

## Attention Please!

This June, the INTG meeting will not be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month but on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, i.e. on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

This July, the INTG meeting will also be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, i.e. on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

There will probably be a second meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup>. See below.

### Informal Northern Thai Group Bulletin

**2 June 2012**

- 1. MINUTES of the 347<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012: “Merchants and Missionaries -Western Incursions into Lanna between 1829 and 1921” - A talk by Ian Bushell.**
  - 1.1. PRESENT: Around 50.**
  - 1.2. THE 347<sup>th</sup> TALK by Ian Bushell (Edited by Rebecca Weldon).**
- 2. ANNOUNCEMENT: 348<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012, 7:30 pm at the Alliance Française: “Creating a Temple Museum”. A Talk by Supachai Sittilert.**
- 3. FUTURE MEETINGS: July 2012**
- 4. INTG CONTACTS: Convenor & Secretary.**

**1. MINUTES of the 347<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012: “Merchants and Missionaries -Western Incursions into Lanna between 1829 and 1921” A talk by Ian Bushell.**

**1.1. PRESENT:** Mike Banadoyl?, Hans Banziger, Sangdao Banziger, Alex Brodard, Marie Burrows, John Butt, Pat? Corey, Jennifer Dains, Harry Deebran (or Dabran?), Margaret Deebran (or Dabran?), Peter Dawson, Paul Fihn, Jack Giles, Peter Gore-Symes, Art Halbisen, Oliver Hargreave, Sjon Hauser, Daniel Henley, David Henley, Reinhard Hohler, Peter Holmshaw, Janet Illeni, Nicolas Koehler, Hai Ying Li, Glynn Morgan, Micaela Moron, CherylJor Ogh [unreadable name], Pattama Tangkhaothong, Natasha Pousse, Cinda Rankin, Ron Renard, David Steane, Elena Suzuki, Ben Svasti, Edward van Tuyll, Vitthi Panichapant, Bob Vryheid, Ricky Ward, Andrew Wat, Lilla Wat, John Wikenden. 40 signed; around 50 present.

**1.2. THE 347<sup>th</sup> TALK: “Merchants and Missionaries - Western Incursions into Lanna between 1829 and 1921” A talk and presentation by Ian Bushell.** (Courtesy of Ian Bushell; Edited by Rebecca Weldon)

This presentation started life some years ago as a thesis I completed as part of a Master's degree in History for the University of Wales. One difference between the original thesis and tonight's presentation apart from some necessary condensing of historical detail - is the photographs I have managed to include and I am very grateful to Andrew Forbes and David Henley of CPA Media for sourcing and providing these for me. Khun Pattama in the British Consulate has also been very helpful with photographs. The main historical sources have been the Payap University Archives, Gymkhana Club records, Siam Society in Bangkok and the National Archives in London.

My original area of study was 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Imperialism and focused on the political, social and cultural consequences of Britain's domination of almost a quarter of the world's land area, as seen on this late 19<sup>th</sup> Century map.

Having lived in Chiang Mai for some years, I was intrigued by Thailand's experience with Western imperialism - which had always appeared somewhat ambiguous. Unlike India, Malaya and Burma which had all formed part of Britain's empire –and the Indo China region which was taken over by France - Thailand, or Siam as it was known until 1939, managed to avoid formal rule by any Western power. Modern day Thailand takes great pride in this historic fact, as was well illustrated in an article in the Bangkok Post at the height of the Preah Vihear dispute with Cambodia last year, part of which stated

*Thailand's history of proud independence having thwarted the colonial desires of France and Britain during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) has shaped its belief that there is no need for foreign interference in the country's affairs, including the attempts to demarcate the land border with Cambodia.*

Technically Siam was never a colony of Britain and for example, was never coloured red on imperial maps like this one. But whilst Siam avoided formal rule by the West –it was clearly not the case that Western influences had left the country unscathed. Not only was territory lost, both to France and to Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Siam was substantially changed in other ways by the impact of Westerners – chiefly British, French and American from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards.

Much of this impact and change occurred here in the Lanna region –which had long had Chiang Mai as its capital.

I'll set the scene for tonight's talk, with the signing the Anglo-Siamese Treaty (The Bowring Treaty), in 1855. At the time, Siam had a king who unlike his predecessors appeared willing to embrace many aspects of Westernization. Having spent over 20 years as a Buddhist monk - King Mongkut was unusually well read, fluent in English and French and an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society in London. For his time and place, he was undoubtedly an enlightened Asian monarch.

But kingship was at a very different stage of evolution in mid–nineteenth century Lanna (the land of a million rice fields). In stark contrast to Mongkut's civilized manner, was that of the contemporary ruler of Chiang Mai, *Chao Kawilorot*. Known as *Chao Chiwit Ao*, or 'Taker of Life', Kawilorot was known for ordering a beheading - by uttering the single word 'ao' or 'take.'

In 1855 Lanna was still very much a backwater and its remoteness had encouraged a tradition of independence in its rulers. For the preceding 600 years, Chiang Mai had functioned as the capital of several semi-autonomous principalities including Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Nan and Phrae. The people of the region were known as Shan by the British –who saw the area as an extension of the Burmese Shan States. The French and the Siamese called the same people Lao. The local people called themselves *Khon Mueang*.

For much of Chiang Mai's history, the outlook was not always South towards Siam but towards the West, North or North East –the directions of likely threat to the region. These were also the directions of the major trading routes. Local power struggles often left the region vulnerable to incursions from the Siamese capital Ayutthaya, from Vietnam but above all from Burma. For over 200 years, Chiang Mai was occupied by the Burmese and it was not until 1774 that the Lanna rulers under Kawilorot's father, Chao Kawila - requested the Siamese King Taksin, to help them expel the Burmese. The eventual liberation of Lanna, with both Siamese and local forces, fighting to overthrow their common enemy was achieved by 1804 - but at the cost of Lanna's previous independence. From now on, the region was considered by Bangkok to be one of their vassal states.

The relative remoteness of Chiang Mai, as well as the insecurity of the region, had meant that contact with the West had been limited. Journeys to and from Siam in the South were dangerous and time consuming – even in the 1870's taking up to 3 months by boat and elephant. The few Western visitors tended to travel from Burma. And one of the earliest recorded visits was in 1587 by a London merchant called Ralph Fitch,

who recorded,

*I went from Pegu to Jamahey (Chiang Mai) ..., it is five and twenty days journey Northeast from Pegu..Jamahey is a very fair and great town... with fair houses of stone... the women be much fairer than the women of Pegu... hither... come many merchants out of China and bring great stores of musk, gold and silver..*

Fitch's focus on property, riches and women has a somewhat contemporary ring about it. But the insecurity of the region and lengthy Burmese occupation discouraged further Western contacts for almost 250 years.

By the late eighteenth century, British imperial interest in the region was underpinned by a belief in free trade. New trading partners and suitable venues for managing imperial logistics were constantly being sought. Siam was potentially an ideal trading partner, but the early Chakri Kings who followed the reign of King Taksin pretty much rebuffed British approaches for commerce.

However the Lanna authorities, exercising their traditional rights for cross-border diplomacy, took the initiative in developing trade links with the British. The British East India Company had recently concluded the first of three wars with Burma, and by 1826 had gained control of the Arakan and Tenassarim regions that bordered Siam and Lanna. Letters of invitation were sent by the Lanna chiefs to Moulmein, inviting the British to send a trade envoy to Chiang Mai. In 1829 Dr David Richardson and Captain William McLeod, were instructed by the British Commissioner in Pegu to travel to Chiang Mai and establish a trade in cattle and elephants. The British need to provision their troops in Lower Burma had coincided neatly with Lanna's requirement to regenerate the local economy.

The Richardson McLeod missions to Chiang Mai, which continued between 1829 and 1839 met with mixed trading results, but represented the first colonial challenges to the region.

Whilst it was the Lanna authorities who had initiated the missions, Bangkok was much less enthusiastic. They increasingly used the missions as a pretext for imposing their authority over Lanna – levying heavy taxes on trade between the Lanna chiefs and the British - as well as declining visas for the two explorers to visit China.

The missions were also responsible for the introduction of East India Company rupees to Lanna, and these were to become the major currency in the region for the next 100 years. These coins can sometimes still be found in silver shops in Thanon Wualai.

By 1855, following the Second Anglo-Burmese War and with the British now occupying the Burmese Delta, the spectre of British domination was encouraging a more amenable attitude to the trade discussions between the Siamese and British. In the treaty signed by King Mongkut and the British representative Sir John Bowring - extraterritorial rights were granted to British subjects, exempting them from the provisions of Siamese Law - as well as free trade with low ceilings of import and export duty. Similar treaties were to be signed by Siam with the United States and various European governments in succeeding years.

A failure to include the Lanna region in the provisions of the Bowring Treaty was however to have important consequences. First, was in connection with the growing market for teak, a resource that grew abundantly in the Lanna forests, as well as in the neighbouring Burmese Shan States. Teak was critical for the British at the time, being needed for shipbuilding as well as later for railway development.

Local traders from Burma had been working the forests on both sides of the Salween from around 1840, and the teak logs were floated down the river to the saw mills in Moulmein. But from the time of the Second Anglo-Burmese War and as Burmese teak stocks became depleted, increasing numbers of Shan and Karen foresters, began to exploit the forests inside Lanna. Here teak had traditionally been owned by the local chiefs, and was primarily used for domestic needs, also for barter and paying tribute –but not seen as having great commercial value.

As the export potential to Moulmein was realised however, the teak trade grew. Whilst the Lanna chiefs welcomed the new opportunity for profits that came from the sale of forest leases, they were less scrupulous

in ensuring the demarcation of their property, or in abiding by the terms of agreements. Regular law suits followed, but under the provisions of the Bowring Treaty, the Lanna chiefs were no longer allowed to deal with breaches of law by Shan and Karen foresters, who now fell under British jurisdiction.

Kawilorot and the other local princes refused to abide by the terms of the treaty and saw it as a challenge to their traditional authority. The early Lanna forest industry was thus marked by regular disputes and violence, with a string of complaints following to successive British Consuls in Bangkok.

King Chulalongkorn, had by now succeeded his father Mongkut –and the problem he faced was that in the absence of the necessary controls of the teak trade, Britain might enter into a separate agreement with the Lanna chiefs, or at worst, resort to annexation of the whole region. But the King was still reluctant to override the traditional authority of *chaows* or to give them grounds to undermine their loyalty. Kawilorot, had at least once threatened to shift his allegiance to the Burmese king in Mandalay.

But realizing that the loss of the Lanna region might well result from any lack of progress, King Chulalongkorn now opened direct negotiations with the British authorities in India. The result was two Chiang Mai treaties, the first signed in 1874 aimed at improving trade and security. The second, signed in 1883 –despite Chulalongkorn’s initial reluctance - saw the appointment a British Vice Consul in Chiang Mai. The Vice Consul was ‘to be responsible for the interests of all British and British Burmese subjects living in the North.’ A new International Court was to be established, with British subjects tried by a Siamese Judge Commissioner together with the new Consul.

Having allowed the India Office to oversee British diplomacy in the region up to then, the Foreign Office now resumed the major role in determining the future relations between Chiang Mai, Bangkok and London. A key factor in their change of attitude was increasing concern about French expansion into the region. The French Mekong Expedition of 1866-68 had alerted London to the imperial ambitions of France, and the threats to Britain’s own long-term plans to open up markets into Southern China. The rapid colonization of Indo China followed and by 1885 the French had established a consulate in Luang Prabang –a previous tributary of Siam.

Chiang Mai and the Lanna region had now assumed an importance that moved beyond mere commercial opportunity, to one of key strategic concern. With a consular presence in Chiang Mai however, the British were now in a position to balance these threats from France as well as to dominate the Northern teak industry.

The first Westerners to actually take advantage of the provisions of the Bowring treaty were American missionaries - and Dr Daniel McGilvary established the first mission in Chiang Mai in 1867. Anticipating his future vocation and home with some adroitness, in 1860 following his wedding in Bangkok, a portion of the wedding cake was sent to *Chao* Kawilorot who happened to be visiting the Siamese capital. What the Northern prince thought of this Western delicacy is not recorded. But the gesture was apparently not lost on him, for when McGilvary later arrived in Chiang Mai, initial relations with the Prince were particularly friendly, McGilvary recorded,

*To all our requests (Chao Kawilorot) now gave his ready consent. Yes we might establish ourselves in Chieng Mai. Land was cheap, we need not even buy it.*

McGilvary and the Presbyterian missionaries that followed him, toured the Lanna region extensively to spread the word. By 1884 the Philadelphia Board of Publications was confidently reporting

*The contribution of our missionaries has special value... Siam owes the introduction of printing, European literature, vaccination, modern medical practice, surgery and many useful mechanical appliances to our American missionaries.*

One could also add education and several other key services to this list. But from an historical perspective, the most valuable legacy of the missionaries was their role as chroniclers of the lives they witnessed. From 1867 a wealth of letters and reports were routinely dispatched from Lanna, to the Boards of Foreign Missions in America. These documents provide detailed accounts, not only of the prospects for evangelizing

the Lanna region, but also of the social and political conditions of the time.

The only contact with the outside world was by letter – or later by telegram once the telegraph line to Chiang Mai was completed in the 1890's. Initially there were long delays in the mail service and the missionaries had to wait sometimes from three to five months before receiving any mail. So the appointment of the first British Vice Consul to Chiang Mai in April 1884 was heartily welcomed by McGilvary, 'as he has promised to get regular communications established.'

According to McGilvary's journal, 'when we left Bangkok we understood that a Mr C of the Borneo Company was due to follow us in a month, on business of their teak trade.' In fact, Mr C never arrived, as he was attacked by dacoits on his way to Lanna. This was however an indication that Chiang Mai's commercial potential had been registered, and that the British traders and consuls were following not far behind the missionaries.

The abundance of teak in the Lanna forests was the impetus for the two major trading companies, Borneo Company and the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation to commence teak operations and open their offices in Chiang Mai from this time.

The Borneo Company was the first British enterprise to be established in Siam after the signing of the Bowring Treaty. The firm's commercial interests included shipping, banking, insurance and several commodities - including teak. In 1862 King Mongkut had requested the firm to supply a suitable governess for the royal children, and the colourful Anna Leonowens was employed for this role. Her son Louis Leonowens was tutored alongside the future King Chulalongkorn, and uniquely for a foreigner, seems to have established a friendship. He was one of the early teak traders resident in Chiang Mai working for the Borneo Company, before setting up his own trading business.

The other major trading company - The Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation - had focused on teak and saw milling in Burma from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The company wielded considerable political influence in London, and a dispute with the Burmese King was believed to have prompted the Third Anglo- Burmese War in 1885, following which the company set up operations in Chiang Mai.

By 1898, Beckett the Vice Consul was reporting that over 60% of the teak being cut in Lanna was now being handled by the main British teak companies. At its peak, teak was ranking second, only to rice as a proportion of total Siamese exports as can be seen here.

King Chulalongkorn had recognized the importance of teak, both for its commercial value through the regular income derived by his government - as well as its 'potential' for destabilizing the region, if proper regulation was not introduced. In a letter to the Chief of Chiang Mai, the King noted,

*...the English government will throw in our teeth (that) we do not know how to rule our own state...with the Burmese example before us, we should hasten to take measures for the reform of the system of forest protection...*

In 1895 in an attempt to regularize the situation, the Siamese Government established a Royal Forest Department with a British forester, Herbert Slade appointed the first Conservator of Forests. Slade was one of many Western advisors to be employed by the Siamese Government over the next fifty years. He is noteworthy for being an early conservationist, and the limits he introduced on teak cutting, put him in conflict with the British teak companies especially Bombay Burmah.

The increasing number of forest managers working for the teak companies led to substantial growth in the expatriate population from the 1890's onwards. They brought to Chiang Mai the interests and attitudes of the time. Professionally their role in supervising the cutting of teak was one of rugged independence, where a young manager might not meet another European for weeks at a time. In May last year, Jack Bain (certainly the last of the teak wallas) described how the work of a forest manager had not changed markedly from the earliest times, to when he was working in the Lanna forests, in the last years of the commercial leases between 1945 and 1957.

With a team of Shan, Karen or Khamu (that is Lao) labourers, a forest manager would be transported by pony or elephant to the areas of teak growth and would supervise the felling and dragging of the logs by elephant to the nearest stream or river. Trees would first be ‘girdled’ or ringed with an axe to let the sap to run out, allowing the tree to dry and able to be floated down stream to the saw mills in Bangkok. The total time taken from first girdling, to the arrival of a log in Bangkok was typically five years.

Out of the forests, sport and recreation were major considerations of the forest managers and other expatriates. The Chiang Mai Gymkhana Club was established by the British Consul in May 1898 to meet the sporting and social needs of the expatriate community. Foresters, consuls and a number of missionaries all became members. At Christmas time the club was the major centre of Northern social life, with forest managers returning from their remote work stations for ten days of horse racing, polo and cricket and one imagines, lots of colonial *bonhomie*.

The Minutes of the Gymkhana Club offer a rare insight to expatriate life at the time. One founding member was the Manager of the Borneo Company - D.F Macfie who maintained a *Chiang Mai Record* listing all the British trading and consular community between 1884 and 1919. Macfie records serious illness and the deaths of residents as fairly regular occurrences. Surviving until the next home leave must have been a subconscious concern for all. The British Consul aimed to partially allay these concerns when he wrote that - ‘several residents of Chiang Mai ... expressed regret at the absence of a cemetery for foreign residents.’ This matter was referred to the Siamese Commissioner and in turn to King Chulalongkorn who agreed to the gift of land to be used as a cemetery for foreigners.

Whilst the boom in the teak trade was the impetus for a burgeoning British trading presence, an expanding consular service was also required to meet judicial requirements. In 1897 Chiang Mai was upgraded to a full British Consulate with new vice consular posts opened in the key forestry stations of Lampang, Nan and Chiang Rai. In 1907 following the *entente cordiale*, France opened its own Vice Consulate in Chiang Mai and the Gymkhana Club minutes record that the British Consul proposed Mr. Roy, French Vice Consul be elected a member of the Club –there were apparently no dissenters.

A key function of the consuls was in regard to the International Court, and the British Consul ‘was entitled to sit in any case, civil or criminal, in which a British subject was concerned .’ According to one Consul General,

*The international court system, all things considered, worked extraordinarily well and there was rarely any serious friction between Siamese Judges and British Consular officers.*

The number of Western visitors was also increasing, often prompting suspicion and associations with imperial espionage. Dick Wood’s History of the Foreign Cemetery *De Mortuis*, notes that the first grave is of a mysterious Major Guilding, whose ‘record is terse: ...service in India, a Russian interpreter. What he was doing here, no man knew...was he perhaps playing the “Great Game” ’?

Genuine spies certainly did pass through Chiang Mai and in 1887, Lieutenant George Younghusband (seen here much later in his career) was recruited by British India to travel clandestinely through Lanna to Chiang Tung, and report on the feasibility of a British flanking attack from Burma in the event of French aggression.

Not all the visitors were out of ‘Boy’s Own Paper’, and in 1884 a British engineer Holt Hallett, completed an extensive reconnaissance of the best routes for a rail network from Burma to China that was to pass through Lanna. Hallett spent several weeks touring the region –part of his journey with Daniel McGilvary - before returning to seek Siamese support for the railway. According to Hallett, ‘the King expressed himself strongly in favour of the railways,’ however Hallett’s proposed trans-Asian rail link never materialized, largely because the British wanted Moulmein, not Bangkok as the terminus. In 1901 Siam commenced the construction of its own railway system, which was to reach Chiang Mai in 1921.

The British merchants and the American missionaries together with the Foreign Office and Siamese Government were as one in their suspicions of French designs in the region. Political tensions reached their highest point in 1893 following the Pak Nam incident when French gun boats forced the Chao Praya River

and opened fire on Siamese troops. French seizure of what had previously been Siamese territory along the East bank of the Mekong followed.

The British stayed out of this conflict, a matter of great disappointment to King Chulalongkorn who had hoped that they might intervene on Siam's behalf. The King now realized however that Bangkok needed to consolidate its own authority in Lanna, if it was not to lose the region to one or other of the European powers. Whilst the 1896 Anglo French accord effectively neutralized Siam, with both colonial powers agreeing that Siam would become a 'buffer state' between their territories - the years 1897-1902 saw a 'rapid Siamese take over' of virtually all the local administrative functions within the Lanna region. Siamese officials were deployed from Bangkok to take on these roles.

It is worth noting that these centralization policies of King Chulalongkorn were encouraged by the British Consul General of that time, Ernest Satow. Satow had been a diplomat in Japan earlier in the century and had witnessed the successful modernization programme there.

It was the uncertainties resulting from the loss of the old order in Lanna, as well as the imposition of new and oppressive taxes by Bangkok that became the basis for unrest.

The Shan Uprising of 1902 was the most serious challenge. Many in the Lanna community sympathized with the aims of the more aggressive Shan who had been living in Lanna for several decades. They joined in a widespread spree of violence. The main targets were the new Siamese officials and Chinese tax collectors. MacFie's Journal records that in July 1902, Phrae was attacked and looted, Lampang attacked 2 weeks later, Borneo Company families and some missionaries escaped down river from Lampang to Tak, and that Leonowens (never far from where the action was) tried to obtain arms and ammunition from the local Lampang chiefs.

Bangkok deployed a force of 5,000 troops to put down this uprising. Whilst the British 'maintained a policy of non-intervention,' the Shan were their responsibility. The British Vice Consul in Nan attempted to disperse the rebels, before the arrival of the Siamese troops. Despite his efforts, there were many incidents of atrocities by the Siamese, prompting British demands for reparations.

The experience of the Shan uprising was a salutary one for Bangkok, and one outcome was the introduction of military conscription in 1905, with a permanent garrison being stationed in Chiang Mai from that time onwards. Lyle the Vice Consul summed up the consequences of the rebellion in a subsequent official report. *'The Siamese do not intend to lose this excellent opportunity - already commenced in the Malay States - of ridding themselves of semi-independent Chieftains'*. And indeed the traditional responsibilities of the *chaows* for law enforcement, employment, tax collection and ownership of the forests had all in short order been taken over by Siamese administrators or by foreign functionaries of the teak companies, or the international court.

By the early 20th century, the expatriate community in Chiang Mai, both merchants and missionaries, had established themselves in a manner similar to colonial outposts elsewhere in Burma or India. Missionary letters suggest a close and supportive community with both Americans and British sharing a similar world view, and a social life interchangeable with Rangoon or Simla. This picture shows the Consuls Beckett and Lyle together with missionaries Dr and Mrs William Harris and Daniel McGilvary's daughter at a picnic on Doi Suthep in 1901.

Through their work and culture the Chiang Mai expatriate community, both British and American, brought change to the Northern states and to the lives of the people. In this last section of my talk, I will look at how Lanna and wider Siamese population experienced and perceived these economic and social changes.

The teak industry had become the major employer in the region and contributed to an entirely new model of wage labour with considerable quantities of Indian rupees imported for paying wages. New modes of production and western capitalist systems generated local commerce and brought Lanna into the world economy. The missionaries in turn saw their role in encouraging new attitudes to work, to meet Western expectations of efficiency and industriousness.

Cultural changes also resulted from the Western influx. On the one hand the missionaries needed intrusive

access to the population as part of their evangelizing, as well as for medical and educational work. The opportunities for British forest managers and consuls to interact with the local community were more limited. Despite this - change did occur, but not surprisingly was initiated by the Siamese and Lanna nobility as a consequence of their more regular contact with Westerners.

As early as 1855, Bowring had noted that in Bangkok, 'English influences' were already establishing themselves, with the royal apartments 'ornamented' with busts of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Bowring was also surprised by the numbers of the court who could speak English. In preparation for King Chulalongkorn's state visits to British territory, in 1870 to Singapore, and in 1872 to India, the court was required to adopt British styles of dress and etiquette.

Siamese nobility now increasingly embraced many features of the West including dress, social customs, architecture, education overseas and Western bureaucratic systems. And Bangkok's increasing dominance of Lanna witnessed a slow assumption of many of the same Western practices in the North. European forms of clothing were gradually adopted by Chiang Mai royalty and the missionary wives were often called upon to advise on making Western styles of female clothing.

Among the wider Lanna population, a strong influence for the adoption of Western dress was missionary concerns for the modesty of their female converts. In 1886 Holt Hallett was noting prudishly that 'the unmarried women were guiltless of clothing above the waist' but that... 'the missionaries have persuaded their female converts and the girls to wear a neat white jacket and (here Hallett sounds a touch disappointed) ... the custom is gradually spreading'.

The Chiang Mai nobility were again the first to adopt Western living styles, and other influences included changes to architecture of official buildings as well as private homes. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century substantial wooden houses, many in semi-European styles were being built in Chiang Mai and a number are still standing, including the original British Consulate -now part of the Chedi Hotel, Louis Leonowen's home which is now part of the 137 Pillar Hotel and the Bombay Burmah Corporation office which still stands behind Rim Ping supermarket near the river. There are other examples of colonial houses in Phrae and Lampang.

The spread of education and Western medicine by the missionaries were key to encouraging the Siamese Government to widen access to the population, with the establishment of temple schools and medical programmes across the country. The missionary reports reflect some dismay that the numbers adopting Christianity were substantially less than those seeking education or medicine.

Overt displays of support or opposition to Western intrusion were rare. But it is clear that limited segments of Lanna society were acutely aware of the disruption to their traditional loyalties, and the loss of an autonomous way of life.

One medium where there is evidence of such awareness is in the temple murals of Nan and Chiang Mai. Nan was one region that lost land to the French after 1893. Among the murals of *Wat Phumin* in Nan are scenes of marching French soldiers and gunboats, together with images of weeping local women. Other temple murals showing images of London policemen and others of local forestry workers suggest an awareness of the Western intrusion to the region as well as of the wider world.

Local commentary on the Western presence in Chiang Mai was rare, but the colourful lifestyles of Louis Leonowens and the ex-missionary cum teak trader, Dr Marion Cheek certainly made an impression. Cheek maintained a 'harem' of local women which he shared with Leonowens - a situation tolerated by the local community but more surprisingly by their Victorian wives. A rhyme commemorating this colonial *machismo* was produced in the local language and was still being chanted eighty years later.

And on that lighter note, I will draw to a close. I started with a mention of Thailand's ambiguous relationship with imperialism, and the ambivalence of whether Siam's encounter with the West was lost or won. From the early Richardson missions through to the later Anglo-French incursions, Lanna was the region where the challenge to Siam was greatest - and where the threat from both imperial powers was ultimately contained.

Ironically it was these Western incursions that – depending on one’s point of view – forced or enabled, King Chulalongkorn to centralize state authority. With influential advisors like Satow encouraging these processes – as well as the willing adoption of British cultural practice by the Siamese and Lanna elite – it might be said that Thailand colonized itself, if not on Britain’s behalf, certainly on British colonial lines. There is much more about this extraordinary period of Chiang Mai’s history to be recounted and I hope others will take up the challenge.

**2. ANNOUNCEMENT for NEXT MEETING: 348<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012, 7:30 pm at the Alliance Française, Chiang Mai: “Creating a Temple Museum”. A Talk by Supachai Sittilert, Curator, Hong Luang Saengkaew Museum, Wat Phra Kaew, Chiang Rai.**

Supachai Sittilert, environmental biologist and former Vice President for Operations at the National Science Museum, has retired from government service to his home in Chiang Rai. A member of the temple council of Wat Phra Kaew, Supachai has guided and facilitated the creation of the temple museum, opened by HRH Princess Sirindhorn in 2008. Having worked with international experts, he is certified in museography by UNESCO. As curator, he has increased professional capacity among the volunteers and monks. The museum now serves as a model for temple and other museums in the region.

Supachai founded the Chiang Rai Museum Association, is advisor to the city and the province on museum activities and cooperates on museum capacity development at the Chiang Rai campus of the Buddhist Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. A believer in community involvement in the process of museum development – conceptualization, collection, documentation and conservation, research, exhibition and visitor activities – he will outline a sustainable approach used at Wat Phra Kaew.

### **3. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**348<sup>th</sup> Meeting – Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012: “Creating a Temple Museum”. A Talk by Supachai Sittilert, Curator, Hong Luang Saengkaew Museum, Wat Phra Kaew, Chiang Rai.**

**349<sup>th</sup> Meeting – July 17, 2012: "Record Production: problems in combining Thai and western instrumentation" A talk by Michael Zager, Visiting Professor, School of Music, Payap University.**

**350<sup>th</sup> Meeting – July 24, 2012: A Talk by Ian Baird, Professor of Geography of Southeast Asia, University of Wisconsin at Madison. [To be confirmed].**

**Talks in the oven** (dates and titles to be fixed): Ballooning in Chiang Mai by Nannapas "Aom" Krainara; Chiang Rai Art Scene by Angkrit Ajchariyasophon ; Stories about teaching English in Thailand by Jeremy Walter.

### **4. INTG CONTACTS: Convenor & Secretary**

**1) Convenor : Rebecca Weldon:** e-mail: <[rebecca.weldon@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.weldon@gmail.com)>. Mobile: **087 193 67 67**; Home: **053 227272**. Address: Gerard Habitat, Room 204 - 8/2 Soi 3 Nimmanhemmin Rd. - T. Suthep - A. Muang CHIANG MAI 50200 - THAILAND.

**2) Secretary: Louis Gabaude:** e-mail: <[gabaudel@yahoo.com](mailto:gabaudel@yahoo.com)>. Mobile: **087 188 50 99**. Address: 28/64 Laguna Home 10 - T. Sansai Noi - Mu 8 - A. SANSAI - CHIANG MAI 50210 [Currently out of the country].

**3) INTG Website:** <http://www.intgcm.thehostserver.com>

*Thank you for printing and posting the following posters in places you think fit for.*

**Informal Northern Thai Group (INTG)**

*27 years of Talks!*

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**Creating**

**a**

**Temple**

**Museum**

A Talk by **Supachai Sittilert**

**Tuesday 19 June 2012 : 19:30**

AT THE **ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE – CHIANG MAI**

**138, Charoen Prathet Rd, opposite Wat Chaimongkhon & EFEO**