹⁵ The Lao of Ban Kruai, no longer toiling as war captives, found employment as stevedores and warehousemen with the Western firms.

In 1881 Madame Suthi, wife of Chaophraya Wichiankiri (Men na Songkhla, sixth governor of Songkhla) and a descendant of Chao Nakhon (Noi), rebuilt the badly dilapidated Wat Lao, and Rama V upgraded its name to Wat Suthi-wararam

¹⁵The Union Chapel was moved in 1903 to Convent Road at the corner of Sathon Road and was renamed Christ Church.

in recognition of its benefactor. Less than two decades later the temple was again in need of repair, and Pan Wacharapai, daughter of Chaophraya Wichiankiri and Madame Suthi, rebuilt the entire temple in memory of her parents. The rear of the Windsor Rose property, cut off from the temple a generation earlier for the construction of Charoen Krung Road, was reacquired by the temple in 1911 to build the Suthi-wararam School, again under the patronage of the descendants of Chao Nakhon (Noi) (Suthiwarapiwat, 2006: 2-3).¹⁶

City

“The landscape of Old Bangkok was a visible representation of the structure of society” (Tomosugi, 1991: 127). Specifically, the strict hierarchy of Siamese society occupied a spatial dimension of concentric rings of ascending status from outer to inner. The rural hinterlands were inhabited by the Thai peasantry as well as farming communities of Lao war captives and other ethnic minorities seeking refuge under the provincial authorities. The Bangkok periphery was peopled largely by communities of non-Thai specialists – mercenaries, merchants, artisans – serving the Thai aristocracy. The walled city (Krung Ratanakosin) was reserved for the Thai élite. Within that restricted zone the royal family was initially confined to the “citadel” circumscribed by the river and the inner city moat (Khu Moeang Doem, or Khlong Lot) but eventually spread beyond those confines in the face of spatial constraints. The nobility populated the less crowded “outer city” (between the inner and outer city moats), though some of them were initially allowed to occupy the fringes of the citadel itself.¹⁷

¹⁶ Upon Siam’s entry into the First World War on the side of the Allies in 1917, the docks, warehouses, inventories, and ships of the German firms, Windsor Rose and Markwald, were confiscated as war booty. The leased Yannawa riverside property also reverted to the Crown. With those newly acquired assets the government established the Siam Steamship Company (later reorganized as the Siam Maritime Navigation Company), operating out of the former German facilities (Greene, 1999: 105-109, 136). In the years following the 1932 Revolution, the waterfront where the German firms had formerly stood was converted to the government-run Fish Marketing Organization, Bangkok Fish Market, Cold Storage Organization, and Fisheries Technical Development Department, and the area came to be known as Saphan Pla (Fish Bridge).

¹⁷ A major exception to the élite’s residential exclusivity within the walled city was the inconspicuous presence of large numbers of household slaves, serving in the residential compounds of the élite and vouched for by their masters. Another was the lingering presence of several small commoner communities, holdovers from the Thonburi era settled along the outer bank of Khu Moeang Doem – Ban Yuan (Vietnamese hostages from Ha Tien), Ban Mon (Mon refugees from Tavoy), Ban Tanao (Mon refugees from Tenasserim), and Ban Tani (Malay war captives from Pattani).

Ban Lao Phuan (see Map 2)

When, in 1818, Rama II decided to build an elaborate pleasure garden, Suan Khwa, in the Grand Palace, Anuwong, then the viceroy of Vientiane and resident at Bangkok, offered the services of a contingent of Lao Phuan laborers to dig the garden's elaborate layout of ponds, meandering streams, and islets (S. Plainoi, 2002: 102; Khaisaeng, 1996: 107–123). For that task it appears that he recruited a sizable group of the settlers at Bang Khun Phrom. The death of Prince Senanurak, the viceroy of Rama II, only a year before had left Anuwong freer than he otherwise might have been to reassign a group of his subjects to the king's service. To allow ready access to the construction site the workers were provided temporary quarters within the walled city, along the outer bank of the old city moat, adjacent to the old settlement of Ban Yuan. With the death of Rama II and installation of Rama III, Anuwong appealed for their repatriation – along with the many other Lao war captives being held at Bangkok and Saraburi – but his plea fell on deaf ears, contributing to his decision to initiate the Thai-Lao war of 1827–1828. In the aftermath of the Lao defeat, that same contingent of war captives may have been called on to carry out the demolition of Suan Khwa, ordered by Rama III to obliterate that unsavory reminder of Anuwong's former connection with the Grand Palace.

The royal chronicles refer to this community in passing. “[One early afternoon in mid-1831] a fire broke out within the walled city. It spread from the Drum Tower to the elephant bridge at Ban Mo. The fire spread to both sides of the [inner city moat], reaching the residence of Phraya Si Sahathep and extending along both banks of the canal up to the bridge at Ban Mon because that area contained the huts of Ban Lao Phuan, which were dry as tinder. The fire burned down a number of princes' palaces [on the citadel side of the moat] and nobles' residences [on the outer side of the moat]. Many people died in the fire” (Thipakorawong, 1995:45). This unusually vivid description of a local disaster places the location of Ban Lao Phuan along the outer bank of the old city moat, next to the old Mon community.¹⁸

The devastating fire of 1831 destroyed the palace of Prince Phithak Thewet, and he subsequently built a new palace (later called Wang Ban Mo) on the site of the burned-down Lao village, forcing the Lao to rebuild their hovels southward, towards Pak Khlung Talat (the downstream mouth of the old city moat). Prince Phithak served with the Royal Cavalry's Elephantry Department (*Krom Khochaban*), its stables located in the royal gardens (*suan luang*) across the moat from the Lao Phuan village. It is likely that the slaves served the royal elephants under his charge,

¹⁸The Lao Phuan settled alongside Ban Mo (Potters' Village), an adjunct to Ban Mon, the residential site of Phraya Si Sahathep and his entourage (Phromphong, 2004: 84–86). That village name was eventually extended to incorporate the Lao village locale as well

cleaning out their stables and giving them their daily bath in the neighboring moat. The village was too small, too poor, and too transient to establish its own temple; instead, the Lao built several worship pavilions (*sala rong tham*) along Foeang Nakhon Road which monks from such nearby temples as Wat Rachabophit and Wat Suthat visited to conduct prayer sessions and communal rituals (Tomosugi, 1993: 40).

The war slaves at Ban Lao Phuan were later assigned to the Department of Guardians of the Women's Quarters (*Krom Khlon*), an agency of the Ministry of the Royal Household (*Krom Wang*) run by senior ladies of the Inside (*fai nai* or *khang nai*, the Grand Palace women's quarters). Under their charge, the slaves were assigned to such menial duties as the upkeep of the latrines and sewage culverts in the densely populated women's quarters of the Grand Palace. In the closing decades of the Fifth Reign the Ministry of the Royal Household dispensed with its reliance on slave labor and left the Lao Phuan to fend for themselves as freemen. Then, around 1900, the king decided to improve their neighborhood edging the inner city moat, and the Privy Purse erected lines of handsome shophouses along both sides of Foeang Nakhon Road, in the early decades of the twentieth century a fashionable shopping street. To make way for that project, the Lao Phuan were evicted from the area.

Ban Lao, or Ban Kraba (see Map 2)

The evicted Lao community was provided a new settlement site nearby, in a tract of reclaimed wasteland behind Wang Burapha, the palace of Prince Phanuphan Wongworadet. There it replicated its former squalor (Bung-on, 1998: 41).¹⁹ The neighborhood was known as Ban Kraba in recognition of its primary industry, the production of household wickerware including various sorts of lidded and unlidded containers and trays (*kraba*) (Sthirakoses, 2002: 24–25; Phromphong, 2004: 105–106). It also specialized in the raising of mosquito larvae (*luk nam*), sold as fish food to devotees of the popular gamblers' hobby of fighting fish (*pla kat*). The nearby Sam Yot and Saphan Than neighborhoods, Bangkok's premier entertainment center of the time, provided them with additional work as snack vendors, lottery dealers, and less reputable employments (Sthirakoses, 1992: 160–161; Tomosugi, 1993: 42–43). The area was upgraded in the first decade of the twentieth century with the creation of Sanam Nam Choet (Potable Water Field), featuring Bangkok's first government-sponsored artesian well, which emptied into a large

¹⁹Bung-on (1998) places the origin of this community in the First Reign, a century earlier.

tank that provided drinking water for the surrounding neighborhood.²⁰ The field was rimmed by tenements providing upgraded, hygienic, fire-resistant habitation for the local community.²¹

Ban Ti Thong

Among the variety of Lao artisans carried off to Bangkok over the course of the nineteenth century were a number of goldsmiths. One small group of those war captives was, in the wake of the Thai-Lao war of 1827–1828, apparently provided to Chaophraya Prayurawong (Dit Bunnag) and settled near his residence along the right bank of the river downstream from Thonburi. There the community of Ban Chang Thong (Goldsmiths' Village) made its living in the shadow of Wat Anongkaram over the following decades, practicing its craft in the service of the noble households occupying the Khlong San district. By the turn of the century the origins of the village were becoming blurred in folk memory. Reminiscing about her forebears, Princess Mother Si Nakharin (Sangwan, 1900-1995), mother of Rama IX, recalled that her family had lived in Ban Chang Thong, where her father had been a goldsmith. "Some of my mother's forebears came from Vientiane. My mother said that seemed likely because at home they liked to eat glutinous rice" (Galyani, 1980: 9, 18).

Just as the residents of Ban Lao Phuan were in the closing decade of the nineteenth century released from their servitude in the Grand Palace, the ties of the artisans of Ban Chang Thong to their masters were also loosened. Some of them appear to have responded by moving across the river to Ban Ti Thong (Gold Beaters' Village), in the midst of the city alongside Wat Suthat, drawn by the commercial promise of the nearby Sao Ching Cha market and Bamrung Moeang Road shophouse lines (Tomosugi, 1993: 54–55; Phromphong, 2004: 19–24). Lacking the business acumen and capital to strike out on their own, they were hired by Chinese merchants to produce gold foil by the hammering of gold lumps into wafer-thin sheets and ultimately tissue-thin gold leaf. The finished product was in great demand among worshipers as a devotional item, pasted by them to icons as a meritorious act; it was also used in the classic Thai art of gold-on-black lacquerwork (*long rak pit thong*). But gold-beating (*ti thong*) was only the noisiest element in the

²⁰John Dunlop arrived at Bangkok from Singapore in 1900 to take over as manager of the Bangkok Dock Co. He quit in 1906 to start his own business as a consulting engineer and like several other Western technicians at Bangkok soon secured construction contracts from the Ministry of Public Works. Sometime before 1910, he bored the ministry's first public artesian well, at Ban Kraba, on the site that came to be known as Sanam Nam Choet.

²¹Later, in the Seventh Reign, the area was further improved with the construction of the Chaloem Krung Theater. Today much of the area is covered by The Old Siam shopping mall.

goldsmiths' repertoire of skills; a wide assortment of Lao goldsmithing techniques was on display in the Chinese shophouses along Ti Thong Road, including gold filigree work, ornamental casting and shaping, and niello inlay. Close to the center of government affairs, with the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of War only a few blocks away, Ti Thong Road gained a reputation for police and military insignia and medallions. Nearby, tailor shops competed in catering to the latest fashions in officers' uniforms; down the street were others dealing in handguns and munitions. Vestiges of that shopping area remain today, though memories of the Lao presence have all but vanished.

In sum, Ban Ti Thong rose with the emergence of Bangkok's middle class of salaried government officials during the decades spanning the turn of the twentieth century. The Chinese shophouses of Ti Thong Road and their Lao goldsmiths exemplified the new commercial fashion or entertainment of retail shopping, making the previously unattainable affordable through its well-known devices of mass production, mass distribution, and mass consumption. Formerly the Lao goldsmiths had been captive craftsmen producing luxury items to order, serving the individual tastes and specifications of their noble patrons. Freed from servitude, they became employees turning out standardized products for display to anonymous shoppers. They symbolized Bangkok's social revolution from patrimonial to commercial norms.

From war slaves to wage slaves

Beyond the nineteenth century Lao communities reviewed above, a number of additional settlements of Lao war captives were scattered about the outskirts of Bangkok. Among them were Ban Samsen Nai (centering on Wat Apai-thayaram), Bang Kapi (alongside Wang Sa Pathum and Wat Pathumwan), Nang Loeng (between Wat Somanat and Wat Sunthon Thammathan), and Taling Chan (near Wat Rachada-thithan). The Lao slaves (*kha luang*) relegated to those communities farmed the king's lands along the Bangkok periphery to supply the royal granaries, while some were contributed as acts of merit to royally sponsored temples as temple slaves (*lek wat, kha wat*). Just like the Bangkok Lao communities reviewed in the preceding sections, the slave status of those peripheral villages withered away in the closing decades of the Fifth Reign, accompanied by a progressive fading of their Lao ethnic identity and cultural memory. "Quietly and effectively, . . . with no royal decree to herald the change, an entire generation of state-owned peasants was [during the closing years of the nineteenth century] released from obligations of servitude" (Snit and Breazeale, 1988: 129).

The proximate cause for the demise of the Lao captives' slave status was a ploy threatened by the French imperialists in the wake of the Thai-French

confrontation of 1893. That stratagem sought to apply the extraterritoriality provisions contained in the Thai-French trade treaties to claim French sovereignty over Siam's villages of Lao war captives, "many of which were in the suburbs of Bangkok itself" (Snit and Breazeale, 1988: 129). The Thai authorities were horrified to discover that under the rules of extraterritoriality all of Siam's population of Lao war captives – and their descendants – could potentially be claimed as foreign subjects. A pragmatic response to that threat was to suppress the ethnic origins of the enslaved Lao communities and treat them as ordinary Thai "citizens".

The very existence of captive labour villages became an acute embarrassment. It was imperative that their [ethnic] identity be officially suppressed and their [origins] denied. An obvious first step was the abandonment of the 'captive labour' caste designation within the Thai legal system. . . . A second step was the formulation of a Thai nationality law in order to establish a legal definition for Thai citizens [and cover those communities formally within the legal framework] (Snit and Breazeale, 1988:129).

An initial draft of such a law was circulated in 1899 granting citizenship to the third generation of resident aliens. The final formulation, the Nationality Act of 1913, granted citizenship to all those born in Siam.

The freeing of the war slaves from their servitude to the Crown and its minions created an instant "footloose" population. Among the peasantry, that suited exactly the manpower requirements of the government's land development programs, such as the Rangsit scheme that opened up vast swaths of reclaimed land north of Bangkok. The many Lao (and Malay) settlements stretching eastward from Bangkok along the Samsen and Saen Saep canals exemplified that policy. Within the city itself, many of the Lao of Ban Kruai found work with the Western logging, sawmilling, and trading houses of Yannawa and Bang Rak. Similarly, many of the craftsmen of Bang Khun Phrom, Bang Yi-khan, and other Lao communities formerly associated with the royal artisans' departments found employment with Chinese merchants intent on developing the local market for luxury goods formerly available only to a tiny elite. Others found menial work with the municipality and with such proto-public enterprises as the Bangkok Tramways Company and Siam Electricity Company, forming an adjunct to the Chinese-dominated labor movement that emerged in the early decades of the twentieth century. The hardships of forced servitude to the favored few had faded into the past; the rigors of "voluntary" sweatshop labor had taken their place. Thus, "while formal slavery may have ended, other forms of dependence . . . continued" (Cruikshank, 1975: p. 329).

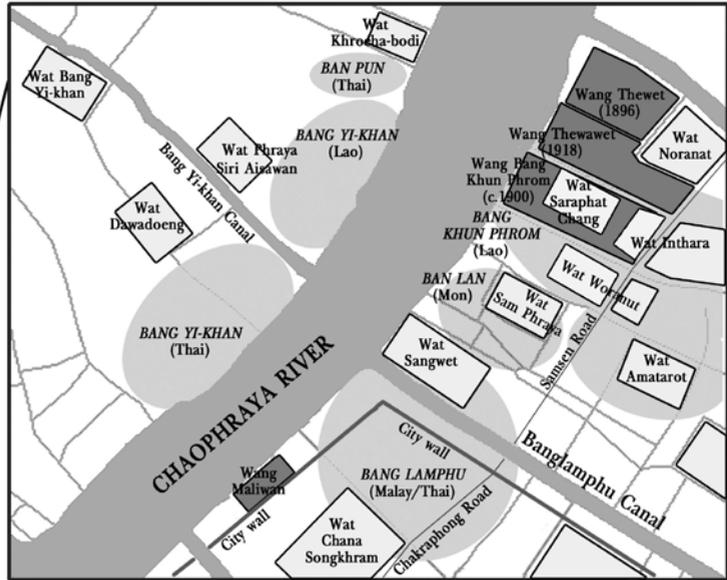
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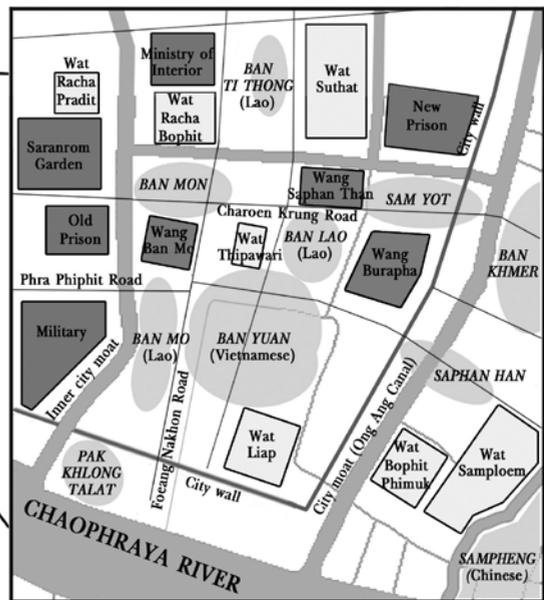
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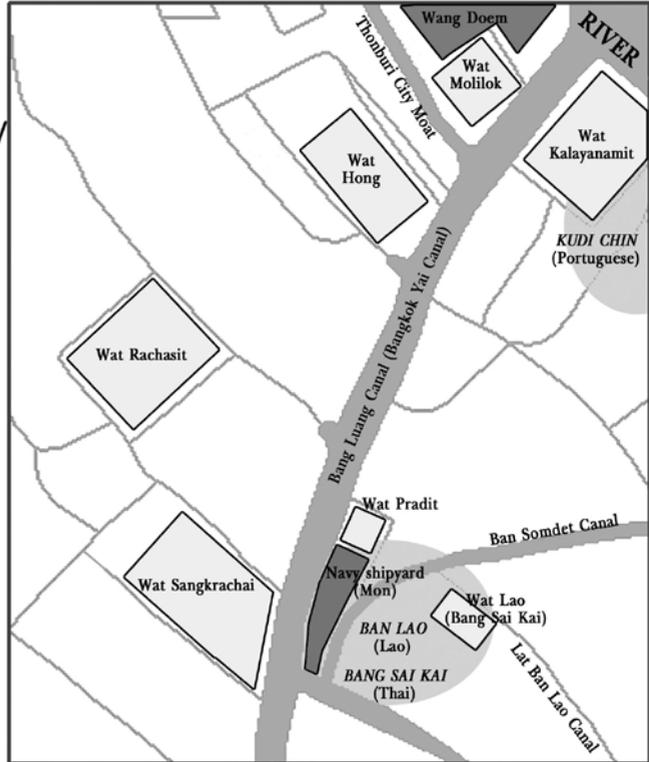
**Map 1 : Upstream:
Bang Khun Phrom
and Bang Yi-khan**
(late 19th - early 20th centuries)



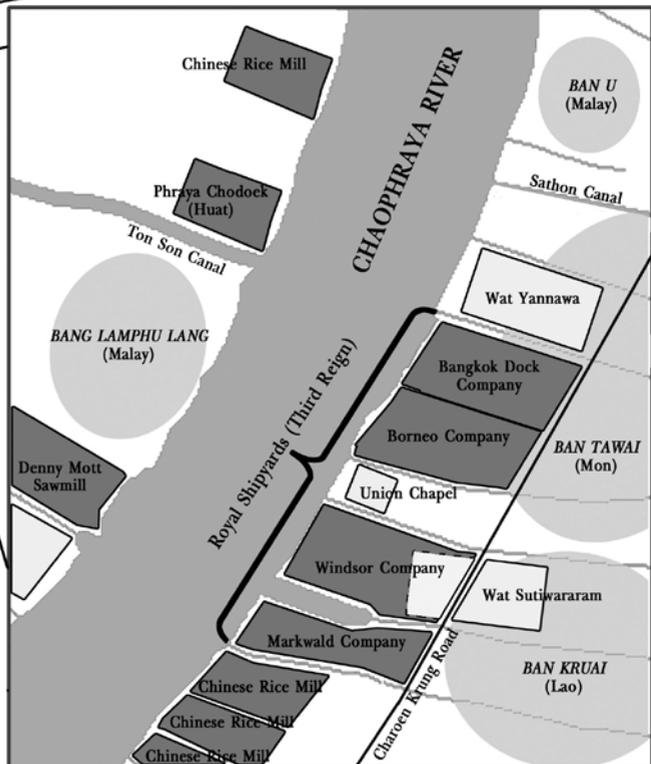
**Map 4 : City: Ban Mo,
Ban Kraba, and
Ban Ti Thong**
(late 19th - early 20th centuries)



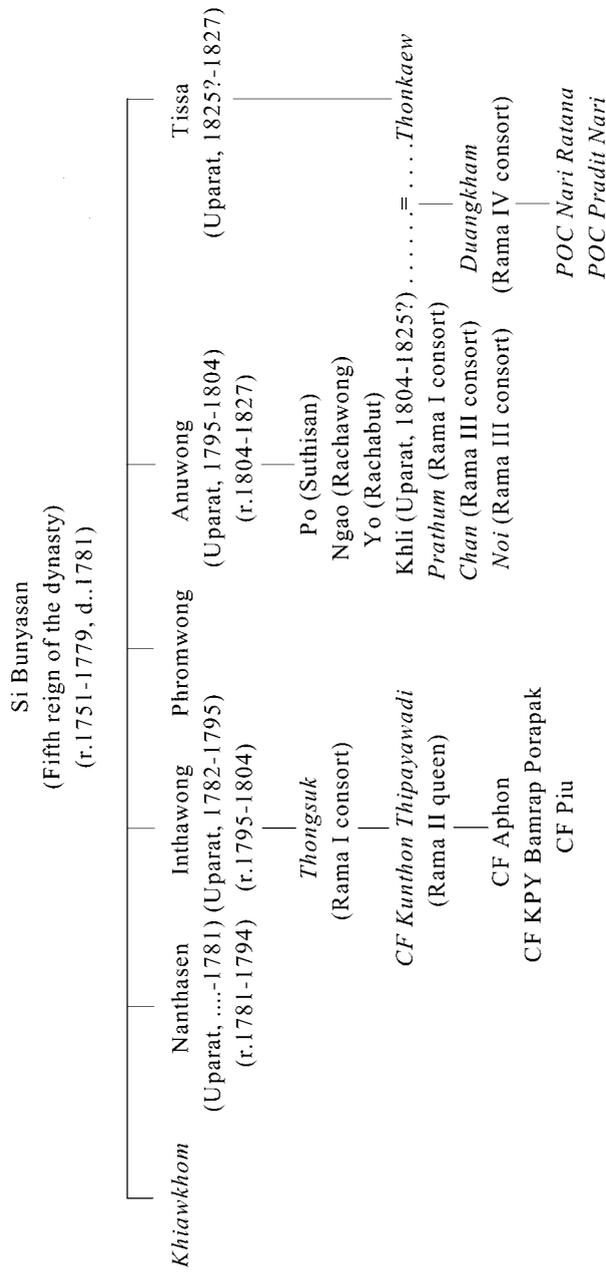
**Map 2 : Downstream:
Bang Sai Kai
(19th century)**



**Map 3 : Downstream:
Ban Kruai
(Late 19th century)**



Vientiane Royal Family Genealogy (Major personalities only)



Sources: Pramuan, 1939: 74-80; Department of Fine Arts, 2002: 219-275.

Notes:

CF = Chao Fa

POC = Phra Ong Chao

KPY = Krom Phraya

Uparat, Rachawong, Rachabut, and Suthisan = Lao royal ranks and titles (listed in order of seniority).

Italicized names = females