

Population Dynamics in Lan Na during the 19th Century

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From the late 13th until the mid-16th century, Thailand's Upper North was known as the kingdom of Lan Na (literally “[land of] a million rice-fields”), whose borders, however, stretched far to the north and west into what is known as the Burmese “Shan States”. After the conquest of Chiang Mai by Burmese forces in 1558, Lan Na fell under Burmese hegemony for more than two centuries. By the end of the 16th century, Lan Na had ceased to exist as a unitary vassal state of Burma and split into contending polities. In 1701, Chiang Saen and Chiang Rai were separated from Chiang Mai and fourteen years later, Chiang Saen became the centre of a large Burmese military zone extending far to the north until the borders of Sipsòng Panna. In 1727, Chiang Mai revolted against Burmese rule.¹ Following several months of internal strife, Cao Ong Kham, the exiled deposed king of Luang Prabang who was a scion of the ruling dynasty of Sipsòng Panna, was finally invited to become the new legitimate ruler of Chiang Mai; the city then enjoyed three relatively peaceful decades under a king who was both of Lao and Tai Lü descent. After a successful uprising in neighbouring Lamphun in 1728/29,² the southern part of Lan Na, with the exception of Lampang, regained its independence whereas the Burmese strengthened their rule in the Chiang Saen-Chiang Rai core area.

Not long after the complete reunification of Burma in 1759 by Alaungpaya, the founder of the Konbaung dynasty, the Burmese started a series of military campaigns against Siam for which the complete control of Lan Na was crucial. Though the Burmese succeeded in reconquering Chiang Mai and Lamphun in 1763, they were unable to consolidate their power for long, as a significant part of the Tai Yuan elite in southern Lan Na, under the leadership of Prince Kawila of Lampang, forged a strategic alliance with Siam to throw off the “Burmese yoke”. For several decades Lan Na became the focus of Siamese-Burmese warfare, which did not end with the Burmese withdrawal from Chiang Mai (1775), but continued until 1804 when the Burmese fortress of Chiang Saen was conquered by Siamese support forces from Chiang Mai, Nan, and Vientiane.

As a consequence of the decade-long warfare, large parts of Lan Na became depopulated. One version of the *Chiang Mai Chronicle* ostensibly describes the complete desolation of Lan Na's former cultural and political centre:

¹ Chiang Mai was conquered by rebels led by Tep Sing, a charismatic rural chief from Müang Yuam (Mae Hòng Sòn province) “in CS 1089, on the fifth waxing day of the fourth lunar month” (17 December 1727). See “Tamnan ciang saen kap paweni calit müang”, folio 9 (Richard Davis Microfiche Documentation, fl. 60).

² This uprising is mentioned in *Cotmaihet lan na* (f° 1), in: Sarassawadee 1993: 17.

At that time Chiang Mai was depopulated and had become a jungle overgrown by climbing plants, it turned into a place where rhinoceroses, elephants, tigers, and bears were living. There were few people living in groups. Everything was overgrown leaving out the eaves of the houses and the roads to facilitate communication with each other, as there were no opportunities for clearing [the jungle].³

To rebuild the devastated and depopulated country, Kawila (1742–1816) and his six brothers (*trakun cao cet ton* ตระกูลเจ้าเจ็ดตน) – who controlled the three western principalities of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang – devised a policy of forcibly resettling populations from the northern areas of Lan Na bordering the still powerful Burmese empire to the new core areas in the south. The principality of Nan in eastern Lan Na, like Phrae a Siamese vassal state not ruled by the Kawila clan, embarked on a similar strategy of systematically augmenting manpower by launching numerous raids against smaller Tai *müang* in the Mekong–Salween river basin. This deliberate policy of forced resettlements, known by the Northern Thai saying *kep phak sai sa kep kha sai müang* (เก็บผักใส่ช้า เก็บช้าใส่เมือง) – literally: “gather vegetables (and/to) put [them] into basket(s), gather people (and/to) put [them] into polities”,⁴ was carried on until the early 1820s although some smaller raids to gather war captives still occurred in the 1830s, and even later. I have discussed the implementation of this policy and its impact on the society and economy of the region in more detail elsewhere.⁵

There is no doubt about the significant contribution of these war captives to the economic and demographic recovery of Lan Na. Although estimates that the captive population made up almost two-thirds of the total seem exaggerated, I argued that at the end of the 19th century, war captives and their descendants made up between 25 and 40 per cent of the total population in Lan Na, with higher proportions in Lamphun, Chiang Mai and Nan and smaller shares in Lampang and Phrae.⁶

In the first decades of the 19th century, the five Lan Na principalities experienced a strong and sustained population growth. Areas of settlement and agricultural cultivation expanded considerably, as is testified by Dr. David Richardson and Captain William Couperus McLeod, the first Westerners to reopen the channels of communication with the Tai states of mainland Southeast Asia, during their diplomatic missions in the 1830s.⁷ At that time, the people lived concentrated in a few relatively densely populated valleys

³ *Tamnan sipha ratchawong* 1989: 20.

⁴ The saying, which is documented in a Lao document from Luang Prabang dated 1853, was popularised by the late Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda, who rendered it into English as “Put vegetables into baskets, put people into towns.” Kraisri 1965. As for the meaning and documentation of this saying, see Grabowsky 2001.

⁵ Grabowsky 1999 and 2004.

⁶ For details, see Grabowsky 1999: 66–7.

⁷ The last European known for certain to have visited Chiang Mai before a breakdown of contact in the early 17th century was Thomas Samuel, who was sent in 1613 to the capital of Lan Na as a representative of the East India Company. One year later, Samuel was deported by Burmese troops to Pegu, along with numerous citizens of Chiang Mai, following the suppression of a local rebellion. See Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 6.

in the southern half of the country. The northern part of Lan Na, especially the basin of the Mekong river and its tributaries, such as the Kok and Ing rivers, were still largely depopulated. Though some isolated villages still existed, for example in the Mae Lao river valley, all political and administrative structures had been eliminated. A British map of 1868, reflecting the political situation of the late 1830s or early 1840s, shows a dotted line demarcating the spheres of influence of Chiang Tung (“Keng Tung”) and Chiang Mai (“Zimmé”).⁸ This “border line” starts at Chiang Khòng (“Kiang Kheng”) in the east and runs along the right bank of the Kok river in south-westerly direction until Chiang Rai, and from there in westerly direction following the watershed of the Ping and Kok rivers. Whereas townships like Chiang Rai, Phayao and Chiang Saen had been abandoned at the beginning of the 19th century, they once again became prosperous centres of commerce and trade, as well as areas of wet-rice cultivation by the end of the century. Both Chiang Rai (“Kiang Hai”) and Chiang Saen (“Kiang-tsen”), the latter situated north of the dotted line, bear the caption “ruins”. This means that around 1840, a largely uninhabited frontier zone of roughly 100 kilometres in depth separated the principalities of Chiang Mai and Chiang Tung, and thus the spheres of influence of Siam and Burma.

It was at that time that the government in Bangkok decided to resettle the northern part of Lan Na, which had been left as wasteland since 1804 when more than 23,000 inhabitants of Chiang Saen and the surrounding countryside were deported to the south because of security considerations. Thus, people from Nan were recruited to repopulate Chiang Khòng (in 1841/42), whereas Chiang Rai was refounded in 1843 by settlers from Chiang Mai. In the same year, the ruler of Lampang recruited retainers to resettle Phayao and Ngao.⁹ The repopulation of these *müang*, which became outer provinces (*müang nòk*) of Nan, Chiang Mai, and Lampang, respectively, took several decades, and was still not completed when the final phase of the Northern Thai “forward movement” started in the late 1870s. This time, the abandoned frontier towns of Fang (discussed in a separate section below) and Chiang Saen were resettled. The migration was precipitated by several factors. Though the scarcity of land in parts of Lan Na’s southern core areas may have been one major incentive, security concerns might have prompted the large-scale and well-organized resettlement of Chiang Saen in 1881.¹⁰ Illegal settlers from the Burmese vassal state of Chiang Tung had been migrating to Mae Sai area since the early 1870s.¹¹ As these people were considered “Burmese subjects”, the Lan Na and Siamese authorities feared that Chiang Tung could be tempted slowly to shift its own frontier – and thus also Burma’s – further to the south.

⁸ This map has been published as an appendix to the McLeod Journal (*Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 46, 1868/69) (see Map 7 in Grabowsky and Turton, Appendix). It shows “the central part of British Burmah with the Shan provinces of Burmah and Siam to illustrate the Journals of Capt. W. C. McLeod & Dr. Richardson.”

⁹ For a detailed discussion of the process of refounding Chiang Khòng, Chiang Rai, Phayao and Ngao, see Grabowsky 2004: 276-83.

¹⁰ Ibid: 323-32.

¹¹ Already in 1871, 8,000 troops from Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang were recruited to destroy illegal Shan settlements near present-day Mae Sai. See ibid: 323.

Most of the people who came to resettle Chiang Saen were descendants of the city's original inhabitants. They came from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, and Phrae. The ruler of Nan, although "over 1,000 full-grown men in his State descended from Kiang Hsen", refused to recruit any of his own subjects, arguing that "Nan had lately repopulated the country to the north of the great bend of the Meh Kong."¹² The real reason for Nan's refusal to participate in the resettling of Chiang Saen, however, was that Chiang Saen was to be placed under the administrative control of Chiang Mai, and all subjects of Nan migrating to the newly founded town would have been lost to the Nan ruler. The rulers of Lampang, Lamphun, and Phrae were likewise reluctant, but the Siamese king exempted only the more powerful Nan from making a contribution to the resettling of Chiang Saen. By 1888, slightly less than half of the originally requested 3,600 families had arrived in Chiang Saen.¹³

Table 1: Resettlement of Chiang Saen (c. 1888), geographical background of settlers

Place of origin müang	Required strength (1881) in families	Settlers (1888) in families	Deficit (a) absolute	in %
Chiang Mai	1,000	1,000	0	0
Lamphun (1)*	500	0	500	100
Lamphun (2)**	800	410	390	49
Lampang	1,000	200	800	80
Phrae	300	15	285	95
Total	3,600	1,625	1,975	55

* Lamphun (1): settlers from Lamphun (unspecified).

** Lamphun (2): retainers of Phraya Ratchadet Damrong.

(a) calculated by the author.

Source: HSH, CMH R.5, C.S. unknown, No. 1805, fascicle 81.

The reconstruction of the population development of Lan Na meets serious, but not insurmountable, difficulties, because the indigenous sources hardly contain any reliable data on the overall population, neither with regard to Lan Na as a whole nor to parts of the country. This lack of data is most serious for the first half of the 19th century. Censuses in the upper north of present-day Thailand were carried out only after the founding of the *monthon* Phayap (1899), the results of which, however, did not conform to Western standards of precision. This general observation does not only hold true for Lan Na but, with some reservation, also for Siam as a whole, even though the lack of reliability of the

¹² Hallett 1890: 203; see also McGilvray 1912: 202.

¹³ A revealing report by Baptist missionaries emphasizes: "[...] the movement is not popular; for the descendants of the captives have been born and lived in those principalities as their home, and therefore shrink from breaking up their life-long connections, selling out their property, and removing to a region where they will be obliged to start anew in life, and liable to greater personal insecurity, even though that region be the home of their ancestors. Still there is no help for them, and the despotic orders of the princes of Zimmai (Chiang Mai) and Lakaun (Lampang) are being carried out." Quoted after Cushing 1885: 330 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, August 1885].

demographic data seems to be more significant in the case of Lan Na than with regard to Siam. The data used for reconstructing the population dynamics of Lan Na prior to modern census taking derive from two sources. The first source comprises lists of able-bodied men (*chai chakan* ชาญฉกรรจ) mentioned in administrative reports (*cotmaihet* จดหมายเหตุ) from the Lan Na principalities to Bangkok. The second source comprises figures reported by Western visitors to the region, including diplomat-explorers like Richardson and McLeod (1830s) and Archer (1880s), as well as Protestant missionaries.

The population of Lan Na: an overview

The first national census in Siam (1904) was systematically carried out only in the twelve inner *monthon*, the core area of the Kingdom of Siam. In the six outer *monthon*, to which *monthon* Phayap belonged, only preliminary censuses (*banchi samruat* ባញ្ញិត្យសារវត្ថុ) were carried out. According to the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok, which oversaw the censuses, the results of the outer *monthon* should be adjusted upwards by 25 per cent, to adjust them to the real population figures.¹⁴ The acknowledged margin of error was obviously too low, for the “adjusted” population figure of 485,563 can hardly be reconciled with the much higher figures yielded by the official national censuses of 1910/11 (1,216,817 persons) and 1919 (1,341,877 persons),¹⁵ because this would imply a completely unrealistic annual population increase of 7.0 per cent during the period between 1904 and 1919.¹⁶ When we compare the census results of 1904 and 1919, comparable differences can be observed for each *müang* of Lan Na, which indicates a systematic mistake in the “preliminary census” of 1904.

Table 2: Population of *monthon* Phayap

<i>Müang</i> year	1904 (a)	1919 (b)	(a) : (b)
Chiang Mai	* 225,000	349,500	2.83
Mae Hòng Sòn		49,713	
Chiang Rai		** 266,178	
Thoeng	10,000		
Lamphun	45,000	132,634	2.95
Lampang	100,000	275,588	2.76
Phrae	38,000	103,739	2.73
Nan	90,000	164,525	1.83
Total	508,000	1,341,877	2.64

* Inclusive Chiang Mai, Mae Hòng Sòn, and Chiang Rai

** Inclusive Chiang Rai and Thoeng

Source: Grabowsky 1993: 37. The figures for 1904/05 are from Carter 1904: 33; they seem to be based on results, which resemble those of the “preliminary census” of 1904/05.

¹⁴ Grabowsky 1993: 60, 84.

¹⁵ Grabowsky 1993: 34, 37 (here: Table 5 and Table 10).

¹⁶ This implies an annual population increase of roughly 16.5% between 1904/05 and 1910/11. However, the census of 1910/11 overestimated the number of inhabitants of *monthon* Phayap by up to 10 per cent, as a comparison of these figures with the quite reliable results of the 1919/20 census demonstrates.

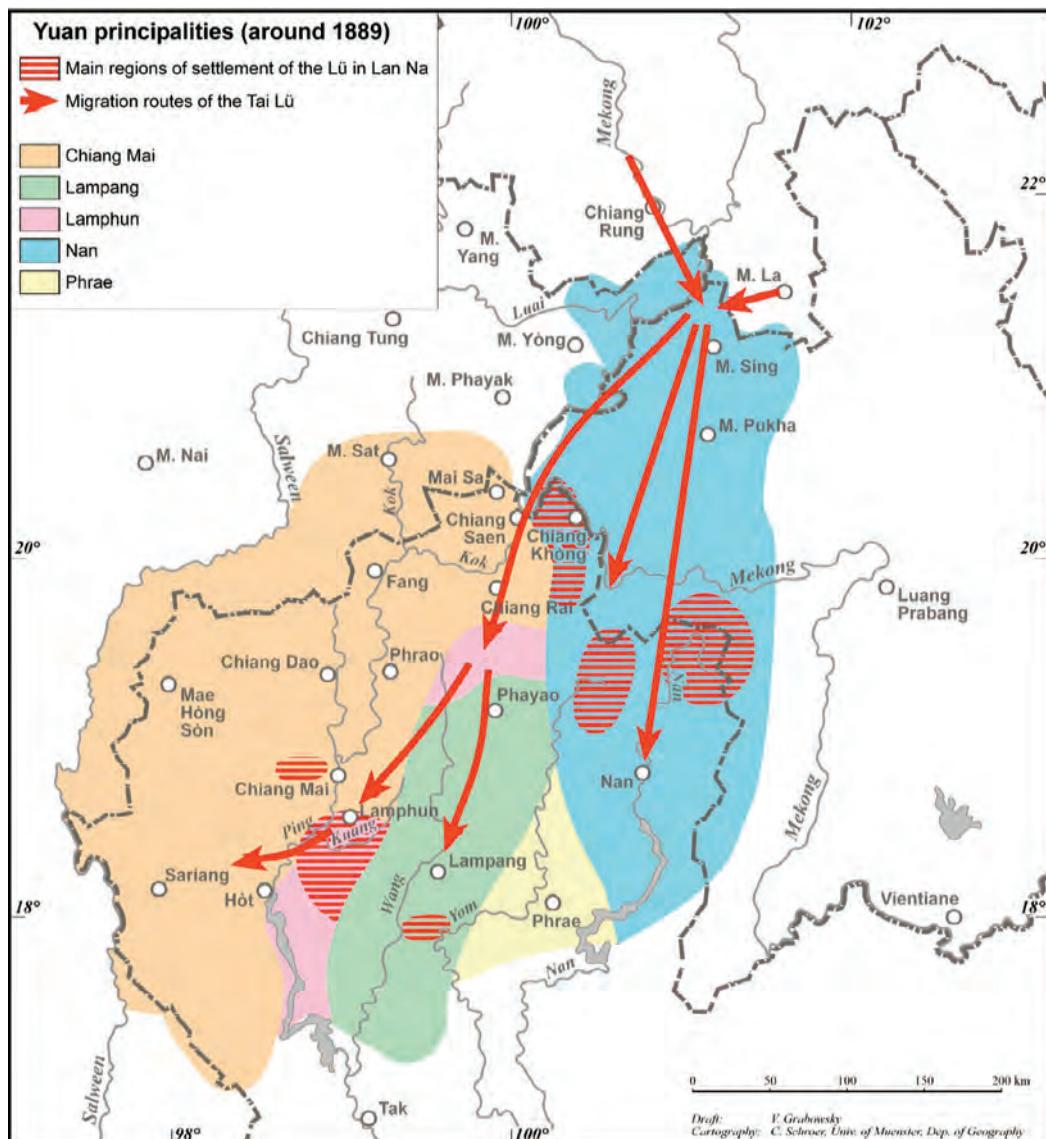


Figure 1. Map of Yuan principalities around 1889 (devised by the author, drawn by C. Schroer)

It is evident that the figure of roughly 508,000 inhabitants, which the Siamese census of 1904 yielded for *monthon* Phayap, represents an underrating of at least 50 per cent; there is no doubt that at the beginning of the 20th century, the total population of Lan Na had reached slightly over one million.¹⁷ This figure, however, contradicts the low population figures that were reported for the first half of the 19th century.

During the rule of Phaña Kham Fan (r. 1823–1825) he endeavoured to carry out a census for Chiang Mai.¹⁸ During his first of three visits to Chiang Mai in the 1830s,

¹⁷ If we assume that the population growth (incl. migration gains) in Northern Thailand in the period 1904/05–1919/20 was approximately 2 per cent, we arrive at a total population of 990,000 in 1904/05.

¹⁸ McLeod Journal: 38 [23.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 313–14).

during an audience with Phutthawong, the ruler of Chiang Mai at that time, he was informed “that Labong had 4,000, Lagon and Zimmay each about 40,000 or 50,000 inhabitants, this if the statement meant only the town is certainly exaggerated and if [if it was meant to refer to] the whole province Labong [it would be] much underrated” (diary entry dated 29 January 1830).¹⁹ It is interesting that Richardson tried his best to treat the data that he obtained with some caution. He also seemed to be aware of the ambiguity of the term *müang*, as he did not hesitate to ask the crucial question of the geographical basis of reference: the city or the principality, and did the latter also include the surrounding countryside? Such differentiation is no longer visible in the edited version of Richardson’s travel notes, published by the Royal Asiatic Society.²⁰

McLeod, who visited Chiang Mai in early 1837, provides more demographic data than Richardson. Government officials in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provided him with data on the quota of troops, which the Tai Yuan rulers had to mobilize in 1827/28 to support Bangkok’s campaign against Cao Anu, the rebellious king of Vientiane. In his diary, the British diplomat compiled these data along with other demographic data.²¹

Table 3: Population of Lan Na around 1827/28

Names of Provinces.	Men furnished for Constant Public Service to the King	Men furnished for the Attack on Wiantchiang	Houses in town	Population of provinces
Zimmé ^a	20	5,000	704	50,000
Lagong ^b	20	5,000	400	30,000
Labong ^c	15	3,000	400	10,000
Muang Nan	20	5,000	700	30,000
Muang Luang Phaban or Lantschiang ^d	25	---	700	50,000
Muang Phé ^e	15	1,000	150	5,000
Win Tschiang, also called Chandapuri ^f	50	---	---	---

a. Chiang Mai d. Luang Prabang or Lan Sang

b. Lampang

d. Müang Phrae

c. Lamphun

e. Vientiane

Source: McLeod Journal, *Parliamentary Papers*, Vol. 46, 1868/69, p. 38.

From his point of view, McLeod was hardly able to evaluate his own data critically. He never visited Lampang, Phrae or Nan. McLeod’s interlocutors in Chiang Mai and Lamphun proved to be completely ignorant and indifferent concerning the political conditions in Phrae and Nan. To his regret, the British envoy discovered that “few could

¹⁹ Richardson Journal: 30 [29.1.1830].

²⁰ Here it is stated “[...] that there are 4,000 inhabitants in Laboung, 40 or 50.000 in each of the other towns – this is also of course very much exaggerated.” (emphasis by V.G.). Quoted from Richardson 1836: 619.

²¹ McLeod assures that he obtained his data from various people, but “these [figures] did not vary much.” McLeod Journal: 38 [23.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 313-14.

tell me whether the Tsóuba of Muang Nan was dead or not.”²² Thus, the data concerning Nan has to be treated with the utmost caution. Even the details about Chiang Mai were strongly relativized by McLeod, because:

I should think that the number of houses in Zimmé far exceed that put down, but the person assured me he had, at my express request, extracted it from the public records; that the number of houses registered in the whole province is 7,000; this he took from the list made for levying the money for the celebration of the festival of the guardian Nat, or spirit of the place, and could be depended on. This would give the population mentioned, allowing a fraction more than seven to each house, which here contain more inhabitants than those in Ava. I should say that the number stated far exceeds the population in the province, but that the town contains more than is put down.²³

It is unclear why McLeod considered the estimate of 50,000 inhabitants as too high for the whole principality (“province”) of Chiang Mai. McLeod points out that the number of able-bodied men to be recruited for military service was 5,000 alone for the “southern districts” of Chiang Mai; they were supervised by 300 “Thuggis or heads of villages”. Yet, these figures, as McLeod continues, were surpassed in the eastern and northern districts; only in the western districts were the number of able-bodied men lower.²⁴ How can we interpret McLeod’s considerations? It seems that in the “southern districts” (probably areas to the south of Chiang Mai town, V.G.), not further defined by McLeod, there were roughly 20,000 people. This figure results from the basic rule that to one able-bodied man (*chai chakan*) three relatives (women, children, elderly and disabled persons) have to be added. In other words, the *chai chakan* made up about one-fourth of the residential population. If we take into consideration McLeod’s remarks about the much higher population density in the eastern and northern districts of Chiang Mai, the principality of Chiang Mai might have comprised far more than 50,000 inhabitants.

Several Western visitors, who travelled in McLeod’s tracks, took his population figures at face value. Henry Yule states in his “Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855” that McLeod in 1837 estimated the population of Chiang Mai and the “confederate states of Lapung or Labong, and Lagong” at a maximum of 90,000.²⁵ The British consul in Siam, Sir Robert Schomburgk, reports after his visit to Chiang Mai in early 1860 that the principality of Chiang Mai counted probably less than 50,000 people of whom 5,000 were able to carry weapons. Unlike McLeod, Schomburgk did not refer to the quota of troops to be levied in the Siamese campaign against the Lao King, Cao Anu (1827/28), but to military contingents in the three Chiang Tung wars (1850–54).²⁶ In the more recent literature on Northern Thailand, scholars have occasionally quoted McLeod’s

²² McLeod Journal: 40 [23.1.1837], see *ibid.*: 317.

²³ McLeod Journal: 38 [23.1.1837], *ibid.*: 314.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Yule 1968: 306.

²⁶ Schomburgk 1863: 394, see also *Bangkok Calendar* 1870: 71.

figures as data to be taken seriously.²⁷ One scholar even drew the conclusion that the population of Chiang Mai had tripled during the last two thirds of the 19th century.²⁸

Table 4: Population of Phrae (1848/49)

Nai Nòi			
Nai Nan	100		
Nai Khoei		}	
Nai Khai	150	250	
Saen Khon Müin			}500
Aristocrats (<i>thao phraya</i>)		250	
Commoners (<i>phrai</i>)		1,500	}2,500
Slaves (<i>that</i>)		500	

Remark: The structure of this table follows that of the original document. The figures seem to be have been rounded. The different categories of *nai* probably represent different groups within the aristocracy.

Source: HSH, CMH R. 3, C.S. 1210, No. 20.

Around 1850, censuses were undertaken in all principalities of Lan Na, probably on the occasion of the ascension to the throne of a new ruler. A document from the year 1849 reports on a census in Phrae. It is a letter (*santra* สารตรา) sent by Phraya Chakri to the political leadership in Phrae, officially confirming the election of the latcawong (Thai: *ratchawong* ราชวงศ์) to the new ruler of Phrae. In the document, dated Friday 19 January 1849,²⁹ it is stated: “Phrae is at present [our] vassal state. Its population has increased many times. Phrae is prosperous; Chinese traders transport goods to Phrae with horse and bullock carts and trade is flourishing.”³⁰ At the same time Phraya Chakri confirmed the receipt of the census list,³¹ which the new ruler of Phrae had ordered to be carried out following his ascension to the throne.³² In this census, the population was

²⁷ Brailey (1968: 25) writes in his PhD dissertation: “McLeod’s figure of 175,000 for the whole of eastern Laos including Narn (Nan) and Preh (Phrae), plus Eastern Lao Luang Prabang, would not appear too great an underestimation.” In the same vein, Vatikiotis (1984: 60-61) quotes McLeod as a serious source, but concludes wrongly that McLeod related the figure 50,000 to the population of the city of Chiang Mai. Indeed, there is hardly any doubt that McLeod included the rural areas of the principality of Chiang Mai in his considerations.

²⁸ Anan (1984c: 68) states: “In the last decade of the nineteenth century the population of Chiang Mai State, comprising Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hongson, increased about ten-fold over the estimate of 50,000 made by Brailey in 1830.” However, in his conclusion Anan only indirectly refers – via Brailey’s work – to McLeod.

²⁹ I.e., on the “fifth day [of the week], on the eleventh day of the waning moon in the second month of the year *wòk samritthisok*.”

³⁰ HSH, CMH R.3, C.S. 1210, No. 20. There did not exist any trade restrictions with China; only the import of opium (*fin* 芬) was strictly prohibited. The missive strongly emphasizes the strict prohibition on trade of whisky (*sura* สุรา) and opium and demands to take decisive action against opium traders.

³¹ The census lists transmitted in long paper rolls are called *hang wao* (ຫ່າງວ້າງ), literally meaning “tail of a paper dragon”. *Hang wao* were traditionally used for the registration of able-bodied men liable to corvee labour.

³² The census results were proclaimed on the tenth day of the waning moon in the second month

divided into social categories, differentiating between different categories of aristocrats and their retainers, the majority of commoners (*phrai* ไพร), and slaves or serfs (*that* ทาส).

More detailed information about the demographic situation in the other principalities of Lan Na is provided in a letter issued by Phraya Phichai several years later.³³ This document, dated 8 July 1856,³⁴ was issued not long after the ascension to the throne of Kawilolot, the new ruler of Chiang Mai. Phraya Phichai summarizes first the course of the military conflicts in Sipsòng Panna and then reports the population figures of the principalities of Chiang Mai (ruled directly by Kawilolot), Lampang, and Lamphun (subordinated to Kawilolot indirectly), as well as Nan. The results may be summarized as follows:

Chiang Mai had 30,000 inhabitants of which 7,300 were already registered (ເທບານ
ຊື່ແລ້ວ) and 22,700 still unregistered (ຍັງໄມ້ໄດ້ເທບານຊື່ຍຸ). A total of 1,255 persons were mobilized for the resettlement of Chiang Rai.³⁵ The settlers, who came from Chiang Mai, were divided into the following social groups:

Table 5: Population of Chiang Rai (1856)

Ruler (<i>cao</i>)	7			
High-ranking noblemen (<i>thao</i>)	11	}	125	
Nobility (<i>nai</i>)	107			
			1,005	
Commoners (<i>phrai</i>)		880		1,255
Elderly and handicapped people (<i>chara phikan</i>)			250	

Remark: The structure of the table follows that of the original document.

Source: HSH, CMH R.4, C.S. 1218, No. 27.

Lampang had a population of 32,000 able-bodied men (6,000 registered and 26,000 unregistered persons). Roughly 1,000 of them were sent from Lampang to Phayao and another 600 people to Ngao, leaving 30,400 behind in Lampang. Lamphun had 8,000 able-bodied men, while Nan counted 10,000, of which 2,000 were sent to resettle Chiang Khòng and another 2,000 to resettle Müang Thoeng. As for the whole of Lan Na, we obtain the following demographic make-up:

of the year *wòk samritthisok* [18 January 1849]. In a missive dated “fourteenth day of the waning moon in the second month” [22 January 1849], the numerical strength of the nobility (Phañā Phrae, Phañā Hò Na and the *but lan saen thao*) is put at 73 persons.

³³ HSH, CMH R.4, C.S. 1218, No. 27.

³⁴ I.e., on the tenth day of the waning moon of the eighth month (Pratomaśādha 25 [of the year *marong atthasok*]).

³⁵ All other data follow HSH, CMH R.4, C.S. 1218, No. 27.

Table 6: Population of Lan Na, c. 1856

<i>müang</i>	“people” (here: able-bodied men)	satellite <i>müang</i>	“people” (here: able-bodied men)
Chiang Mai	30,000	Chiang Rai	1,255
Lampang	32,000	Phayao	1,000
		Ngao	600
Lamphun	8,000		
Nan	*10,000	Chiang Khòng	2,000
		Thoeng	2,000
Phrae	*2,500		
Total	82,500		6,855

* Figures probably grossly underrated.

Source: National Library, CMH, R.4, C.S. 1218, No. 27.1

Do the results of the above-mentioned censuses confirm the assessments made by British diplomat-explorer McLeod in the mid-1830s? This question could only be answered in the affirmative if each of the census figures referred to the total population of a particular *müang*. Only under this assumption would we be able to calculate a total of c. 100,000 inhabitants for the whole of Lan Na by c. 1850 (after taking into account an error margin of 10–20 per cent). But is this assumption plausible? The census of Phrae in 1848/49 distinguishes social groups, such as “aristocrats” and “notables”, “commoners” and “slaves”. Both in Siam and in Lan Na, such census lists usually included only able-bodied adult men, not their family members. The census of 1856 consistently uses the classifier “person” (*khon* ຄົວ), but it seems evident that only “male adults” were recorded. In any case, these figures are in accordance with the target strength of able-bodied men to be recruited for the resettlement of the *müang* Chiang Rai, Phayao, and Ngao, all of them refounded in 1843/44.³⁶ Moreover, the Baptist missionary Cushing, who sojourned frequently in Chiang Mai during the 1870s, observed:

Still, if the number of able-bodied men liable to be called for government service is thirty thousand, as the queen’s sister said, the population must be very much larger, for slaves are not included in this class.³⁷ (Emphasis by V.G.)

³⁶ The required strength of the *chai chakan* for Chiang Rai, Phayao, and Ngao was 1,500, 600 and 300, respectively. Assuming a ratio of one *chai chakan* to three women, elderly people and children, these figures translate into total populations of roughly 6,000, 2,400 and 1,200, respectively. In 1849, Chiang Rai and Phayao reached only one third (454) and three fifths (350), respectively of these required strengths. At that time, in Ngao there lived already 434 *chai chakan*, corresponding to a total population of c. 1,700. We may assume that the number of inhabitants in all three *müang* considerably increased after 1850, as numerous war captives from the region of Müang Yòng were resettled in Chiang Rai. Thus, it seems plausible that the census figures of 1856 – for Chiang Rai (1,255), Phayao (1,000), and Ngao (600) – only referred to able-bodied men and not to the population at large.

³⁷ Cushing 1885: 70 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, March 1885].

There is another aspect, which further substantiates the hypothesis that both censuses discussed above only counted able-bodied men: 82,500 *chai chakan* (1856) correspond roughly to a total population of 330,000. The Thai national census of 1919 counted 1,342,000 persons for Monthon Payap, comprising *cum grano salis* the territory of the five former Lan Na principalities. Using these two key values, an average annual growth rate of 2.2 per cent can be calculated. This rate is quite high, but not off the mark. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that the 1856 figure of 82,500 refers to the population at large (able-bodied men plus family members), a completely unrealistic annual population growth rate of 4.5 per cent would be needed to produce more than 1.3 million people by 1919.

For the period 1840–1919, a population growth of 1.5 per cent per annum appears as the most realistic assumption for mainland Southeast Asia. If we take this growth rate for granted, a recursive calculation would result in a population size of 518,000, i.e. 57 per cent higher than the figure of 330,000 deducted from the 1856 census. Or, in other words: The 1856 census underestimated the (hypothetically calculated) total population by 36 per cent. This would not have been surprising as the results of the censuses of 1849 and 1856 obviously served as the basis for calculating the tribute to be sent by the Lan Na vassal states to Bangkok and the strength of the military contingents to be levied by these states in times of war.³⁸ We may surmise that the Tai Yuan rulers were therefore keen to underreport to Bangkok the numerical strength of able-bodied men living under their administration.

If someone wished to sum up the population development of Lan Na in the 19th century, taking into account regional specificities, he or she would soon face the problem that for smaller geographical units hardly any reliable data is available. Nevertheless, it is possible to confront the few indigenous sources with the contemporary reports of Western travellers and identify some general demographic trends.³⁹

Chiang Mai

David Richardson was the first Westerner on record who visited Chiang Mai. He reached the city, travelling from the south via Lamphun, on 23 January 1830. On the following day, Richardson surveyed the city and acknowledged the relatively good state of the city walls.⁴⁰ After his second visit in April 1834, Richardson described the city's fortification once again, but this time deplored its deterioration:

The inner wall of the town is all of brick, 800 fathoms from east to west and 1000 from north to south with a ditch and rampart all round. The outer wall one half of which [is] brick and the other wood made in a semicircular form from the northeast to the southwest corner about 1800 fathoms with a rampart round the brick portion

³⁸ See also Sarassawadee 1996: 439.

³⁹ Terwiel (1989) has shown for central Thailand that the combined use of both categories of primary sources might enable us to reconstruct the demographic, ethnographic, social, and economic conditions in the region under study.

⁴⁰ Richardson Journal: 25 [24.1.1830].

around the whole. The walls and ditch[es] are both much out of repair, and a good deal of waste ground and jungle [are] within the walls.⁴¹

Within the city walls, Richardson did not notice any densely built-up areas. Chiang Mai appeared to him as a settlement largely marked by horticulture:

And each house except those the poorest further stands with in an enclosed compound in which they [grow] coconut, arica, [...] and other fruit trees with betel vine, bamboo and other useful trees, and a great variety of flowers and flowering shrubs of which they are very fond. Their gardens are irrigated by a stream of clear water from the neighbouring hills.⁴²

McLeod confirmed the impression of a city whose inhabitants lived primarily from agriculture and trade with agricultural products.⁴³ He states that there were altogether 704 residential buildings in the city of Chiang Mai. However, it is not clear whether this figure refers to the area within the inner square wall or also includes the suburbs surrounded by the semicircular outer earthen wall.⁴⁴ In 1875, almost four decades after McLeod, the deputy British commissioner of the Salween district, A. H. Hildebrand, visited Chiang Mai and calculated for the “city proper” a total of 360 houses.⁴⁵ “Each house is much more thickly-populated than I have seen elsewhere; all the married sons and daughters [are] living with the parents”, Hildebrand expressed in utter astonishment. Making spot checks in some living quarters, he arrived at the following conclusion:

[...] I don't think there are less than an average throughout of 12 persons to the house, and, in addition to these, some 1,000 slaves should be thrown in, who live goodness knows where, and I think the estimate made of the total city population would be a fair one. On this estimate of 360 houses, at 12 persons to the house, the population would be 4,320 souls, to which add 1,000, and the total city population would be 5,320 souls. Immediately in the neighbourhood of the city walls, reside

⁴¹ Richardson Journal: 103 [24.4.1834].

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ McLeod writes: “The outer fort is not in some parts inhabited, being swampy; it is the residence principally of the Kiang Tung, Kiang Then, and other Tsóbuas, with their followers. The inner fort is abundantly watered by watercourses intersecting it in all directions, the water being brought from the hill, entering the ditch and fort at the northwest angle. There is a tolerable bazar here in the outer fort, along the main street, kept by women; small sheds are erected along each side of the road, in which they display their goods. The fresh meat sold here is pork, and occasionally beef, both slaughtered by Chinamen.” McLeod Journal: 36 [23.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 308-9.

⁴⁴ McLeod Journal: 38 [23.1.1837], see ibid: 314.

⁴⁵ See Hildebrand 1875: 19 [Public Record Office, F.O. 67/65A]. Each house, states Hildebrand, was surrounded by spacious orchard gardens, roughly 100 square yards in area. As one yard was equal to 91.44 cm and the square-shaped city wall included an area of 256 ha, the inner city should comprise slightly more than 300 houses.

about as many more people, so that the population of Chiengmai may be roughly estimated between 10,000 and 11,000 souls.⁴⁶

D.J. Edwardes, the author of a “British Consular Report” on the Siamese “Teak Districts”, estimated for the same year the population of Chiang Mai at c. 15,000 inhabitants.⁴⁷ In the 1870s, the suburbs of Chiang Mai had spread beyond the outer semicircular earthen wall beyond the left bank of the Ping river. Cushing reports that during his first visit in 1870, he still had an unobstructed view of the city walls when standing on the banks of the Ping river. But a decade later, peace and prosperity had brought the city a considerable population growth, because “the extensive suburbs shut out all view of the city walls from the river.”⁴⁸ Hallett, who stayed in Chiang Mai during the early 1880s, estimated the population of the “Twin Town” of Chiang Mai at not more than 30,000 but more than 20,000 inhabitants”. However, Hallett does not explicitly tell us on which empirical basis his conclusion is formed. In any case, he leaves no doubt about the fundamental assumption that in Chiang Mai, as well as in other parts of Lan Na, an average of seven persons were living in one house. Under this assumption, the city of Chiang Mai would have comprised 3,000 to 4,000 houses. The British missionary Colquhoun reports: “some nine hundred houses inside the inner fort” and “many more than that number in the portion of the town enclosed by the outer fortifications and in what may be termed the suburbs.”⁴⁹ His estimate implies an urban population in the magnitude of 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.⁵⁰ Interesting is Hallett’s observation about the higher population density in the city’s outskirts where the majority of war captives, resettled in the era of *kep phak sai sa kep kha sai müang*, had their quarters:

The inner city contains the palace of the head king,⁵¹ the residences of many of the nobility and wealthy men, and numerous religious buildings. In the outer city, which is peopled chiefly by the descendants of captives, the houses are packed

⁴⁶ Hildebrand 1875: 19 [Public Record Office, F.O. 67/65A].

⁴⁷ Edwardes stresses: “Though in some places much of the space within the walls is left to bamboo jungle, the population is considerable, and probably amounts to 15,000 people. The houses are built of wood, and each stands in its own garden of areca or cocoa palms. The streets are regular and well kept, and on both sides of some of the principal streets sheds have been built, which answer the purpose of shops, and from which goods are daily carried. These sheds display English cotton goods, flannel, Turkey red cloth, muslins, articles of native manufacture, both silk and cotton, also Bombay chowls, twist, muskets, and a variety of other articles. Calico, white shirting, and Bombay chowls were conspicuous, and I counted about 100 shops where these goods were displayed for sale.” Edwardes 1875: 18 [British Library, I.O.O.C.], see also Chatthip and Sutthy 1978: 135.

⁴⁸ Cushing 1885: 70 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, March 1885].

⁴⁹ Colquhoun 1885: 124.

⁵⁰ According to Colquhoun (*ibid.*), the whole city comprised altogether between 2,000 and 3,000 houses. Completely off the mark, however, is his assumption that “in Zimmé the household often contains thirty, or even fifty, people under one roof at night”. It seems much more plausible that an average of five (or up to seven) persons lived under one roof.

⁵¹ This refers to the *cao müang* or *cao luang*, not to the Vice-King, called *upalat* or *cao hò na*.

closer together than in the inner one, the gardens are smaller, the religious buildings are fewer, and the population is more dense.⁵²

At the beginning of the 19th century, the population of Chiang Mai was concentrated in the city and in the central parts of the fertile plain of the Ping river valley. In these areas Richardson and McLeod observed a rather dense rural settlement in the 1830s. Looking over the wide plain of the Ping river valley from the pagoda at the feet of the Dòi Suthep, McLeod noted with admiration:

From this high position we had a fine view of the country and town immediately below us, but it was too hazy to distinguish the hills forming the eastern boundary of the valley of the Mé Ping. This river flows from a north-20-west direction, and below takes a south-20-west course, forming a segment of a circle round the town. Its banks are darkened by trees, concealing the houses of many small villages. We could see one or two large tanks to the northward, not far from the town. The country around is, in fact, one sheet of field, with numerous tops of trees, marking the position of so many villages. The valley is rich, and said to be about 35 or 40 miles long, and 15 wide in some places.⁵³

When a few days later, McLeod departed from Chiang Mai to Chiang Tung, he chose the north-eastern route via Chiang Rai. For the first fifteen to twenty kilometres, McLeod and his companions (a “Shan officer” with ten men and six elephants) passed through a densely populated wet-rice cultivation area. In the territory of present-day San Sai and Dòi Saket districts they passed numerous villages protected by strong stockades.⁵⁴ Behind Müang Lòn (Dòi Saket), a large village with c. 100 houses was the end of the road, which had passed through an area McLeod describes as “a fertile and well-cultivated country, irrigated by canals, and having numerous villages scattered over it.”⁵⁵

After crossing the western sections of the Pi Pan Nam mountain range, McLeod reached the headquarters of the [Mae] Lao river. In the valley of this river, belonging to the region of Chiang Rai, the population density was low, but not insignificant. Only north of Pák Bóng, a frontier village situated on the left (western) bank of the Mae Lao, McLeod’s expedition could no longer find any settlement where they could take

⁵² Hallett 1890: 97. See also Cushing (1885: 70, Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, March 1885) who notices: “Much of the ‘new’ city is peopled by the descendants of captives taken in war with various Laos principalities.”

⁵³ McLeod Journal: 35 [23.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 307.

⁵⁴ McLeod observes: “After crossing the bridge over the Mé Ping, the whole march lay over fields (which were well watered by water-courses communicating with the Mé Ping), or flat, swampy and open ground, with only, occasionally, a little brushwood. The cultivation most extensive, and round the plains numerous villages. These are well inclosed with strong palisades to prevent the cattle and elephants (which are here numerous and always let loose) from entering the gardens.” McLeod Journal: 43 [29.1.1837], see *ibid*: 322.

⁵⁵ McLeod Journal: 43 [30.1.1837], see *ibid*: 323.

a rest.⁵⁶ The border station of Pák Póng was mostly peopled by ethnic Tai Yuan from Chiang Mai,⁵⁷ while the majority of the sparse population in the area, however, were Lua (Lawa). McLeod speculates that they were the region's autochthonous people:

The Lawas are said to be the aborigines of the country, but are now so reduced in circumstances and numbers as to be considered by the Shans as an uncivilised tribe, little better than the brutes of the field. They inhabit villages amongst the hills in this direction, but are not numerous; they are an agricultural race, but also employ themselves in extracting iron from the hills, making muskets, dahs, &c. There are altogether 10 or 12 villages belonging to them, and their number is estimated at about 4,000. Most of the cotton taken away by the Chinese is the produce of the Lawa villages, they also cultivate indigo and sugar cane, which, however, are to be found in most gardens.⁵⁸

Cushing, traversing the valley of the Mae Tao on his way to Chiang Rai in March 1884, noticed a linguistic and cultural affinity of this Lua group to the Wa living in the Chiang Tung area. He believed that the ancestors of these Lua migrated from Chiang Tung "several generations" ago, eventually becoming rice cultivators when settling in the Mae Tao valley.⁵⁹ Hallett, who accompanied Cushing, fully agrees with this hypothesis and supports it with linguistic arguments.⁶⁰ If we follow McLeod's hypothesis, discussed earlier, the Lua as a non-Tai and predominantly non-Buddhist indigenous community would have been less affected by the refugee movements and forced resettlements of the late 18th and early 19th century than the Tai Yuan majority population. If Cushing was correct, the Lua (Wa) of Chiang Tung had occupied the plains of the Mae Tao valley not long after the Tai Yuan had left their homesteads. The relative prosperity of the somewhat large Lua villages, testified by McLeod in early reports, might point to a longer tradition of dwelling in this area. On the other hand, we should not ignore Hallett's statement that the Lua had testified to him "that nearly every year some of their kinsmen from the neighbourhood of Kiang Tung paid them a visit, and that their forefathers were immigrants from the north, and not natives of the Zimmé State."⁶¹

⁵⁶ McLeod Journal: 46-50 [7.-12.2.1837], see *ibid*: 330-5.

⁵⁷ The governor (*phāñā*) residing in Pák Bóng was an official loyal to the ruler of Chiang Mai; several of the c. 150 villagers (25 households), however, were considered retainers of the rulers of Lamphun and Lampang. See McLeod Journal: 47 [6.2.1837], see *ibid*: 330.

⁵⁸ McLeod Journal: 45 [3.2.1837], see *ibid*: 327.

⁵⁹ Cushing 1885: 125 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, May 1885].

⁶⁰ Hallett, who obviously was a passionate linguist and ethnographer, noted down several word lists of the "Lua" language in Chiang Rai that he compared with the Lua dialects in Chiang Mai. He did not notice any linguistic affinities between these two Lua groups. However, with the help of Bourne's Lolo word lists he tried to construct a linguistic relationship between the Lua of Chiang Rai and the Lolo in Yunnan and Sichuan. See Hallett 1890: 144-5.

⁶¹ Hallett 1890: 145.

Table 7: Places passed by McLeod in the valley of the Mae Lao river

direction SW > NO	orthography of McLeod	number of houses (a)	population (a) x 7 = (b)	dominant ethnic group
1	Ban Kai Nón	?	?	#
2	Banchi di San Niot	6	42	#
3	Muang Fue Háí	50	350	#
4	Kiang Po Pau Viang Hau	---	---	uninhabited
3	Tanko*	20	140	#
4	Takau**	70	490	Lua (“chiefly”)
5	Teng Dam	70	490	Lua (“entirely”)
6	Nónquan	50	350	#
7	Móng Món	15	105	#
8	Mé Phit	25	175	#
9	Pak Bóng	5	35	#
10	Ban Tue	10	70	#
11	Pák Póng	25	175	#
Total		346	2.422	#

Source: McLeod Journal: 44-7 [1–6 February 1837].

* Situated on the right (eastern) bank of the Mae Lao in a narrow, fertile valley; in the vicinity of three Lawa villages.

** Two further villages of the same name were situated in the immediate vicinity of the settlement.

(b) Own estimate.

No data, presumably predominantly Tai Yuan [206 of 346 houses].

Half a century later, the demographic conditions in the valley of the Mao Lao river had changed fundamentally. According to Hallett, the population density was quite low at the river’s upper reaches south of Wiang Pa Pao, indicating that the consequences of former depopulation campaigns during the Kawila period were not yet overcome, because:

[t]he plain had evidently been at one time under cultivation, as very few trees had been left standing: the population had doubtless been swept away in the wars of last century, and was still too sparse to cultivate one-twentieth of the splendid plain.⁶²

Wiang Pa Pao, an old town which McLeod had found abandoned in 1837, was rebuilt after 1844 as an outlying estate; the whole district comprised, according to Hallett, only 322 houses, scattered over several settlements, and roughly 2,250 inhabitants.⁶³ In 1888, as Archer emphasizes, Wiang Pa Pao was surrounded by rice-fields and “prosperous-looking little villages”, but due to the narrowness of the valley there was not enough space for the expansion of settlements. The complete middle section of the Mae Lao valley was still dominated by the Lua, as had been the case half a century earlier.⁶⁴ Only

⁶² Hallett 1890: 140.

⁶³ Hallett 1890: 143. Hallett calculated that seven persons lived in one house.

⁶⁴ In May 1888, Archer made a short stopover in Wiang Pa Pao on his journey from Chiang Mai back to Chiang Tung. He summed up the Lua influence in the areas as follows: “The hills close in after passing the town, and cultivation becomes scarce again, and there is little population beyond

at the river's lower reaches, south of Chiang Rai, did the population density increase. Although Chiang Rai, situated at the confluence of the Kok and Lao rivers, had not yet fully developed its economic potential, Archer gave a rather optimistic assessment of the city's long-term perspectives, due to its convenient location:

The new capital, which stands on the site of the former city of the same name, was founded about 40 years ago, and as yet, only a small part of the space inclosed by the old embankment is occupied. But the numerous gardens, neat roads, and well-built houses have a most pleasing aspect to the traveller coming from the new unformed Settlements. Chienghai (Chiang Rai) is a large province, but a great portion of its territory is mountainous, and the fertile plain to the east and south of the city alone is well suited to cultivation. In comparison with the new Settlements further north this province is fairly prosperous, but the population is still small, and the country but little developed. [...]

The town of Chienghai appears destined to become an important commercial centre if the trade of northern Siam ever undergoes great development. It stands on the direct road from Chiengtung to Chiengmai, Lakhon (Lampang) and Phrë, or, what may be of greater importance, from Yünnan to Siam; also, on the as yet little frequented route from Chiengmai to Luang Phrabang.⁶⁵

Like Archer, Cushing argued that the wide, fertile plain surrounding Chiang Rai could feed a large population. Yet, Chiang Rai was still facing a lack of inhabitants, writes Cushing after his arrival in the town on 15 March 1884; but the preceding two decades had been much more peaceful than previous times, causing a steady increase of population.⁶⁶ The city of Chiang Rai was obviously the centre from which the surrounding countryside was developed; in the whole Kok river basin, Chiang Rai was the only settlement fortified with a brick wall and a moat, providing its inhabitants with sufficient protection against armed robbery. Vrooman and McGilvary, who stayed in the town in 1872, indirectly confirm this impression. According to their view, Chiang Rai was "a small city of three hundred houses, population between two and three thousand."⁶⁷ During their two-day journey from Chiang Rai, the Kok river upstream,

a few villages of Lawas, the aborigines of the country. The Më Lao has increased in bulk, and runs between narrow banks. The road continues level as far as the Më Sui, a large tributary of the Më Lao, close to which are some villages. Here we leave the Më Lao a little to the right, and do not cross it again, the road avoiding a long bend by going over some low hills, and then descending into the plain of Chienghai." See Archer 1889: 1 [Public Record Office, F.O. 881/5713]. Cf. Hallett 1890: 143 and Cushing (1885: 125, Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, May 1885), who believed: "[The Lua] very probably will become merged in the Laos (Yuan, V.G.) in due time."

⁶⁵ Archer 1888: 8 [Public Record Office, Z HCI/5076].

⁶⁶ Cushing 1885: 125 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, May 1885].

⁶⁷ See also McGilvary and Vrooman's report published in the *Bangkok Calendar* 1872: 80. Here, the two American missionaries of the Presbyterian Mission make the observation that Chiang Rai had roughly 300 dwelling houses, which lead them to assume a total population of 3,000 inhabitants.

to the banks of the Mekong, the two American Presbyterian missionaries passed four or five villages, each of which comprised twenty to thirty houses. The dangers arising from bandits and wild animals forced the sparse population to live concentrated in a few larger settlements:

In the morning we discovered tracks of a large tiger near our boat. These fierce brutes are quite numerous throughout the country. For mutual protection against their attacks, and the more dreaded depredations of robbers, nearly all the people of this country reside in villages or congregate in larger numbers in cities.⁶⁸

The country's development and the expansion of rural settlements were always initiated by the administrative centre of a newly founded *müang*; this general rule was also characteristic for Chiang Rai. W.J. Archer saw a kind of guiding principle here, relevant for the founding of all new *miang* which he visited during his exploration trip in 1887:

The site having been fixed upon, the laborious task of clearing the jungle is begun; all, or nearly all, the trees are felled, the roads are marked out, and alongside the settlers are allowed to choose a piece of ground. A rough shanty is generally put up at first, and round it are planted bananas and other quick-growing plants; the grounds of the old temples are not encroached upon, and the principal 'wats' are often reoccupied by priests. Many of the new-comers first reside in the capital, but as by degrees they have opportunities of becoming better acquainted with the surrounding country, they begin by cultivating the most promising land in the neighbourhood; others join them, and thus villages are founded, and when a longer-residence and increased population have given a feeling of greater confidence and security, Settlements are gradually formed further from the capital.⁶⁹

In 1884, Chiang Rai still had about 300 houses within its city walls, as Hallett and Cushing report correspondingly.⁷⁰ The houses, remarks Cushing, would be scattered in small groups all over the town. Considering its relatively small population, Chiang Rai appeared quite oversized, as some places within the city were overgrown by dense jungle.⁷¹ Cushing's impression is supported by observations made by the French medical

⁶⁸ Vrooman 1884: 531.

⁶⁹ Archer 1888: 3 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

⁷⁰ Hallett 1890: 158; Cushing 1885: 125 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, March 1885]. McGilvary (1912: 246-7), the third senior missionary, does not mention any demographic data in his memoirs. The Norwegian Carl Bock, who in early 1882 made an expedition to Chiang Saen via Chiang Rai, writes in his famous book "Temples and Elephants" (published in 1884): "The town of Kiang Hai (Chiang Rai) is a small place. [...] It has a population of about 3,500 men, and the province of which it is the capital numbers 2,000 men more." The number of several thousand [able-bodied] men alone for the urban centre of Chiang Rai might be exaggerated, given the fact that all other Western observers, who had visited the town in the mid 1880s, agree on a maximum population of only 3,000 inhabitants. See Bock 1884: 314.

⁷¹ Cushing 1885: 125 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, May 1885]. A

doctor Paul Neis, who had visited Chiang Rai a few weeks earlier.⁷² Neis was visibly impressed by the powerful, though in some places slightly damaged, fortifications.⁷³ Yet, apart from the large market in the centre of the town, daily frequented by 300 to 500 people, Chiang Rai evoked a depressing atmosphere due to the many abandoned monasteries and large neglected gardens: “Toute la ville a un air de désolation et de solitude qui attriste.”⁷⁴ Davies, a British intelligence officer based in Burma, reports of his enquiry trip to Chiang Rai in early 1893, that the whole city, including its outskirts, had about 600 houses, the inhabitants being able to requisition large amounts of beef and rice.⁷⁵ The whole müang, which also included neighbouring Chiang Saen, counted, according to figures that Hallett and Cushing obtained from local authorities in 1884, 2,000 houses (or 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants).⁷⁶

In the following decades, the population growth in Chiang Rai accelerated. An improved security situation in the plains of the Upper Mekong and Kok river valleys was certainly an important incentive for an increased immigration from other parts of Lan Na.⁷⁷ The expansion of the transportation network and the improvement of rural infrastructure further encouraged immigration to Chiang Rai; the population growth both in the urban centre and the surrounding countryside was remarkable. In 1899, roads were built until the confines of the walled city (wiang) and a new city gate was also constructed. The city wall was straightened and water ditches were dug, within as well as outside the city wall. Parts of the wall that were damaged were repaired.⁷⁸ At the beginning of the 20th century, additional works for the draining of marshland were carried out. The population of the region “North-Phayap”⁷⁹ increased, on average,

similar observation was made by Younghusband in 1887, when he realized that “[the population was] small for the size of the place. [...] There are no shops [...] only a daily market held at the cross roads in the middle of the town.” See Younghusband 1888: 43.

⁷² Neis stayed in Chiang Rai from 20–23 February 1884.

⁷³ Neis published the only visual representation of the city way, which was already in decay in the 1880s. It is a lithography devised by a person named “Hildibrand” based on a sketch made by Neis’s companion, Eugène Burnand. See Neis 1885: 69. Cf. Penth 1989: 19.

⁷⁴ Neis 1885: 68. At the daily market fermented tea leaves (*miang* ເມັງ), which were very popular among the Tai Yuan, were offered for sale. The environs of Chiang Rai were full of *miang* trees: “La ville de Xieng Haï est entourée de bois de thé que l’on dit très parfumé, mais les habitants n’en font guère sécher et ils le vendent ou le consomment en entier sous forme de mian. Tous les Ventres-Noirs (Lao Phung Dam), tous les Birmans, les Ngious (Shan) et les Karyens chiquent le mian et le passeraient plutôt de manger que de chiquer.” Neis 1885: 70, Insertions in round brackets by V.G.

⁷⁵ Fenton 1894: 1161.

⁷⁶ Cushing 1885: 125 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, May 1885]; Hallett (1890: 158) cites as authority the governor of Chiang Rai, who personally provided these data to him. Hallett stresses: “In answer to my questions, he said that there were 300 houses in the town and 1,700 in the district, making 2,000 in all. On an average the houses contained seven inhabitants. This seems to be the usual number throughout the Zimmé States.”

⁷⁷ Forays by Shan groups had been markedly reduced since the refounding of Chiang Saen (1881) and no longer posed any serious danger after the suppression of the Shan uprising of 1902.

⁷⁸ *Prawat tang müang chiang rai* 1981: 150.

⁷⁹ Founded in 1905 and inhabited by people coming from Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen and Fang (formerly Chiang Mai), Phayao and Ngao (formerly Lampang), Phan (formerly Lamphun) as well

considerably faster than that of Monthon Phayap as a whole.⁸⁰ When Reginald LeMay visited Chiang Rai in 1914, he could convince himself of the impressive economic and demographic development which had taken place in the region:

An earlier traveller, who visited it in 1887,⁸¹ says that at that time only a small part was yet occupied, but that the gardens and rows of well-built houses then laid out gave signs of a prosperous future; at that time, of course, the population of the plain was very small and the country little developed. Nowadays, the city has been developed to a certain degree and is fairly populous, but there are great plains all around still uncultivated, and the population of the district is still on the small side. The rains in the Chieng Rai district are so steady and the soil so productive that bad rice harvests are almost unknown; yet there are thousands of acres of waste land waiting for immigrants to come and scratch them.⁸²

Settlement movements within the principality of Chiang Mai not only proceeded in north-eastern direction, i.e., across the Pi Pan Nam mountain range into the plains of the Lao, Kok and Mekong river valleys, but also into the Ping river basin where, at its southern periphery, (Müang) Hòt is situated. This larger settlement situated on the right (west) bank of the Ping river, approximately 100 kilometres to the south-west of Chiang Mai, was an important trading centre where two major trade routes intersected, namely an East-West, predominantly land-based route from British Moulmein to Chiang Mai via Mae Sariang and the Lua inhabited plateau of Bò Luang,⁸³ and a South-North route

as Chiang Khòng, Thoeng and Chiang Kham (formerly Nan). See HCH R.5, M.58/125.

⁸⁰ See census results (1919–1960) in the appendix of this article.

⁸¹ Obviously a reference to W.J. Archer.

⁸² LeMay 1926: 197–8.

⁸³ Richardson passed through several Lua villages, including Bò Luang: “The village contains 60 or 80 houses, the inhabitants are all black smiths and are exempted from service or taxation [but] are furnishing [...] elephant chains, spears, cooking pots and other ironware during war and for military purposes.” Richardson Journal: 15 [9.1.1830]. See also McLeod Journal: 21 [4.1.1837], cf. Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 280–1. This situation had hardly changed half a century later. As Colquhoun remarks (1885: 49–51): “The inhabitants of the village of Baw are Lawas, who are said to be the aborigines of the country lying to the east of the Salween, from the borders of Yunnan to some distance south of Baw, they are still found in isolated hamlets scattered about the hills. McLeod, on his journey to Kiang Hung, passed through many of these villages. They are an agricultural race, cultivating cotton, indigo, sugar-cane, tobacco, safflower, chillies, cereals, and other produce. The cotton is grown in abundance on the sides of the hills and in the valleys. The seed is sown broadcast. The only preparation the ground undergoes is to have the old plants dug out and burnt for manure. The Lawas we saw at Baw were not agriculturists but iron-workers and manufacturers. The metal which is found in a hill located about half a day’s journey to the north-west of the village, is a red oxide, and is worked solely by the women. It is brought to the village on elephants, and it is smelted in such a rough way that it yields only fifty per cent of metal. The principal tax paid by the villagers to the Zimmé chief consists of elephant chains, spear-heads, cooking pots, and other ironware. Where iron is not worked in the other villages in the province of Zimmé, each household pays annually to the government a tax of ten viss (a viss equals 3.65 lbs.) of cotton, the same weight of chillies, and five of safflower. [...]”

via Tak, which followed the course of the Ping river. When Richardson passed Hòt in early 1830, the settlement counted sixty houses that were in deplorable condition. On the opposite bank there was another village of only six to eight houses.⁸⁴ Seven years later, on his journey to Chiang Mai, McLeod also passed Hòt, which he called a “frontier village” which, though containing only twenty-five houses, did possess the political status of a *müang*.⁸⁵ In the vicinity of Hòt, in two or three smaller neighbouring villages, farmers cultivated, apart from rice, coconut palms, banana groves, orchid gardens and vegetables. People were even engaged in the breeding of silkworms, though silk production was only for their own use.⁸⁶ Thus Hòt maintained a rather diversified economy, even in the last third of the 19th century, as Lowndes (1871) and Colquhoun (1884) confirm. However, with regard to the size of the settlement, both make deviating statements. Whereas Lowndes counts just forty to fifty houses,⁸⁷ Colquhoun provides the much higher figure of 200 houses for Hòt.⁸⁸ Hallett is silent about the size of the town, but reports that he noted a total of fifty-nine village names on this river ride from Hòt to Chiang Mai:

Twenty-five of these [villages] lie between Zimmé and the mouth of the Meh Hkuang [Mae Kuang], the villages bordering that part of the river being nearly

⁸⁴ Richardson Journal: 16 [11.1.1830]. In the diary excerpts, edited and published by Blundel, only sixteen houses are mentioned. See Richardson 1836: 613. Richardson’s handwritten notes on Hòt and the corresponding text in Blundell’s edited version do not correspond with each other on this point. Blundell reformulated – as in many more instances – Richardson’s diary entries sometimes in a distorting manner.

⁸⁵ McLeod Journal: 21 [4.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 280. Hòt had two headmen. Only one of them was appointed by the ruler of Chiang Mai, to whose sphere of power Hòt officially belonged. The other headman was under the authority of Lampang. No other (Western or indigenous) source confirms this important observation, which – if valid – would testify Hòt as a “condominium” (*müang sòng fai* ເມືອງສອງຝ່າຍ) of two principalities.

⁸⁶ McLeod Journal: 21 [4.1.1837], see *ibid.*

⁸⁷ Lowndes 1871: 7, 27 [Public Record Office, F.O. 67/55]. Lowndes passed Hòt on his way from Moulmein to Chiang Mai; he counted there “roughly 40 houses” (13 April); on his way back, he made a stopover again and this time saw “50 houses belonging to the village” (13 May).

⁸⁸ Colquhoun (1885: 86) stresses: “Muang Haut, although containing only two hundred houses, is called a town, and is included among the fifty-seven townships of Zimmé. It is situated on the western side of the Méping, surrounded by plantations of cocoa-nut, palmyra, plantain, and other fruit-trees. The mulberry-tree, grown in all villages in the neighbourhood, is a mere shrub. Silkworms are reared by most of the villagers. Radishes, onions, sesamum, and other crops are grown by the women; and cucumbers, pumpkins, and gourds are cultivated on the sandy islands of the river. At most of the villages throughout the Méping valley, oranges, pummaloes, pine-apple, mango, palmyra, cocoa-nut, guava, and other fruits are abundant.” Cushing (1885: 39, Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Febr. 1885) makes a very similar, though much more prosaic, statement: “There was not much to see in the village. Custard apple, guava, pumplenose, cocoanut, palm, and other trees abounded.” Colquhoun (1885: 86-7) observes that on the eastern bank of the Ping river – directly opposite Hòt – the population was not sufficient to plant the fertile land; in contrast to McLeod and Richardson, he mentions quite a number of villages situated further to the north of Hòt.

conterminous; other villages were hidden from view by the long, low-lying, orchard-clad islands, which are numerous for some miles below the city.⁸⁹

Approximately seventy kilometres to the north-east of Chiang Mai, situated in the narrow valley of the Ngat river, a tributary of the Ping, is the small *wiang* of Phrao. During their journey in the 1830s, neither Richardson nor McLeod visited this town. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, Phrao was situated off the invasion routes taken by the Burmese armies in the late 18th century. Therefore, Phrao was a kind of protective enclave that seemed to have been hardly affected by the big population movements of the Kawila era. A series of monastery foundings in the early 19th century hint at a settlement continuity in Phrao.⁹⁰ Hallett arrived in Phrao in May 1884. He was one of the very few Europeans who lost their way to this remote place. Hallett describes the scenery in the twenty kilometres long and 12 kilometres wide plain of Phrao in these words:

Nothing could be more peaceful than the aspect of this beautifully situated plain. It seemed to be cut off from the turmoil and din of the world by the surrounding mountains, a place one might long to retire to.⁹¹

However, in 1869/70 and again in 1872, troops from Mòk Mai a Shan *müang* on the west bank of the Salween, commanded by Kolan, had attacked Phrao leaving traces of devastation behind, but luckily these destructions were not permanent; sixty monasteries, which were registered in Phrao district in 1990, were founded in the period 1874–1882.⁹² According to Hallett, the villages near Phrao, formerly administered directly by Chiang Mai, were given the status of a satellite *müang* in 1870. This went hand in hand with the appointment of the former headman (*kae ban* แกบบ้าน) of Phrao to the rank of *phaña*. Müang Phrao, which comprised a smaller territory than present-day Phrao district, had roughly 900 houses inhabited mostly by Tai Yuan; of these houses about 200 were situated within the stockade of the administrative centre.⁹³

⁸⁹ Hallett 1890: 392.

⁹⁰ Volume 9 of the “History of monasteries in the whole kingdom” (*prawat wat thua ratcha-anacak*), published in 1990 by the Department of Religious Affairs of the Thai Ministry of Education, provides a survey of 1,085 monasteries in the province of Chiang Mai. These monasteries are not only recorded by their present-day name but – if changes of names occurred – also by their original names. For each monastery, the following aspects, as far as they are known, are mentioned: the extent of the monastery’s compound, the historical background of founding or refounding, the names of previous abbots, the year of founding or refounding, the year of the construction of an ordination hall (*uposatha*) and the consecration of the sacred area surrounding the ordination hall (*visuñgāmasīmā* วิสุ่งคามสีมາ), and other relevant data (construction of monastic schools, royal donations, etc.). All these data have to be considered with some caution and are only of limited value for statistical purposes, as many of them rely on oral tradition. See *Krom kan satsana* 1990.

⁹¹ Hallett 1890: 364.

⁹² *Krom kan satsana* 1990.

⁹³ Hallett 1890: 365. Bock (1884: 254) characterizes Phrao (“Muang Pau”) as a “small and poor-looking settlement, with an adult population of about 700 [living in the town only or in the whole

Besides, there were two *Lua* and three *Karen* villages in the peripheral zone of that *müang*.⁹⁴ It is reported that the governor of Phrao commanded over 1,000 *chai chakan* (“fighting-men”),⁹⁵ which indicates a total population of 4,000 to 5,000 inhabitants.

Like Phrao, the small *müang* of Chiang Dao, situated c. seventy kilometres to the north of Chiang Mai at the fringes of the Ping river basin, was devastated in 1869/70 by Kolan’s troops. Chiang Dao had to be rebuilt after the marauders were repulsed. Hallett states that Chiang Dao was refounded in 1809 by seven families from Ban Mae Rim (near Chiang Mai).⁹⁶ This statement, based on oral tradition, is not confirmed by written sources.⁹⁷ Several Western travel reports agree that families from Chiang Mai, who were allegedly possessed by “evil spirits” (*phi ka* ຜົກາ),⁹⁸ were exiled to Chiang Dao and Müang Ngai.⁹⁹ It seems evident that the migration into the upper reaches of the Ping river plain gained momentum under Prince Kawilolot’s successor, Inthawichayanon (r. 1873–1893). Not far away from Chiang Dao, separated from the latter only by “a few miles of forest”, Müang Ngai was founded after 1870.¹⁰⁰ Like Chiang Dao, Müang Ngai was surrounded by a formidable stockade which Archer, however, considered insufficient for any defence purpose.¹⁰¹ At the time of Archer’s visit (1887), Müang Ngai had become a prosperous market place. Shan people from districts further north came to Müang Ngai to provide themselves with food and consumer goods. From Müang Ngai it was possible to reach Fang via a mountain path. Since 1717, Fang laid uninhabited and was resettled not until 1880/81 when the ruler of Chiang Mai ordered the *müang*’s refounding. Hallett quotes from the official

district?], situated on a vast plateau, about 1050 feet above sea-level, and entirely hemmed in by mountains”.

⁹⁴ According to Hallett (1890: 365), these “*Lua*” came from Chiang Tung, they were so-called *Lolo*.

⁹⁵ Hallett 1890: 365.

⁹⁶ Hallett 1890: 334.

⁹⁷ Of the 27 monasteries of *amphoe* Chiang Dao registered in 1990, only one single monastery was founded in the first half of the 19th century. Besides three older monasteries, already constructed before 1770, the monastery Si Dòn Chai (ວັດຄວືດອນໜ້າ), founded in 1862, seems to be the oldest monastery in Chiang Dao. It seems that significant settlement activities started in Chiang Dao only in the late 19th century – a total of nine monasteries were founded in the period 1887–1922. See *Krom kan satsana* 1990.

⁹⁸ Clan spirits, who usually take possession of female mediums, are called *phi mot* (ຜົມດ). If the ceremonies are worshipping one’s own clan spirit, the *phi mot* can turn into a *phi ka* (NT: ຜົກະ) and all members of the clan are considered to be possessed by such a *phi ka*. *Phi ka* are considered very dangerous as they can take possession also of other (female) persons outside the clan. Because of that reason, families stigmatized as *phi ka* were treated like outcasts and in many cases expelled from the village community. See Davis 1984: 58–9. As for the procedure of the *phi mot* ceremonies, see Mani 1986: 34. Anan (1984: 116–21) argues that the allegations of families being possessed by *phi ka* were quite often a “conscious expression” of land conflicts, since the families stigmatized as *phi ka* were often used as a labour reserve for the reclamation of fallow land.

⁹⁹ Archer 1888: 2 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076]; McCarthy 1900: 126; Hallett 1890: 340.

¹⁰⁰ Archer 1888: 2 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

proclamation dated 20 March 1881,¹⁰² the original of which can no longer be traced.¹⁰³ Hallett's translation of the proclamation suggests that the decision was connected with the refounding of Chiang Saen, which occurred only a few years earlier, for Fang was the last major "uninhabited spot" of the principality of Chiang Mai. Cao Ratchasamphanthawong, a distant relative of the ruler of Chiang Mai, announced the proclamation:

[...] the Royal authority is granted to me to proclaim that whosoever wishes, or prefers, to go up and settle at Muang Fang, there shall be no obstacle thrown in his way. In the case of a serf of any prince or officer, they, their masters, shall not forbid this; their lords and officers shall give their consent. The serfs are not to be hindered from removing, as they will be engaged in their country's service. [...] If anybody wishes to settle in Muang Fang, let him be enrolled in my list of names; and let no one forbid them, until they number 1000 fighting men (freemen between twenty years and sixty years of age). If more than 1000 apply, the Government has power to restrain them.¹⁰⁴

Local oral traditions mention the religious motivation of a *müang* founding in anecdotal form. They realistically describe the initial problems encountered by the first generation of settlers who arrived in Fang even before the *müang*'s official founding:

[...] The South [of the principality] of Chiang Mai prospered, the population [there] was numerous. During the reign of Cao Chiwit Ao (เจ้าชีวิตอ้าว) or Cao Kawilolot, a hunter of aristocratic background stayed for almost one month in the area of Fang. He collected ivory, furs, animal skin as well as meat. He also discovered an ancient Buddha statue which he presented to the ruler informing him about the occurrences. The ruler explored the history of Chiang Mai and discovered that the abandoned town was called Fang. Thus he instructed Cao Ratchasamphan and the hunter to inspect the place once again. After receipt of the information [on that place], Cao Ratchasamphan received the order to resettle households (*khrua rüan* ครัวเรือน) to Fang and to rebuild the *müang*. The number of [resettled] households is unknown. Cao Ratchasamphan did not stay (permanently) in Fang. He appointed as leaders two noblemen, men whom he trusted. One of them was called Luang, he was appointed Phraya Suriyoyot or Phraya Luang. The other was called Phraya Nòi and was Phraya Suriyoyot's assistant. Both ruled for ten years, but the roughly 500 households¹⁰⁵ suffered considerable hardship, because the cultivation of the soil provided not enough yields and the people were exposed to the dangers

¹⁰² On the fifth day of the waning moon in the fourth month (Phalgun 20) of the year *marong thosok*, C.S. 1242.

¹⁰³ Hallett 1890: 348.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted from Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The number 500, recorded frequently in chronicles and other traditional secular, as well as religious, literature, is a sufficiently large, but not very large, number. In the context above it should not be taken as an exact figure.

of wide animals. Only few settlers had come, moreover Phraya Suriyoyot had already become very old.

The ruler of Chiang Mai¹⁰⁶ now issued the order that Cao Mahawong Mae Rim [...] should replace Phraya Suriyoyot to rule over Fang and appointed him Cao Luang Müang Fang. In 1883/84,¹⁰⁷ Cao Mahawong arrived in Fang, accompanied by [several] officials who were his intimates, [...] and 25 households as well as the abbot Phra Kesòn Pòratikacan and several monks. [...] There were 3,500 new settlers and around 100 Musoe (Lahu) and Karen. Cao Mahawong ruled eight years. The population increased to 8,000 inhabitants, of which roughly 300 were Musoe and Karen.¹⁰⁸

The local tradition, as popularized by Sanguan Chotisukkharat, mentions Phrao and Chiang Dao, besides Lamphun and Chiang Rai, as the most important places of origin of the settlers.¹⁰⁹ The migration to Fang was, to a large extent, generated by a population surplus of neighbouring, already established, frontier regions. It was this “secondary” migration rather than the “primary” migration from the core area of Chiang Mai and Lamphun that contributed to the re-peopling of Fang. Hallett’s account corresponds with Sanguan’s quoted above. Hallett reports of 100 families, who had moved from Phrao to Fang. These people had fled from high taxation of whisky, pork, tobacco, and cotton. The tax exemption that awaited them in Fang was an additional incentive for their decision to leave their homes in Phrao.¹¹⁰ The difficulties of a new beginning are described in detail by Carl Bock after his short stay in Fang in early 1882.¹¹¹

Five years after Bock, British vice-consul Archer visited Fang. Archer was deeply impressed by the many deserted monasteries and the extensive fallow land. Although rice plantation at the lower course of the Fang river was impeded by severe flooding during the rainy season of 1887, Archer remained quite optimistic: “There is, however, still a large extent of country well suitable to cultivation, and labour alone is required to bring the province to its former state of prosperity.”¹¹² Some of the needed labour force were Shan, who took over the clearing of the jungle as contract workers. Archer observed how hundreds of “Shan” from the Chinese side of the Burma-China border (Tai Nüa?) were recruited for the hard development work.¹¹³ Archer estimated the Fang

¹⁰⁶ Though the ruler’s name is not explicitly mentioned, it is clear from the historical context that Kawilolot’s successor, Inthawichayanon (ິນທວີຈະຍານນີ້), who ruled from 1873 until 1896, is mentioned here.

¹⁰⁷ The year B.E. 2426 is recorded. The proclamation of the refounding of Fang is from the end of 1880. The first settlers arrived at Fang in 1881. See Hallett 1890: 348 and Bock 1884: 270. Bock asserts that, at the time of his visit (February 1882), the settlements had already existed for twelve months.

¹⁰⁸ Sanguan 1972: 553-4, 556-7 (Vol. 1).

¹⁰⁹ Sanguan 1972: 557 (Vol. 1).

¹¹⁰ Hallett 1890: 365.

¹¹¹ Bock 1884: 270-1.

¹¹² Archer 1888: 3 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹¹³ Archer explices: “At the time of my visit to the province most of the hard work of clearing

population at “probably less than 2,000 inhabitants”, of which “roughly 500 or 600 persons” would live in the administrative centre. He considered a rapid increase of the population in Fang as highly improbable without a substantial immigration from other parts of Lan Na.¹¹⁴ In 1884, Hallett obtained official statistics which confirmed his own figures: Fang had 630 able-bodied men. The whole *müang* counted 411 houses, of which 250 (i.e., almost 60 per cent) were situated in the urban centre. On the basis of these figures, Archer calculated that the total population of Fang was more than 3,000.¹¹⁵ A census, carried out in 1890/91, recorded 763 able-bodied men (*khon chakan* ຂອນຈະກຳ) and a total population of 4,251. The same census recorded for Chiang Dao 174 able-bodied men and 842 inhabitants; the corresponding figures for Müang Ngai were 168 and 698, respectively.¹¹⁶

Lamphun

In January 1837, McLeod stayed in the town of Lamphun for just two days. His description is the first made by a European of the town situated on the right bank of the Kuang river, also called the “Lamphun river”:¹¹⁷

The town of Labong, called by the Shans Lapûn, is situated on the right bank of the Mé Quan, here at present 100 feet (30,50 m) wide, and two feet deep, but from bank to bank about 200 feet (61 m). It is surrounded by a brick wall, varying from 15 to 20 feet (4,57-6.10 m) high, with loopholes for musketry in the parapet which is about 4 1/2 feet (1,37 m) high, and 2 1/2 feet (0,76 m) thick at the top. The wall in many places is falling down, and is not kept in the slightest order. I did not observe a single embrasure for a gun. The town is crowded with cocoa-nut and betel-nut trees, both inside and outside, and contains about 400 houses, almost all of bamboo, with the exception of some belonging to the chiefs, which are of wood. They are built without regularity, along streets rather wide, and each compound

the jungle and preparing the soil for rice cultivation was done by a band of several hundred hired labourers. These men belong to a people called, by the Laos, Thai Yai, or “Thai Lueng,” the inhabitants of the country tributary to China lying north of the Shan States, close to Yünnan and Burmah. They had followed the course of the Salween as far as Mehongson, the western frontier province of Chiengmai, and thence had come across country to Müang Fang. Some of them return to their country with only a year’s earnings, but they are soon replaced by fresh arrivals.” See Archer 1988: 4 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹¹⁴ Archer 1988: 3 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076]; cf. Fenton 1894: 1182.

¹¹⁵ Hallett 1890: 349.

¹¹⁶ See Table 11 on the results of the census in Chiang Dao, Fang, and Müang Nai in 1890/91. Hallett estimated the number of houses in Chiang Dao at 250, of which seventy-five were built within the fortified administrative seat. Müang Ngai had a population of 200 able-bodied men and the total population figure was 2,000, according to Hallett’s very rough estimate. For the town itself, Hallett counted 100 houses “like Kiang Dow [Chiang Dao], with a strong stockade.” See Hallett 1890: 334, 338; cf. HCH, R.5, M.65/2.

¹¹⁷ McLeod talks of the Mé Quan [Maenam Kuang] as “Labong river”. See McLeod: 44 [31.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 324.

surrounded by a bamboo palisade, enclosing a garden. The gateways, of which there are four in the eastern face, one in the northern, two in the southern and western sides, are faced with stone. I was, however, unable to go round the fort. The northern, southern, and western faces are said to have ditches. Under the sheds occupied by my followers there were eight guns of sorts, the only ones, I believe, belonging to the place.¹¹⁸

Half a century later, Hallett confirmed the validity of McLeod's entries, deviating only in a few details.¹¹⁹ The plain of the Ping river north of Lamphun was already densely populated by the mid-19th century. When Sir Robert H. Schomburgk travelled in February 1860 from Chiang Mai to Lamphun on the Ping river and a lateral canal, he expressed his admiration of the "perfect network of canalisation", which provided the rice farmers with sufficient water supply. Schomburgk saw larger villages and smaller settlements on both sides of the route: "It was a succession of them; they formed bands extending N. and S., between which, for miles in breadth, the ground was cultivated with rice."¹²⁰ A quarter of a century later, Paul Neis travelled from Chiang Mai to Lamphun. Unlike other European travellers, Neis did not take the waterway but travelled along the picturesque avenue, which is nowadays a Thai national heritage.¹²¹ Neis writes that on the second day of his journey he passed through sprawling rice fields ("des rizières immenses"). After a fatiguing march under the burning sun, Neis finally reached Lamphun, "capitale d'une province peu étendue mais très fertile et fort peuplée" and described the place as "une petite ville fortifiée située sur les bords du Nam Kouang."¹²²

Hallett and Neis did not provide exact population figures for Lamphun. Let us recall here that the census of 1856, discussed earlier, recorded 8,000 able-bodied men in Lamphun. This corresponds to total population of c. 30,000. This figure appears rather low. A census taken in 1900/01 (see Table 8) records almost 110,000 inhabitants for the whole *müang* of Lamphun. Under the realistic assumption that the annual natural population growth in the period 1856–1900/01 was about 1.5 per cent we can calculate a population of 56,500 for the year 1856.¹²³ Striking is the sparse population in the densely forested southern district of Li, where on three-fifths of the territory only one-tenth of Lamphun's population lived.

¹¹⁸ McLeod Journal: 24 [10.1.1837], *ibid*: 287.

¹¹⁹ Hallett describes Lamphun's irregular perimeter correctly. The town had an extent of 2.5 to 3 miles [4–4.8 km] and was situated 3.5 miles [5.6 km] to the east of the Ping river. See Hallett 1890: 291; cf. McCarthy 1883: 4 [Public Record Office, F.O. 881/4874].

¹²⁰ Schomburgk 1863: 388. See also *Bangkok Calendar* 1870: 66.

¹²¹ The Chiang Mai-Lamphun road, planted with high trees on both sides, was obviously built after 1860, but before 1884. The lithography drawn by Eugène Burnand after A. Sargent's sketch was published by Neis (1885: 78). It seems to be the oldest pictorial representation of the road Chiang Mai-Lamphun.

¹²² Neis 1885: 79.

¹²³ Assuming a population of 30,000 inhabitants for 1856, this would imply an annual growth rate of roughly 3 per cent. A continuous population growth rate of this magnitude over half a century seems to be improbable, as it would have almost exclusively resulted from a surplus of births because there are no substantial gains by immigration recorded for the period 1856–1900.

The census of 1900/01 still included Müang Phan, situated south of Chiang Rai. So far, no documents have been found which provide details about the refounding of Müang Phan. According to one local tradition, the first pioneer settlers in Müang Phan came from Wiang Yòng, a Tai Lü settlement situated on the left bank of the Kuang river just opposite Lamphun town, in c. 1835;¹²⁴ but the influx of settlers from Lamphun gained momentum only one decade later, following the refounding of Chiang Rai and Phayao. The flow of settlers to Müang Phan also included migrants from other parts of Lan Na. For example, in 1867, thirty families from Phrae arrived.¹²⁵ As the majority of settlers originated from Lamphun, Müang Phan was founded in 1845 as a satellite *müang* of Lamphun, although it was a territorial enclave separated from the mother *müang* by territory belonging to Chiang Mai and Lampang. Territorial conflicts between Lamphun and these much larger and powerful principalities became almost inevitable. In fact, both Chiang Mai and Lampang claimed parts of Müang Phan.¹²⁶

Archer evaluated the demographic and economic development of Müang Phan with exceptional optimism:

Müang Phān, as well as the district under Phayāo directly to the south, is populous, and appears indeed to enjoy greater prosperity than most of the surrounding country. It is well irrigated, and the crops are generally good, while many of the other common necessities of life are here abundant and cheap. Fish is indeed very plentiful in the extensive lake,¹²⁷ or rather marsh, that occupies the centre of the plain, and it forms an important article of export, giving rise to a considerable trade with all the neighbouring States.¹²⁸

Notwithstanding its prosperity and viable agricultural structures, “according to the Report of 1900/01, the territory and the population were too small to consider it appropriate to make [Müang Phan] a district (*khwaeng* แขวง) of its own.”¹²⁹ The relinquishment of Müang Phan meant that Lamphun lost only 6 per cent of its population. This slight population loss was not in proportion to the large investment, which would have been necessary to establish advanced communication networks, notably a post and telegraph service, in order to connect Lamphun with its enclave. The Siamese *kha luang* in Lamphun arrived at the opinion that the territorial and demographic importance

¹²⁴ Sawaeng 1995: 170, fn. 51.

¹²⁵ Sixteen years later, the ruler of Phrae demanded their return. See HCH R.5, *Samut phiset*, RL-MT/26, Nos. 30 and 32.

¹²⁶ Archer 1888: 9 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076]. Chiang Mai’s satellite *müang* Chiang Rai claimed the territory of Müang Phan, situated to the north of Huai Mae Khaeo (ห้วยแม่ค่าeo). It was not until 1901 that Lamphun relinquished the disputed territory (c. 20–25 per cent of the inhabited area). See the letter of Phaya Uthaimontri, the permanent Siamese *kha luang* of Lamphun, dated 20 December 1901 (Section 37), in: HCH R.5 M.58/187.

¹²⁷ This refers to the *kwan* (กວान), a lake eight kilometres in length and four kilometres in width at the eastern bank of which the city of Phayao is situated.

¹²⁸ Archer 1888: 10 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹²⁹ “Raingan müang nakhon lamphun pi rattanakosin sok 119”, in HCH, R.5 M.58/187. See Table 8.

of Müang Phan was not worth such financial efforts.¹³⁰ In the course of a territorial reorganization in Monthon Phayap in 1905, Müang Phan became part of the *bòriwen* Phayap Nüa; today this *müang* forms a district of Chiang Rai province.¹³¹

Table 8: Census in Lamphun (c. 1900)

<i>Khwaeng</i> (<i>amphoe</i>)	number of <i>khwaen</i> (<i>tambon</i>)	inhabitants male	inhabitants female	total	in %
Lamphun	28	44,619	47,389	92,008	83.7
Li	5	5,089	6,229	11,318	10.3
Phan	1	3,156	3,452	6,608	6.0
Total	34	52,864	57,000	109,934	100.0

Source: "Raingan müang nakhòn lamphun pi rattanakosin sok 119", in: HCH, R.5 M.58/187.

Lampang

In contrast to McLeod, who did not visit Lampang during his journey to Lan Na in 1837, Richardson visited the ancestral homeland of the Kawila dynasty during this third visit in February and March 1835. His description of the city walls of Lampang is, however, quite vague.¹³² Other Western visitors, such as Vrooman (1872),¹³³ Edwardes (1874),¹³⁴ Bock (1882),¹³⁵ and Hallett (1884),¹³⁶ commented on the topography of the city of Lampang only in passing. More elaborate descriptions of the twin-city, situated on both banks of the Wang river, came from McCarthy (1883) and Cushing (1884). The most precise description is McCarthy's:

Lakon is a large walled city, divided into two sections by the river, that on the right having been built at an earlier period. The Chief's residence is now on the left bank. The east, south, and west sides have a high brick wall, surrounded by a moat 40 feet (12,19 m) broad; to the north side facing the river is a palisade of teak posts 12 feet (3,66 m) high, 6 inches (15 cm) broad, and 4 inches (10 cm) thick, well riveted together.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ See letter by Phaya Uthaimontri, dated 20 December 1901 (Sections 46-47), in: HCH R.5 M.58/187.

¹³¹ HCH R.5. M.58/125.

¹³² Richardson Journal: 149 [28.2.1835]. See also Richardson 1836: 699.

¹³³ Vrooman 1884: 542.

¹³⁴ Edwardes 1875: 21 [British Library, I.O.O.C.].

¹³⁵ Bock 1884: 147.

¹³⁶ Hallett 1890: 267.

¹³⁷ McCarthy 1883: 3 [Public Record Office, F.O. 881/4874]. This description is confirmed by Cushing (1885: 423, Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Nov. 1885), who writes: "Lakaun [Lampang] consists of two parts, – the 'new city', on the left bank of the river, surrounded by a brick wall in good repair; and the 'old city', on the opposite bank, also walled, except on the river side, where it is palisaded. The governor's residence was a large frame house, or rather collection of houses, built in the usual Lao style."

Vrooman estimates the population of the city of Lampang at slightly less than 10,000,¹³⁸ while Hallett's figure of "about 20,000 souls", 100 of whom were Chinese, also included the suburbs.¹³⁹ According to indigenous sources, in early 1893, Lampang had between 600 and 700 houses.¹⁴⁰ The statistics published by McLeod records 400 houses for the town of Lampang (c. 1830).¹⁴¹

The southern outpost of the principality of Lampang was Thoen, which was a *müang* bordering the Siamese province of Tak (Rahaeng). Carl Bock estimated its population – "exclusive of women and children" – at 1,000 persons.¹⁴² He described the plain of the Wang river valley, between Thoen and Lampang, as densely populated. Bock, taking the land route from Tak via Thoen to Lampang, remarked that the settlements were becoming now denser and denser: "All day we rode through village after village, all of them neat and clean in appearance, and presenting a contrast to those I had left behind me, and, as I afterwards found, to those I had yet to visit."¹⁴³ This statement was echoed by McCarthy who, travelling on the same route from Thoen to Lampang, emphasized the prosperity of the villages in the southern section of the Wang river valley:

Approaching Lakon one feels he has entered an entirely new country with a new people. For 20 miles before reaching Lakon the whole way is covered with villages thickly populated, and the people have a prosperous appearance, which is a great improvement upon what one meets with in Siamese villages.¹⁴⁴

Rice surpluses in Lampang were rare due to the bad quality of the soil in most parts of the plain. The prosperity of the population was based on the purchase of teak that was abundant in the region, whereas the rice harvests were hardly sufficient to feed the population of Lampang. Therefore, as stressed by Cushing, rice had to be imported regularly from neighbouring principalities, such as Chiang Mai and Lamphun.¹⁴⁵ In

¹³⁸ Vrooman 1884: 542.

¹³⁹ Hallett 1890: 267.

¹⁴⁰ This figure recorded by Capt. Walker probably refers to the areas situated within the city wall. See Fenton 1894: 1159.

¹⁴¹ McLeod Journal: 38 [23.1.1837], see Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 314.

¹⁴² Bock 1884: 145.

¹⁴³ Bock 1884: 146. Capt. Walker, a British intelligence officer, remarked in January 1893 with regard to the relatively high population density in the valley of the Wang river "Across plains dotted with villages." See Fenton 1894: 1159.

¹⁴⁴ McCarthy 1883: 2 [Public Record Office, F.O. 881/4874].

¹⁴⁵ Cushing 1885: 424 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Nov. 1885]. Edwardes (1875: 21-2, [British Library, I.O.O.C.]) confirms the lack of water supply in Lampang: "The annual rice crop also, which is watered only by the rains, is often scanty when the rainfall is small." Reports on failed harvests in Lampang appear frequently in Siamese archival documents. In 1891/92, a severe famine haunted Lampang, Lòng (at that time part of Lampang) and Phrae. The government in Bangkok provided to the ruler of Lampang 1,100 rupees for the purchase of additional rice (220–550 *thang* ถัง, i.e. c. 2,220–5,550 litres) to alleviate the suffering of the starving population. See HCH R.5, M.58/176 ("Koet thupphikkhaphai thi müang lampang, phrae, lóng, ratsadòn khat son dai cai ngoen sü khao caek ratsadòn"). McCarthy (1900: 113) complains that

Ngao, situated c. eighty kilometres to the north of Lampang city, the quality of the soil was also bad. Cushing reports that the rice harvest never exceeded a ninetyfold of the rice seeds.¹⁴⁶ Cushing's companion, Hallett, softened this negative assessment, which was obviously too influenced by the harvest disaster of 1883. Nonetheless, Hallett acknowledged that Ngao's wealth depended less on rice cultivation than on "cash crops":

Half of the people gain their livelihood by cultivating cotton, and the remainder by rice, tobacco, and other crops. The outcome of rice varies with the rainfall; and in good seasons the return is eighty to ninety fold, or about double the average in Burmah. The rainfall was insufficient in 1869 and 1883; though in other years their crops were good. The river (Ngao river, V.G.) does not inundate the land, but the hills being near, canals can easily be made to irrigate the fields.¹⁴⁷

Archer gives an even more optimistic picture emphasizing Ngao's favourable geographic location and its function as an important trade station.¹⁴⁸ Müang Ngao comprised the administrative seat and six surrounding villages with together "only 800 houses". In addition, there were several Karen villages in the nearby mountains where Cushing's Baptist mission started its first missionary efforts.¹⁴⁹

Phayao was Lampang's northernmost satellite *miang*. Archer saw the town as a trade junction along the important route from Chiang Rai to the areas in southern Lan Na. Since Phayao was in the centre of a circle connecting Chiang Mai, Chiang Saen, Nan, Phrae, and Lampang, the town, so Archer claimed, could be called the geographical centre of Lan Na ("centre of the Lao country").¹⁵⁰ Phayao was not large; one could perambulate the town from one city gate to the opposite gate without haste in not more than thirty minutes.¹⁵¹ According to the governor of Phayao, who had been appointed by

during the recurring droughts the people in Lampang were suffering hunger. See also Anonymous 1895: 67. Hallett (1890: 366) reports rice exports from Phrao to Fang and from Phayao to Lampang in the 1880s.

¹⁴⁶ Cushing 1885: 423 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Nov. 1885].

¹⁴⁷ Hallett 1890: 253. Wide teak forests, exploited mostly by British companies, constituted the largest economic wealth of Ngao. See Archer 1888: 15 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁴⁸ Archer (1888: 15 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076]) writes: "The valley is broad and well cultivated, and the numerous and populous villages and the traffic on the roads showed greater prosperity and animation than I had yet seen, with a few exceptions, since leaving Chiangmai. Müang Ngao lies on the trade route from Lakhon to the north, and the number of traders I met here proves it to be a trade station of some importance. [...] For the first time since my departure from Chiangmai, I saw a number of Toungthoo [Karen] and Burmese pedlars; and this may show that the people confine their trading expeditions chiefly to the southern part of the Lao country, leaving to the Ngios the trade in the more northern provinces. I found the well-frequented road from Müang Ngao to Lakhon a great improvement on the rough paths I had followed since leaving Phayao. It lies over undulating country, covered with extensive forests of teak."

¹⁴⁹ Hallett 1890: 252; see also Cushing 1885: 423 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Nov. 1885].

¹⁵⁰ Archer 1888: 10 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁵¹ LeMay 1926: 232.

the ruler, or *cao luang* (เจ้าหลวง), of Lampang, there were about 300 houses within the city walls. In the whole *müang* of Phayao, 4,820 houses were counted. Given that figure, Hallett calculated that Phayao's population totalled 38,560. He obviously assumed an eight-person household as a rule.¹⁵² Generalizing the drought of 1883, Cushing rated, as in the case of Ngao, the fertility of the soil in Phayao as rather low.¹⁵³ Hallett argued that well-irrigated rice fields had higher crop yields than fields exposed to drought and flooding.¹⁵⁴

Table 9: Census in Lampang (1902/03)

Category	Romanization	Siamese	Number
District	<i>khwaeng</i>	แขวง	11
Sub-district	<i>khwaen</i>	แคว้น	123
Village chief	<i>kae [ban]</i>	แก่(บ้าน)	1,471
Population	<i>ratsadòn</i>	ราษฎร	200,461
Elephants	<i>chang</i>	ช้าง	738
Horses	<i>ma</i>	ม้า	447
Cows	<i>kho</i>	โค	74,805
Buffaloes	<i>krabii</i>	กระ比อ	50,684
Boats	<i>riia</i>	เรือ	500
Rifles	<i>püin</i>	ปืน	11,996

Source: HCH R.5 M.58/181.

The census of 1856 recorded for Lampang 32,000 able-bodied men; this translates into a total population of 128,000 inhabitants. According to the census of 1900/01, Lampang's population had increased to 200,500. Assuming an average annual growth of population of 1.5 per cent for the period 1856–1900, a population of roughly 100,000 can be calculated for 1856.¹⁵⁵ It seems obvious that the population of Lampang grew at a lower rate than the rest of Lan Na during the second half of the 19th century. Whereas the 1856 census disclosed for Lampang a slightly larger population than Chiang Mai (32,000 versus 30,000 able-bodied men), this was no longer the case at the turn of the 20th century. In 1875, Edwardes could still claim the following, though exaggerating a bit: "The population of the Province of Lakhon (Lampang) is said to be considerably more than half that of Chiengmai."¹⁵⁶ However, a quarter of a century later, the much larger territory of Chiang Mai had more inhabitants than people living within the confines

¹⁵² Hallett 1890: 231.

¹⁵³ Cushing 1885: 393 [Phayap Archives, *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 65, Oct. 1885].

¹⁵⁴ Hallett 1890: 231.

¹⁵⁵ In fact, the annual population growth was less than 1 per cent, if we assume 128,000 inhabitants for 1856.

¹⁵⁶ Edwardes 1875: 22 [British Library, I.O.O.C.].

of Lampang.¹⁵⁷ One reason for the much smaller demographic increase in Lampang might have been related to the significant migration from the Shan areas in Burma and from Sipsòng Panna during the second half of the 19th century, as these migrants predominantly settled in areas under the control of Chiang Mai and Nan. Migration losses, caused by out-migration from Lampang to the fertile plains of Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen, might have been an additional factor.

Phrae

Phrae, by far the smallest of the Northern Thai principalities both in terms of territory and population, received few European visitors during the 19th century. Neither Richardson nor McLeod, Schomburgk, Edwardes, McCarthy, Neis, Bock or Hallett is reported to have visited Phrae. Each only left behind incidental notes about Phrae. However, at the start of 1886, the British consul of Chiang Mai, Ernest Satow, and his deputy, W. J. Archer, visited Phrae, coming from Uttaradit. Their joint report, drafted by Archer, emphasizes the geographical isolation of the *müang*:

The position of Müang Phrë is, though on a smaller scale, similar to that of Lakhōn and Chiang Mai. It is an extensive valley, or rather plateau, of an oval shape, surmounted by mountains, the height of which ranges perhaps from one to four thousand feet. The town of Phrë is situated in the centre of this valley, by the side of the river Më-Yom, which at this time of the year is a small and shallow stream. This was the first Lao town we had yet visited, and it made an agreeable impression after the long and straggling villages of Siam. It is surrounded by a wall and has broad roads lined with houses, each with its garden neatly enclosed by a palisade. The diameter of the town, which forms almost a square, does not measure perhaps more than half-a-mile, but there are also suburbs on the east side. The whole population is perhaps not much over fifteen hundred.¹⁵⁸

Though Archer and Satow mention that Phrae was a fertile and wealthy country, they acknowledge that this wealth depended more on its untapped teak reserves and the cultivation of betel nut, cotton and tobacco, rather than high rice surpluses. “The tobacco of Phrë is of superior quality and is exported to all the surrounding provinces.”¹⁵⁹ Phrae’s balance of trade however, should not be overestimated, and in some years the rice harvest

¹⁵⁷ This statement refers to the principalities within their old borders as they had existed before the territorial reorganization in Monthon Phayap. According to the census of 1919/20, 576,000 persons lived in the principality of Chiang Mai (comprising the present-day provinces of Chiang Mai, Mae Hòngh Sòn, and two-thirds of Chiang Rai province), while the principality of Lampang (present-day Lampang province and the southern third of Chiang Rai province) had only 364,000 inhabitants, i.e., 36 per cent less than Chiang Mai. As for the results of the 1919/20 census for *monthon* Phayap and Maharat, see LeMay 1926: 85.

¹⁵⁸ Archer 1886: 13 [Public Record Office, F.O. 881/5295]. The city of Phrae was surrounded by a square wall whose side length was half a mile. Anonymous 1895: 67.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

did not even cover Phrae's own consumption.¹⁶⁰ A critical economic situation is testified for the year 1914 by LeMay.¹⁶¹

Pressed by her neighbours Nan and Lampang,¹⁶² Phrae could preserve its status as an autonomous political entity with direct tributary relations to Bangkok – without being subordinate to any of the other Lan Na principalities – only with some difficulty. Its geographical isolation within Monthon Phayap may explain, at least partially, why in 1902 Phrae had become the main site of a serious uprising against the Siamese policy of administrative centralization in Lan Na. The Siamese authorities believed that the “Shan Uprising of Phrae”, led by Shan contract workers from the Burmese Shan areas – mostly of Shan ethnicity, but also Karen, Burmese, and members of other ethnic groups – was tacitly supported by the ruler of Phrae who, after the suppression of the rebellion, lost all his titles and privileges.¹⁶³ Thereafter, Phrae was ruled directly by Siamese officials; and

¹⁶⁰ The Siamese Ministry of Interior received from American missionaries based in the North a letter about the worrying supply situation in Phrae and Lampang. The *senabòdi* (เสนาบดี) of the Ministry of Interior reports this situation in that document, dated 22 December 1892. The missionaries speak of a famine (*thupphikkhaphai* ทุพพิกขภัย) in Lampang, Phrae, and Müang Lòng (a district in the province of Phrae) and urge the government to send rice supplies to the starving population. Phraya Kraikosa, the *khaluang* (ข้าหลวง), and the *cao müang* of Lampang discussed the situation together and arrived at the following assessment: The farmers could plant a lot of paddy in 1892 and, according to missionary reports, were already able to harvest some rice. But the rice prices had fallen dramatically. For 10 *thang* of husked rice (*khao san* ข้าวสาร), they got 20 rupees; this rice had already been distributed to the people. The price for the newly harvested rice was falling from month to month. In Lamphun and Chiang Mai, the price was higher, i.e., 25 rupees for 10 *thang*. The situation in Phrae was even more critical. Here, only a smaller portion of the fields could be planted, resulting in a shortage of rice that led to an increase of prices to up to 50 rupees for 10 *thang*. In Phrae, the distribution of rice to people in need was already carried out. The famine in Phrae had already caused several deaths. See HCH R.5, M.58/176 (“Koet thupphikkhaphai thi müang lampang, phrae, lóng, ratsadòn khat son dai cai ngoen sùi khao caek ratsadòn”). Moermann (1975: 159) reports that at the end of the 19th century rural traders from Chiang Kham (now a district in Chiang Rai province) transported rice on bullock carts to Phrae.

¹⁶¹ LeMay (1926: 157) writes: “The different Government buildings, the temples, and the residential houses of the Europeans [...] are scattered over too wide an area to make the city imposing. The market appeared squalid for a town in such close proximity to the railway, where business should be increasing yearly. But Phrê is far too dependent on its rice crop as yet, and its people too improvident to make any headway as a commercial town. [...] [A]nd yet if the rice crop fails, even partially, as it does not infrequently, many of the population are on the verge of starvation – the majority have store of neither rice nor money.”

¹⁶² In his diaries, Satow made the following illuminating remark: “The Phrê chiefs can only count six or seven generations back, and have no knowledge of their earlier history, nor any written annals. The only books we saw were some bundles of palm leaves at the second chief's, which he says were used for fortune-telling: what laws they have, probably reside in the chief's breast. The references in the recitation of last evening, which had been at first interpreted to be directed against Siamese tyranny were now re-explained, to refer to the bullying which the little State of Phrê undergoes at the hands of its more powerful neighbour of Nan, but it is unlikely that Luang Thoranen advised them to give this assurance, but worse trouble should come upon them. [...] Phrê being small and weak is subject to oppression at the hands of both its neighbours.” Quoted from Satow's Journal: 165, 176 [Public Record Office, P.R.O. 30/33 – 20/1].

¹⁶³ This uprising is also known in Thailand as the *kabot ngiao müang phrae* กบฎเงี้ยว เมือง

after 1915, Phrae became the seat of the newly founded Monthon Maharat, which also included, besides Phrae, the former vassal states of Nan and Lampang.¹⁶⁴

The principality of Phrae (in its old, more limited, borders) had 103,739 inhabitants, according to the census of 1919/20. In 1848/49, Phrae had 35,500 inhabitants; if one assumes, once again, an average annual population growth of 1.5 per cent for the whole period 1848–1919.¹⁶⁵

Nan

Western visitors were able to get first-hand knowledge of the situation in Nan relatively late. Richardson and McLeod had never visited this easternmost Tai Yuan principality on any of their journeys to Lan Na. In June 1867, the French Mekong expedition, under de Lagrée and Garnier, passed Chiang Khòng,¹⁶⁶ an outpost of Nan, which had been founded in the early 1840s; the core area of Nan, situated south of the Mekong, was not touched by the French expedition. It would take another two decades until Archer visited the principality of Nan in his capacity as British vice-consul of Chiang Mai. In March 1887, Archer visited the heartland of Nan, followed by two further investigation tours into Nan's outer regions, undertaken in 1891 and 1895 respectively.

As Archer reports, the capital of Nan was situated on the right (western) bank of the Nan river in the midst of “a considerable number of villages for ten or fifteen miles on every side of the city”.¹⁶⁷ The city layout resembled in shape and dimension that of Lamphun:

The walled city of Nan itself is smaller than Chiengmai, and bears much resemblance, both in shape and dimensions, to the little city of Lamphun. It contains almost exclusively the residences of the Chiefs and a few temples, but the greater part of the inhabitants reside at Wieng Kāo,¹⁶⁸ a large suburb about a mile to the north, occupying about half the area inclosed by a rectangular palisade that is now almost entirely decayed. This was the former capital, and was abandoned

ແພຣ). Thai-language monographs are Prachum 1984 (with excerpts from primary sources in the appendix) and Yòting 1990 (a Master's thesis which stresses the economic factors causing the uprising). According to my knowledge, there is no comprehensive study in a Western language of monographic length on the “Shan Uprising of Phrae”. Most works are from the 1970s, such as Gardener 1972; Bantorn 1979; and Ramsey 1979.

¹⁶⁴ See Freeman 1922: 85 [Phayap Archives].

¹⁶⁵ The results of the census of 1848/49 (2,500 able-bodied men, indicating a total population of roughly 10,000 people) cannot be reconciled with a retrospective calculation. See HSH, CMH R.3, C.S. 1210, No. 20. An unrealistic natural increase of 3.3 per cent per year would be necessary to produce a ten-fold increase of the population within seventy-one years.

¹⁶⁶ See Garnier 1873: 359.

¹⁶⁷ Vrooman 1884: 541.

¹⁶⁸ Wiang Kao (ວຽງເກົາ), the “old (walled) city”.

about thirty years ago,¹⁶⁹ because the location was not found propitious.¹⁷⁰

The urban population of Nan, estimated by Vrooman in 1872 at “about 10,000 inhabitants”, which is probably an exaggerated figure,¹⁷¹ was scattered over a wide area within the city wall, which was still well preserved by 1914. Like most other cities in Lan Na, Nan was dominated by agricultural activities, as described in LeMay’s travel report:

The city wall is high and built of red brick, and, being newer, is in a better state of preservation than those of the other towns in the north. The enclosed space is large, but the population is small and scattered. [...] The streets within the walls are in good order, many planted with avenues of full-grown tamarinds, but, except to the south, there are no roads leading out of the city. To the north lies a forest path, to the west many miles of rice fields, while to the east is the river, and across that, rice fields again.¹⁷²

At the northern end of the city were erected barracks, in which a relatively strong garrison was based. LeMay noticed that the military complex was well shielded, because “[the barracks] are situated in well-wooded fields some distance from the actual market.” In this way the military was hardly visible in the urban landscape.¹⁷³ The Siamese garrison did not yet exist at the time of Archer’s visit; it was probably established not longer after the suppression of the Shan uprising of 1902. As a careful observer, who took a noticeable delight in detail, LeMay did not overlook the multi-ethnic character of the city: apart from the Tai Yuan majority population, groups of Khamu, Shan, Burmese, and Karen (Toungsu) lived in their own quarters.¹⁷⁴

The majority of the rural population settled in the plain of the Nan river valley. Within a radius of some twenty kilometres from the city the population density was high. Numerous villages spread, especially in the southern section of the plain, between the towns of Nan and Müang Sa.¹⁷⁵ Archer revealed how impressed he was by the favourable climate and the abundant rainfall in the region.¹⁷⁶ Outside the core area, larger concentrations of settlement also existed in the plains of the Ing river valley (Thoeng, Chiang Kham) and further to the north, around Chiang Khòng in the Mekong valley.

In the 1860s, Chiang Khòng was still an isolated outpost, surrounded by a moat and fortified by a stable stockade. The surrounding countryside was still sparsely populated,

¹⁶⁹ The rebuilding of Wiang Kao began immediately after Cao Mongkhonwalayot’s return from Bangkok in May/June 1855. On Tuesday 15 July 1856, the royal family and the ruler’s entourage found their way into the city through the main city gate. See Wyatt 1994: 119.

¹⁷⁰ Archer 1888: 14, [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁷¹ Vrooman 1884: 541.

¹⁷² LeMay 1926: 166-7.

¹⁷³ LeMay 1926: 167.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Vrooman 1884: 541; Archer 1888: 10-11 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁷⁶ Archer 1888: 14 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

in spite of some settlements of Tai Lü migrants from Müang La and Müang Phong. Francis Garnier, who visited Chiang Khòng from 5 to 14 June 1867, observed:

Le village de Xieng Khong (Chiang Khòng) est entouré d'un fossé et d'une forte palissade; un petit ruisseau le divise en deux parties et les rives en sont reliées par un pont en bambou, plus pittoresque que solide; la forêt qui entoure le village est sillonnée de sentiers plus larges que de coutume: ce sont presque des routes. Cependant les légers chars laotiens du sud¹⁷⁷ ont disparu. [...] L'aspect de la campagne est assez triste et la population est très-clair-semée. Elle se mélange de sauvages dans une proportion considérable. [...] Les habitants, laotiens ou de race sauvage, conservent les cheveux longs. Ils les relèvent en chignon sur le côté et ont tous adopté la mode birmane du turban.¹⁷⁸

Translation (Garnier 1996: 12-13): The village of Xieng Khong was surrounded by a moat and by a strong palisade. A small brook divided it into two parts and the banks were connected by a bamboo bridge, more picturesque than solid. The forest which surrounded the village was traversed by paths that were larger than usual: they were almost roads. Nevertheless the light Laotian carriages of the south were not in evidence here. [...] The look of the countryside was rather sad and the population sparse. [The Laotians] had mixed with the natives in considerable proportions. [...] The inhabitants, Laotians or of the native race, wore their hair long. They tied it upwards in a bun at the side of the head and they adopted the Burmese fashion of the turban.

Two decades later, the once impressive fortification was already in a state of decay.¹⁷⁹ After the refounding of Chiang Saen (1878–81), Chiang Khòng had lost its role as the northernmost border station of the Siamese empire. The population of Chiang Khòng, which had expanded far to the south into the plain of the Ing river valley, mostly comprised Tai Lü, who were noticed by Garnier due to their hairstyle and their headgear (turbans), although the French explorer did not identify these people explicitly as Tai Lü. Along with the Tai Lü settlers, a number of “uncivilized” hill people (“sauvages”) from Sipsòng Panna had come to Chiang Khòng as well; however, they seemed to have already been assimilated to some degree.

In the second half of the 19th century, the settlement movement of the Tai Lü reached Chiang Kham, situated in the Lao river valley.¹⁸⁰ Archer remarked in 1887 that

¹⁷⁷ This term obviously refers to the “southern Lao”, who Garnier had encountered before in the Middle Mekong basin, for example at Nòng Khai.

¹⁷⁸ Garnier 1873: 359.

¹⁷⁹ Neis (1885: 67) writes: “[...] On s'aperçoit autrefois une ville forte. Du côté du fleuve il n'existe plus aucune trace de fortification; mais du côté de la terre on retrouve encore des restes assez imposants de murailles et de fossés.”

¹⁸⁰ Maenam Lao must not be confused with the river of the same name, which is a tributary of the Kok river, joining the latter near Chiang Rai town.

they were “very numerous”.¹⁸¹ A detailed report about the Tai Lü in Chiang Kham was published by LeMay in his book, *An Asian Arcady*. He estimated that at the time of his visit (1914) the population of the administrative centre of Chiang Kham was 2,000 and that the whole *miiang* comprised 26,000 inhabitants. The majority of them were Tai Lü, claimed LeMay, adding that Chiang Kham stood out due to an exceptional fertility of the rice land.¹⁸² There was also a strong concentration of Tai Lü about 100 kilometres further to the south, in Chiang Muan.¹⁸³ It is a contentious point whether these Tai Lü migrated from the north via Chiang Kham or from the east, via Nan, to Chiang Muan. Local tradition points at the second hypothesis and argues that the voluntary migration of the Tai Lü started in the late 17th century, although none of the villages in Chiang Muan district can be dated prior to the late 19th century.¹⁸⁴

Table 10: Census in Nan (1899)

Category	Romanization	Siamese	Number
(1) houses	<i>riian</i>	เรือน	18,854
(2) inhabitants	<i>phonlamiiang</i>	พลเมือง	126,704
(3) monasteries	<i>wat</i>	วัด	452
(4) monks	<i>phra song</i>	พระสงฆ์	1,728
(5) novices	<i>sammanen</i>	สามเณร	4,383
(6) elephants	<i>chang</i>	ช้าง	584
(7) buffaloes	<i>krabü</i>	กระเปื้อ	29,638
(8) cows	<i>kho</i>	โค	28,540
(9) horses	<i>ma</i>	ม้า	348
(10) rowing boats	<i>riia chala</i>	เรือชลล่า	273

Source: *Hò cotmaihet haengchat*, R.5 M.58/158.

In 1899, at the turn of the 20th century, when the principality of Nan had already lost

¹⁸¹ Archer 1888: 14 [Public Record Office, Z HCl/5076].

¹⁸² LeMay (1926: 188-9) describes the geographical position of Chiang Kham and the composition of its population as follows: “Chieng Kham is a long straggling village, lying in a valley and almost surrounded by hills, which rise at no great distance. It is a picturesque spot, for the river Mê Lao runs through it, and at the end of the village, on the main road, there is a splendid panorama to the east of a long range of mountains running north and south and rising at some points to close on four thousand feet (1,220 m). The district officer took pride in informing me that the rice crop of Chieng Kham was more abundant than in any other district of Northern Siam; and Chiang Kham may indeed be said to be the beginning of the great rice plain which stretches north to Chiang Rai, Chiang Sén, and beyond into the Shan States. The population of the district is about twenty-six thousand, but Chiang Kham itself cannot contain more than two thousand of this number, the majority of whom appeared to be Lü.”

¹⁸³ Chiang Muan is today a district belonging to the province of Phayao; until 1905, it belonged to the principality of Nan.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Nai Ut Buadaeng, Ban Sa (บ. สา), Chiang Muan District, Phayao Province, 6 April 1992.

wide territories on the left (northern) bank of the Mekong river to French Indochina, a total population of 126,804 inhabitants was registered. This figure is certainly compatible with the results of the 1919 census (164,525 inhabitants).¹⁸⁵ The population comprised Tai Yuan (“Lao Phung Dam” or “Black-bellied Lao”), Tai Lü and Mon-Khmer groups, such as the Khamu (“Kha”). According to a Siamese source, the population increased in the period 1893–1896 through the reclamation of forest areas.¹⁸⁶ The document, however, is silent on the relative strength of the various ethnic groups. The proportion of Tai Lü, who were partly war captives and partly voluntary immigrants, might have reached at least the mark of 30 per cent.¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

The Lan Na principalities experienced a long period of peace from 1804; until the end of the century, no military conflict of importance was carried out on northern Thai soil. These were ideal conditions for a strong and long-lasting population growth. The settlement movements in the course of the 19th century can be described by the following three-phase model:

Phase 1 (until 1840): *Contraction* and concentration of the main areas of settlement to the core areas of the northern Thai principalities in southern Lan Na. The concentration of the population in the urban settlements, administrative seats of the Tai Yuan princes, and the surrounding rice-growing plains created the preconditions for the accumulation of economic resources, which were essential for the building of a viable state order. The temporary depopulation of extended frontier zones in the northern half of Lan Na, the abandonment of important *müang*, such as Fang, Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen, Chiang Khòng, and Phayao, was a price paid for this consolidation strategy.

Phase 2 (c. 1840–1870): *Expansion* into the abandoned and deserted areas of the north. The resettling of the Kok-Ing river basin was initiated through political decisions at the highest level (royal decrees of the Siamese king). The new settlers were, on the one hand, descendants of refugees and war captives from northern Lan Na (resettled in the era of *kep phak sai sa kep kha sai müang*); on the other hand, they were migrants from other areas of the Upper Mekong valley, such as Sipsòng Panna. The population flow to the north was less motivated by an overpopulation of the core zones in the south, but rather by concerns of external security, as the flow of settlers from the Burmese Shan areas (notably Chiang Tung and Müang Nai) towards the south and south-east alarmed the northern Thai princes and their Siamese overlord.

¹⁸⁵ From the two benchmark figures we can calculate an annual population increase of 1.3 per cent in the period of 1899–1919. The results of the 1899 census, however, do not reveal to what extent the districts of Thoeng and Chiang Kham, which nowadays belong to Chiang Rai province, were included in the census. After his journey in 1884, McCarthy (1900: 80) estimates the population of the principality of Nan at 250,000 which seems to be a gross exaggeration. However, quite interesting is McCarthy’s assumption that only one-fifth of the population of Nan lived in the large territories north of the Mekong river, which were ceded to France in 1893.

¹⁸⁶ HCH R.5 M.58/158.

¹⁸⁷ See interview with Somsak Phrompanya, District Pua, Nan, 8 April 1992.

Phase 3 (c. 1870–1900): Consolidation of the settlement areas in the north and the west. The re-establishment of Fang, Chiang Saen, Chiang Dao, and Mae Hòn Sòn are part of this third phase, which was mainly determined by Bangkok's strategic interests; the Tai Yuan principalities were now integrated step by step into the Siamese state. The frontier settlement gained momentum in the last decade of the 19th century, at a time when the northern borders of Siam with British Burma and French Indochina were drawn. The idea of overlapping frontier zones, based on the primacy of manpower, was replaced by the European concept of a territorial state with clearly defined border lines.

In the course of the 19th century, the areas of settlement in Lan Na expanded and the size of its population grew considerably. By 1850, the total population of Lan Na probably exceeded the mark of 500,000. In the period 1850–1900, the population doubled and in 1919, it reached 1,342,000 (according to the second nationwide Thai census). During most of the 20th century, the population of Lan Na experienced a further growth, which was also nurtured by the immigration of Chinese and Sino-Tibetan hill tribes.¹⁸⁸ The population growth differed from region to region. It was higher in the fertile rice-growing areas of the Ping-Kuang river basin of Chiang Mai and Lamphun (first half of the 19th century) and the Kok-Ing river basin of Chiang Rai and Phayao (in the second half of the 19th century), as these most severely depopulated areas possessed the greatest agricultural potential. The less fertile and less war-torn principalities of Lampang and Phrae, on the other hand, experienced a slower population increase.

It is an important and, at first glance, paradoxical result of my research that the rural population of Lan Na during the entire 19th century was highly mobile. This mobility, however, was, to a large extent, related to forced resettlements as a strategic device of traditional warfare, and more voluntary migrations were triggered by these forced resettlements.

¹⁸⁸ Concerning the immigration of Sino-Tibetan hill tribes, the Khamu, and other groups to Northern Thailand, see McKinnon and Vienne 1989 (general); LeBar 1967 (Khamu); Renard 1980a and 1980b (Karen); Mischung 1990 (Hmong, Karen).

Table 11: Census in Chiang Dao, Fang and Müang Ngai (1890/91)

	Chiang Dao			Müang Ngai			Müang Fang		
Sub-districts	7			1			39		
ตำบลบ้าน									
Houses									
หลังเรือน	182			185			1.284		
Inhabitants	Total	M	F	Total.	M	F	Total	M	F
คน	รวม	ชาย	หญิง	รวม	ชาย	หญิง	รวม	ชาย	หญิง
	*842	390	452	*698	358	340	*4,251	2,117	2,134
comprising:									
Small children	112	68	44	92	34	58	744	350	394
คนอุ่ม									
Children	92	35	57	64	39	25	577	257	314
คนจุง									
Youths	100	57	43	159	85	74	1,010	523	487
คนเล่น									
Adults	437	174	263	317	168	149	1,461	763	698
คนฉกรรจ์									
Elderly people	43	19	24	45	21	24	444	212	232
คนชรา									
Handicapped	58	37	21	21	11	10	21	12	9
คนพิการ									
Weapons (pieces)									
อาวุธ									
Rifles	108			115			618		
ปืน									
Lances	---			3			71		
หอก									
Swords	32			205			933		
ดาบ									
Domesticated animals									
สัตว์บ้าน									
Elephants	8			12			29		
ช้าง									
Horses	---			---			12		
ม้า									
Buffaloes	295			258			1.081		
กระปือ									
Cows	117			15			1.000		
โค									

*) These figures have been calculated by the author from diverse data mentioned in the document below. The total figures provided in this document (836; 700; 4,281) deviated slightly from those calculated by the author.

Source: HCH, R.5 M.40/3: *Raingan luang prachakhadikit krap thun riuang banchi sammanokhrua huamüang chai daen* [รายงานหลวงประชากิตติกริจราบทูลเรืองบัญชี สำมั่นฯ ให้ราษฎร์เมืองชุมชน], in: Nakhon 1973: 177.

Appendix: Population development in Northern Thailand (1919–1960)

Province	1919 absolute in %	1929 absolute in %	1937 absolute in %	1947 absolute in %	1960 absolute in %
Chiang Mai	349,550 26.05	440,694 28.44	543,846 28.81	535,664 26.90	798,483 27.05
Mae Hong Sòn	49,713 3.70	55,725 3.60	70,484 3.73	66,389 3.33	80,807 2.74
Lamphun	132,634 9.88	142,689 9.21	170,788 9.05	180,360 9.06	249,820 8.46
Lampang	275,588 20.54	287,140 18.53	308,640 16.35	331,956 16.67	471,699 15.98
Chiang Rai*	266,187 19.84	335,900 21.68	443,411 23.49	485,080 24.36	811,771 27.50
Phrae	103,739 7.73	117,877 7.61	151,302 8.02	181,153 9.10	299,369 10.14
Nan	164,525 12.26	169,325 10.93	198,927 10.54	210,858 10.59	240,471 8.15
Total	1,341,936 100.00	1,549,350 100.00	1,887,398 100.00	1,991,460 100.00	2,952,420 100.00

Notes:

Percentages calculated by the author.

* including Phayao

Source: Wilson 1983 (table II-2)

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