

CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL OBSERVATIONS MADE IN THE TALI
(YÜNNAN) REGION WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO THE NAN-CHAO PROBLEM

by

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During the summer of 1930 the author led for four and a half months a study group, sent out by the Sun Yat Sen University in Canton, through the mountainous province of Yünnan. This study group started from Yünnanfu, the provincial capital of Yünnan, which, by Young China, has been given the new name of Kun Ming, after the leader of the first Chinese army which, during the reign of the Han dynasty, in 225 A.D., first invaded the hilly country of Yünnan.

The journey was undertaken along the chief caravan route to Burma and led us first through the plateau like eastern part of the province to Tali that lies on the banks of the great inland lake, Erh Hai, in an exceedingly beautiful plain surrounded by lofty mountain ranges. From Tali the route continued through the very hilly western part of the province and then crossed the deeply cut in river beds of the Mekong (by the Chinese called Lan Tsan Tshiang) and the Salwin (Lu Tshiang), in whose valleys the most northern outposts of the Tai, living in West Yünnan, were met with. Finally we crossed the 5,000 metres high range of Kao Li Kong Shan to the west of Lu Tshiang and reached the valley of the Shweli (Luang Tshiang).

After having recrossed the Kao Li Kong Shan we followed the valley of the Salwin northwards passing through the region of the Lissu (Lissaw). At 26° latitude North we turned from west to east, recrossing Lu Tshiang and Lan Tsan Tshiang, and travelled on till we reached Tsin Sha Tsiang, the river of the golden sand, as

⁽¹⁾ Translated by Major Erik Seidenfaden.

the course of the Upper Yangtze is called here. We followed this river from Tomae down to Tsin Tshiang Kai and thereafter returned to Yünnanfu by a south easterly route.

The details concerning our journey have already been published in 1931 in the first number of *Communications from the Geographical Institute of the Sun Yat Sen University in Canton* in German⁽¹⁾ and Chinese.

The geological and morphological results were also published, in 1931, in the second number of the *Communications*. The cultural and geographical results obtained on the basis of the vocabularies of the eight languages, which we found in the regions travelled through and noted down by us, are still awaiting publication. A separate problem which arose during the observations made in the Tali region and indicated in the first part of the description of the journey will be treated here. This concerns the Nan Chao problem, on which we shall throw light on the basis of the cultural and geographical observations made in the Tali region.

In order to investigate the different questions on a broader basis, we shall first sketch the general distribution of the population in the regions in question. Next the observations made in the more limited area of Tali will be treated, and finally an attempt will be made to draw some conclusions with regard to the Nan Chao problem. However, it must be mentioned beforehand that the extensive nature of the observations, i. e. observations such as are made when travelling, naturally will result more or less in a working hypothesis only which must be subjected to further and intensive investigations later on.

On a rough map (fig. 1) I have tried to show the distribution of the population as it is to-day. This map is based on the exemplary investigations of General H. R. Davies⁽²⁾ and Rev. W. C. Dodd⁽³⁾ and besides on information obtained on personal observations.

For a fuller comprehension, however, it is necessary to give brief characteristics of the formation of the landscape described.

Eastern Yünnan is the watershed between the Red River in the

(1) Reviewed by the translator in JSS, vol. XXVI, pt. 2, October 1933.

(2) H. R. Davies, *Yünnan, the link between India and the Yangtze*, Cambridge University Press, 1909.

(3) W. C. Dodd, *The Tai Race*, Iowa, The Torch Press, 1923.

south and the Yangtze in the north. Only small rivers water it. But contrary to the big rivers they have not been able to cut deep beds; and thus, eastern Yunnan has the character of a plateau, with a flat relief, on which rise only a few low mountain ranges. These high plateaux lie in an altitude of 1900-2000 metres. The river valleys, which often have developed into flat basins, do seldom go deeper than 200 metres below this flat niveau, while the hill ranges, which rise on the plains, rarely exceed 2400 metres in height. The boundary of this plateau follows the valley of the Red River and extends thus roughly from Tali towards the South East.

West of this line one meets another formation of surface. The valleys of the Red River, Mekong and Salwin are here deeply cut and almost everywhere the bottoms of their beds are below 1000 metres altitude. Like these rivers their tributaries have also deeply cut beds in their lower courses. The whole relief is thus much more markedly developed. Western Yunnan is the typical mountain country with water shed ranges which reach a height up to 4000 metres. Just on the boundary of both types of landscapes lies the plain of Tali. The surface of Erh Hai lies in an approximate height of 2000 metres (above sea level). The plains rise slowly from the shores of the lake in the west bordered by the range of Tien Tshang Shan towering up to a height of 4300 metres, while to the east of the lake the mountains only reach a height of 3000 metres.

The present distribution of the Tai in Yunnan is intimately connected with the principal features of the country. They are hardly to be found on the Eastern Yunnan plateau where only a few small groups, like islands, are met with. Their proper territory is towards the south-west, i. e. south-west of a line drawn from Tali along the Red River. They are thus confined to the mountainous part, not on account of the mountainous character of this part of the country but because only in this region are found valleys so deeply cut in that they have a *tropical* climate. The *tropical valleys* represent thus the dwelling places of the Thai everywhere in South-West Yunnan. The Tai are the inhabitants of the tropical valley plains on which they are able to cultivate their irrigated paddy fields while on the hills between these valleys there live other people whom we shall call the hill people of Yunnan. Even on the plain round Tali no Tai are found to-day and they have probably *never* been the inhabitants of this plain which lies at an altitude of 2000 metres. The northernmost outpost of the present day Tai population we

found on the same latitude as Tali, to the west of this place, in the valley of the Salwin, at the small market place Man In, at a height of 800 metres only, down to which depth the valley, between the 3500 metres high ranges of Kao Li Kong Shan and Pi Lu Shan, is deepened.

After having outlined the region of the Tai living in the valleys, we shall also briefly deal with the distribution of the remainder of the Yunnan tribes, confining ourselves to the most important of these. The greater part of the original population of Yunnan—we are not dealing here with the more recently immigrated Chinese—belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group, represented by the Lolo, Lissu (Lissaw), Nashi (Musseu) and Lahu of which the three first named are spread over wide territories, while the latter the Lahu, who live widely spread over south-western Yunnan, are only mentioned here because their most southern outposts are found in the hills of Northern Siam where they are called Musseu.

The distribution of the three chief representatives of the Tibeto-Burmese people will be seen from map 1 which shows clearly that the Lolo from Szechuan populate the whole of East Yunnan, i. e. *the Yunnan plateau*, and from here stretch out in a south western direction passing the line of Tali-Red River.

Farther south-west in the hills, i. e. *above* the dwelling places of the Tai, there lives a confused mass of tribes. There are found, in innumerable small groups, the Austro-Asiatic Palaung, Lā and Wā, the Tibeto-Burman Lahu and Woni, besides small groups of Miao and Yao. Only further north, north of the 25° latitude, we find more homogenous settlements. To the west, in the hills by the Salwin and Mekong, live the Lissu and again further north, between Mekong and Yangtze, the Nashi, who, as already said, are called Musseu by the Chinese. Between the three large regions of the Lissu, Nashi and Lolo is a space, which, reaching from the southern border of the Tali lake northwards almost to Li Tshiang, is inhabited by the Minchia tribe. These Minchia are to-day the inhabitants of the country round Tali and on them we have especially centred our observations. Who are they? What is their relation to the other peoples? Since when have they occupied the region round Tali? How does their presence in the Tali basin agree with the presumed existence of the Nan Chao Tai kingdom? They are not to be confused with the Nashi who, also by the Chinese, are called Musseu.

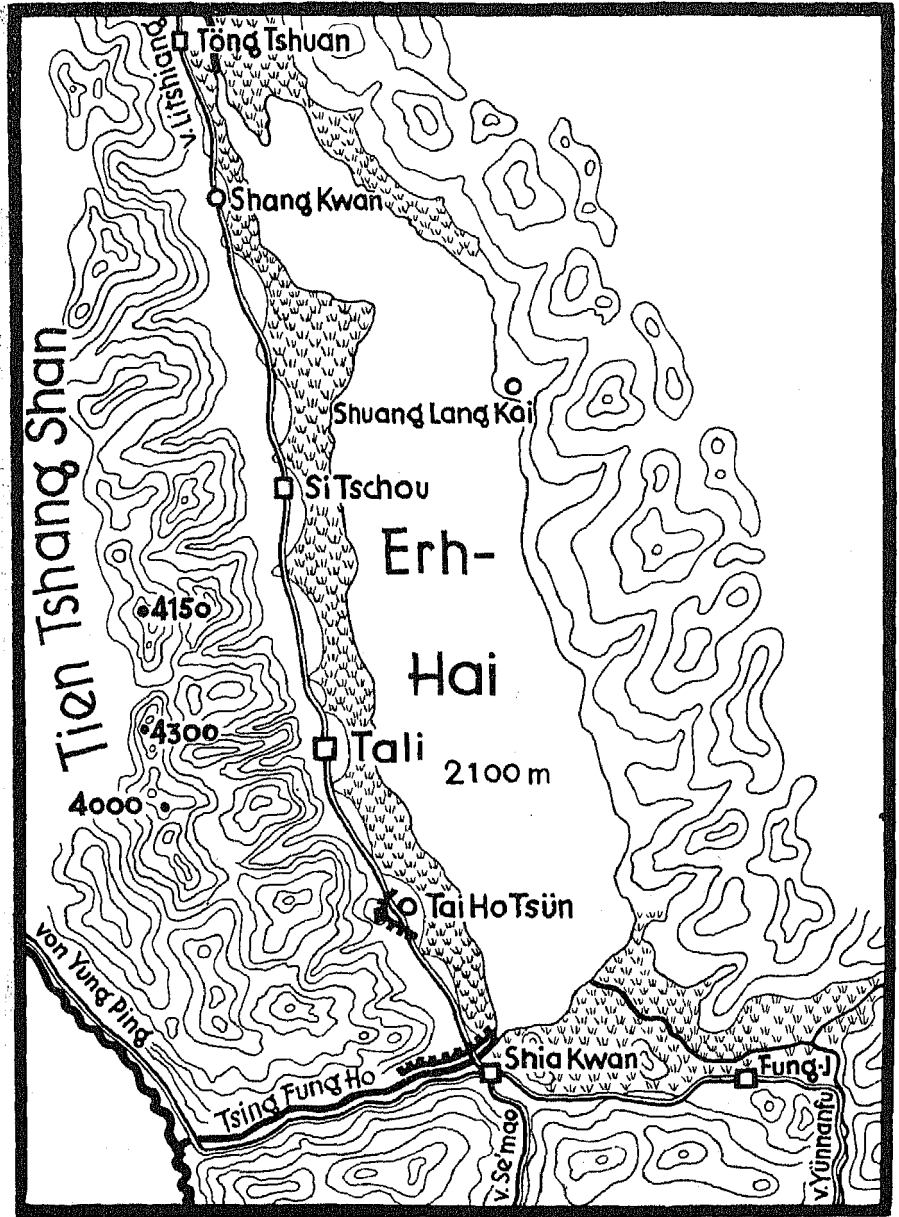


Figure 2. Sketch map of the country round Tali. Scale ca. 1: 600,000.



Besides all these important original components the Chinese element is naturally of the greatest importance in the composition of the Yünnanese population. The Chinese came as conquerors. The first invasion took place in the year 225 A. D., during the period of the three kingdoms, following that of the Han dynasty. The invaders issued from the western of these kingdoms, from Shu, whose capital Chengtu lay in Szechuan. The next advance of the Chinese only took place during the Tang dynasty more than 500 years later.

The Chinese attacks during the Tang dynasty were met by a powerful adversary in the form of the Tai kingdom of Nan Chao which beat off several of them. This kingdom had been founded by the Tai prince Piloko (728-848) during the reign of the emperor of the Tang dynasty, Shuan Hung (713-755). Piloko was originally prince of Mōng She, the southernmost of the six Tai principalities in Southern Yünnan, and after its southernmost position was the new Nan Chao dominion named.⁽¹⁾ The capital was transferred by Piloko from his own principality to the rich plains of present day Tali and built at Tai Ho Tsheng, 8 km. south of Tali, between the shores of Erh Hai and the precipitous walls of the Tien Tshang Shan range (see map 2). The word transcribed in Chinese as Tsheng (in the name of Tai Ho Tsheng) stands probably for the Thai word Tshiang (Chieng) which means a fortified town. In our days the place is called Tai Ho Tsün—Tsün means in Chinese a village. The name has evidently undergone a change due to the decay of the place and its slow transformation into a mere village.

The position of the town was a favourable one because it lay on the great line of communications which leads from the north from the land of Tupan, i. e. Thibet, southwards and secondly because it was possible from here to protect the E-W road, which passed the southern shore of the Tali lake crossing the Tien Tshang Shan range through the pass of Tien Tshiao, against Tibetan attacks from the north.

It was thus evidently, from a strategic standpoint, an especially good place in which the new capital was built for the purpose of commanding the important crossing of both of the chief trade routes and

(1) A. Rosthorn, *Geschichte Chinas*, Stuttgart-Gotha, 1923, p. 119. This history, which gives the foundation of Nan Chao, contains also the introduction to the Chinese history of Nan Chao: Yang Shen, *Nan Tsao Se*, vol. I, published for the first time in 1550 A. D.

thereby safeguarding the most important traffic junction in Yunnan against northern enemies.

In case the Tibetans were threatening from the north the Chinese could use the second route which coming from the east passes the southern shore of the Tali lake (Erh Hai).

The decisive battle fought in the year 751, in which King Ko Lo Föng (748-778), the son of Piloko, vanquished Li Pi, the army commander of the Tang empire, and destroyed his army, took place therefore on the route which, coming from the east passes the south shore of the lake, i. e. in the country which is seen on plate 3. In Tai Ho Tsün is still shown to-day the commemorative stela which was erected by King Ko Lo Fung (Khun Luang Fung?) in commemoration of this victory of Nan Chao (see plate 4). The Chinese campaigns and the invasions made by the Nan Chao troops into Chinese territory, and still more the diplomatic relations between both countries, have naturally led to far reaching cultural influences.

We know of treaties made with China, of Chinese literati who lived as advisers at the court of Nan Chao, and of embassies exchanged between Nan Chao and China.

Chinese art and literature were cultivated at the court of Nan Chao. In the 9th century A. D., the power of the Kingdom, after victorious campaigns down to Tongking, was so great that King Yulung, whose realm then stretched from Assam to Tongking (859 A. D.) could adopt the title of emperor of Tali.⁽¹⁾

The country where once lay the capital of Nan Chao, we designate best as the Tali basin. It is really a tectonian basin formation, a sinking region between higher surrounding territories of which, first of all, the range of Tien Tshang Shan, which bounds this basin to the west, reaches a height of no less than 4300 metres. The tectonian movements have not yet ceased. Even to-day this region is suffering from violent earthquakes. When the author visited the country the ruins in all the villages and of whole quarters in the towns of Tali and Shia Kwan told about the violence of the last great quake which took place in 1925.

The basin lying between both of the mountain ranges is mostly occupied by Erh Hai, the Tali lake, which from north to south reaches a length of more than 48.3 kilometres with an average

(1) A. Rosthorn, *Geschichte Chinas*, 1923, p. 119.

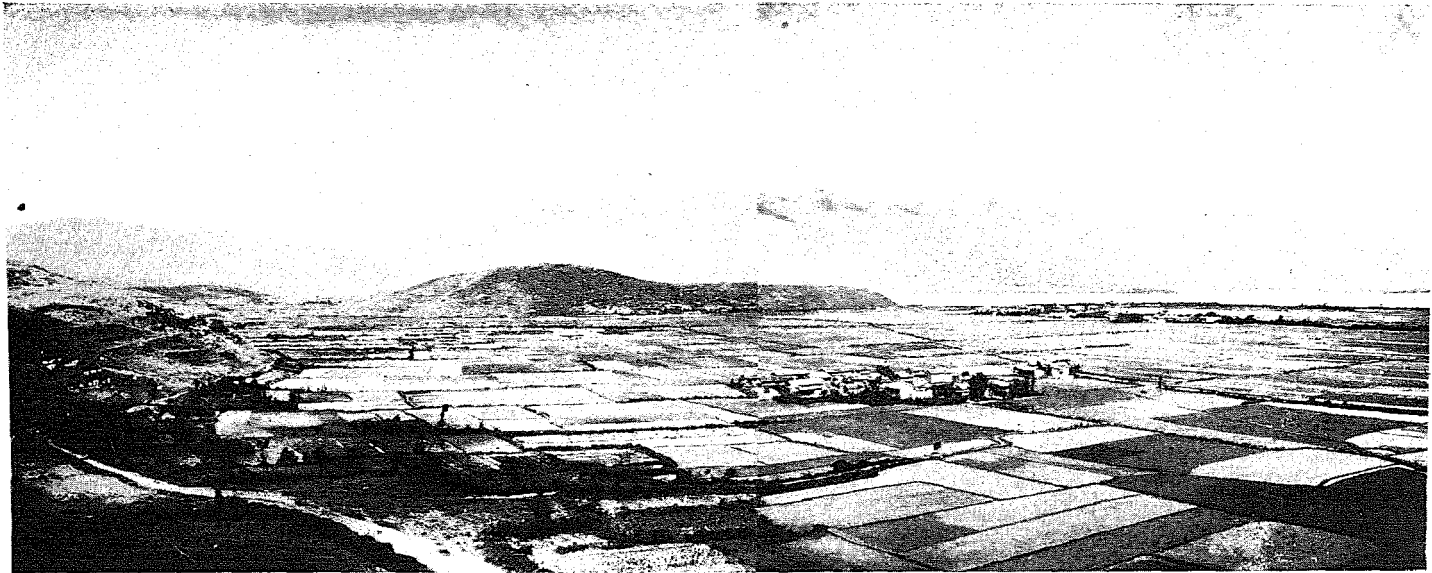
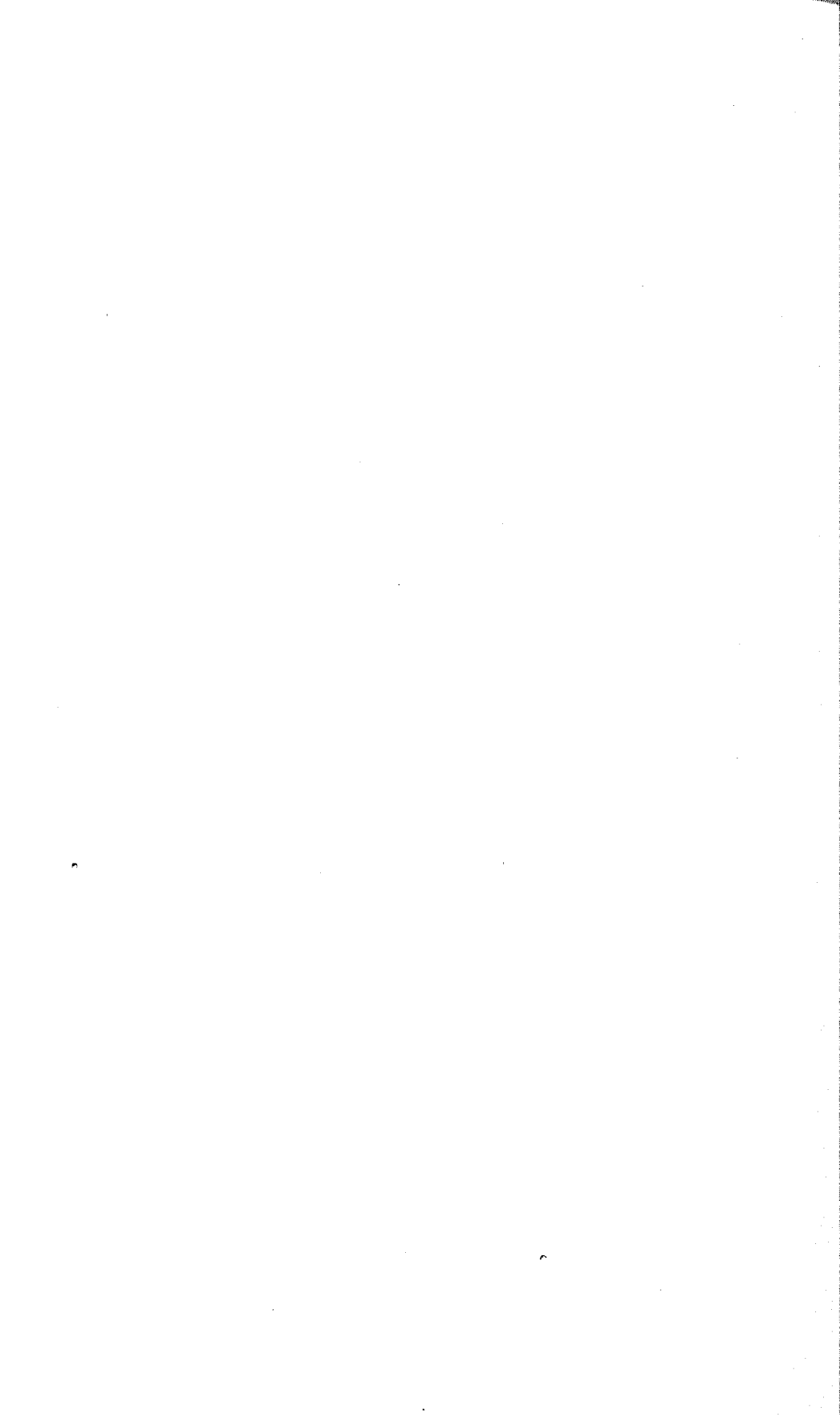


Figure 3. Landscape at the south end of the Tali lake seen from the east. In the background the 4300 m. high range of Tien Tshang Shan with the valley cut through which the outlet of Erh Hai runs to Mekong. To the left in the foreground is seen the ancient main route to Burma on which, before it enters the valley (behind the hill in the middle background) lies the market town of Shia Kwan. This landscape is thus the scene of the battle at Shia Kwan in the year 751.

Photographed by W. Credner, July, 1930.



breadth of 7 kilometres. The eastern shoreline goes directly into the small valleys which dissect the slopes of the hills. There is therefore no space for the development of settlements nor any available ground for cultivation of fields. Devoid of human dwellings rise the mountains directly up from the lake. It is otherwise on the western side of the lake. Here has come into existence, below the slopes of Tien Tshang Shan, a strip of flat alluvial land, 2 to 4 kilometres broad, which slopes gently down towards the lake.

This flat land is built up close to the mountains on the rough masses of rocky débris which the small rivers, coming down from the mountains, have built up into the shape of conical rubble peaks.

The farther away from the mountains, the lower the land becomes and the substance of the soil becomes finer and forms good paddy land, easily irrigated, 1 to 3 km. broad, which stretches right down to the swampy shores of the lake.

The land lying on the west side of the 100 m. deep lake can thus be divided into three clear types which follow each other from west to east, viz:— steep hill slopes cut through by narrow valleys covered with pine forests, in which in the lower parts pine trees (*Pinus Yunnanensis*) are in the majority, while, above them, up to a height of 4000 m., almost impenetrable forests of spruce (*Abies Delavayii*) and rhododendra climb up the almost perpendicular and deeply cut slopes. Next to the mountain slopes comes the zone of the rubble cones covered with grass land, whose existence no doubt is due to deforestation, and now serves as pastures for horses, mules, asses and goats. Here the ground is comparatively dry and the ancient road, on which there still is to-day a lively traffic of horse, mule and ass caravans, therefore passes over it.

On this road too lie the larger towns; in the south, at the southern extremity of the lake and on the south bank of its outlet, the Tsing Fung Ho, the large market town of Shia Kwan, (the lower gate). Next, 7.5 km. farther north, the large village of Tai Ho Tsin, about which more anon, and 8 km. farther north again the walled city of present day Tali. Twelve km. to the north of Tali is a small village, Si Tshou. Though to-day insignificant, it has formerly played a bigger rôle. At the times of the Tang dynasty it bore the name of Tali and was the residence of the kings of Tali, after the latter had given up Tai Ho Tsheng as capital. Next follows Shang Kwan, (the upper gate), in contrast to Shia Kwan, (the lower gate), a pass of strategical importance serving as protection of the plains against the north.

Finally, at the northern border of the plain, where the northern chief tributary river of the lake has created a fertile delta land, lies Tong Tshuan, an opulent town, equalling Tali which, since the earthquake in 1925, is still partially in ruins. To the east of this dry zone of rubble cones with its road and string of pearls constituted by the above mentioned towns, stretches the plain of paddy fields right down to the shores of the lake. This plain is now inhabited by the *Minchia* who, in spite of more than six hundred years of Chinese influence, have retained certain cultural peculiarities and first of all their own language.

The *Minchia*, whose habitat reaches northwards almost to Li Tshiang and who recently have been moving westwards, invading the territory of the Lissu in the Mekong valley, belong doubtless, as regards appearance to the finest of all the human types of Yunnan. The characteristic features of the Mongoloids—the high cheek bones and oblique eye slits—are, especially among the women, very little developed and the clear complexion and often fresh red cheeks lend to the women and young girls a very charming appearance. With regard to dress, house building and the plan of their villages, they are quite sinicized. The *Minchia* are certainly not new immigrants as *nothing* is stated about that in the otherwise reliable Chinese annals. Nor have they replaced a departed Tai population but have always, also during the period of the Tai power, constituted the bulk of the population.

We have taken notes of the *Minchia* language at two different places. An abstract of the vocabulary taken down is here published for the first time.

The *Minchia* vocabulary marked I was obtained at the southern border of the Tali plain in Shia Kwan from an artisan who lives in the lively market there in close contact with the Chinese immigrants. It was therefore very surprising to find that this vocabulary agreed with the words (II) taken down in a village near the ferry at Lama Ting, 130 km. N.W. of Shia Kwan, in the farthest western outpost of the *Minchia* region.

The reliability of our notes is proved by the *Minchia* vocabulary which I have taken from General H. R. Davies, who took his down at Yun Lung about 100 km. W.N.W. of Shia Kwan.

For comparison I have attached a list of words of the Lolo language, that tribe which surrounds almost on all sides the habitat of

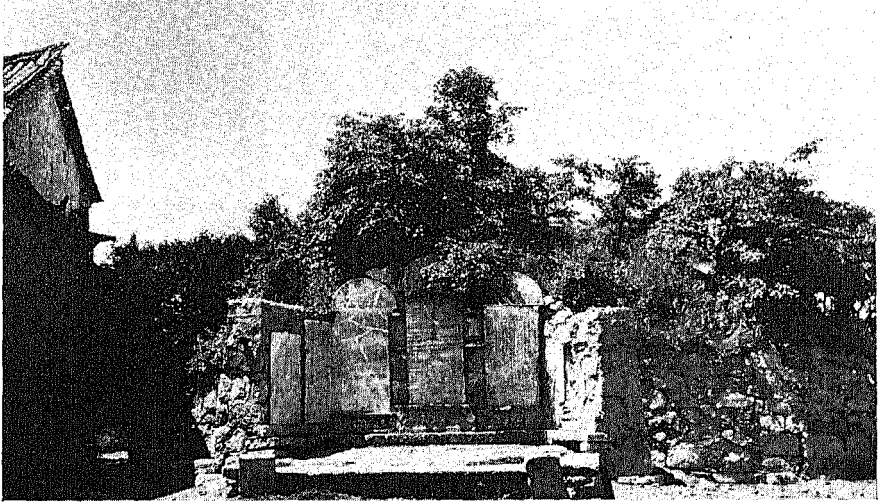
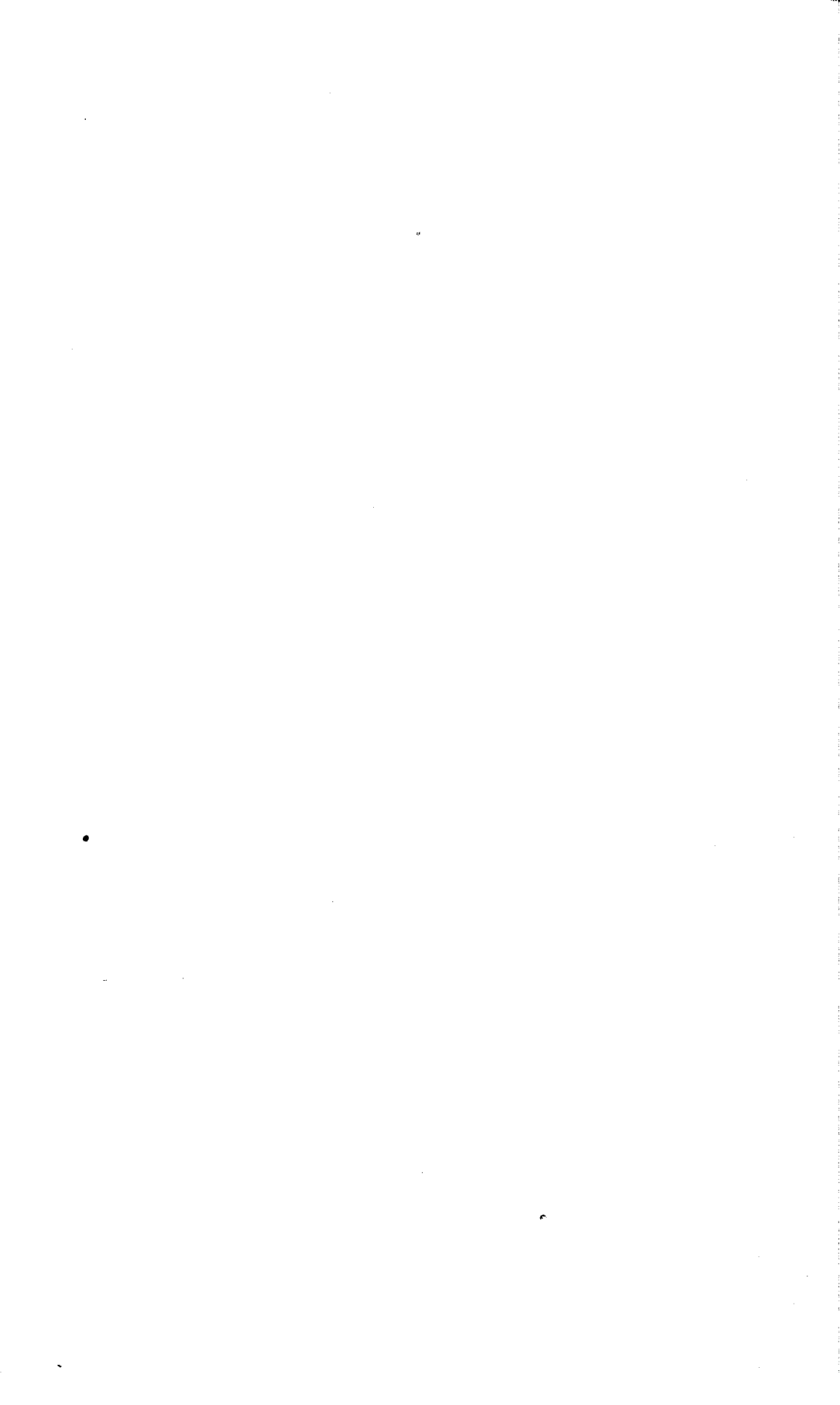


Figure 4. Memorial tablet in Tai Ho Tsün set up by King Ko Lo Fong of Nan Chao to commemorate the defeat of the Chinese army at Shia Kwan in the year 751 A. D.

Photo by Yet Kui, July, 1930.



the Minchia and finally, which is of especial importance to us, a vocabulary of Yunnan *Tai* whom the Chinese call Pa-yi.

The latter was taken down by us in the Salwin valley in a settlement of the Tai which lies far from the road leading to Burma and in the almost northernmost district of the Tai in West Yunnan. A striking feature is the almost perfect agreement of this language with that of the Siamese, of which we also attach a vocabulary, besides German and English.

With regard to the Minchia language the most important fact is that it shows absolutely no relations with Tai, but that it contains many Chinese elements and what probably will be found to be an older form of Chinese, according to what Professor Haloun in Goettingen has written to me after having gone through the vocabulary a first time. Forms related to the Lolo language are not lacking either, a fact to which General Davies has already referred.

However, finally to fix the position of the Minchia language in the system of Yunnanese languages will be the task of further linguistic research.

The most important thing for us is anyhow the absolutely sure fact that any relationship whatever with the Tai languages cannot be traced, and that also relics from the time when the Tai resided in Tai Ho Tstin and Old Tali are completely lacking.

Very interesting furthermore is a comparison of the various forms under which we find the cultivation of food plants by the different tribes. All the tribes of Yunnan use the plough and as draught-cattle, according to the nature of the ground, buffaloes or oxen. The buffaloes are mainly used in the plains and the oxen in the more hilly parts.

The peoples of Yunnan are thus, including the Lolo and Lissu, plough people. On steep slopes the digging stick is, however, often taken in use. When we, in Siamese territory, see the hill people, who live in Northern Siam, the Yao, Miao, Lahu and Lissu exclusively using the digging stick, then this is clearly an indication of poverty compared with their form of cultivation in Yunnan.

It is of great interest to go into the reasons for the change which has taken place with regard to the cultural forms during the migrations toward the south. One could doubtless receive replies to these questions when asking the elders in the villages of the hill people in North Siam as there are still found among them old people, as for instance, the village elder of the Lahu village, Ban Musseu, south

west of Mu'ang Nān, who came himself with the immigrants from the north. During his travels in Siam the author did not put these questions to himself; only when travelling in Yünnan, did they occur to him as a matter of course as he there met relatives of the same peoples but with quite different forms of cultivation.

A close study of the question of the cultural changes of the peoples during their march from north toward south is—it seems so to me—of capital interest with regard to the problem of the origins of the forms of agriculture met with in Further India.

The author has tried to illustrate in a diagram in a new methodical manner the forms of agriculture, the kind and number of food plants met with in Yünnan, as well as the seasonal distribution of their cultivation (Plate 5).

From this diagram (we have not included plants like pepper and other spices or textile plants like cotton and hemp as we did not take notes of all of these types) several points of view may be given. In the plains of Yünnan, which are all under a strong Chinese influence, the Chinese forms of agriculture are the rule which, if possible, work both during summer and winter thus representing the most intensive working form of cultivation.

The form of cultivation of the Minchia, which are less richly developed, especially among the Hill Minchia, who work their fields in a height of 2500 m., deviate very clearly from the Chinese type. By reason of the low temperature, no winter crops are grown in the hills, and on the other hand their summer crops show a noteworthy manysidedness especially with regard to the exclusive presence of plants of the temperate zone.

The agriculture of the Lissu presents again other differences. They understand how to cultivate even the steepest hill slopes in the Mekong valley. There we found clearly the most developed manysidedness of cultivation we have ever observed and adapted to the many different conditions of soil and exposition of the hill slopes. But, *most of all in these types of Yünnanese agriculture, that of the Tai stand out.* Here we meet only one kind of cultivated plants namely the rice plant which depends upon irrigation. The Indian corn, as an American species of grain, is quite a recent addition and at the earliest was first cultivated in the 16th century in Eurasia.

On the very spot in the Salwin valley, at a height of 760 m., where we found Tai settlements with the same language and cultivation as in Siam, we also encountered Chinese settlers, but in the next

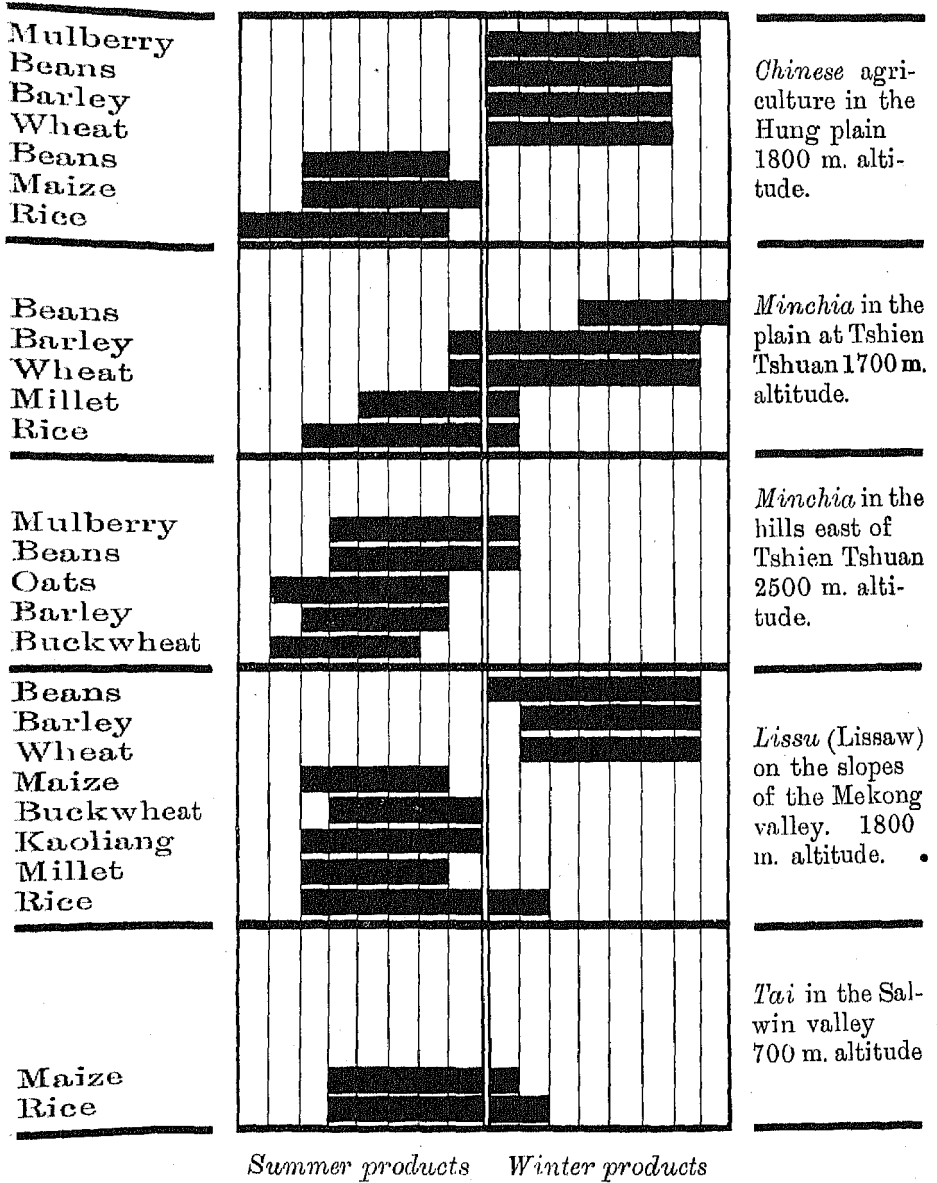
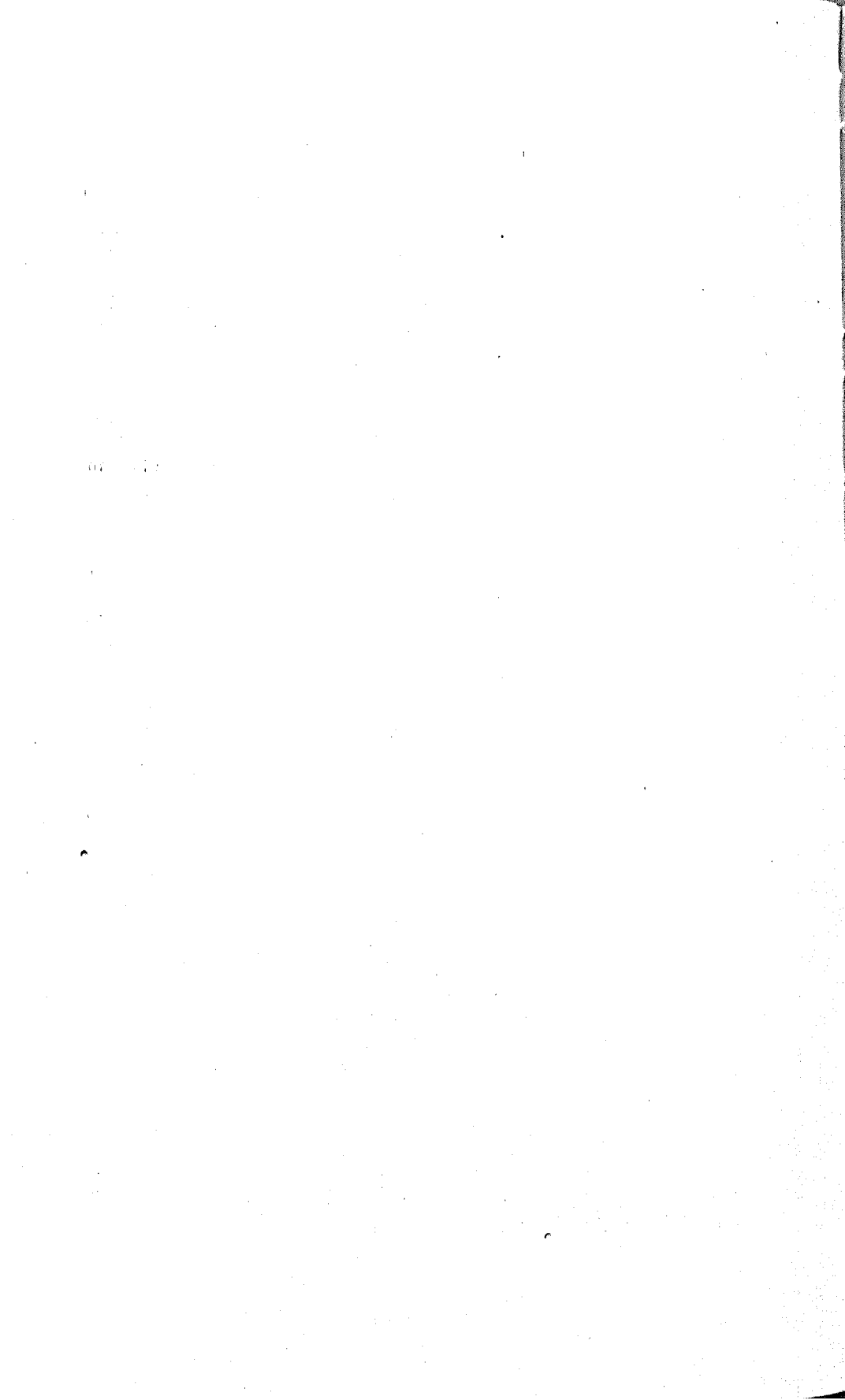


Figure 5. Some important types of agriculture in Yunnan recorded by the Yunnan journey of the Geographical Institute of the Sun Yat Sen University in Canton 1930. Information gathered by the Assistant of the Institute Liu Chao.



higher layer of settlement on plains at a height of 1800 m., and above these again, at a height of 2500 m., thus in a somewhat closer neighbourhood, the Lolo and Lissu with their manysided agriculture so characteristic of these hill people.

Though during winter time in the Salwin valley there are the most favourable conditions for the cultivation of the species of grain belonging to the temperate zone, and though right above them this kind of cultivation is carried out by other peoples, the Tai only cultivate a single and pronounced tropical cereal in their deep valleys and abandon themselves during winter time to the *dolce far niente* of a tropical race. This phenomenon is only possible when a people has been long accustomed to the tropical climate. The Tai have not migrated slowly to the south like the Tibeto-Burman tribes do to-day from the hills and dales of Yunnan. Their home country must be a tropical country with rice as their traditionally cultivated food plant. Their invasion into the tropical valleys and valley plains of Yunnan cannot have taken place from the north but only from the east from the tropical low land of the river plains and coastal regions of South China.

Under the pressure of a new people developing in North China and gradually advancing toward the south the Tai have, possibly following their own craving for tropical lands, migrated south and westwards perhaps in small groups of emigrants as one may still see them do to-day in Northern Siam when they are out searching for new paddy land.

In doing so they have settled only in those climatic regions which favour their form of living and have only rarely and in fragments settled in the hills; otherwise they have kept to the deep lying valley basins. Thus they have never been settled even on the 2000 m. high lying plains round Tali. No traces can to-day be found there of a former Tai population. Only their *rule* have they imposed on that region and that came from the south. However, linguistic and archaeological researches must be applied in order to test the foundation of this working hypothesis.

Archaeological researches, which perhaps could be carried out by the *Siam Society* in co-operation with the *Accademia Sinica*, must, first of all, clear up the discovery made by us of the fortress and wall ruins lying in the former Tai Ho Tsheng, the present-day village of Tai Ho Tsün. In this village stands the above mentioned memorial tablet concerning the battle at Shia Kwan in 751.

A. D. Here lay, as the name of the place indicates, the capital of Nan Chao founded by King Piloko. On the 27th July 1930, on the point of starting on the long journey from Tali through Western Yunnan, we made inquiries in Tai Ho Tsün about the remains of the former capital. One of the villagers, instructed by the village elder, led us over the plain to the top of a hill which lies about 80 m. to the north west of the village. This hill forms part of the slopes of the Tien Tshang Shan range and to our surprise we found here clearly preserved traces of imposing fortifications (figure 6). A system of walls and moats, now overgrown with grass, encloses an even place on which stands a small insignificant Chinese temple with its dusty idols. The temple is now used as a store room for the agricultural implements used for the work in the vegetable gardens and small paddy fields laid out inside the city walls.

The hill is called Ho Ding Shan and the temple standing on it Ho Ding Tse. The hill is formed by two small valleys of which the southern one comes from far inside the mountains while the steeply cut valley with its kettle-shaped source coming from N. E. separates the hill from the mountain slope.

The sketch made by help of a compass and pacing off the length will give a sufficient idea of the position of the ruins in question.

It shows at the same time the contours of the land lying at the foot of the hill and the approximate position of the former system of earthen and brickbuilt walls which connects it with the hill fortress and which clearly could be traced over the plain down to the shore of the lake when pointed out by the villager. The walls run first straight down to the main road, closing this in north and south, and then continue an almost straight course through the plain down to the lake shore. One might at first sight take this place for a fortification made to keep the road traffic under control, something like our mediaeval castles, but its importance increases when seen in connection with these wall constructions in the centre of which lies the Tai Ho Tsün village. Of special importance is the rivulet, called Ti Min Tzi, which runs in a wild bed of stone rubble through the middle of the space between the walls, which stand at a distance from each other of about 1000 m. down to the lake. The rivulet has a length of 1500 m. from the mountain slope to the lake. South of the streamlet, leaning itself to the slope of the rubble formation, lies the village, Tai Ho Tsün, containing 360 families, thus quite a large locality, which to-day is inhabited by a purely agricultural popula-

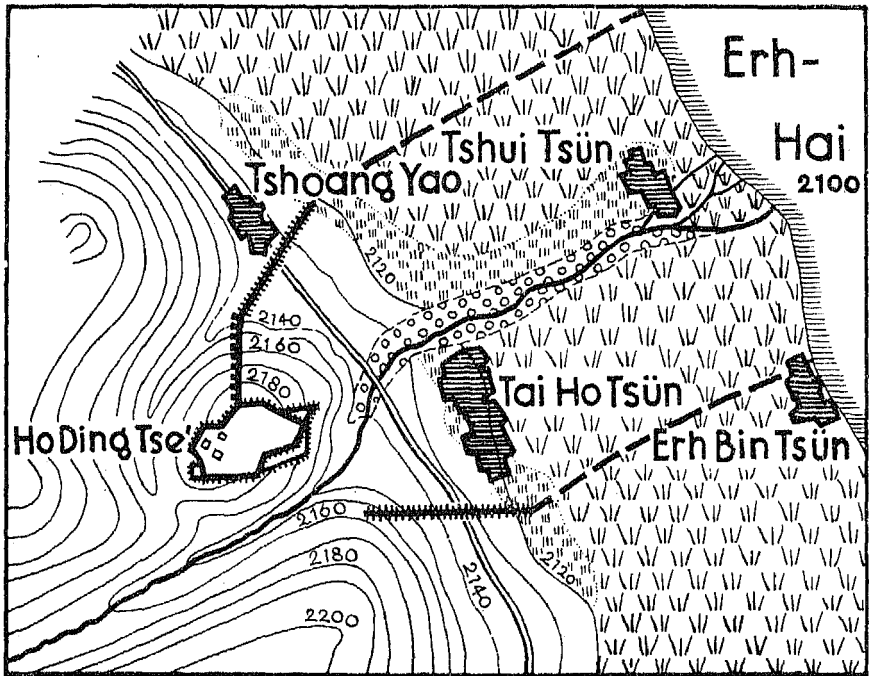


Figure 6. Sketch map of the region at Tai Ho Tsün. Supposed fortifications of the first capital of Nan Chao—Tai Ho Tsheng. Scale 1 : 25,000. According to own rough sketch. The altitude of the lake surface is estimated.

References.

Castle walls



Remains of brick walls



Walls still in evidence



Walls considerably levelled



Rubble bed of the rivulet

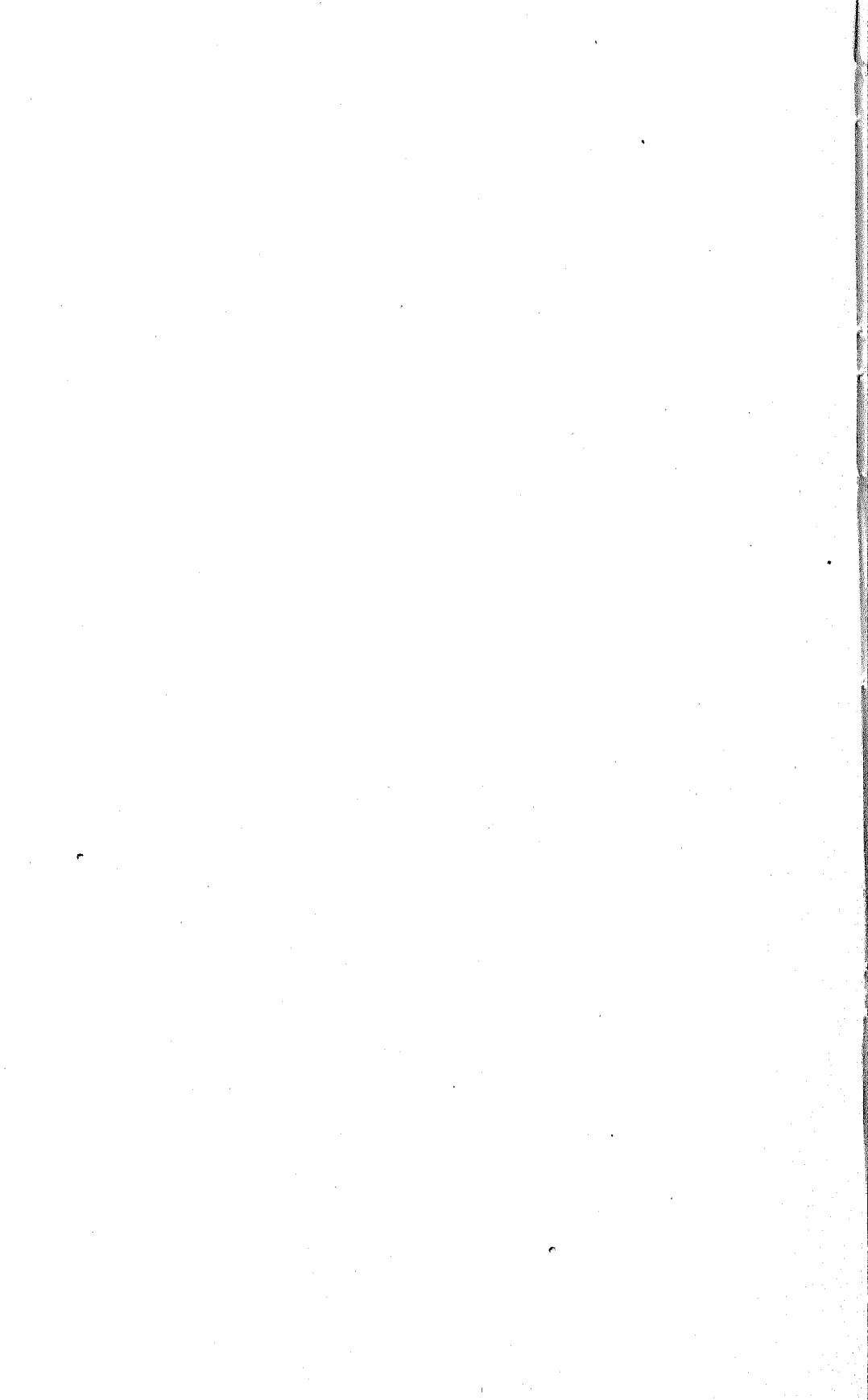


Paddy Land



Vegetable gardens





tion. As our sketch shows the village is separated from the main road by a bamboo thicket. Its paddy fields extend inside and outside the ancient walls right down to the lake only interrupted by the vegetable gardens, which lie on the higher lying, and therefore dryer, land along the north side of the rivulet, and the hamlet Tshin Tsün (which perhaps formerly meant "the Chinese village") which evidently also lies inside the old city precincts. It is regrettable that a closer study was not possible due to lack of time. Our caravan, which by reason of the rainy weather, had taken our cameras with it, had already long ago departed in the direction of Shia Kwan so we, though reluctantly, had to follow it so much the more as our task admittedly lay in another and different field.

Now the question presents itself whether the ruins found by us really represent the remains of the old Nan Chao capital or they perhaps are fortifications dating back to a quite different period. When considering this point one must remember that we are here in a land of great historical importance. All the armies which coming from the east, were marching through Yünnan with the aim of extending the boundaries of the great Chinese empire, have marched through the southern portion of the Tali plain in order here in the narrow rocky pass of Tien Tshang Tshiao to break through the only passage existing in the mighty Tien Tshang Shan range. Here were the invasions of the Tang dynasty in the Yünnan regions brought to a halt through the opposition of Nan Chao. This way also came the armies of Kublai Khan in 1253 that broke the power of the Tali kingdom which, at the time, already had transferred its capital northwards from Tai Ho Tsheng. At that time too it seems that Islam got a foothold in Yünnan, brought there by Kublai Khan's Mongolian warriors. This, as we shall see, caused again in the 19th century terrible bloody wars from which the country has not yet recovered till to-day.

We know that the Chinese governor in Yünnan, appointed by Kublai Khan, was a Muhammedan by name of Omar, from Buchara, who adopted the Chinese name of Sai Tien Tshi, and that he built a mosque, and his statue in the city temple of the provincial capital, at least until quite recently, was the object of a cult. At that time therefore Tai Ho Tsheng had already lost its importance and it is hardly to be thought that fortifications would then have been put up. The most important campaigns of the Chinese in Yünnan took place in the periods of the Ming and the early Tsing or Manchu dynasties.

They invaded the upper regions of the Irrawadi, the habitat of the Kachin by whom the still well known General Wong, of those times of the wars of the Ming, is yet honoured in the temples. These regions were, through the political developments in the first decade of the 20th century, lost to the Chinese suzerainty when the English arrived on the scene. That any fortifications should have been made during that time is not mentioned in the otherwise reliable Chinese annals.

Finally the plain of Tali once more was the scene of grave political events which also have left traces in the fortifications in the Tali plain.

These events are the so-called Muhammeddan revolts in the 19th century of which the last, from 1855-1873, terribly devastated the country. At that time the Muhammeddan chief point d'appui was in Tali, the seat of the Muhammeddan Imam Tuk Wen Sin. For almost two decades the fighting raged here and there in the land and terrible massacres, often of whole town populations, took place.

In order to defend the Tali plain against the enemy, who was expected to arrive from the south, the Imam constructed a wall at Shia Kwan on the northern bank of Tsing Tung Ho (see map 2). This wall begins with a bastion in the defilé of Tien Tshang Tshiao and leads, only broken by a gate at Shia Kwan, to the lake. An important point is the state of conservation of this wall which is completely undamaged. It thus seems impossible that the much decayed walls of the fortifications above Tai Ho Tsün can be dated from the same recent times; besides that, we possess quite detailed information with regard to that period in which nothing is said about the works at Tai Ho Tsün.

At that time the present day Tali was the scene where the fights with the Muhammeddians found their dramatic end with a horrible butchery on the 15th January 1873. After the Chinese, by false promises, had induced the defenders of the wall at Shia Kwan to surrender and had thereafter unmercifully massacred all of them they entered the town, where the old Imam and his defenders surrendered without conditions, with the result that the whole population of 30,000 men, women and children were butchered in a horrible carnage in one night!

This short review of the most important historical events should show that we may safely take it that Tai Ho Tsün is identical with the old capital, Tai Ho Tsheng, of King Piloko, the founder of the Nan

Chao empire, which may also be concluded from the memorial tablet set up by Ko Lo Fong and that it never played any part in later history.

We may therefore assume with great probability that the fortifications discovered by the author date back to the oldest period of Nan Chao. The final proof can, of course, only be given through excavations, i.e. by archaeological methods.

Finally, I shall once more sum up my provisional conclusions based on my cultural and geographical observations on the questions treated here:—

1) The *Tai* of Yunnan have not arrived at their present habitat in the lowest parts of Southern Yunnan by a slow migration from the north. They have rather spread out from the tropical lowlands in Southern China, first of all from Kwangsi and Kwangtung, going south and westwards and always kept to tropical regions which suited their manner of living.

2) In the Tali region there has most probably never been a *Tai* population. The Nan Chao kingdom was rather a state created by the conquering *Tai* prince Piloko (728–748) from Southern Yunnan. He built his capital, for the protection of the important and, from the point of view of taxes, profitable centre of communications, Shia Kwan, against the hostile Thibetans, in the fertile plain on the western shore of Erh Hai which was densely populated by the culturally high standing Minchia, and, militarily speaking, easy to defend.

3) The fortifications found at the village Tai Ho Tsin at the rim of the mountain slopes as well as the walls which cross the plain down to the lake represent in all probability the remains of the former defensive works of the oldest capital of the Nan Chao *Tai* empire.

The further study of this place, so important for the history of South East Asia, will now be the task of the science of archaeology.

May the ways and means be found that such research work through excavation can soon be started and carried through!

APPENDIX.

Abstract from the vocabularies of *The Yunnan journey of the Geographical Institute of the Sun Yat Sen University of Canton 1930* made by the Assistant of the Institute, *Lin Chao*.

The Minchia Vocabulary III is taken from H. R. Davies in order to control our own notes.

The vocabularies have been taken in the following places:—

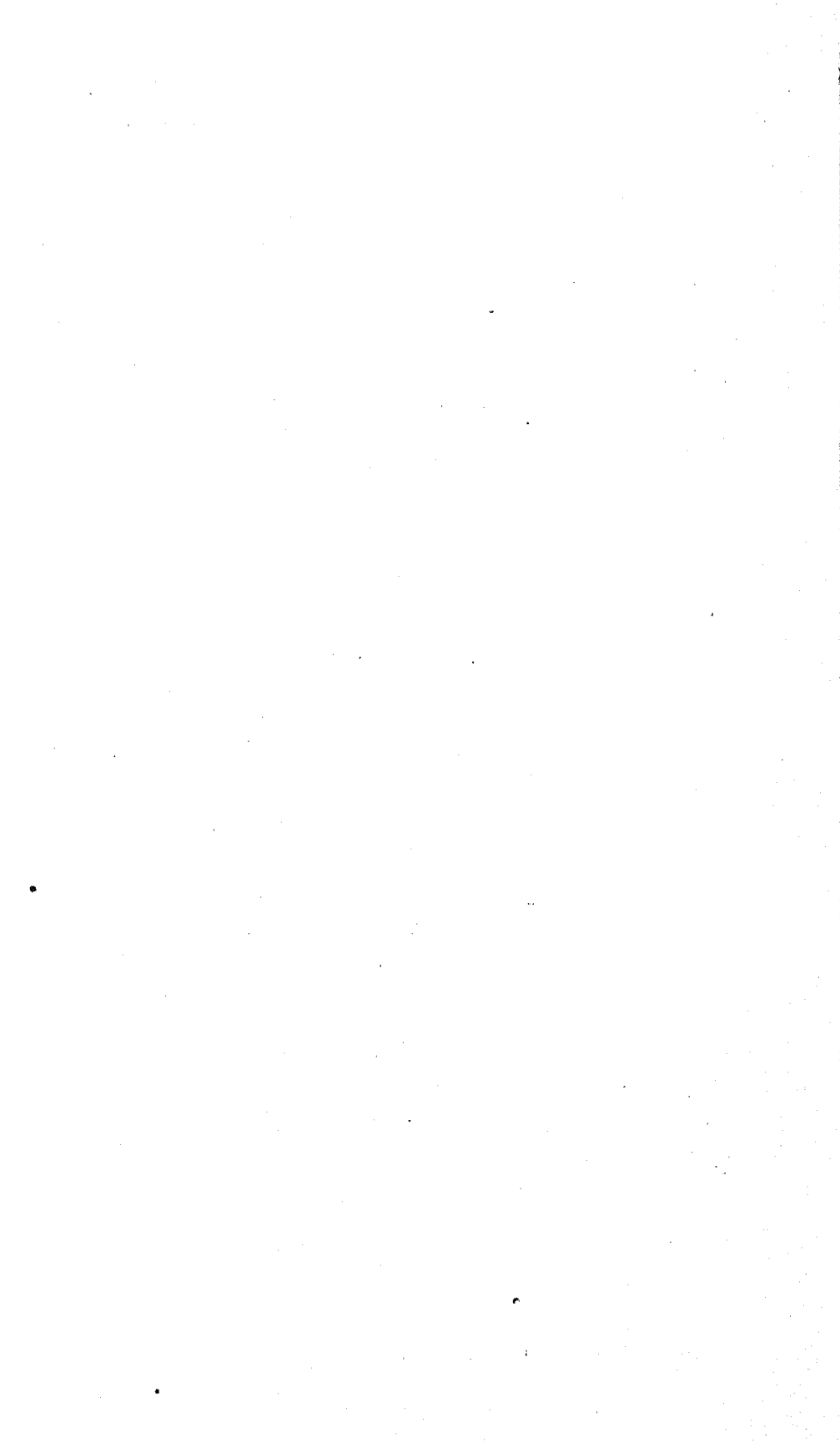
- Minchia I from an artisan in Shia Kwan at the south shore of the Tali lake.
- Minchia II from villagers in She Ping, a Minchia village east of Lama Ting, on the Mekong, about 180 km. N. W. of Shia Kwan.
- Minchia III taken by Davies from villagers at Yun Lung, about 100 km. W. N. W. of Shia Kwan.
- Lolo from villagers of the Lolo village Hou Shan in the hills S. E. of Fung I. about 36 km. S. E. of Shia Kwan.
- Tai from villagers in the Tai village Man Le on the lowest valley terrace in the Salwin valley south of the Tali-Teng Yü Road.

Method of transcription of place names and vocabularies⁽¹⁾.

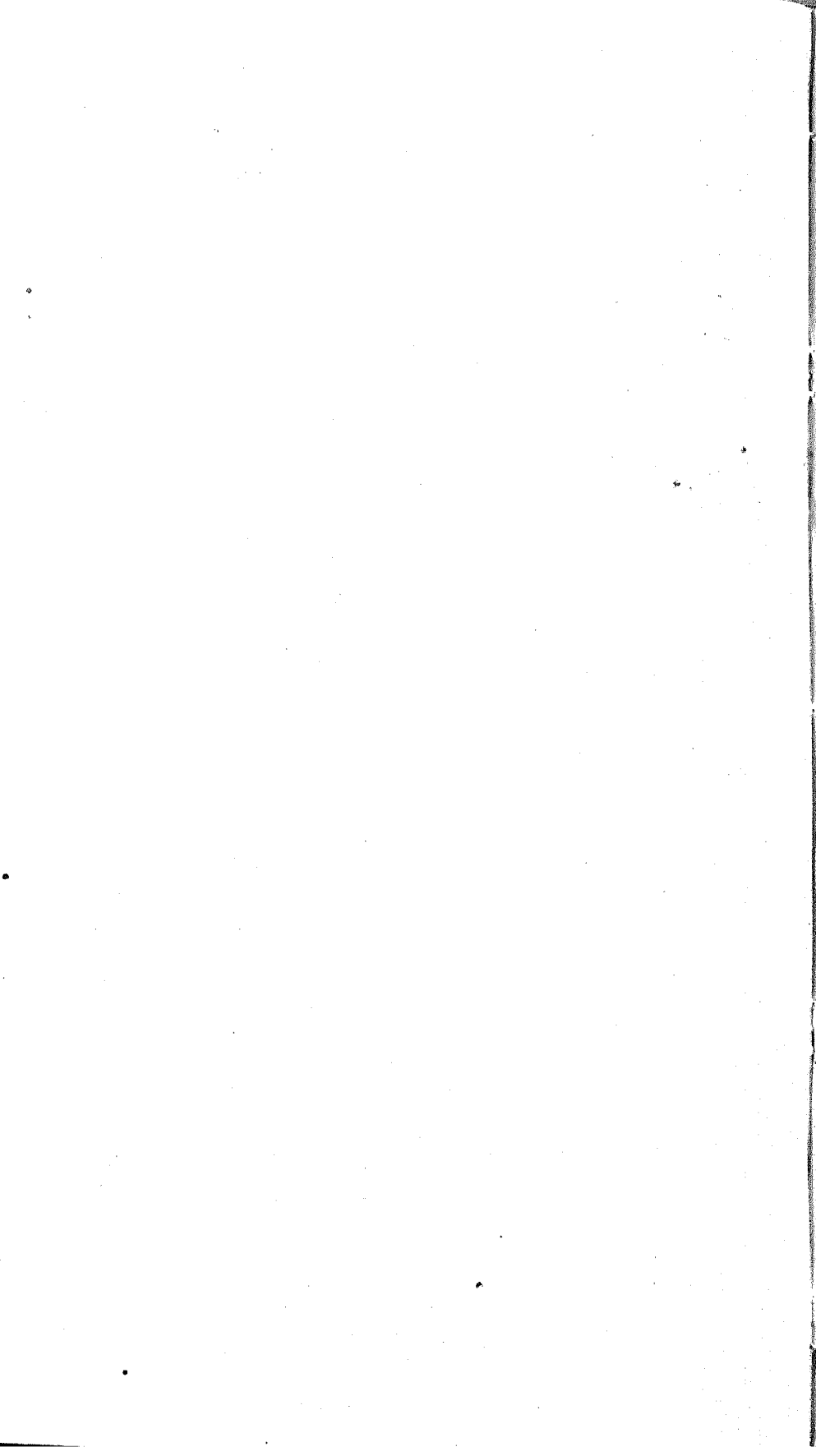
- 1) The vowels *a, e, i, o*, as in German, French, Italian and Spanish. Long vowels are marked with – above the vowel. The letter *e* is not dumb. *Ajin* is represented by an apostrophe: *Se'Tshuan*.
- 2) The French sound *ou* is represented by *u* as in German, Italian, and Spanish.
- 3) The French sound *u* is represented by *ü* as in German.
- 4) The German *ö* and French *eu* are represented by *æ*.
- 5) The consonants *b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, z* are used as in French.
- 6) The letter *g* is always used with the value of the German or French hard *g*.
- 7) The letter *s* is always sharp as in French.
- 8) The German *sch* the French *ch* are represented by *sh*.
- 9) The letter *h* is always used aspirated.
- 10) The German half vowel *j*, the French *i* are represented by the letter *y*, as for instance: *Yao*.
- 11) The German *w* is represented by the French *v*. The letter *w* represents the English sound in *William*.
- 12) The German *tseh*, the French *tch*, the English *ch* are transcribed as *tsh*.
- 13) The letters *w, c, q* are not used.
- 14) Under the forms quoted the place names are given the local pronunciation.
- 15) As an exception the writing of place names, which have had a long usage, is retained.

(1) According to *Senckenbergiana*, Frankfurt 1927, vol. 9, pt. 1, p. 18.

Deutsch	Mintshia I	Mintshia II	Mintshia III	Lolo	Tai (Payi)	Siamesisch	Englisch
Himmel	hai	hai	hē	ngdū	fā	ฟ้า	sky
Erde	tsi-pā	tsi-pā	ye-pe-tong	mi-di	lin	ดิน	earth
Sonne	nie-pī	ngī-pī	nyī-pī	an-tso	wan	ตะวัน	sun
Mond	mī-na-pī	mī-na-pī	ua-pī	ha-pā	len	เดือน	moon
Stern	shie'	sia	sien	ke	lau	ดาว	star
Wolke	ve'	vo	—	an-tī	mok	เมฆ. หลอก	cloud
Wind	pī-she'	pī-she'	pī-se'	au-she'	lum	ลม	wind
Regen	vū-shī	vū-shui	—	an-ho	fon	ฝน	rain
Berg	shu	she'	nge-tō	ku-ze'	loi	ภูเขา	hill
Fluss	—	kou-tō	tshō-tshō	la-kū-ge'	nam-hon	แม่น้ำ	river
Baum	tse'-tse'	tse'-tse'	so-tse'	se'-ze'	mai	ไม้	tree
Gras	tsū	tsū	tso	she'	yā	หญ้า	grass
Fels	tso-kuai	tso-kuai	—	ka-lo	hin	หิน	rock
Pferd	me'	me'	me'	tsan	mā	ม้า	horse
Rind	nge'	nge'	nge'	a-mī	ngō	วัว	cattle
Huhn	kai-de'	ke-hi	ki	ai	kai	ไก่	chicken
Hund	kua-de'	kua-te'	kua	a-ke'	mā	หมา	dog
Schwein	de-de'	te-te'	te	a-vī	mū	หมู	pig
Katze	a-mī-de'	a-nī-te'	a-nī	miau	miau	แมว	cat
Körper	tse'-kō	tse'-ke'-net	—	ge'-tse	ho-tsa	ตัว, ร่างกาย	body
Kopf	te'-bou	tī-pū	te-hō	e'-de'	hō	หัว	head
Haar	te'-mā	tī-mā	te-mā	u-tse'	hun-hō	ผม	hair
Ohren	—	ngi-tī-kua	nio-tō	ngo-pā	• hu	หู	ear
Auge	ua-nā	ngue	ngue	mi-tse'	tā	ตา	eye
Mund	tsu-nā	tsu-kua	tshī-ge	ka-pī	shup	ปาก	mouth
Nase	pi-kua-nā	{ ngu-kua tie-net	pui-fu-te	na-kua	hū-lang	จะงูก	nose
Zahn	tse'-pā	tsui-pa	tshe-pā	she	hiu	ฟัน	tooth
Zunge	tsai-nā	tsai-pie	tshe-pūi	lo	lin	ลิ้น	tongue
Haus	ho-ka	huo-ka	ho-ke	hī	he'n	บ้าน	house
Tür	mai-sā	me-se	men-shen	a-ke'	na-tū	ประตู	door
Feuer	hui	hui-ne	hui	a-do	fai	ไฟ	fire
Kleider	i-kō	i-kō	i-kō	pu-tse'	she'	เสื้อผ้า	clothes
Hose	kua-iu	kua-io	kua-io	lo	kun	กางเกง	trousers
Schuhe	ngai-tsie	ngai-tsi	nge-tsi	ke'-ni	kiam-tin	เกือก	shoe
Essschale	ka-pe'	ke'-pei	—	a-ke'	van	อ่าง, ชาม	bowl
Vater	a-tie	ti-ngie	ā-te	ā-po	te	พ่อ	father



Deutsch	Mintshia I	Mintshia II	Mintshia III	Lolo	Tai (Payi)	Siamesisch	Englisch
Mutter	ā-mā	mo-ngie	ā-mō	ā-mō	mā	แม่	mother
Sohn	tse'-nī	tse'-ngie	tse'	ngu-zo	luk-tsai	ลูกชาย	son
Tochter	du-la-tse'-ni	ngi-ngie	—	zo-mō	luk sau	ลูกสาว	daughter
Älterer Bruder	a-ko	ko-ngie	—	a-ko	tsai	พี่ชาย	elder brother
Jüngerer Bruder	tai-ni	ti-ngie	—	nga-na-zo	nong-tsai	น้องสาว	younger brother
Ältere Schwester	a-tsi	tsi-ngie	—	a-tsi	tsi-tsi	พี่สาว	elder sister
Jüngere Schwester	du-tai-ni	ngiu-ti-ngie	—	ke'-mō	nong sau	น้องสาว	younger sister
Mann	sai-tau-tso-ni	tse'-ngi-ngie	—	i-ke-pō	pu-tsai	ผู้ชาย	male
Frau	dū-nī-ne	ngie'-tse'- ngie-nā	—	zo-mō	pu-ing	ผู้หญิง	female
Ich	go	ngo	ngo	nga	kau	ฉัน	I
Du	no	no	no	ni	me'	ท่าน	you
Er	bo	mo	—	ia	me'n	เขา	he
rot	tse'	tso	tshe	iu-ho	leng	แดง	red
schwarz	he'	he'	he'	a-nī-vū	lam	ดำ	black
weiss	pe'	pa	pe	a-vī-kū	pe'	ขาว	white
gross	to	to	to	ge'	yai	ใหญ่	big
klein	sai	sei	se	dī	en	เล็ก	small
essen	ie'	ie'	ie'	so-so	tsin	กิน	eat
gehen	pei	pei	nge'	shia	pai	ไป	go
stehen	tse'-he'	tse'-ke'	die'	kī-ti	tsok	ยืน	stand
sitzen	ku-te'	ku-tie	ke'	nī-ti	nang	นั่ง	sit
1	i	i	a	tse'-mo	mūng	หนึ่ง	1
2	ko	ko	go	nge'-mo	song	สอง	2
3	sa	sa	sa	so-le'	sam	สาม	3
4	sī	sī	sī	i-le'	sī	สี่	4
5	nge'	ngo	ngū	ngo-mo	hā	ห้า	5
6	fe'	fo	fū	ko-mo	hok	หก	6
7	tsī	tsī	tsī	ke'-mo	tset	เจ็ด	7
8	pia	pia	pia	he-mo	pie	แปด	8
9	tsiu	tsie'	tshe'	ke'	kau	เก้า	9
10	tse'	tse'	dio	tsi-mo	sip	สิบ	10
100	a-pe'	a-pa	a-pe'i	tzo-ho	i-pat	ร้อย	100
1000	a-tsi	e'-tsie	a-shi	tse'-te	li-mūng	พัน	1000



TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTS.

It is with much satisfaction that the Council of the Siam Society is now able to publish Professor Dr. Wilhelm Credner's interesting and highly important paper on the discovery of the ancient capital of the Thai of Nan Chao and the problem of the origin of the Thai race.

As will be remembered, when the writer of these lines reviewed the author's book *A journey through Yunnan undertaken by the Geographical Institute of the Sun Yat Sen University* (JSS, vol. XXVI, Part 2, 1933), he expressed the wish that Prof. Credner would soon write an account of his discovery of the old Nan Chao capital. This wish has now been gratified.

With regard to Prof. Credner's conclusions it seems more than probable that he has really found the ancient and earliest capital of the Nan Chao empire in the ruins of Tai Ho Tsheng. That he is also right when stating that the Minchia did not replace any former Thai population seems equally probable. However, when we examine the professor's third "working thesis", namely that the Thai did *not* come down from the north during a slow migration towards the south but that they spread westwards and southwards from the tropical lowlands of Kwangsi and Kwantung, then we think a halt must be called in order to subject this theory to a closer examination.

Prof. Credner's theory is, to use the right word, nothing less than revolutionary. It is opposed to all theories, so far launched, about this question. Still it might be tempting to accept the author's ideas as the true solution were it not for a certain amount of historical and other evidence which we believe, it will not be easy to discard as unimportant or wholly unreliable.

Without agreeing with all of the latest that has been written on this subject in *Thai Origins* by Nai Sngā Kanchanakphandha (1928)⁽¹⁾, who claims for his race the high age of 6,000 years, stating that the Thai entered present China (the valley of Upper Hoang Ho) even before the Chinese, one may say that, according to historical evidence, it seems reasonably sure that the Thai occupied a broad stretch of territory on the north bank of Yangtze-kiang at least as far back as the 6th century B. C.

Terrien de Lacouperie says that the great Mung, whom he consi-

(1) หลักไทยของ รอมอมาตย์ไท่ สวัง กาญจนาคพันธุ์ พิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๗๑.

ders to be Thai, were in possession of N. W. Szechwan, identical with Nai Sngā's Nakon Pā, about 2300 B. C. and that in 1971 B. C. the Pā and Lung, other Thai tribes, were also domiciled there. In 1551 B. C. the Lao, also a Thai tribe, under the various name of Leao, Chao, Ai Lao, Ko Lao, Pu Tyao and Shen Lao⁽¹⁾ were the inhabitants of Szechwan, Hupeh, Anhui and Kiangsi. Further he says that the first invasion of the present Shan States by the Thai took place in the 6th century B. C. when the states of Mōng Mao and Mōng Nai were founded. In 338 B. C. the Chinese state of Ts'in subdued the Pā in Szechwan resulting in a great migration of this tribe towards the south. In 78 A. D. the Ai Lao, being harassed by the ever advancing Chinese, migrated right down to Tongking and in 345 A. D. followed the third great migration of the Leao down into South China and Indochina. In the 7th century A. D. we find the six Thai principalities established in Middle and Southern Yünnan, the nucleus of the later Nan Chao empire. However, Terrien de Lacouperie may perhaps not be trusted in view of his fantastic "Mon-Taic" theory and a too implicit reliance placed upon the dates of Chinese chroniclers which rather belong to the mythical age than to solid historical facts.

The so-called Mung, Lung, Pā, Pang and Ai Lao, mentioned in the Chinese chronicles, evidently represent what the Chinese please to call "Barbarians", though these may have been just as civilized as the Chinese. Now there are, besides the Thai, three other great non-Chinese races or nations living in Western and Southern China, such as the Lolo, the Miao and the Minchia. So there might be the possibility that these and not the Thai represent the tribes mentioned as "Barbarians", so much the more as the Lolo certainly have occupied the highlands of Szechwan for a very long period.⁽²⁾ Here, however, the late Dr. Dodd, in his admirable book *The Thai Race*, and Rev. W. W. Cochrane, in *The Shans*⁽³⁾, rally to the assistance of Terrien de Lacouperie. Dr. Dodd thus tells us of a visit paid to Thai villages on the Yangtzekiang and says expressly that there

(1) All these names are Chinese and we do not know what the tribes called themselves.

(2) General Vicomte d'Ollone, *In forbidden China*, 1908.

(3) W. W. Cochrane, *The Shans*, Rangoon, 1915.

are also many Thai living in Szechwan, i.e. on the north bank of the great Blue River. General Davies in his *Yunnan the Link between India and the Yangtze*, for the matter of that, also says that he found Thai living in the Yangtze valley. Dr. Dodd, when travelling in Kwangsi and Kwangtung, was told by the Tho that they had been driven out of the provinces of Anhui and Hunan by the Chinese, and Rev. Cochrane states that the Chung Chia Thai in Kweichow came from Kiangsu north of the Yangtze. Furthermore from old vocabularies made by Chinese chroniclers it seems that the original inhabitants of Kiangsu spoke a kind of Thai. Even in Shantung there was a Thai speaking population, the Tung-jen, who were later forced to emigrate to Hupeh.

When examining the various names with which the Chinese have labelled the Thai tribes we are able to identify not a few of them with present-day Thai tribes. The Pā are thus most probably the Pa-yi or Thai Nu'a of S. W. Yunnan while the Mung may be the same word we find in Mōng or Mōang and in the name of the Tongkinese tribe of Mu'ong. Lung may simply mean Luang or Great, the Great Mung. The Pu Tyao may be identical with the Pu Chioi or Pu Thai. With regard to the word Lao or Ai Lao, as once having been the name of a great division of the Thai, we have in spite of the late Colonel Gerini's scholarly merits, always been in doubt as to whether this word really denoted the Thai or the region from which they came. We are inclined to favour the latter explanation which entails that the name Lao, as wrongly given by the Southern Thai to the Northern and North Eastern Thai of Siam, has nothing to do with the so-called Ai Lao. The nickname Lao is, as H. R. H. Prince Damrong suggests, simply a contraction of the word Lawa or Lwa.

Professor Credner's strong point is that the Thai are by nature and inclination tropical valley dwellers par excellence and *not* hill people and that they never were the inhabitants of hills or high plateaux. In this contention he is confirmed by Sir George Scott who in the *Gazetteer of Upper, Burmah and the Shan States* says that the Shans do not consider themselves hill people but prefer the alluvial plains. However, we have several examples that former hill people, forced by circumstances, have become plain dwellers. So for instance the Lāo Song of Petchaburi who only a hundred years ago were living on the high plateau of Chieng Kwang from where they were deported as prisoners of war by the Siamese armies down

to the hot plains of Southern Siam.⁽¹⁾ In the beginning of these comments I mentioned a book, written by a young Siamese official, Nai Sngā Kanchanakphandha (now Khun Wichitratra), which treats of the origins of the Thai race. Though this book contains several not unimportant assertions, which are either wholly wrong or at least very doubtful, still it is a book of no mean merit as it represents a piece of research work, one of the very few, so far, issued from Siamese hands, always excepting the work of such érudits as the late Phya Prachakit Korachakr and H. R. H. Prince Damrong, still happily with us.

Let us hope that it will not be long before young Thai savants with a solid knowledge of the history of their own country and of that of mighty China will take up the further research work on the origins of their own race. They ought to be successful!

In conclusion I beg to tender my sincere thanks to my friend, Mr. U. Guehler, for his many valuable suggestions and other assistance in the translation of Prof. Credner's paper.

Erik Seidenfaden.

Bangkok, March 1934.

(1) Major E. Seidenfaden, *Guide to Petchaburi*, Bangkok, 1931.

