

G. W. SKINNER

THAI CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR  
AN UNPUBLISHED WAR TIME STUDY  
DATED SEPTEMBER, 1943

RUTH BENEDICT



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## PREFACE

This stimulating study of traditional and recent patterns of Thai culture by the late Professor Ruth Benedict was prepared in the United States under war conditions. It was completed in September, 1943. In 1946 the monograph was processed for limited distribution by the Institute for Intercultural Studies, Inc., 15 West 77th Street, New York, of which Dr. Benedict was a director and vice-president. By the time of the author's death in September, 1948, the institute's issue was already exhausted. There had been a constant demand for the essay, and this demand has continued. For this reason it is now re-issued by the Cornell University Southeast Asia Program through the courtesy of the Institute for Intercultural Studies and by special arrangement with the Institute's secretary, Dr. Margaret Mead.

The limiting conditions under which this study was made are outlined by Benedict in her "Foreword". Exceptions both to some of her data and to some of her conclusions could be taken by Thai or by those who know Thailand well. She relies heavily on material more relevant to the Lao of the north than to the majority of Thai. Buddhist monks in Thailand need not be as unoccupied as she pictures them, nor does every man become a monk. Tales may be told and enjoyed which do not necessarily express Thai attitudes or behavior which would be approved. But these are relatively minor matters, and this essay remains nevertheless of value to students of Thailand and has not yet been superseded by any other study.

Students who have not had access to this paper have had to rely on a summary of it and of a companion paper on Burma by Geoffrey Gorer which is now unavailable for re-issue provided by Professor Alfred Kroeber in the 1948 edition of his Anthropology (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., pp. 589-590). Kroeber uses both studies as the basis for a discussion of the problem of the development of divergent character structures in Burma and Thailand, two countries in which most of the formal institutions, and indeed many detailed items of behavior, are so similar that similar personality types might be expected. Readers who now have this full report by Benedict will still find Kroeber's discussion of interest.

Precisely because of the conditions limiting it, this essay is noteworthy as an example of what can be accomplished by using methods of cultural anthropology in the study of "cultures at a distance" even when available data are fragmentary and inadequate. The reader will here find the author systematically using available sources to reach useful conclusions regarding a culture in which she had no first hand experience. Essentially the same method was used later on a more intensive scale in her longer study of patterns of Japanese culture, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1946, 324 pp.), which has been of value to experts on

Japan. Undoubtedly, some part of the success of these studies is related to the fact that Ruth Benedict was a poet as well as a scientist, an acutely sensitive and perceptive person. Nevertheless, more prosaic students seeking to understand Southeast Asian countries or any foreign society which is inadequately reported should read her paper and take heart and emulate her as best they can.

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THAI CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

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## Foreword

This study of the Thai is an attempt to investigate their way of life and regularities of their customary behavior for the use of those who will deal with them during and after the war.

Thai culture can boast of a centuries-long continuity unknown in Western cultures, and its carriers have been conditioned from infancy to certain kinds of behavior appropriate to its fundamental tenets. This appropriate behavior is integrated into certain patterns which are manifested not merely in Thai dealings with foreign nations or in economic matters or in religious practices or in family life; all these aspects of their culture are equally relevant and are interrelated with one another. Only by treating the whole culture - its sociological as well as its psychological aspects - its child rearing as well as its international relations - is it possible to see what consistency emerges and in how far certain patterns of Thai behavior can be stated.

I have not attempted to pile up examples and to cite all supporting material. Selection has been exercised. I have, however, not omitted any relevant item because it was inconsistent with other behavior. That would falsify the study. Any consistencies which emerge include those details which, from the point of view of our own cultural standards, appear contradictory.

The present study describes the life of the Thai people, not merely the life of the court and of officialdom. This relative weighing is necessary not only because the agricultural villages are 90% of the Thai population but because the upper class and village customs are rooted in the same - or in complementary - attitudes, and the former is unintelligible without the latter.

A greater difficulty in organizing the material comes from the many changes which have been enacted by legislation or have simply overtaken the Thai during the lifetime of the present generation. Some of the customs described are no longer general. These have been noted in many instances, but I have, nevertheless, included them, acting on the assumption that customs which have been practiced during this generation have still conditioned this generation. Each generation, in any culture, in order to become the carriers of that culture, must have certain attitudes and selected types of behavior conditioned in them, not merely by long past historical events but by experiences they themselves have actually undergone. These attitudes and selected types of behavior can be studied from the customs operative in their youth and are likely to have a very strong hold upon a population.

I have examined the literature on Thailand and, owing to the fact that the best books on the Thai way of life are out of print, I have summarized or quoted portions of these volumes. Of these the most indispensable is Graham's Siam, originally published in 1912 as Siam: A Handbook of Practical, Commercial and Political Information. Young's Kingdom of the Yellow Robe contains some excellent material, and Le May's comments on Siamese life contained in his Siamese Tales Old and New are acute. Recent volumes still in print include Virginia McLean Thompson's indispensable Thailand: The New Siam, 1940, prepared for the Council on Pacific Relations and Landon's valuable Siam in Transition, 1939. Entirely different in character is Cahndruang's My Boyhood in Siam.

I have arranged the very scattered material from the literature but much necessary information, especially on child rearing and the relations of men and women had to be secured from Thai men and women now in this country. They were most helpful and gracious and I owe special gratitude for their generous cooperation.

The methodology used in this study is that of cultural anthropology, and as an anthropologist I am keenly aware that any study of this kind is inadequate which is not based on personal observation of acts and procedures in Thai homes and villages. However, since no such study and report was attempted while it would have been possible to base it on first-hand field work in Thailand, the present study was undertaken in spite of the limitations of data.

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## THAI CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR

## Part One

## I. TRADITIONAL BACKGROUND

Thailand, the newly assumed name for the country earlier known to outsiders as Siam, is no artificial designation. The people who inhabit it have called themselves Thai\* since earliest history, and the Thai are the most numerous and widely distributed ethnic group in Southeast Asia. Representatives of this group live in great numbers not only in Thailand but in Yunnan, in Indo-China, where they are known as Laos, and in Burma, where they are known as Shans. The Thai language is cognate with Chinese, and its linguistic differences from region to region are only dialectic. "Their long history and numerous legends dating back 3,000 years, in addition to certain distinctive traits, differentiate this people from neighboring races" (V. Thompson 16). The different Thai groups, however, separated from each other by great mountain ranges, usually ignore each other's existence; if their interests conflict, they fight each other as heartily as they fight non-Thais. Only in Thailand are the Thais dominant peoples of the country and in that country Chinese accounts as early as the beginning of the seventh century enlarge upon the splendors of the royal court (Graham II: 173)

Besides its reference to a great ethnic group, the designation Thai means "free men". Naming their kingdom "The Land of the Free" is by no means an empty boast. In all of southeast Asia and western Indonesia, Thailand is the only country which had not fallen under European rule. Bordered on the east and north by Indo-China under French rule and on the west and north by Burma under English rule, to the south by the Malay States and flanked by Indonesia under Dutch rule, Thailand has maintained its native administration through all crises. Only twice in its six centuries of centralized rule, and then only for a few years, has its seat of government been held by its neighbors: in the last decades of the sixteenth century, its capital was twice sacked by Burma, and in 1767 it was practically destroyed, also by the Burmese. The Thai are more than compensated for these short periods of eclipse by the periods when they had extended their kingdom into Burma, into Indo-China, and into the Malay States.

Thailand was in 1940 a country of about 200,000 square miles -- considerably smaller than Texas -- with a population of about 14,000,000 people. The country is ecologically extremely diverse, from the rugged mountain terrain

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\*In this memorandum Thai refers to a great linguistic group in Southeast Asia, Thai, without italics, to the dominant people of Thailand.

of the North to the sea level lands of the central plains and the green jungle of southern, peninsular Thailand, from the laterite soil of the great Korat plateau of Eastern Thailand to the rich alluvial soil of the drainage of the Chao Phye Menam. Climatically, the whole country lies in the monsoon area. The succession of the seasons is much alike for all the regions except the eastern peninsular coast. The southwest monsoon blows from the end of April to November and gradually brings the rainy season; this is followed by the north-easterly winds of the dry season which last until the end of February; after a couple of months of the hottest weather, the monsoon brings the rains again.

Those who call themselves the Thai are racially and linguistically the close kin of most of the very numerous Laos of North Thailand who are indeed as Thai as the Thai themselves. The classification is cultural, political, and geographical. In spite of all the complicated ethnic mixture of Thailand, the native people fall, broadly speaking, into three great groups; those of the mountain, the forest, and the plain (Credner, Das Land der Thai, Stuttgart, 1935). The mountain and the forest peoples are non-Thai, and have been little integrated in Thailand's economy. They are simple tribes, living in small groups and subsisting largely on hunting and food-collecting, though they are also primitive agriculturalists. The mountain tribes generally use only the hoe and planting stick. The plains' people, living at an elevation below 3,000 feet, are Lao Thai, an incorrigibly low-land people who raise their omnipresent rice on the inundated surfaces of the valleys and plains. They use a simple plow, usually harnessed to the water buffalo or bullock and on the plains their country is laced with intersecting waterways and canals which bring water to the rice lands.

These waterways have no locks or water-gates to control the flow of water to the fields, and no reservoirs, natural or man-made, impound the flood waters of the rainy season. Thai have made no inventions for the control of floods and the one area recently opened by commercial irrigation is a western innovation. The waterways of the plains, however, represent a vast investment of human labor carried out under the absolute kings of the past centuries, presumably by corvee labor. Their upkeep in the past century has been haphazard and the local population has never taken responsibility for repairs; in this the Thai contrast strongly with similar areas in China. Western engineers have always recommended extensions and upkeep of the waterways instead of the Siamese government's favorite investment in railroads.

This study deals with these people of the rice lands, the Lao-Thai, living in North, Central, and East Thailand; the area which extends into the Malay Peninsula is not considered except when specifically mentioned.

The Thai, since the beginning of the Christian era, have been drifting southward from the Southern provinces of China into the under populated and fertile valleys of southeast Asia. They are supposed to have brought with them from China some form of Mahayana Buddhism but at least by the fifth century Hinayana Buddhism, the form characteristic of Ceylon, Burma, and Cambodia, had become the religion of the people and Brahminism, the religion of the ruling class. From contacts with the Khmers of Cambodia, Brahminism and ideas and practices of absolute kingship spread among the Thai, and by the middle of the fourteenth century, the seat of an absolute Thai monarch had been set up at Ayudhia, the great capital which was the seat of government for more than

centuries. The laws of that kingdom recognized Buddhism as the State religion; their Buddhist ecclesiastical order was self-governing within its internal organization with the king as its lay defender who had power to make appointments to the highest offices and to enforce secular law among its members. (V. Thompson 625) In the kingdom at large, secular laws defined who could give evidence before the court and prescribed punishments for stealing from the government, for those who abducted other's slaves, and for witches and sorcerers. The laws with reference to filial piety and to marriage are of special interest. "If any unfilial man attempts to bring a case against his parents or grandparents, let him be flogged as an example to others; and his claim shall not be admitted." "If a husband and wife have a physical or mental distaste for one another and desire to be divorced, let it be as they wish; for they two have no further blessing on their union, and therefore should not be compelled to live together." (Wood 67, 69)

The greatest mediaval king of Thailand was King Trailok who was crowned in 1448, some fifty years after the fall of Angkor (Cambodia), Thailand's former liege state. Since, as Wood (85) says in 1912, "the system of King Trailok survives to the present day" and since this long continuity of law and custom is one of the most significant facts of Thai culture, the laws of this period are relevant to this study.

Trailok established a centralized kingdom which both levied taxes and maintained an army. He ended the old feudal scheme whereby each petty prince furnished his quota of an armed force. Every man henceforth owed his military service directly to the absolute King, and instead of the old feudal ties to petty chiefs, a patron-adherent relationship came to prevail, under which serfs were not tied to the land but became adherents to certain patrons. The princes and the feudal lords were made officials of the government, holding posts in a Ministry of the Interior, of Finance, of Agriculture, and of the Royal Household, or they became ministers in charge of military departments. A hierarchy of titles graded all officials, from highest to lowest.

The status of the absolute King was also fully hedged about. Death was the penalty for whispering during an audience or for shaking the king's boat or for sending a love poem to the king's women or for allowing stray animals to get into the palace.

Chinese accounts dating from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) add other observations to this picture of mediaval Siam (Ming Shih chapter 324, p. 19 b-20 a):

"The nation is divided into ten classes, from the king to the ordinary citizen."

"When there are affairs to be settled, they are settled by women. In determination and judgment, the women really surpass the men."

"... the rich are particularly devout toward Buddha. Those who own 100 catties of silver will contribute one-half of their property (to monasteries and convents)."

"When the wealthy die, mercury is poured into their mouth before burial".

"They are used to fighting on water."

All these laws and accounts of early Siam reinforce Sir John Bowring's observation made in 1857 (I:101) that "descriptions of A.D. 1250, or 1650 or 1850 scarcely differ as to custom, usage, and fundamental attitude of mind."

These traditional "customs and usages" can be summarized under certain general headings:

1. The Absolute King. The omnipresent fact of Siamese history has been the absolutism of the king, an absolutism which in theory and practice meant that his caprice made and voided the fortunes of those who surrounded him. His power of punishment and of death extended to the princes of the royal blood and to his ministers. The heads of the chief departments of the government were flogged before the court for missteps and, though the blood of royal princes could not be shed, a prince was traditionally put in a sack and beaten to death with a sandalwood club.

The learned English governess whom King Mongkut imported for his 70 or 80 children in the 1860's writes: "In Siam, the King is not merely enthroned he is enshrined" (Leonowens 99). A superhonorific language, with a special set of pronouns and declensions of the verb, was used in addressing him, and all the parts of his body and many objects associated with him had special terms. Until 1874 all his subjects crouched on hands and knees before him and crawled into and out of his presence. He was hedged about with such restrictions that he had little direct contact with any except subservient officials. It was, however, customary for him twice a week to receive complaints from such subjects as wished to present themselves.

The great harem of the King had political significance. Officials from all parts of the kingdom offered their daughters to him as wives for the purpose of cementing relationships. Within this century there have been as many as 600 wives attending upon the king. Inevitably this city of women and children, which no man but the king himself could enter, isolated him still further. The affairs of the harem were extremely time-consuming. Also if difficulties developed in the outer world, it was an easy retreat for the king to sequester himself with his women and children.

The king stood to his subjects as the symbol of the nation and the protector of the nation. The Siamese equivalent of national holidays in other countries was the three-day annual celebration of the king (a birthday). At his death all his subjects except the youngest children shaved their heads and assumed mourning. His obsequies, held in a long series of special rites, were attended by his people from far and near. Annually before rice could be sown in any of the rice fields, the king, or the Minister of Agriculture as his delegate, ritually plowed with white bullocks harnessed to the plow and scattered the seed over a traditional plot; until the last few years it has been the occasion of a crowded festival.

Because of the great sacredness of the King, his Queen had to be his own half-sister and from among her children his successor was chosen. Of the five 19th century kings of the Chakri dynasty, four were the children of such marriages. However, neither order of birth or any other circumstance

determined which particular son should succeed his father. Interregnums accompanied by disorder and violence occurred in the capital during the struggles of royal brothers to gain the throne and the successful candidate put his brother to death along with his adherents. Not till 1887 was a law passed requiring the king to name his successor during his life time.

2. Bureaucracy. The social system of Thailand has been a bureaucracy from the time of Trailok. The power of local hereditary chiefs and kinglets was sapped by Trailok's program of centralization and the earlier warrior nobility was transferred gradually into an official class (V. Thompson 235). There is in Siamese history no parallel to the rise of the great hereditary noble families of Japan.

Even the Thai royal family did not constitute a perpetual aristocracy, except actual sons and daughters of the king born of a marriage with his half-sister. All others were commoners in four generations. The king's children by his queens, his half-sisters, were Chao Fa; by other wives, Phra Ong Chao; their children and grandchildren had progressively lower titles and their great-grandchildren no title at all. Their status, moreover, was further assigned. Twelve princes in any one generation were given appointive status and titles and occupied official positions in the king's service; no one of these positions was automatically filled by reason of order of birth, genealogy, or other considerations. They could be demoted at the royal pleasure (Graham I: 231-233). The princes were regarded as above the law.

This system of administrative titles held not only for the royal family but for all civil servants of whatever status, and they also of course held their titles and positions at the king's pleasure. Whatever his title, a man was addressed by it at all times, and it defined his place in the status hierarchy. It also defined his wealth. To the holder of each title went "land according to his honor", and with this land of course a toll from the produce of the farmers living upon it. From this prerogative the official drew his revenue, and he received no other salary. "Every Prince, official, and private person, had a certain amount of land allotted to him. For instance, the Chao P'iyas, or P'ias holding important posts, were allowed to hold from 1,000 to 4,000 acres. Subordinate officials, such as K'uns and Luangs, held from 160 acres upwards. Common people held 10 acres. This system not only definitely fixed the relative rank of every man in the Kingdom, but it actually placed a value upon him. He was literally 'worth' so and so much. If he had to be fined for any offence, the fine was graded according to his Sakdi Na, and if compensation had to be paid for his death or for any injury, this was likewise computed on the same scale" (Wood: 85). Even when, about 1900, this system was formally abandoned, the old prerogatives were merely replaced in terms of land-substitutes; the essential sakdi na system remained.

This system of titles for civil servants was as little conducive to rise of a permanent aristocracy among the non-royal as the system of titles was among the princes. Each man held his title during his life at the whim of the king or of his subordinates; he certainly did not transmit it to his son. Whatever tendency there was for high status to run in family lines was due solely to the better opportunities a man might be able to provide for his children or to the favor of his superiors, but family dynasties did not arise.

Just as political status was not transmitted intact from one generation to another, so high financial status was transitory. This was due partly to the great insecurity of political tenure, but perhaps even more basically to the Thai laws of inheritance. Indivisibility of an estate is contrary to all Thai custom; all children inherit, daughters as well as sons, and widces also receive their own personal shares. This inheritance law holds good for all classes but its effects were the more extreme among princes and officials because plural wives were almost the rule among them and children very numerous. Though the sons and daughters of lesser wives did not have claims to their father's holdings equal to those of the first wife, they always shared in the property division. The result was a very considerable mobility up and down the social scale and the absence of permanent, entrenched "feudal" families. At any given moment of time, however, the hierarchy was explicit, and the rewards of status were definite.

The chief endeavor of any man who had attained status was, not to consolidate his power for the benefit of his family line, but to keep a fairly precarious footing with his superiors. A job well done was not so likely to achieve this end as presents well placed, inconspicuous routine observance of formalities and knowing the right people. It is true that in districts far removed from Bangkok an official could have things much on his own terms but this was balanced by the losses which ambitious men felt that they sustained in going to such provinces. Residence in such parts was regarded as exile and being absent from court meant that their names dropped into oblivion, and the king might well appoint to their position a current favorite (Graham I:321).

All semblance of caste is, of course, lacking in such a system as prevailed in Thailand.

3. The Villagers. According to the 1937 census, 88.5 per cent of the population of Thailand were engaged in agriculture and fishing. The peasants live in small villages either strung along the banks of a waterway or grouped together in a little forest of fruit trees in the midst of the great unfenced rice fields. Exceptionally, there are some isolated farm houses, but these too belong conceptually to some village unit.

These villages comprised from 10 to 80 families and were organized under a headman selected by both men and women of the village. In the villages described by my informants, a headman retained this position for life or until he was too old to perform the duties of his office, but Zimmerman writing of Siam in 1930 says that they were chosen "each five years". This may well not be contradictory since there was certainly no feeling that a good headman should succeed himself.

The headman of some 10 to 20 villages select from among their number a commune headman, the kamnan, to deal with matters which may concern them all and to represent this group of villagers to the governor of the district (amphur). This governor of the district is an administrative official appointed and paid by the Central Government in Bangkok and is not a local man. He passes on to the local commune and village headmen the government's demands in the way of taxes, corvee labor, etc., and they carry out the requirements. Though in 1934 the local headmen were by law made officials of the Central Government, I have nevertheless used the present tense in describing these arrangements because in all the known cases the traditional arrangements were not modified by this change

of terminology; local incumbents were left in these positions and the Central Government has voted down proposals to pay a salary to them from the government treasury.

Local matters are handled by the village itself acting together under the headmen. The fields are planted and harvested by work parties drawn from the whole village which do the work on individual fields in turn. These arrangements are cleared through the headmen. If a waterway becomes clogged, some villager speaks to the headman, and the latter arranges the necessary village cooperation. "If they are lazy in their field duty, a good 'Pu Yai Ban' will stir them to work, and one particular duty may be mentioned of beating the gang at the cry of thief to summon all the villagers to help to catch him" (Le May, 146). The headman also arbitrated quarrels between villagers, and disputes in the village are still heard by the headman and other elders; more and more such cases, however, are argued before the judges appointed by the Central Government. These appointive judges are very much respected in the rural areas and since by law they accept no witchcraft cases, this change has, from all accounts, worked to reduce not only the incidence of witchcraft charges but also the suspicion of witchcraft generally.

Another shift has recently been made in the traditional manner of administering justice. This is in the direction of more nearly limiting responsibility for crime to the individual offender. Traditionally, if a case of theft had to be dealt with by higher authorities, the village or even several villages were responsible for making up two-thirds of the amount stolen, the victim taking one-third of his own loss (V. Thompson 287). In many other kinds of antisocial behavior, also, the family, more or less extended, or the village was responsible for producing and chastising the malefactor. This, too, still continues; though during most of this century, the individual himself has legally been held solely responsible to the State.

The village, acting through its headman, also prepares village floats, racing canoes, dramatid performances, and offerings for the temples and priests on the occasion of festivals in which many villages take part. Each village tries to excel in the costumes of its performers, the speed of its racing team and the lavishness of its offerings.

In contrast, however, to almost all other countries with such responsible local village organization, there are no cases discoverable where protest was made to the representatives of the Central Government or to landlords about the amount of taxes or rents or about abuse of corvee labor. The villagers have accepted without formal complaint the demands of higher authorities and have lodged no face-to-face protest. They do, however, sometimes escape the imposition. The evacuation of whole villages used to occur in anticipation of the visit of the recruiting sergeant; conscription for military service has not been popular in Siam. In cases described by informants, too, when an exacting landlord required too large a toll, the whole village loaded itself into its boats and set itself up on other land.

It is extremely important to realize that Thailand is underpopulated and that it has been possible to take up new lands either individually or by groups. This is locally impossible today in the most fertile parts of Central Siam, but such areas are not typical of the whole country even today.

In 1910 P.A. Thompson wrote: "It is probable that not more than one-

half of the delta of the Menam is under cultivation," and the Menam is the heart of Central Siam. "Any man can go into the jungle and burn off the long grass and bamboo scrub, and so clear for himself a space in which to plant his rice. For this he pays nothing except the annual land tax, and if he likes he can claim the land henceforth as his own. If, on the other hand, he prefers to clear a new patch of jungle and abandon his old clearing, he can do that also. By far the greater number of Siamese are small freeholders, cultivating on an average about eight acres, which are sufficient to support a family of four or five in comfort."

This freehold land, was, in Siamese law, a part of the sakdi na system; just as "land according to his honor" was allotted to a prince or civil servant, so ten acres was legally due each head of a biological family for his military and corvee services. Actually, "ownership" of land was reckoned as one's privilege of cultivating it, whether as tenant or freeholder until 1901 when registration of landed property was begun. It is still the way in which the peasant reckons his ownership.

The arrangements of a village of freeholders and a village of tenant farmers differ hardly at all. Traditionally, they all were subject to military or corvee labor. Tenant farmers generally pay only a small part of their rice to the landlord, often a tithe, and, for the rest, get a certain satisfaction out of being called the great man's "man". Up to 1905 probably one-fourth of the population were slaves, mostly debt-slaves who could redeem themselves if they were able. Slavery was peacefully abolished in 1905 following a series of laws mitigating the slaves' conditions, and Le May writes of them:

"If the slaves found a good master, they were very content to remain in the household, as they gained considerable advantages by doing so, such as protection and free food in return for their services. Knowing the Siamese passably, I have little doubt that a great many of the slaves became such by selling and attaching themselves and their families to the households of important men. It gave them prestige to be called so-and-so's man." (Le May, A 141)

The same remark applies also to tenant farmers and their usual relations to their landlords.

Landlords who came into direct contact with the peasants were generally prosperous local farmers of the region. These often held their lands as tenants, in their turn, of some prince or high official whose home was in Bangkok, but they were a rich peasantry. Andrews (p 317) found, in the Economic Survey of 1934-35, that about half of peasant indebtedness was held by relatives of the debtor, and this is easily understandable because of the predominance of peasant landlords in most parts of Thailand, as also because of the comparative mobility of village population (as compared to China or India; for example) which spreads any man's relatives not only into many parts of the country but also into different income groups.

The hardships of the traditional system were in regard to forced labor, In 1855 Sir John Bowring wrote: "Every Siamese is bound to devote one-third of the year to the service of the King" (V. Thompson 123) and since this service was in practice exacted by his underlings who hold this right as a prerogative and there was little or no check upon abuses, the peasants were often quite helpless.

Graham says of the days prior to 1900: "The faces (of the peasantry) were forever being ground." By this century's introduction of better laws regulating military service and corvée labor and by the introduction of regulated poll taxes, etc., "the social conditions of the lower classes have been totally changed." (ibid 239)

In Central Siam almost all villages have markets, (Graham I:21) which are typically run by the women. Small villages, especially in the north, may not themselves have markets, but there is one nearby. The central, old-established larger market town with its circle of small villages so characteristic, for instance, of China, is not characteristic of Thailand. These larger towns with their stores and their public buildings are, rather, in Thailand administrative centers and cater to the resident administrative officials. The peasants' village has, besides its market, its temple and its resthouse which often served as a temple and was besides a place where any wanderer could sleep with a roof over his head and a dry floor. The temples also were the schools where the monks taught all Siamese boys at least to read. "Education was free in Siam long before it was in England" (Campbell 128), and literacy was practically universal among men and common among women under the traditional Siamese regimer

The history of Thailand records no catastrophic crop failures and manure, either animal or human, is not traditionally used. The one economic danger is flood. Though all the richer areas of Thailand grow wet, not dry, rice, there were, in Central Thailand, until the last decade, no systems of controlled irrigation. In poorer North Thailand, north of the flood plains, the peasants must use weirs because without these there would be no crops at all, but Central Thailand depends upon the annual inundations which cover the country. The vast system of waterways, natural and artificial, channels the water to the fields, but they are built for boats to use, and no control of water is attempted. A too-great or too-small rise of the waters made a bad season, and floods in some years have been disastrous.

The greater disasters which history records in Thailand have been wars with its neighbors. The histories of Thailand largely concern court intrigues and laws passed at various times, but until recent years such matters very rarely affected the great mass of the population. On the other hand, wars with Burma, for instance, in spite of the inefficiency of the army and of military tactics from the Western viewpoint, meant conscription, the overrunning of the country, sack of the cities and whole populations put to the sword or removed bodily to another country. In 1828 "the expedition against Laos was successful. As usual in Siamese warfare, they laid waste the country, plundered the inhabitants, brought them to Bangkok, sold and gave them away as slaves." The king (of the Laos) "was confined in a large iron cage, exposed to a burning sun." "In this cage was placed with the prisoner, a larger mortar to pound him in, a large boiler to boil him in, a hook to hang him by, and a sword to decapitate him; also a sharp-pointed spike for him to sit on" (Bowring I:61.2). Periods of peace, internally or with its neighbors, on the other hand, automatically meant comparative prosperity for the people, and for the last century there was been peace.

The Thai peasants have never probably been enthusiastic soldiers and they are during historical times as unenthusiastic as possible. In the last century, "officers rarely led their men but remained discreetly behind them, a naked sword in hand. Siamese tradition held that if a soldier retreated even a few

steps before the enemy, the officer must cut off his head. The generalissimo stood furthest behind of all, holding a long lance with which he periodically prodded his soldiers in the back, crying, 'Forward, children!'" (V. Thompson 296).

The underpopulation of Thailand, Indo-China, and Burma is probably closely related to the policies of devastation carried out by the periodical victors. Disease seems no more rampant than in overpopulated India or China, and the Thai birth rate, as recorded in recent censuses, has been only second to that of the U.S.S.R.

### European Contact and Modernization

Like all countries of Asia and the Pacific, Thailand has inevitably been caught up in the changes occasioned by the spread of Western interests and the dissemination of Western ideas. This common cultural transformation has, however, had in Thailand a character unique in all of Southeast Asia and the Malay Archipelago owing to the fact that in this country it was carried out, not only by an Asiatic state acting as a sovereign people but also until 1932 by an absolute monarch -- the only one left in the world after the fall of Abyssinia.

The great Western powers were all interested in Siam in the seventeenth century. Portugal, Holland, France, and England vied with each other for advantages and, incidently, taught the Siamese certain techniques which became basic in the country. Thus, the Portuguese taught the Siamese the arts of cannon foundry and musketry, and the Dutch the art of modern shipbuilding (V. Thompson 207-211). The king Phra Narai in the latter half of the seventeenth century, through the coaching of a Greek sailor-adventurer, Constantine Phaulken, who rose to be the king's favorite and dictator of Siamese policy, made himself the principal Siamese merchant in his kingdom and his port a clearing house for products of China, Japan, Sumatra, and India. Phra Narai reckoned, however, without the court and the officials. Jealousy of Phaulken and fear for their own way of life brought on a court revolution during which Phaulkon was killed, and the king died. The new king killed all the royal family to remove possible competitors for the throne and then closed the doors of Siam to Europeans.

When in the nineteenth century official contacts were again resumed, they had a quite different aspect. Siam's export trade was expanded and Western trading companies were interested in removing the more cumbersome restrictions on their trade. Also, both France in Indo-China, and England in Burma were extending their Asiatic empires, and Siam was caught between them. The pictures of their negotiations drawn by European representatives at this period have all of them a family likeness. The Siamese Government never used force or threats, but it was adept at humiliations and subterfuges and infuriating requisitions. "The one diplomatic receipt of Siamese officials is 'Delay, delay, delay, again and again; and if pressed, ask, as a last resource, for the advice of the person who is pressing you; then say that you must refer it to headquarters; and thus keep the ball rolling, until he perhaps gives up in despair of ever getting to the bottom of your diplomacy'" (Colquhoun 225). From the point of view of the kingdom of Siam, these methods could hardly have been bettered, and Siam actually maintained her independence. But the method was, naturally enough, not popular with Western representatives.

Crawford, who attempted to negotiate an English trade treaty in the 1820's, was kindly received in royal audience in a hall where "every inch of the floor was covered with prostrate courtiers carefully ranged in hierarchal order.

The Siamese had arranged the whole ceremony so that Crawford and his companions had to make more than the usual number of obeisances, and their gifts were represented as tribute." (V. Thompson 147). Sir John Bowring in 1855 quotes the opinion of a French priest: "Ships trading to Bangkok should bring three cargoes, one of presents for those in high places, one for bribes to the customs officers, and one for purposes of trade" (Graham II: 121)t

In spite of the unpopularity among Europeans of the methods employed by the Siamese court, Siam was able to avoid taking part in the First Anglo-Burmese War, and to remain neutral in the Second. In 1893 when the French claimed an area on the left bank of the Mekong, French gunboats actually proceeded up the Menam to Bangkok. The king of Siam called a truce! When it was later discovered that the French military orders to the commander had not been in good form, the Siamese premier congratulated him on his skill, and daring in forcing an entrance. When the French ships departed, the people along the river casually remarked that their king would not let them stay any longer, Siam then accepted the cession to the French of Luang-Prabang and of their part of Chan-tabun (V. Thompson 188).

Modernization has been gradually making headway in Siam since 1850, and the initiative in these moves was taken by the kings themselves, certainly never at the instance of any popular pressure and often against the will of the princes and officials.

The remarkable King Chulalongkorn's abolition of the practice of obeisance to the king is typical of later modernizations. "Until the year 1874 A.D., all persons approached the sovereign on hands and knees, crawling with the head upon a level with the monarch's feet" (Young 131)t In that year 1874 the king assembled all the court and a decree was read to them of which the following paragraphs formed a portion: "Since His Majesty ascended the throne, it has been the Royal purpose to cherish the State and augment the happiness of the greater and lesser princes, ministers and nobles, the clergy, the Brahmins, and the masses of the people all over the kingdom. Whatever is oppressive and burdensome, it has been the Royal purpose to remove from the people, and abolish from the State...The custom of prostration and human worship in Siam is manifestly an oppressive exaction which an inferior must perform to a superior, causing him embarrassing fatigue in order to honour a superior. These acts of showing honour by such prostrations and worship, His Majesty perceives are of no benefit whatever to the country" (Young 132-33); The edict then proclaimed that men should henceforth stand in the presence of their king "after which the whole crowd rose from the ground, and for the first time in the history of the country, the subject stood upright in the presence of the sovereign" (Young 134). Twenty-five years later some noblemen still required their servants to approach them on hands and knees, but the custom of crouching before a superior has gradually been done away with.

The peaceful freeing of the slaves by King Mongkut's son, Chulalongkorn, during his reign, 1868-1910, was a remarkable achievement in any country and was carried out by royal edicts with complete success. When he became king, it is estimated that one-fourth of the population were slaves, mostly debt slaves, Chulalongkorn first ruled that slavery was no longer hereditary and that the children of slaves were free men. Some years later he declared a wage scale which landlords were compelled to pay their slaves for labor; if these wages were not paid, the unpaid sums were credited against the price for which the slaves had sold themselves. In 1905 he freed all slaves unconditionally. In

this whole period of emancipation, there is no evidence of popular support or of court resistance; the king acted and the country accepted.

A recent modern social program is that of vaccination. In 1914 the Government passed a compulsory vaccination law applicable to all Bangkok Circle, and this has been extended until epidemics of smallpox are now, even in areas where there have been no improvements in sanitation nor in medical care, a thing of the past. Vaccination has been accepted by the people, even in rural districts. "So ready are most people to be vaccinated that they are sometimes exploited by quacks and swindlers. During one smallpox scare a bogus doctor vaccinated the entire population of three villages with Nestle's timed milk at twopence a head" (Wood: Land of Smiles 17).

The people have recognized also the value of quinine as a specific for malaria. "It was readily accepted and today is on sale very cheaply" (Landon 127). It has not been so easy to get people to wear foot coverings in order to decrease the incidence of hookworm.

Since 1917 when 7,000 people died of plague in Eastern Thailand, control of infected rats has become so effective that the country was in 1939 almost free of plague (Landon 127).

In 1937 on the outbreak of a cholera epidemic "the nation mobilized as for war...A law was passed which required everyone to be injected. The government health centers injected people by the thousands. Many of the railroad stations had temporary injection stalls erected." (Landon 126)

It is clear that definite programs to inoculate the people or to get them to use certain specifics have been quite successful but desirable changes in traditional custom - including all habits of garbage disposal, sanitary arrangements, etc.-- are of course slower in gaining acceptance.

The greatest change in all Thai political history was accepted by the people and, this time, by the king himself, with the most peaceful compliance, the coup d'état of 1932 which ended the absolute monarchy, "The people remained passive throughout. A curious throng pressed around the Throne Hall, but there were no demonstrations. The general order was so complete that the shops, which had been closed on the morning of June 24th, reopened one by one during the course of the afternoon." (V.Thompson 63). Throughout all the succeeding conspiracies and intrigues also, the peaceableness of the populace was remarkable.

Efforts to get the people interested in public and political affairs have not met with much success. The Thai have no traditional habits like those in Burma where men spent a good proportion of their time electioneering for local village positions. The village and commune headmen were regarded just as "the best men". Now that the Thai are supposed to vote in elections and meet for public discussion there is little response. One-tenth of the people turned up to vote in 1933 "in an atmosphere of calm amiability bordering on indifference" (V.Thompson 83), and a wreath of flowers was placed around the victor's neck.

Economic modernization has involved the development of trade and of more systematic production. The Thai, however, have let the profits to be derived from such activities go by default, and business was developed by immigrant Chinese. The Thai raised the rice, but the Chinese were the middlemen; they owned and ran the rice mills or worked as coolies in them. Practically the

whole rice export trade was in their hands. "The Chinese was the pawnbroker, the tailor, the boot-maker, the dyer of cloth, the furniture-maker, the iron smith, the market gardeners, the fish-dealers, the old tin can collector, and the hawker" (Le May A: 165). They filled the yawning labor shortage whether as merchants or as rickshaw men, for the Thai of the upper classes were only too glad to have them do the wage-service which they themselves refused.

The Chinese in Thailand followed the usual South Sea pattern of Chinese emigration: they came from the Southeast coastal provinces as transients. They left a wife in China -- to whom they would eventually return -- but they married a Thai wife and their children grew up as Thai and usually remained there. The children too prospered. During the first World War the Chinese for the first time began bringing their women with them and thus gradually led to a separation which had hardly been possible earlier. By the 1930's when the depression hit Thailand, the Chinese were a ready scapegoat and the reason "why peasants are in debt" -- though Andrews in the Economic Survey of 1935 shows how unjustifiable this view is -- and with the growing nationalism of the later 30's, much anti-Chinese legislation was passed.

Economic modernization has not yet induced the Thai upper class to give up their exclusive predilection for civil administration positions or the lower class to accept either wage-labor or small business.

The recent nationalist movement, which culminated in Thailand's present alliance with Japan, has been led, as in Burma, by university and foreign-trained Thai. It has had a number of planks in its platform, some of them dominant at one moment and some at another. Besides the usual anti-foreign agitation, which in the thirties led to some demonstrations against the Chinese "exploitor" and has this spring (1943) drawn a complaint from the Vatican against Catholic discrimination, the nationalists in the early thirties urged a constitutional rather than an absolute monarchy and better agrarian conditions. The nationalists stepped into power as a result of the bloodless palace coup d'etat of 1932 in which Army officers took a leading part. Their front was the agrarian leader Luang Pradist Manudharm, who in the new government functioned ably as Foreign Minister and Minister of Finance. The Army soon put in their own men as premiers, and at the time of the Japanese invasion in December 1941 a general, Luang Pibul Senggram who had received his military education in Germany, headed the government. He maintains this position today under the Japanese.

On January 25, 1942, Thailand declared war against Britain and the United States. Radio Bangkok has been especially ecstatic over Japan's gift to Thailand, July 3, 1943, of the Northern Shan States (ex-Burma) and of the four Malay States which lie south of peninsular Thailand; Perlis, Kodah, Kelantan, and Trengganua. Those four Malay States Siam had ceded to Great Britain in 1909. The Bangkok Government celebrates Thailand's role today in Japan's co-prosperity sphere as a fit alliance between the two great Buddhist nations of the Far East which had maintained their independence from European control.

## II. RELIGION

The Thai are Buddhists and follow the Southern or Hinayana form of that religion. Buddhism is the State religion, and the king the defender of the Buddhist faith. Innumerable figures of Buddha occur everywhere in temples and the open air, and every home has an altar to Buddha. (Young 38).

Historically, it is interesting to separate Buddhist ceremonies and practices from those of Brahmanism but culturally the two are welded into what appears to all Thai who are not historians a consistent and homogeneous whole. Brahmanism was earlier the religion of the nobles, and many of the most impressive Thai ceremonies of the present day are of Brahman derivation. Buddhism is tolerant and has incorporated these with no sign of fissure.

The Buddhist monastery, wat, is omnipresent in Thailand. It is a collection of buildings of different types, generally set together "in no sort of order but with delightful irregularity" (Pratt 151) as place is found for them when some merit-maker erects one. "To build a new wat (or any shrine in a wat) is accounted one of the surest ways of making merit, but to repair one which someone else has made is considered merely to increase the merit of that other. Hence, he who desires to lay up riches in Heaven prefers to erect a new building rather than to repair an old one" (Graham III 237). An effort has been made in recent decades to change this attitude.

The wat is surrounded by a brick wall and facing the main entrance stands the temple, bawt, crowned with its series of tiled, overlapping roofs. Inside, it is dim and cool and bare of furniture; the altar at the far end supports a large, gilded Buddha with lesser images grouped about it. Outside, the temple is set off as sacred ground by eight large flat stones conventionally representing the leaves of the bo tree which sheltered the Buddha (Graham II:236). Other holy buildings within the wat enclosure are the needle-spined shrines, phra chedi, and the image houses which contain figures of the disciples of the Buddha, the fat belly-god, the mother earth, and the judge of souls. Besides these are the lecture hall where sermons may be preached and the rest house where any traveller can sleep and which in some villages serves as temple (P.A. Thompson 180), a bell tower, and the small houses where the monks live.

These wats are more numerous in the rural districts than in the urban. In 1939 there were more than 18,000 in the country-- not counting those in ruins -- averaging in East and North Thailand almost one to every 500 persons. They are the hub of village life. They serve as "church, town hall, hotel, recreation center, school, crematorium, and home" (V. Thompson 630).

The wat is the home of the monks, the "yellow-robles". These monks have taken vows not to eat after midday -- though they drink tea and coconut milk, chew betel and smoke tobacco to make the deprivation bearable, -- to remain aloof from all women, and to own only eight possessions: "Namely, three cloths all of which are worn at the same time and which the wearer is supposed never to put off, a waist-girdle, a begging bowl, a razor, a needlecase and a small cloth through which to filter drinking-water, the last not for

hygienic purposes but to prevent the accidental destruction of life by swallowing of aquatic animalcules. To these were long ago added by common consent a fan, a spittoon, and a water vessel" (Graham II:240). This rule of poverty is honored in the breach and the possession of many luxuries is quite general and no cause of embarrassment. The monks also have a whole list of specific rules about the height and width of the beds they can sleep on, about not using scents, and about "not loving one man better than another." In public they must keep their eyes on the ground a few paces ahead of them so that they will not look upon a woman.

The monk's routine is unexciting. He rises at dawn and takes his begging bowl "as big as half a pumpkin" and walks silently to some part of the town or the village to receive his food. The women keep watch and fill his bowl; he is not allowed to knock or signal his coming or to speak in thanks. The giver makes merit by the gift, and no thanks are due. It is no secret to anyone that the contents of the bowl are often thrown to the dogs that swarm in every wat, after which the monks breakfast on food prepared by their own servants. For the rest of the day they relax according to their pleasure or wander abroad. They have no responsibilities except such as they may seek, and no full routine of devotions such as is common in monastery life in all countries, fills up the monk's day. They can give free rein to lassitude.

At the last census in Thailand there were more than 225,000 monks and novices, 4,500 students resident in the monasteries, and 100,000 temple attendants. The monks and novices, however, are by no means life-long incumbents; the monkish vows in Thailand never under any circumstances are assumed for life; though some choose to stay all their lives, anyone can leave at any time. With equal freedom a monk can return again if he wishes. The one rule is that every Thai at the age of 20 become a monk, and the almost universal minimum period was three months.

He had very likely lived in a monastery earlier either as temple attendant (attending upon individual monks, or living in the wat as a pupil) or as a novice (boys who, in contrast to temple attendants, wear the monk's yellow robe, and have usually entered the temple service "for the soul of" their father or their mother who has died.)

Every male Thai is, therefore, ordained as a Buddhist monk. The ceremony of acceptance into the monastery is a festive occasion. "The applicant arrives at the temple with a host of relatives and friends dressed as for a holiday. He is clothed in white and over his ordinary garments he wears a mantle of gauze decorated with gold and silver spangles. A procession is formed and to the sound of a band that plays in the open air, he and his male friends march three times round the outside of the temple. He next enters the building and sits down on the floor in a place reserved for him. The women of the party sit on one side of the temple and the men on the other. They all chew betel-nut, and the men smoke while all refresh their thirst from the numerous tea-pots that circulate round and round the congregation" (Young 256-257). A post-monk friend of the candidate then leads him to the superior who sits in the midst of the rows of priests at one end of the hall, and the superior catechises him as to whether he is free from disease, whether he is sound of mind, whether he is male, whether he is a fugitive from justice, whether he is unencumbered by debt (both these later questions are pertinent because men sometimes take refuge in a monastery to avoid the consequences of debt or of desertion from the army), whether he has reached the age of 20, and whether his parents have given their

consent. The candidate then goes forward toward the superior on hands and knees and three times salutes him with the palms of his hands pressed against his forehead and asks that he be raised "from the lowly condition of the laity to the perfect condition of priesthood." When this is granted, he retires to one side, and in full view takes off his festive clothes, tramples them underfoot, and puts on the yellow robes of the monk. "The ceremony concludes with the paying of homage to the newly made priest. He sits on the floor and then all present who are acquainted with him come, one by one, and prostrate themselves to the ground before him, at the same time giving him some present. If he has many friends, the floor of the temple around him is seen covered with about as motley an assortment of articles as it is possible to gather" (Young 260). From now on "he regards the superior as a second father."

The monks must in no way pass moral judgments upon the people; one of their vows is that they will judge no man. Their public repetition of moral sayings is, however, regarded as immensely important and able to transform even the most evil-minded person. A folktale tells of the powerful official who used to put to death his watchmen until he heard the supposed dolt who was watching that night teaching a moral lesson; he withdrew and in the morning he "was found possessed of a kind and loving spirit and no longer desired to destroy his people" (Fleason 122).

The number of monks and novices at the last census was more than one in every 30 males, adding to these the temple attendants, one in every 20 males. Of all the vows which they take the strictest one and the one least often broken is that of chastity. Not even the folk-tales which sometimes lampoon the monk's lassitude or grudgingness tell of any approaches made to women; even imposter monks who in the tales swindle villagers and live high never get into any sexual difficulties. Nor is this vow regarded as onerous; the one forbidding eating after noonday is the chief deprivation always mentioned first.

Public ceremonies are all of them religious except theatricals and games, which the monks are forbidden to witness. However, no calendaric religious ceremony or religious rite de passage passes off without these amusements, and to the people they are inextricably intermingled. The heavily sanctioned formal etiquette and lack of levity characteristic of a royal audience contrasts strongly with the gossiping, the laughter, the betel chowing, and tea drinking which accompanies even a temple service. "The service had not begun when I arrived, and the congregation were having a pleasant social time, chatting, chewing betel nut, drinking tea, one or two of the men smoking, and some of them quietly praying. Men and women are present -- I confess it was hard for me to tell which was which -- as well as a few children. Each newcomer took off his shoes on entering, got down on his hands and knees and crawled to his mat, bundle in hand -- for all come pretty well armed -- and on reaching his place proceeded to unpack and arrange his possessions. First the candles had to be lighted up and put in place. Then the betel box, spittoon, and perhaps teapot and teacup must be conveniently located near the mat. These things being attended to, the newcomer would put his hands together, extend them toward the Buddha, and make a little silent prayer" (Pratt 181).

Annual ceremonies for the worship of Buddha, or the King's First plowing, or the annual Presentation of Monastic Robes to the monks, or the New Year, or the Songram festival at the beginning of the rainy season when not

only the sacred images but any man and woman, especially younger ones, get good dousing of water, or the Krathong ceremony when floating baskets of fruit, flowers and betel nut, made up into curious and artificial forms are floated down the river as offerings, or the Swing ceremony for Phra Isuen (Shiva) who "likes to see swinging" on the gigantic 8--foot-high swing -- all these are occasions for pleasure trips, picnics, plays, and all the amusements the Thai knows. Booths for the sale of offerings are erected at the sides of walks laid out round the foot of the hill, theatrical performances and displays of fireworks continue all night, and a dense crowd of chaffing youths and laughing damsels move slowly to and fro up and down the long spiral stairway giving access to the shrine. The scene is illuminated with pink paper lanterns shaped like lotus flowers; temporary restaurants provide exhausted merit-makers with food of all kinds; toys and fairings of every description are to be had, and everybody spends his money and is happy" (Graham II: 250). According to the means of the family giving the life crisis ceremonies, these occasions also include all possible recreations. Cremations are enlivened by orchestras and dances and fireworks and eating and drinking.

### Animism

Acts and prayers of propitiation in Thailand are made not in the Buddhist worship but to the phi. Even a peasant hardly makes an appeal for specific help in Buddhist worship, but then phi are propitiated and besought. These are spirits of the dead; not the soul, which represents man's full character and passes on into endless reincarnations, but his "lower" soul, his passions, which may haunt the world he has left and disturb the living. The peasants continually make offerings and prayers to these spirits of the dead "whom they ardently desire not to see" (P. A. Thompson 63).

The "lower soul" under certain circumstances "persists for a time after death, but gradually as the impulse it received during life becomes exhausted, its component parts are scattered abroad." (P. A. Thompson 147-48). These circumstances are primarily "violent" death, including women dying in childbirth, people killed by wild animals and those who died away from home and had no proper ensequies, or from cholera, smallpox, etc. Such persons are not cremated but are buried, and their spirits are dangerous. Little bamboo bird-houses are set up near their graves, and men and women who can discover which of these spirits are responsible for bad fortune and can exercise them are much in demand. Phi of this kind -- spirits of those who have died violent deaths are also useful; at least they were used in the past to protect public buildings. Three men were taken at random in the crowd (Leonowans 218) and buried alive under the gateposts of the buildings (Alabaster 212). Their violent phi protected it from harm.

Besides these uncremated spirits there are also the spirits of particularly remembered dead, and nearly every house has "for the accommodation of each phi, a miniature house, about the size of a small birdcage, set up either on the verandah or on a post in a shady corner of the garden and before it incense sticks are burned, and flowers, fruit, and rice are offered to avert misfortune in the daily round of domestic affairs. The approach of crises such as the birth of a child, the annual school examination or the drawings of one of the frequent State-sanctioned lotteries, is marked by the appearance before these little shrines of more considerable offerings such as horses, slaves or cattle, though these take, of course, the convenient form of rough images in clay or other material" (Graham II: 286).

There are endless named groups of phi; phi who terrify persons out alone after dark, phi who guard hidden treasure and make sick any person who disturbs it, phi who trouble pregnant women, phi which give help in finding lost objects. Wood says that in North Thailand a woman who controls this latter phi puts on trousers when she exercises her power (Land of Smiles 107). There are the spirits of evildoers, phi who are condemned to perpetual hunger; they are taller than trees and have such tiny mouths that they can hardly get food in. There are phi of women who were passionate lovers and who lure men with their great beauty and afterwards devour them (Graham II: 287). There are rare phi, too, which make a man or woman they enter absolutely refuse to wear clothes; Wood gives examples from North Thailand of both a man and a woman whom he met (Land of Smiles 104 - 05).

In Northern Siam those who exercise such spirits are said to inherit the power, a man from his father, a woman from her mother, and there is some trance behavior at such rituals. Some phi can only be controlled by women who put on some article of man's dress (ibid. 109). Offerings and charms are, however, the usual means of controlling the phi; even the monks peddle charms, and all persons wear them. The little bird-cage houses for them are universal; Graham says in 1912 that these were to be seen "not only in every house but in every forest glade, in the fields, even in the crowded streets. The very wats themselves are not exempt, for in the rural districts spirit offerings are sometimes exposed on the walls of them and even within the sacred precincts" (II: 292). In the San Chao Lak Muang, a great shrine at Bangkok, images of phi are grouped around the central richly-gilded pillar and the "guardian phi are freely consulted by persons in search of lucky numbers to both private and public lotteries of which there are many, of tips for the local races; while childless women go there to pray for children" (Graham II: 284).

### III. ADULT LIFE

The family, the unit of Thai life, is not the large extended family of the Chinese; it is the biological family. Zimmerman, in his Survey of 1930, found that the average Thai family consisted of between five and six persons, and each of these small biological families has its own house, its own fields, and its separate economy; its meals are prepared and served among its own inmates. The ties to the extended family are, however, close. The commonest traditional arrangement was to build the house for each young couple close to the wife's parents' home, but in all periods the house might alternatively be in the husband's village; this latter has become more common today; and a boy's mother's brothers are often widely scattered. One informant described several years of residence with his various mother's brothers in many sections of the country as extremely important to his education. The warm tie between a brother and his sisters is carried down into the next generation, and a sister's son is welcomed by his mother's brothers. Even more general is residence with the grandparents, whose relation to their grandchildren is very warm though they do not usually live in the child's own family unless one of the grandparents is dead and the survivor too feeble to support himself alone.

In the village each family house is built on piles and has a fence around it, generally of bamboo, which keeps the animals in at night; these latter usually sleep all together under the house floor. The peasants' bamboo house is a frail structure tied together at the joints, and its floor of bamboo has chinks large enough to drop down through most of the waste and garbage. Especially in the dry season when all moisture is dried out of the house materials, it has seemed to Europeans as if any strong push would knock the whole structure over. The bamboo ladder, too, is usually a rickety affair. A platform or verandah runs at least across the front of the house, and the main room is open to the verandah so that day-time family life is open to the view of passersby. Mats are spread in the living room for sitting and in the bedroom for sleeping. There is also a kitchen, and the smoke of the fire, made in a kettle or between bricks, is not drawn out by any chimney arrangement.

There were two meals a day in Central Thailand, one at about 7 A. M. and the other about 5:30 P.M., but eating and cooking was highly irregular. Whenever anyone was hungry, he ate, regardless of meal hours, not only cold leftovers but freshly cooked food which any member of the family might prepare for himself. Husbands and little children know how to cook properly and often did so. At mealtime the big bowl of rice stood in the center of the floor and before each person his individual dish of "garnish" with a spoon in it. Rice is taken with the fingers, rolled into small balls, and dipped in the garnish before it is put in the mouth. In Central Siam the flavoring of garnish is a very respected art -- mixing of "sweet-sour," hot, and various spices. It is very hot to European taste.

Each family averages about eight acres of rice land, and rice is not only the chief food of the human members of the family but also of the animals. The wet rice fields -- most Thai agriculture is of wet rice -- are not fenced but lie in great level stretches, under water during the growing-time of the grain, and oaked and barren during the dry season. The work in the fields is highly seasonable, with long periods of leisure between. People planted the fields of their neighbors in succession, and each farmer provided for the

work party "plenty of good white rice and a special brand of dried fish." In the evening the workers, washed and clean from the mud of the fields and dressed in dry clothes, partake of the superior rice and fish of their hosts, on which they do not fail to compliment him, then, after a smoke, more chaff and perhaps a round of two of semi-improvised verses touching on the incidents of the day, the party breaks up, to meet again and go through the same routine the next day. Reaping and winnowing by concerted action are conducted in the same way, when, the weather being fine, the ground reasonably dry and the sexes indiscriminately mingled, there is even more room for jollity than the planting season affords (Graham II: 14, 15).

The women do the milling of the rice in the villages. The pounder is raised by placing the foot on an attached lever "and then jumping up so as to press upon the lever with the whole weight of the body. In any small village, you can hear the steady thump, thump of the hammers from morning to night, and see the girls and young women jumping on and off the short end of the lever, with an almost painful regularity and precision" (Young 209).

Throughout the year women tend market. They carry their own produce for sale and buy others' produce. They take great pride in beating down the price and in getting a good bargain, and the "mouth of the market women" is proverbial for fast and shrewish talk. In farming villages, because of the market, the women handle the day-by-day money, though the men usually handle the sale of the rice crop to the Chinese middlemen, etc.

Life on the water is almost as important as life on the land. Every household has its boat, and men and women equally are strong and skillful paddlers. Bangkok, at the proper season, is thronged with the houseboats of families from a wide radius who come down with the whole family and their household goods, to dispose of their crop and have a "trip." Everyone is in and out of the water daily; the native pantaloons are not removed but get "washed" in this way.

The entry into adult life, is, for the boy, his entry into the monastery when he is 20. For the girl there is no corresponding ceremony but about this same age of 20 she usually bears her first child, and this traditionally marked for her the assumption of adult responsibilities. Marriage did not, for until the birth of the child, though the young wife of course labored as she had done before marriage, the wants of the new family were supplied by the parents of the spouse in the close vicinity of whose home their "wedding house" had been built. Certainly in Central Siam the "ooeking" of the young mother was essential after childbirth. She lay during this period on a long narrow flat board. The room was like a furnace. The "ooeking" lasted a month. The woman, because of it, was supposed to lose her looks. When she took up life again, she owned her own property, managed her own household, tended her baby, and provided for her husband's wants. She was adult.

For the women of the upper classes, the birth of the first child did not usually mean this change in responsibilities. The first wife permanently managed the household economy, and the lesser wives were under her management. It is significant that Siamese tales "describe the junior wives as wicked, deceitful, bewitching (given to witchcraft) and treacherous" (Chandruang 63). In the royal households the "forbidden women" as they were called, were cared for by servitors and usually had practically no responsibilities at all. Polygamy was made illegal in 1935; Rama VIII's earlier efforts to abolish it after the first World War had been met with such strong resistance, led most obstinately by upper class women themselves, that the measure was pigeon-holed (Graham I: 246).

Marriage, for the man, closely follows his period of monastic life. The courtship is short, and there is plenty of opportunity for the young men to choose their own mates. There is no infant or childhood betrothal at all. The boy has mingled very freely, outside of school and the monastery, with girls of his age, and there is often an understanding between them. The great rule is that he must not touch her body before marriage. One informant said that if a boy seized a girl's arm he attacked her kwon (soul-stuff, guardian spirit), and a boy would not do this before he has spoken to his mother asking that marriage negotiations be undertaken. His parents then choose go-betweenes of both sexes who formally visit the girl's family and open the delicate negotiations.

The go-betweenes say that the parents of the boy have asked him if he had anyone in mind "to whom he could trust his life in sickness and his obsequies after death", and he had mentioned their daughter. There are several visits before the great subject of property settlement is mentioned, for relatives must be consulted and astrologers must determine the compatibility of the couple's years of birth. The Thai have the twelve-year cycle of the Chinese: the year of the Rat, Cow, Tiger, Rabbit, etc., and a couple, one of whom was born in the year of the Rat and the other in the year of the Dog, would not be happy. Most "years", however, allow for harmony, and when this is determined important matters must be settled. The property settlement concerns the nest-egg for the young couple themselves -- not an exchange between their elders, as is so common in other cultures. Only "the payment for her mother's milk" is paid to the elders, a comparatively small sum paid by the bridegroom to the girl's mother. The rest is for the young couple -- so much for the house, and the furnishings, so much for trade. The bride's and the bridegroom's family bargain as to how much each shall contribute, but, as one informant said, if the bride's family ask to much, the bridegroom's go-between can deal a careful insult: "Do you desire to sell your daughter?" Until all is arranged and the house is built and the wedding day comes, the girl is carefully chaperoned by her parents, and the couple do not see each other (Young 89 - 95).

The marriage ceremony is simple. It takes place at the bride's home. The bridegroom's party comes bringing the gold and property agreed on, and this is laid out opposite that contributed by the bride's family. Both contributions are examined and counted. The groom and the guests arrive bringing all kinds of gifts, many of them live fowls and animals. Food and drink are provided for all who come, and the monks come to pass a holy thread around the bride and groom, pour holy water over them, and pronounce a blessing. The bridegroom then arrays himself in a new suit of clothes provided by his wife, and the party feasts till it is time to make the bridal bed at night. A happily married elder couple spread the mats and arrange the pillows "calling upon the angels, the house spirits, the sun, moon, and rain to be kind to the young couple throughout their life," the bride is led in to her waiting bridegroom, and the girl's father and mother press their noses close to her cheek and inhale strongly (the Thai "kiss") while the mother says to her, "Away from your mother's breast into your husband's arms. My son, keep her and love her. And you, my daughter, serve him as a loyal wife." Then a great beating of gongs that "covered the entire valley and shook the heart of the jungle" announced the marriage, and the party withdrew from the bridal room (Chandruang 131).

In case the husband takes a lesser wife, there is no ceremony of this kind. She is bought and can be sold again, though there is relatively high stability even in marriages with lesser wives. To break up a duly arranged marriage, however, means a property arrangement, with loss to the husband; even more important perhaps, sentiment is against it. Divorce is extremely rare.

The adult male's ambition to rise in status during his lifetime took quite different forms according to his class position. The prince and the civil servant were dependent on favors from above, and these were never guaranteed for long. It was necessary to remain in favor or to lose out publicly. The peasant, however, sought few favors. He accepted taxes, rents, and corvée labor as the laws of existence, even when they were arbitrarily increased for the personal benefit of the collector. Few of the impositions were directed against him personally; they affected the whole village or area together. To achieve standing in the community a man could make a reputation for his wit and rhyming skill as a performer in "sings", he could be known as a good farmer, he could make a name as such a "sound" man that he became village headman, or he could be given special honor by all if he gave it all up and lived as a monk. Peasants sometimes became very well-to-do and made merit by building wats and rest houses, but such merit-making was not a recognized status-ladder with rungs to which one climbed in competition with one's fellows. Status anxiety was very low, and all observers comment on the careless self-reliance and the absence of servility among the peasantry.

The "sings" are an important adult pastime, and the unmarried play a chief role in this game. Such "sings" are an accompaniment of any group activity like planting or harvesting or being on a holiday and held a special position at the Thai New Year. They were not rote performances but tales played out on certain themes during the enactment of which the players must carry on the unfolding of the plot no matter what turn was given it by an interrupting player or by the vis-avis player of the moment. They are truly extemporaneous! But they demand practical and witty facility. Double meanings are particularly approved by the audience, though except in the least common and wholly masculine bands of players these double meanings are not obscene -- and the Thai recognize obscenity and have an elaborate cursing language which is obscene and is particularly characteristic of the market place. Formal requirements of prosody must always be met, no matter how impromptu the plot. The audience sings a chorus of nonsense words, and all the actors' lines must rhyme with the last syllable of this chorus. Each line extemporized by the actors has also a special "inner assonance" which is obligatory and the line must be of a fixed number of syllables. If the rhyming starts off with a six-syllable line, the actors must keep to six syllables. An expert is highly valued and may be engaged to lead off and set the pace by the farmer whose field is being harvested, etc., and who will agree to pay him two or three days' exchange labor for one which the expert gives in return. This expert gives the "call" and the invocation to named male experts, "Gru This and Gru That, rural men just like himself, now dead and gone, but famous as rhymers in their day" (Bidyalankarana III), and a woman answers eulogizing named women experts.

These sings may be staged in boats as well as in the fields or the villages. When they are on land, the actors move around in a ring and accompany their singing with gestures, in the case of harvest sings by a very vigorous dumb show of reaping with a sickle the rice sheaf they hold in the left hand. In boats, there is, of course, less possibility of gesture. At any festival where people congregate in canoes, boatloads of men will be on the look-out

for a woman's boat where the crew will "answer" them. When they get started, another boatload may interrupt, and bring new complication into the plot. (ibid, 113-122).

Dancing takes a more serious form in the lakhon dance performed by women. It is "stately as a minuet" (P. A. Thompson 173), and is danced to the music of an orchestra which, when it is complete, consists of 21 instruments. There is also a chorus which sings the lines. The plots are taken from the Ramayana or other Hindu sources, but the acting never "tells the story"; as is usual in Southeast Asia, it refers to the story somewhat obliquely. Professional troupes perform in the villages. The only men in such a dance are clowns who enliven the women's very formal posturing. "The make-up of the women consists of powder plastered on the face until it resembles a smooth white mask, and of strongly-marked black eyebrows and red lips. This covering entirely precludes all facial expression of the emotions; hence joy, sorrow, pleasure, anger, and fear are all expressed by conventional signs. The dialogue, except that of the clowns, is conducted at a high and monotonous pitch of the voice, and the singing, which forms a great part of the entertainment, is always slow, loud and of strong nasal intonation" (Graham II: 207). There are also yeegai dances performed by men, which are less stylized, and sword dances which require very smooth and flowing movements; two sword dancers dance opposite, but "neither one wins."

Towns, as opposed to villages, have a theater where people go nightly to see these performances or shadow plays (Introduced from South Thailand) or a marionette show or, latterly, motion pictures. No admissions are charged. Towns also have clubs for officials and civil servants where men go in the afternoon to play games, drink tea, and relax, and their wives and children frequent these with them; they are not "men's clubs".

Kite flying is a man's game and very popular with spectators too. During the windy months much time is devoted to it, and Young (p. 50) says that in his day "men might often be seen on calm, dull days flying their kites from boats as they pass up and down the river". The most popular kite game is a contest of male and female kites (see below Chapter V.) but, in another form, fine ground glass is applied to the string of two kites, and the object is for the two kites to get their strings around each other and "saw". The one which outs the string of the other kite "wins."

There is gambling on kite games and on innumerable other occasions on fights between crickets, beetles, and fish, a "numbers" game which is a monopoly sold by the State, taking "chances" of all kinds, and national lotteries.

The State has regulated gambling for a long time, and cock fighting; for instance, was made strictly illegal a generation ago -- though it was, nevertheless, ubiquitous (Bowring I: 154). The Thai, Young says (p. 150) are "born gamblers", and P. A. Thompson (p. 69) relates it to Thai lack of interest in laying money by. As soon as a man (he is speaking of Bangkok) receives any money, "he will go off to the nearest gambling-house and stop there until it is finished. If he is lucky it may last him a week; if the luck is against him he has to return to work the next day. It is his form of amusement and he never contemplates the possibility of making money by it."

The Thai attitude toward money -- or any surplus -- is given vivid

expression in a folktale translated by Le May (A: 13-18). The king on his travels asked a peasant what he did with his surplus. "Your majesty, all the money I am able to save, after paying the expenses of our frugal household, I divide into four parts. The first part I bury in the ground; the second part I use to pay my creditors; the third part I fling into the river; and the fourth and last part I give to my enemy." The King sent his retinue away and asked him to specify. The peasant answered: "The money I bury in the ground is the money I spend on alms and in making merit. The money I give to my creditors is what it costs me to keep my father and mother, to whom I owe everything that I have. The money I fling into the river is the money I spend on gambling and drink and opium; and the money I give to my enemy is the money I give to my wife." The answers pleased the King, except that he protested that a man's wife was not his "enemy." The point of interest here is that no part of the surplus was thought of something to be put by or to put into buying animals or tolls, etc.; the money given his "enemy" was, of course, spent on jewelry, etc., and insofar, in some sense, savings. But "burying in the ground" and "throwing in the river" are folk designations of where money should go, and "paying one creditors" is supporting one's parents, not meeting debts in a financial sense. "Meeting obligations was not the specialty of either prince or peasant. Peasants indebted themselves with all lightness of heart, and the most honest among them took every possible means of avoiding legitimate payments" (Graham I: 584).

Corveelabor was, until legal changes were made in this century, a heavy requisition which the peasant accepted as part of the way the universe was made. In Bowring's time (1855) he said it might be as much as one-third of a man's working time per year (I: 123). Insofar as it was agricultural labor, it followed more or less the usual "work-party" scheme; when corvee labor was used to build modern roads, etc., it was more resented. The Thai have not willingly engaged in industrial labor even when wages are paid; the tin mines of South Thailand are worked by Chinese (Bowring II: 72), as are also the industrial rice mills, etc. Working for wages on another man's project or undertaking the responsibilities of commerce on one's own account seems to them a poor way of life.

Thai ideas of politeness should also be mentioned. It involves, among all who are not explicitly Westernized, a running fire of questions about the stranger's private affairs -- age, plans, cost of articles he is wearing, and everything else they can think of. If a stranger is not asked these questions it means that he is of no interest, and the Thai feel strongly that anyone who has nothing to hide will respond freely.

The Thai certainly do not conceive of life as a round of duties and responsibilities. They accept work and make it as gay as possible; when it is done they are free to take their leisure. They have no cultural inventions of self-castigation and many of self-indulgence and merriment.

The greatest celebration of all is the one that follows death. It consists in a whole series of rites. A cremation of members of the royal family used to last "for a month, during the whole of which time thousands of persons were fed daily and entertained with all manner of diversions at the royal expense" (Graham I: 165). Down to the poorest peasant, the greatest efforts of a life time were spent in providing worthy obsequies, but there was no less of merit to the dead not of respectability to the living if these were inexpensive when times were bad or where the peasantry were hardoppressed. The essential

observances were not expensive; a fee to the monks for their participation, a coffin which might be just a lidless wooden box covered with wallpaper and a few logs for the pyre.

The best description is Chandruang's account of his mother's funeral rites. She was the first wife of an appointive judge in a town of Central Thailand. Her body was washed and embalmed, dressed in her favorite dress, and placed on a raised dais in a room of her own home. Her palms pressed together under her chin held flowers and incense to show reverence to Buddha. The monks intoned their prayers, and friends and relatives laid flowers around her and sprayed perfume over her. For seven nights neighbors kept the wake with the family; playing chess and card-games and listening sometimes to the monks reciting the punishments of the eight hells, each divided into sixteen sub-hells. The first important rites took place on the seventh and the fiftieth day after death -- when an orchestra and a shadow play were provided, and Taoist priests burned paper models of luxuries for the use of the dead in the next world.

Until the 100th day her soul had not reached the Buddhist heaven. The body still lay in the house, and every evening her children brought fresh flowers, incense, and mandibles, and a servant brought food to be set beside the body. On the 100th Day, on her entrance into heaven, there was a great feast, two orchestras, and a puppet show.

The body was not removed from the house till the arrangements were made for the cremation four years and three months after death. On that day the town theatres were closed for plenty of theatricals were offered at the feast, merchants did a heavy trade, and orchestras and fireworks and even an outdoor motion picture were provided. After dark the pyre was lighted and when it had burned down, a handful of ashes was put in an urn and placed in the house. (Chandruang 153).

There is no effort to build monuments to perpetuate the name of the dead. The Thai are "content to accept the complete annihilation of the body intended by nature, only marking occasionally the spot where the corpse of some one or other of their great ones was reduced to ashes, by a nameless spire, all memory of the origin of which is usually soon forgotten" (Graham II: 176).

## PART TWO

## IV. THE CHILD

The Thai, like many other Eastern Asiatic peoples, count a person's age from the time of conception. The months in the womb are described in the ritual of cutting the top-knot as these days when "thou hast enjoyed every pleasure" (Young 77) and during this period the mother must keep a "clean heart", i.e. clean of all turmoil. She must be calm, not make fun of people, and avoid jerky or violent motions; if she breaks a cup, her child will have a cleft lip, etc. No similar rules are reported for the prospective father, but he must cherish his wife, especially he must try to provide anything which she craves to eat and such cravings are usual for pregnant women.

Gestation is terminated, again in the words of the top-knot ritual on that day when the "time of delivery arrived and thou hast suffered and run the risk of perishing by being born alive into the world." However, all attention is focussed on the ritual for the mother: the month-long "cooking" is not for the child, it is for the mother. She has lost blood, and the fire is necessary to bring her back to normal life. The child is regarded as having still a tenuous hold on life and should be kept away from contact with it; even after the cooking period is over, the baby is not taken out of the house if it is possible to avoid it. It does not sleep with others of the family. At birth it has a little wicker basket, and very soon a little cradle is hung from the rafters and a string attached to swing it by; the father and older children, as well as the mother, sit swinging the cradle for hours while they chew betel-nut and sing for the baby. Informants comment on young mothers in America who wheel their little babies out to the store when they do their marketing; a Thai mother would not do this. "The least trifle," the ritual continues, "frightens thee and made thee shudder." The baby must be protected. One way of protecting it is by giving it a slurring name so that spirits will not jealously snatch it away; the mother's term to her baby, however, is "phra ong, holy baby" (Leonowens 103). The mother always nurses the baby sitting, cradling the baby in her lap and arms, and she gives the child the breast whenever it wants it. Mothers are said to like the act of nursing, and it is certainly re-garded as the maternal act -- i.e., rather than gestation. The payment to the girl's family on her marriage is, for instance, phrased as "payment for the mother's milk." The baby is seldom "kissed" -- Thai kissing is with the nose pressed against the cheek -- but it is handled "much more than any American babies." It is massaged in bathing, and powdered from head to foot. Nineteenth century observers describe all babies as, almost from birth, rubbed with a yellow tumeric paste -- supposed to keep mosquitoes away -- and this was renewed all through childhood. (Young 16a)

The first teaching the child receives is in gestures of obeisance. A mother holding her infant in her arms puts its palms together between her own

and raises them to the chin, to the nose, to the forehead according to the degree of deference that is called for. Before the baby is taken from the house, its hands will be put in proper position to greet guests, and when the mother takes it to the temple, she raises its palms still higher -- to the forehead -- to greet Buddha.

As soon as it can hold its head up, the baby is carried straddled on the hip, supported by the left hand. As one informant said, "When you carry a baby, it's a main job. You don't carry anything else, and you don't do anything else while you're carrying it." If the mother is not free for the job, the father or other children carry it. This hip-straddled position never admits of the baby's passive relaxation to every movement of its carrier's body, as shawl-carrying does, and the baby is supposed to stay awake while it is carried. If not, the father may sling it on its stomach over his shoulder, supporting it behind with his hand.

Older brothers and sisters take equal care of the babies. Before the baby is born, they are told, "You'll have a real live doll to play which soon. You won't have to pretend," and they help in making the things needed for the baby. In every way they are encouraged to identify with the mother in expecting the infant and in looking forward to caring for it. From the next older, a special renunciation is required; the infant is loaded with bangles, usually of silver or gold, and these are taken from the next older child, since it is no longer "the baby". In view of the great love of bangles in Thai life, it seems likely that this can properly be called a "renunciation", but no information on this could be secured. Perhaps it is not important; there are plenty of ornaments worn by children even when they are no longer "the baby."

From at least three months, the baby is given little pellets of rice rolled into a ball by its elders. The rice is mashed or masticated, and there is no attempt to make the baby take it until it swallows it without gagging. As soon as it likes it, the mother is freer to leave the baby in the care of the older children or of the father because if the baby cries it can be satisfied by being given the mush-like rice. Throughout babyhood there is no attempt to discipline the infant about crying; the child stops because it is attended to in some way, and a great deal of attention is offered it. This attention is certainly ungrudging; to older children as we have seen, it is phrased as a more satisfactory doll-playing, and a folktale gives a man's gloating daydream about taking a wife and "when we have a child large enough to sit along, I'll take care of it while my wife works the rice fields" (Fleeson 83). Before the child can walk, he is thrown into the water by his mother; "wings" are attached to his body to keep his head above water, and he paddles around and often learns to swim without the wings as soon as he learns to walk. His walking, too, is something he learns by himself. His elders do not offer him their fingers to encourage him to walk under their tutelage; they clap him on their hips. When he walks he walks by himself. He is very early made responsible for small acts like offering the proper entertainment to guests. Even very small children set out the various making of betel-nut, the cuspidor, and the tea things, and they make the obeisance as second nature. These are all done under the approving eyes of their parents, but the elders do not interfere.

When the child has learned to walk, his need of good motor coordination-- going up and down the bamboo house ladder, swimming in the water, and paddling boats, walking over the separated slats of the bamboo floor -- is considerable, and as the top-knot ritual says, "Thou wast ever falling flat on thy

face and on thy back. After the child's teaching in obeisance, his teaching in motor control is that which is next insisted on. He has not as yet been clothed, and he has not been given toilet training. He may or may not have already had experience of not getting much attention when he cried; especially if he is the youngest child, that will probably be delayed longer.

The self-reliance inculcated by carrying-habits, by learning to swim and walk under his own steam, as it were, and reinforced in later childhood remains permanently with the Thai, and their selection among Buddhist teachings is that what a person is depends on himself alone. A person's first duty is to meet a situation adequately; to bemoan the existence of the situation itself is weak and foolish, as is also to seek for recognition of one's adequacy from others. Their stress on this latter point shows clearly in the Thai elimination of most of the ten auspicious childhood rites of Hinduism; they have none of those which gave public honor to the child's achievement, neither celebrating the child's first eating of rice, nor the first steps, nor the first words, nor the first swimming. The Thai baby had traditionally only the very minor rites of birth (directed mostly toward the mother), the baby's head shaving at four weeks, and the christening which was his recognition as member of the family; all that is known of these two latter ceremonies is that the monks came and intoned, the soothsayer was called to cast the child's horoscope and there was entertainment of guests according to the position of the family.

The eminently satisfying suckling period of the Thai baby lays the basis for his life-time lack of food anxiety, his belief that the morrow will take care of itself, and his attitude that if you are having a good time you are surely eating and chewing and smoking and drinking. "Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, we like first and best to eat" (Chandruang). The early training in gestures of obeisance makes it possible for the Thai, figuratively, to feel their mother's hands pressed over theirs in all hierarchical behavior; it is not demeaning as it is in some countries. The exact placing of the gesture to denote degree of respect becomes second nature for them, and the obeisance itself is wholly consistent with complete personal dignity. "The groundwork of all Siamese institutions and habits is a reverence for authority" (Bowring I: 124), but the child is "quick-witted and independent" (Graham I: 257), and he is "not cringing". Belief that he relies on his own efforts is apparent in the attitude of parents toward his learning to walk, to swim, to paddle, to achieve motor coordination, and the lesson the child thus learns does not have to be unlearned later. He does not look to others for applause when he has achieved these skills; the lesson he learns is that he is himself sufficiently rewarded if he masters them.

The Siamese child learns little from his own experience about sex differentiation. His older siblings, whether brothers or sisters, take turns caring for him, his father fondles him and cares for him and may do anything except nurse him. They all feed him rice-mush. More than most babies of the world, his dependence is diffused between the sexes, and his affection, though it remains warmest toward his mother, is not exclusively directed toward her. Nor are there distinguishing marks set upon the sexes. The baby's own name, if he is a boy, would be just as appropriate for a girl, and none of his brothers' and sisters' names are sex-typed. If he has siblings old enough to be wearing clothes, their clothes are -- or were, until recent innovations -- identical. So were his father's and mother's clothes. European observers often remarked on the difficulty of telling men and women apart; when seen from the back, there seemed no way of telling. Informants report that, as children, they were not at all interested in the outward difference of girls' and boys' sex organs.

The place taken in some cultures by sex differentiation is taken by age differentiations. Sibling terms are "older brother", "older sister", and "younger brother or sister;" for uncles, "parent's older brother," "parent's older sister," and "father's younger sibling," "mother's younger sibling". All these aunts and uncles, plus his grandparents, call him by one term. Elders, even his next elder siblings, deserve respect which is not accorded to juniors. Where there is a difference in generation, the chasm is unbridgeable even in fantasy. His mother treats his father as a member of one generation, the children as members of another. "They cannot be rivals". This non-exacting deference to parents is maintained all through life. A Thai woman commented upon the help with their children which young American mothers expect from their mothers: "she tells her own mother to take care of the baby this afternoon; I wouldn't ask my mother to pass me the salt at the table." Such an attitude toward the older generation, practiced consistently after babyhood in every contact within the family, the Thai transfer in adult life to those in authority over them. Superiors are not people from whom one demands assistance and toward whom one feels resentment if it is not forthcoming; they are "second parents" "to whom one owes all". Being their "man" gives one reflected glory; it does not make them partners to a contract in the usual Western sense.

Another trait inculcated in these early years, especially in the girl's experience, is love of all kinds of bangles. "Before she is able to walk, and years before clothes of any sort become a necessity, the Siamese girl begins to wear jewelry. Bangles of silver, or of gold if the parents are well off, encircling each ankle, and the small heart-shaped ornaments called chaping, suspended in front by a cord around the waist, constitute a girl-child's everyday apparel during the years of infancy, to which on festive occasions, bracelets and a chain necklace are added. Also a gold pin for transfixing the top-knot when the wisp of hair left for the purpose has grown long enough to be dressed. In four or five years clothes supersede the chaping, and at about the age of 13 the jewels of infancy are all abandoned, and the ears are pierced for the wearing of gold or jewelled ear-studs. The boys, in childhood, wear little or no jewelry, the string of phallic charms tied round the waist of the male infant scarcely coming within that category, but when adolescent the modern youth greatly affects studs, buttons, watch-chains, rings and even gold bracelets, a taste which, however, usually passes off with the arrival of years of discretion (Graham II: 167).

Informants say that this jewelry is given individually to a particular child and is its property i.e., principally the property of girls. In adult life women's greater purposive activity in regard to property, as compared to men's, has been remarked by all observers, and their greater childish ownership of property is consistent with this. In adult life, the female's love of adorning herself persists also, and male vanity in Thailand, class for class, distinctly does not equal the woman's. Early stress on jewelry is, in addition, important in conditioning another adult trait: "Almost the first idea which, presents itself to the mind of a Siamese when, by a turn of fortune, he finds himself possessed of a little spare cash, is the purchase of jewelry, and this no matter how low he may be in the social scale or how little the possession of gold and silver trinkets may be in keeping with his personal appearance and condition of life." (Graham II: 166)

During all these early years -- to the age of about three -- there has still been no emphasis on toilet training. It is allowed to come of itself. No disgust is expressed by the elders. After the child is three, he will probably

go where the others go, but individual differences are given great leeway. Wetting the bed at night continues much longer, and informants say it would not be especially commented on in a child of six. Thai lack of compulsiveness thus has an early foundation, as has also the casual disposal of filth and garbage; even in Bangkok all food left-overs were dropped down between the floor cracks, and what the dogs did not scavenge was left there. The Thai have no compulsive cleanliness about their surroundings.

Table etiquette is taught also in these early years. Except in the families of the upper classes, the whole family eats together and making one's own rice balls and eating in a proper way is learned early. There is one special rule: each person, after eating, washes his own bowl and spoon, even the little children. It is not the mother's responsibility.

No attention is paid to the boy baby's play with his genitals or to any erection. The child is certainly not punished.

By the time the child is about three years old, he is playing freely with children of the neighborhood, both on land and in the water. The play group is not a solid phalanx of "relatives", and the child adjusts early to an "outside" world. Here the clear hierarchy in which one's own family is arranged is absent, and the child has to find himself in an environment where it is not the role of one group or people to care for one and to receive deference, and of another group to be cared for and to give deference. The fact that the child enters this non-hierarchical world of age-mates so early -- i.e., that he plays freely with children who do not come from his own extended family -- is important in that it makes the contrast between the two worlds much less of a psychological problem than it is in many Asiatic countries where the child does not go "outside" until sometime in adolescence. The Thai children -- like the adult man -- moves freely between two "worlds." But the un-hierarchical world of age-mates seems to be a prototype of an important relationship which figures throughout all Thai life. This is the relationship called "play friend", len poen, and the term is particularly apt if the assumption of its early play-group patterning is correct. The opposite of "play friend" is the "die--friend" who will be your friend to death. "Die friends" are rare indeed, and Thai stories emphasize that they are probably never to be found. "Play friends" feast with you when you can feast them, betray you if it is to their profit to do so, and certainly disappear if you become a nonentity. Among "play friends" you live by your wits, and a great many Thai stories describe with approval the "deceit and guile" which bring a man advantages. In a Thai philosopher's description, "play friends" give tit for tat, and if you want something from them you must pretend to offer them deference in order to get it (Young 88). In a out-throat world, all the ideas clustering around the "play friend" would give scope for great hostility, but the Thai -- as is consonant with the hypothesis that it is learned in the child's happy and irresponsible play-group -- do not carry it to this length. Everybody knows the rules and what to expect, and the dolt -- the one who got cheated -- always draws a laugh. That is, laughter is directed toward the cheated, not condemnation -- even moral condemnation -- toward the cheater. The latter has a "cool heart", sangfroid, which is one of the most admired Thai assets, see below.

Dealing with "play friends" involves offering pretended deference, and Chandruang (40) describes his childish games with a little prince before he was old enough to go to school. He had to let the little prince beat him in every game. "If I let him win, he would feel fascinated about his superiority.

And he would give me generous rewards. I soon realized that in playing with a prince it paid not to win. This diplomatic tact Father also applied when he played chess with the Viceoy" (the little prince's father). It is not de-meaning to pretend lack of skill in this fashion.

During the whole period roughly from two or three to eight years, the child learns that he is a nuisance if he cries and that it is up to him to express any discomfort in quieter terms. He is no longer petted when he cries. His elders use several methods. Most characteristic are repudiations like the mother's "You aren't my child. Father found you floating on the river in a basket" or "What was the use of bearing you?" (Le May A: 152), and threats of ogres who will come and take naughty children away forever. These may be reinforced by spanking if necessary -- from any elder -- but this is usually not necessary. Also the child may be shamed by being told he's a baby. Exactly the same sanctions are used to a crying child and a disobedient child, for crying is a form of disobedience. The picture given the child in these ways is of a compact safe home from which he runs the risk of being excluded or to which, perhaps, he never belonged. Le May says that a child who is told that he was found on the river points to his mother's stomach and says, "No, I came out of there," and certainly the child is not confused by lack of knowledge of the way babies are born. The effect of these sanctions, however, remains explicit in the folklore in the recurring theme of the father's giving his child away to a stranger. This role is not given to the mother -- unless she is acting on instructions from a cruel stepfather. Nor does the cruel step-mother figure in the stories; the role is taken by the stepfather. The father is pictured as the unreliable member of the family. Sometimes he gives his child away to make merit -- having given away everything else -- sometimes, as stepfather, he prompts his wife to abandon them. In a story told by an informant, the son who was given away says, "If I had a mother, she would have been as good as a father and a mother. I had a father, and it was no better than having no parent at all."

The fact that the abandonment theme is pinned upon the father has undoubtedly a basis in the father's early relation to the baby, but what this is could not be discovered, and would probably require first-hand observation of child rearing in Thai villages. The father's motivation of merit-making in giving away his children is, of course, thoroughly appropriate to Thai customs.

Both the literature and informants' statements repeat that girls and boys are brought up alike until the boys begin to go to the monks' schools at about eight years of age. But the statement must be qualified; in comparison with most countries, the statement is relatively true, but the differences are nevertheless important. Little girls and little boys do the same things about the house, but little boys are given less responsibility, though they help with the bullocks or water buffalo; they "run wild" much of the time amusing themselves as they see fit. Girls are a part of the children's play group, but they are oftener absent than the boys are. Partly they are helping their mothers, sometimes they play with their dolls more than the boys -- Mrs. Leonowens said of the court children as she saw them in 1855 that they "observe with grave formalities the eventful ceremony of 'hair cutting' for their favorite dolls" (p.168) -- and partly they are practicing posturing like the Thai dancers. "At the age of about four years the Siamese girl-child is frequently seized with the desire to become a prime-donna, and thereupon proceeds to practise both singing and dancing with the utmost seriousness" (Graham II: 204). The little girls sit forcing their fingers back as far as they will go, practice "double-jointing" their elbows, and then practice the steps. These steps are never "skipping,

tripping, or pirouetting" but involve "swaying and writhing the body and advancing or retiring with gliding motion" (Graham II: 207). Many boys, too, practice the motions; for both sexes "some proficiency is usually attained, and the pose becomes familiar to such an extent that upon the sudden experience of joy or triumph in later life, the body is almost involuntarily thrown into the attitude of theodance as the most adequate way of expressing the feelings" (Graham II: 208). There are dancing classes for girls, too, though few girls become professionals. It is declassé to be a professional woman dancer, and anyone who has been one at some time in her life will resent reference to it. Village "sings" and dancing processions, however, give scope for amateur dancing, and there are amateur travelling dance companies which perform on holidays.

Boys of this age have their exclusive games -- kite flying and fighting insects. Chandruang describes playing kites with his father and how they were so unwilling to stop at nightfall that they fastened candles to their kites so that they could follow their course in the dark. Little boys keep crickets in match boxes and teach them to fight; they have fighting fish which they train to fight their own images reflected in mirrors attached to the bottles in which they are kept. They train beetles to fight. They are passionate spectators of fighting, though it must be noted that these fights of crickets and fish and beetles -- which sometimes grab their opponent and hold on for twenty minutes while the spectators watch patiently -- are not very "violent".

Boys are critical if tales are "not fierce enough". Young tells of a boy who dismissed our Jack the Giant Killer with this comment and told in return a "good" story where the hero had more scope.

Girls do not train fighting insects nor join in the groups that watch them and gamble on them. It has no attraction for them.

Traditionally, children put on the Thai pantaloons at eight or nine. Girls when they put these on never removed them in public; even when they changed them in private, they wrapped the clean cloth around themselves first before they removed the one they had on. The modesty taboo was much less rigorous for boys, who when thirteen and fourteen used to swim and dive together naked in the villages.

About the time children were clothed, boys began going to the monks' school. They also continued to help with the bullocks or water buffalo or to scare off birds from the rice fields. Girls, however, helped increasingly about the house and with the rice milling. They were often taught their letters, too, but at home, and by their mothers, who had, in their turn, learned from their mothers, or perhaps, after marriage, from their husbands.

The great ceremony for the child, either boy or girl, was the cutting of the top knot. This fell into disuse generally in the childhood even of the present older generation so that detailed description is not necessary. It was a feast as great as the family could make it, and the child was arrayed in all possible ornaments and finery. Buddhist monks intoned and were served by the child and the guests feasted, often for two days before all malignant influences were safely counteracted by the sacred words. At last three of the family's oldest members -- to give the child long life -- and most respected guests -- to make his successful -- cut his top knot which had previously been separated into three strands. The child then ascended a "throne" of special structure and was doused with water -- for ritual cleansing -- by the monks and then the

relatives and honored guests. After the child had descended and put on dry clothes, he served the monks with rice and sweetmeats. The most interesting part of the ceremony was the "capturing" of his soul-stuff and its return to him. His soul -- which resides in the crown of the head -- had been exposed by the shaving and may have escaped. It is tempted by an assortment of sweets and unguents set forth on a little pagoda erected for the purpose, and a napkin is thrown over it while it feasts, then rolled up tightly and given to the child to hold close to his breast for three days. "O gentle Kwun, come into thy corporeal abode; do not delay this suspicious rite. Thou art now full-grown and dost form everybody's delight and admiration. Let all the tiny particles of Kwun that have fallen on land or water, assemble and take permanent abode in this darling little child. Let them all hurry to the site of this auspicious ceremony and admire the magnificent preparations made for them in this hall" (Young, 77-78). Then the priests make on the child's forehead the scroll which represents the way Buddha's hair grew between his eyes, and the child is fed a taste of all the food his soul has been feasting on, and "having thus imbibed the food of the kwun, ensures ultimately the kwun's permanent residence in his body" (Young 79).

The whole ceremony is an honoring of the child, an invocation of blessings, and a protection against all evil. The top-knot cutting in no way changes his status or responsibilities, and he remains a "child". Legally his childhood ended -- until 1935 when the old poll tax law was changed -- at eighteen when he was subject to this tax and, if he could not pay, to corvee labor. Actually the period of monkhood at twenty, and his marriage which followed its conclusion, placed him as fully adult.

## V. SOME THAI CHARACTERISTICS

The Enjoyment of Life

The Thai enjoy life, and their usual human intercourse is easy and friendly. Their greetings as they pass each other on the waterways and the roads are jolly, and the hospitality they offer to strangers is unsuspecting and gracious. In Campbell's phrase, "trouble touches them lightly" (127); "they have a happy carelessness" (126)t

Their festivals are occasions of lighthearted gaiety and of sensory enjoyment. Whether the occasion is the King's First Sowing or worshipping the Buddha's footprints or a tonsure-cutting or a cremation, there must be an orchestra, theatrical performances and displays of fire-works, plenty of tidbits available for everybody to eat, and often a deafening racket. At the fairs and public festivals, "everybody spends his money and is happy" (Graham II:250).

The Thai find life so enjoyable that they very rarely indeed seek oblivion from it either in drunkenness or in opium smoking. They like alcohol for the exhilaration it gives, not for withdrawal. Because opium offers only withdrawal, opium smoking has never been a social problem among the Thai. The Chinese in Thailand use it extensively and obtain it no matter what the official restrictions, but it has proved to have little attraction for the Thai. They have no liking for additions which interrupt the everyday routine pleasures of life.

This deep-seated capacity to make this life a thing to be freely and simply enjoyed has made Thai Buddhism quite a different thing from the view of life taught by Gautama. Central in Gautama's teaching was the doctrine that sorrow attends existence and that only from the extinction of desire can come cessation of sorrow. But the Thai have an indestructable conviction that existence is good, and they have characteristically placed the promised rewards of Buddhism in this life rather than in the life to come. Thai exegesis describes Nirvana as an eradication of evil wishes such as can be achieved by man in this life (Landon 229), and in the folktales even a monk of long standing knows that his merit is exhausted because his mother has lost her money (Le May A: 96); there is no reference to another world where his merit has accumulated. Thai references to the classic Nirvana of Buddha are ambivalent. Young (p.277) tells of his Siamese boy who hoped that he would not accumulate too much merit; he did not want to take a chance of achieving bodiless existence. "The average Siamese layman.... trusts that he will always have enough merit to avoid the more painful hells, and to escape the inclusion in his career of the life of a draught-ox or other long-suffering beast, and he hopes either for rebirth as a man in a better worldly condition than the present or for a few million years of rest among the pleasures of one of the Lower Heavens" (Graham II: 228)a

Like the Four Noble Truths about suffering and the extinction of desire, the Five Great Commandments of the Buddha have been culturally interpreted. The Five Great Commandments are:

1. Not to destroy life. The Thai have had to exercise their facility in rationalizing this unpleasant rule for they have remained a nation of fisher-

men eating fish daily, and they do not forego meat when they can afford it. The theory is that fish are not "killed", they are taken out of water and if subsequently they die a natural death, no man is responsible (Graham II: 38). A slightly different line covers the matter of meat for the upper classes: no man could without guilt send to the market or give orders to his servant for some particular animal or kind of meat which he would then be responsible for having had killed, but if he sent for an animal or fowl which was dead already he had no guilt (Alabaster 60).

2. Not to obtain the property of another unjustly. There is plenty of theft in Thailand. "The number of petty thefts is really appalling. In the year 1903-04, 5,570 cases of theft were reported in Bangkok province alone, with its population of 750,000 which exceeds the number of cases in the whole of southern Burma with a population of six millions. Yet I do not believe that this is the result of innate depravity, but only of a careless disregard of the rights of property. The Siamese have a passion for pretty clothes and jewelled rings and, like children, they instinctively take what they want" (P.A. Thompson 69-70). This petty thievery is characteristic of Thailand to-day also, and no informant is provided with a rationalization that squares the tendency with the Buddhist commandment except that they say that people are pressed by poverty.

3. Not to indulge the passionst Alabaster (p.62) summarizes the wording of a great Siamese commentator on this commandment: "Women who are objects of another's jealous care -- that is, wives and unmarried women, who are cared for or supported by their husbands or relatives, and women who are betrothed -- are all improper objects of desire; but as this is 'the undisputed opinion of all except those bad men who think there is no harm in adultery unless it is discovered,' the main point considered is, why, under this commandment, men and women are put on a different footing -- that is, why polygamy is allowed?" In other words, this commandment which is in many countries the most stressed of ethical precepts is passed over in Thai comment because exhortation is unnecessary. Certainly the level of morality in the Western sense -- according to which the commandment means "morals" -- is high and divorce is very rare. This will be further discussed under Male Dominance, see below.

4. Not to tell lies. Many proverbs and sayings record the Thais own verdict on veracity. Some of them are the usual ones

"What people say, divide by five."

"Ten mouthfuls are not so good as an eyeful (i.e., ten people may lie or exaggerate; it's better to see for yourself)."

There are others which refer to more than exaggeration, like:

"His tongue is so long that he can wind it around his ears" --

which, as Le May says, means that he "can twist his words and so manipulate their use that he can make them mean whatever he pleases. A wise old Siamese statesman once remarked that to be a good diplomat you must not only be able to 'wind your tongue around your ears,' but that you must be able to wind it seven times." (Le May A: 164).

In the Thai legend of a Land of Women, these women are said to have been fed up on men's lies and to have gone off to form their own community. They welcome men when they come to their country, but these men never stay long because the women expel them as soon as they find them lying. (Chandruang 61).

5. To refrain from all intoxicants. "The Buddhist precept against intoxicants is not observed by many. A merry party, a wedding, a festive day, is hardly considered to have been properly celebrated unless there has been a large amount of beer, wine, and 'whi-sa-key' consumed. The beer hall has become a regular part of most large towns" (Landon 151). This is not to say that drunkenness is a social problem in Thailand; it is relatively minor, see below. But no tabu against the use of intoxicants is generally observed.

The ethical rules for obtaining the good life are thus Buddhist but with Thai cultural emendations. There are similar cultural emendations in the Buddhist doctrine of mystical contemplation. The Thai are not mystically inclined, and the elaborate Indian physical techniques of inducing contemplation are absent. Even the meaning of the word is changed, for Alabaster (p.195) notes that chan, their word derived from Sanscrit dhyana, meaning meditation, is translated in the Bangkok Calendar as 'sinburning' and, as he says, this is "incorrect". The very idea of dhyana has become a kind of negative merit-making.

To the Thai the essential doctrine of Buddhism is merit-making, and their interpretation of merit-making is that if a man exercises sufficient care in following the rules he need not be anxious. It depends upon himself. Everyone repeats the proverbial maxim: "In this world everything changes except good deeds and bad deeds; these follow you as the shadow follows the body."

"King Prajadhipok (1925-1933), in the preface to a widely used textbook of religion, expressed the opinion that the essential of Buddhism for young people was their realization of the principle that what the child becomes depends upon himself and nobody else. He who does good receives good, and he who does evil receives evil, not only in this life but in the existence of the future. This is the mainspring of religion, and the basis for morals and character.... His Majesty says nothing of Heaven, Hell, or Nirvana" (Landon 221).

Merit-making, not as a measure for the conquest of desire and attainment of other-worldliness, but as an ethical precept of the good life is basic in Thai Buddhism. And merit-making is only exceptionally derived from special acts of getting along well with one's neighbors. The Thai do get along well with their neighbors, but those merit-making acts which figure in everyone's calculations are, rather, giving food to the monks each morning, being a monk, plastering a few square inches of gold leaf on a Buddha, erecting some building in a wat, buying an inexpensive copper votive tablet, joining the feast at the days of worship of the footprint of the Buddha, and innumerable other observances. There were plenty of opportunities, all of them with accompanying rewards of having a good time or getting the approval of his fellows. One can cash in too, on an inadvertent calamity; a woman who was robbed even made merit for her lost property -- after the same fashion as the gypsy, who, according to the Eastern European proverb, "When his hat blows into the river, says 'For the soul of my father'".

Merit-making provides a series of pleasurable activities -- there is no fasting nor self-torture included at any point -- by which a man is assured of his own moral solvency, but the very real human goodwill which prevails is

not "counted" in the same way. Even a deliberate act of aggression when it occurs is not reckoned against the specified merit-acts, and the story of the young Buddhist monk of good family who tried to kill a baby is characteristic. A soothsayer told him he would marry a slave's daughter, and he identified this prospective bride a baby at the moment hanging in its cradle under his room. So, to avoid the prophecy, he dropped a knife through the slats of the floor. It hit the baby's body but did not kill her, and eventually he wooed and won the girl without knowing it. But his merit as a monk was untouched by knifing the baby (Le May A:93).

The good life is not a series of acts which can be counted like "merit", and folk ideas about it are consonant with their patterns of child rearing. The Thai do not think it is necessary to strive mightily to make life good -- it is good if it is accepted. The laugh is always against those who find their lot bad, and they tell the story of the Man in the Moon who got lodged there because he was always wanting to be something he wasn't (Fleeson 37). Patience with one's lot and patience in one's projects is the great male virtue. One with patience can one rest in peace.

Anger is reckoned as a prime disturber of the good life. It heats the heart, (which is bad), and it gets out of hand and results in violence. Therefore, anger must be curbed while it is small. The moral lesson drawn from a folktale by the Siamese editor is: "The force of anger, is like a forest fire, if one has not sufficient sense to stamp it out at once, it is likely to spread until it becomes a calamity of the direst kind," and he admonished men "to suppress any cause of quarrel while yet it has but little power." For a stranger dropped one drop of honey from his load, and even in a village where peace, contentment, and happiness reigned and no man's hand was raised against his neighbor, when the lizard crawled out to lick the honey, the cat ran for it, and the dog ran after the cat, and their owners fell to separating them and then into a violent fray, and "the cause of all this trouble was a single drop of honey" (Le May A: 123).

This didactic counseling against anger goes with and not against the Thai grain. Siamese, by nature, are a quiet people. The idea of mass movements against authority seems foreign to their nature. A very noticeable thing about large gatherings of Siamese is their orderliness. An unruly mob of Siamese is difficult to imagine (Landon 215). As we have seen, there were not riots or arson even on the day of the coup d'etat of June 1932 which ended the absolute monarchy.

Private disputes also characteristically pass off without violence. In the midst of an altercation, one party will suddenly leave off and turn his back on the whole thing. An informant says, "The best way to show your opponent up for a brute is to give in to him. Anger is the least advantageous method of meeting a difficult situation. "The Siamese are of a forgiving nature, Nor, as a rule, are they easily irritated, and it is a rare sight to see a Siamese excited, unless he is under the influence of liquor" (Le May A: 155).

This excitement when intoxicated, of which Le May speaks, requires definition. The Thai drink, for the exhilaration and not to "pass out"; when drunkenness passes this point, it has little attraction for them. Nevertheless, drinking eventuates neither in violence or in eroticism. Festival crowds are dense in Thailand, and alcohol is popular, but men who have been drinking do not annoy women or proposition them, and they are exceptionally non-quarrelsome. Typically, a man who has been drinking is noisy, but such behavior only

raises a few degrees the usual and approved behavior of crowds; Europeans speak of the frightful din" most marked in Central Thailand festivities. Drinking does not release repressed aggressions in a Thai crowd; typically, they are happy when they have had something to drink.

The lack of vengefulness among the Thai could not be better illustrated than by their version of the almost worldwide tale of the deserted children. A cruel stepfather persuaded their mother to refuse them food, and they wandered off and eventually the older boy married the prince's daughter. Then the two brothers came back to see their parents, but instead of humiliating them or killing them, as other people's tales relate, they brought them a bundle of bamboo, joints stuffed with gold. The tale ends by telling how the parents scolded the boys for bringing them only a bundle of bamboo, and when, too late, they discovered the gold, they "were unable to endure their remorse and died on the wayside" (Fleeson: 126).

The Thai emphasis on curbing anger and vengeance is complemented by their belief that good is more powerful than evil. A folktale tells how a good priest fraudently comforted a girl and her family who had become convinced that she was bewitched; when her mind was set at ease, she got well. The moral is: "Joy and pleasure, and happiness, once aroused, are able to drive away all thought of disease, and thus the disease itself. So we should regard joy and happiness as the finest medicines... that have ever been vouchsafed to us" (Le May A: 92).

In dealing with spirits, the Thai project this faith as an infallible technique for controlling the supernatural. When they wished to capture the boy's soul which might have escaped when his topknot was cut, they set out choice dishes and sweet unguents, and when the soul was presumably occupied in deep enjoyment of these delights, they threw a napkin over the whole array and gathered up the spirit in order to restore it to the boy (Young 75). On all occasions methods of enticing the spirits are overwhelmingly used. They are hardly ever beaten off and violence is not used against them; they are offered food, or music is played for them. The behavior used toward the spirits is only that behavior which the Thai also rely upon in their dealings with their fellowmen.

The enjoyment of life is to rest at ease. "They rarely quarrel amongst themselves, as they dislike worry and trouble of every description. Their idea of the millennium is that the tide will flow up one side of the river and down the other so that everyone may go whithersoever he pleases without the trouble of rowing. There will be no work of any description, and men will lie in the sunshine, as happy as birds" (Young 138).

### The Cool Heart.

But Thai behavior is more complicated than it appears from the above description. The Thai, in common with many Far Eastern and Oceanic peoples, have special attitudes and emotions which they designate as "cool" and others which they designate as "warm". In Thai those that are desirable are "cool", and the undesirable are "warm". Being "cool" means several things. In the first place, it means not being an anxious person and thus refers to enjoying life in the sense just described. As Alabaster says, being "warm" is "inability to rest at ease" (p. 186). Bearing a grudge makes you "warm" and so does quarreling.

But being "cool" means, in addition, a kind of sangfroid. "The term implies coolness of attitude toward work, responsibility, or trouble. A certain girl who held a prominent position and who, when caught in adultery and theft, stood to lose both good name and position, met the situation with a coolness that was most astonishing, was described by Siamese as undeniably choei" (Landon 1

Most of the Thai tales translated by Le May celebrate the "cool heart" or expose the foolishness of people who act without due weighing of all the circumstances. For instance, four imposter monks had made themselves solid with a certain village and secured for themselves a big feast, with plenty to drink, on what they told the people they must bring to feed a company of demons. One of the villagers by chance caught the monks at their drunken revels and proclaimed the fact. But the people believed the demons had made him mad, and they bound him with ropes and kept him locked up for three days. When he still stuck to his story, they took him to the "monks" to be cured. The head monk ordered six strong men to hold him down while he blew pepper up his nose. He "nearly went off his head," and the monk prepared a second dose. The poor victim "could not see himself becoming a martyr for a thousand such rogues as these," and he made it appear that he had just wakened up from a bewitchment, and he did obeisance to the "monks" and thanked the Lord Buddha that he had regained his senses and could shake off the effects of his evil dream. He had not yet learned wisdom, however. When he got home and was alone with his wife, he appealed to her again to believe him. But his wife ran to her father crying, "He is raving again," and there was nothing for the poor man to do but to leave home and go back to his mother's village. The moral is that even if you speak the truth, no advantage will come of it either to the speaker or the listeners if you are speaking against their convictions; "indeed it may well happen that disaster will overtake the speaker... This story is an excellent example of the old sayings, "A little water will not extinguish a great fire," or "If you live among folk whose eyes are closed, you had better close your own as well" (Le May A; 99-111).

Tales also describe how when a good end is in view it is praiseworthy to use "deceit and guile". In one of these, the good monk carefully rigs up a magical demonstration to save a girl who thinks herself bewitched. "There is no use my telling these foolish folk the truth," he says to himself, and the moral of the tale is that praise is due him for his trick, "for he did it to gain a good end, and his reward was great" (ibid, 80-92).

Others of these tales describe cool betrayals of husbands by their wives, and the moral then points to the woman's "shameless, brazen heart" (ibid 65-70). "Coolness" is a woman must draw a public censure. But as Le May says, "Still it must be remarked that the laugh always rests with the lady against the husband, who is pictured as a dolt, and easily guiled" (p. 139).

"Audacious as a woman" is one of the stock Thai phrases and means that if there is advantage to be gained from it your wife will not only leave you for another lover, but will betray you to your death. Women are not "patient," the Thai says. In many traditional tales, the favored and successful lover then coolly decides that a woman who would be faithless to one man will be faithless to another and either abandons her or kills her as she had her husband killed. In such cases, the Thai judge that the woman did not have a cool heart, and the man did.

This is to us an unfamiliar phrasing of aggression. To us the lover's killing his woman is extreme aggression; in Thai tales, it is a sensible precaution, not in any way based on superstition. To us, the woman committed a crime passionel and is to that extent exonerated; to the Thai she is the dangerously aggressive person - the one who was not "patient", who did not act with worldly wisdom.

This interpretation of aggression as being necessarily the act of a person who cannot or will not estimate consequences in a rational way underlies the Thai version of witchcraft. Thai witchcraft is very specific; it is a belief in ghouls. Your neighbors, male or female, may be ghouls - who go out at night in an astral body with a tail, out out people's livers without leaving a trace and consume them. This is a variant of the widespread Pacific Islands belief in vada, but usually in other parts of the Pacific the sorcerer who takes his victim's vital organs learns his trade and when he practices it against someone works himself up into a ghastly imitation of the death agonist. In Thailand, being a ghoul is involuntary. A woman inherits from her mother, a man from his father, and no ghoul knows he is one. He is merely a person who by an involuntary curse is unable to direct his own behavior. Therefore, his detection - and exiling him from the community - devolves on his neighbors. This occurred, especially in North Thailand, within the last generation. With the establishment of non-local courts which refused to take witchcraft cases, concern with ghouls has rapidly diminished. The essence of it was always that the curse was involuntary - and prevented the ghoul from knowing what he was doing and from using his wits.

In situations where hierarchal status is well established, the Thai have clear and unresented patterns of behavior; where they are not, the virtues of the "cool heart" are the code provided. One is "cool", too, in hierarchal relations - using flattery, allowing the superior to win the game, etc. - but not placed in a clear hierarchal position - one lives by one's wits and counts it as virtue to be as inventive as possible.

### Male Dominance

The most revealing of all Thai summaries of male and female character is the proverb which is on every tongue: "Man is paddy; woman is rice," i.e., man is the seed rice able to reproduce itself, woman is rice polished for eating. As Thai women informants said, "She can only be swallowed once," "she can't reproduce unless a man comes to her." But a man can "produce by himself." An informant illustrated with a "rice" (woman) as a kernel inside a closed circle; of "paddy" (man) as a short straight line with arrows radiating out from him. The proverb is used in the education of girls to teach them to guard their virtue - for they can only be "eaten" once, i.e., by one man. In the education of boys, it bears testimony to their superiority; they are the "seed" which produces the harvest.

In spite of all the freedom of Thai village women and of the wives of officials, the one superiority - fertility - which is ascribed to them by most peoples is not theirs by Thai definition. They provide a nest for the child in the womb and nourish their husbands, but they have not the virtue of creativity in themselves.

Yet they can nourish their husbands well. As men say in Thailand, "A play friend is not equal to a die friend and a boy friend is not equal to a girl friend," i.e., a man is a fair-weather friend, but from a woman one can expect loyalty till death. When a man courts a girl, he selects one to whom, in the Thai phrase, "he can trust his life in sickness and his obsequies after death." It is the woman - not the husband, as in our Episcopal marriage service - who must "cherish... till death do us part."

This is the great Thai day dream and it is the betrayal of this day dream that is usually elaborated in story and proverb and simile. A woman who does not satisfy this dream, since she has no other justification in living, has betrayed her kind. The Thai say: "A male elephant, a crocodile, and a loving wife, put not your trust in these." They say: "Three days absence from home and your wife is another's."

The best statement of what men hope and fear for in their wives is the writing of the Siamese philosopher quoted by Young (86-88):

1. Some wives are to their husbands as a younger sister. They look to their husbands for approving smiles as the reward of their kind and affectionate forethought. They confide in him and feel tenderly towards him. And when they have once discovered the wish, the taste, and the ideas of him whose approval they respect, they devote themselves thoughtfully and assiduously to the realization of his desires. Their own impulsive passions and temper are kept under strict control lest some hasty word should mar the harmony of their union.

2. Some wives are to their husbands as an older sister. They watch sedulously their husband's outgoings and incomings so as to prevent all occasion for scandal. They are careful as to the condition of his wardrobe and keep it always in order for every occasion. They are diligent in preserving from the public gaze anything that might impair the dignity of their family. When their lord and master is found wanting in any particular, they neither fret nor scold, but wait patiently for the time when they can best effect a reformation in his morals and lead him toward the goal of upright manly conduct.

3. Some wives are to their husbands like a mother. They are ever seeking for some good thing that may bring gladness to the heart of the man for whom they live. They desire him to be excellent in every particular, and will themselves make any sacrifice to secure their object. When sorrow or trouble overtakes them, they hide it away from the eyes of him they love. All their thoughts center around him, and they so order their conversation and actions that in themselves he may find a worthy model for imitation. Should he fall sick, they tend him with unflinching care and patience.

4. Some wives are to their husbands as a common friend.

(i.e.† "play friend"), They desire to stand on an exactly equal footing with him (i.e.† they give tit for tat)† If ill-nature is a feature in the character of their husbands, they cultivate the same fault in themselves. They will quarrel with him on the slightest provocation. They meet all his suggestions with an excess of carping criticism. They are always on the look-out for any infringement of what they deem their rights, and should the husband desire them to perform any little service for him, he must approach the subject with becoming deference of their refusal is instant and absolute.

5. Some wives wish to rule their husbands. Their language and manners are of a domineering nature. They treat the man as if he were a slave, scolding, commanding, and forbidding with unbecoming asperity. The husbands of such women are a miserable cringing set of men.

6. Some wives are of the robber kind. Their only idea in getting married is the possession of a slave and the command of the purse. If there is money in the purse, they are never satisfied until they have it in their own grasp. Such wives generally take to gambling and staking money in the lottery, or purchasing useless articles. They have no care as to where the money comes from or by whose labors it is earned, so long as they can gratify their own extravagant and ruinous fancies.

7. Some wives are of the murderess kind and possess revengeful tempers. Being malicious and fault-finding, they never appreciate their own homes and families, and are always seeking for sympathies from outside. They share their secrets with other men, using their pretended domestic discomfort as a cloak for their own vice and an excuse for their greatest misdeeds.

The wives who are on a female pattern are all "good"; they are "younger sister," "elder sister," and "mother." They will be "die friends,"† and in looking for a wife a man looks for one who will reproduce his relations with the women of his family. Yet Thai men are so rarely impotent that it is not a subject of gossip, not even a cursing accusation. Those wives who follow the pattern of their husband's mothers and sisters are submissive and ideal.

The wives who take their prototype from males are "bad"† From the whole context and from the whole description of Thai concepts and behavior in this memorandum, this is evidently not because of taboos separating the respective spheres of the sexes but is, rather, a projection upon women of all the non-hierarchical relations between men. These latter, as we have seen, are relatively "difficult" in Thailand. First there is the "play friend" type who returns evil for evil and will do her husband "no little service" unless he pretends deference. Then there is the domineering woman who orders her husband about, and he becomes a "miserable cringing" being. The "robber kind" are out for money and interested only in spending it at their whim. Only the last and "murderous kind" betray their husbands by taking other lovers. Wandering sexual fancy is only characteristic of one out of four "bad" wifely types which disturb a man's peace.

The man's attitude toward the relations of the sexes is given symbolic elaboration in the national game of kite flying - which is played exclusively by men. This game is unknown in other countries and is carried out with a skill which all observers have admired. It is a "courtship" of a female kite and a male kite. The female kite is a four-sided diamond shape and goes up with a lilting motion to the accompaniment, in any exhibition game, of a dancing tune from the orchestra. There is a special orchestra for the female kite and another for the male kite when it finally comes up to "court" the female. The man who flies the female kite stays in one part of the field, and his kite is not allowed to cruise. Presently another kite-flyer from another end of the field sends up his male kite. This is a much heavier kite, perhaps six times as big, in the shape of a five-pointed star. It ascends higher than the female kite and cruises toward the female to "capture" it. It must not get too close to the body of the little kite or its balance would be upset, and it would "lose"; then the male kite's orchestra would play a lamenting tune and, if the female kite has an orchestra, it will play triumphantly. But the string of the male kite has attached to it, up toward the kite, two small curved twigs of bamboo which project out in four points. The female kite has a slacker cord attached to its string up in the air, and into this loop the male kite must get its tentacles. It swoops down on the dancing female kite and, if it is successful, drags her in triumph to its end of the field where they both fly entangled to the triumphant music of the male kite's orchestra. She is "his":

The male is the huge, heavy kite, the female the little, dancing one. The male is the cruiser, the female is anchored. The male pulls her into his orbit and flies with her in triumph; if he gets too close to her and falls, it is "she" who caused his fall and "she" triumphs. "I have never, I think, seen the Siamese so serious with attention so riveted, as when they assemble in thousands every afternoon for hours a stretch to fly their kites. That for them is the real business of life" (Campbell 107).

The game well symbolizes the relation of men and women. Men are not doubtful of their masculinity - which is here symbolized in the kite's size and shape and activity. Men mark their kites with their insignia or name and may have three or four at hand to continue the game if one falls or is damaged. The object of the game is to keep a "wife" within their orbit and both male and female "flying"; if "he" falls, it is the woman's fault, and "she" has won. But attacking her too closely - perhaps it would be fair to say dominating her, or possessing her, in the European sense - would mean, in the kite game, falling to the ground and being defeated. Thai men assume that she is small and fragile and has no "game" to play unless a man "captures" her. It is the same statement under another simile, which they make in "Woman is rice but man is paddy." Success, for the man, depends upon skilled maneuvering and a not too close approach to the body of the other kite, - on one's own wits, in daily life, and one's canny skepticism about others.

The plots of their impromptu "sings" show the rules of the game between men and women as they are thought to work themselves out in Thai behavior. After the male leader has sung the invocation, the answering female leader invokes dead women leaders to assist her "in making men humble and discomfitted, in fact to make her victory over them absolutely crushing". It is again the "contest" of the kite game. The most popular ways in which the "sing" may develop is "contending for a lady" or contending for a man. In the first form,

described by Prince Bidyalankarana, the husband is urging his wife to return to him no matter what her infidelities; "despite her faithlessness his love for her is as deep as ever, and he implores her to abandon her lover and return to husband and child." It is not necessary for the husband to defend his "honor"; he wants her within his orbit. In the plot of contending for a man, the man finds himself "an unhappy fellow who stands between two sharp tongues." He has lost the initiative to the women, and the story only ends when he is once more paired with one of them. Obviously, the "crushing victory" for which the women ask is preeminence in repartee; they do not seek a "defeat" of men in the sense of humiliating them.

The high place of the male in his world is powerfully reinforced in real life by Buddhist teachings and by the male prerogative of the monkhood, from which women are unconditionally excluded. But the Buddhist, doctrine of man's superiority is divorced from sex; by definition the monk is asexual. Among the Thai this operates merely to remove from men a possible source of anxiety; they do not have to prove their virility by affairs with women or even by their relations with their wives. They are in Pallogoix's words "almost passionless" - and one man in twenty is at any given time unquestionably chaste since he is in a monastery - yet impotence is hardly recognized except that it is admitted that it might be found in a psychopath. King Mongkut retired to a monastery for more than twenty years and when he came out, at forty-five, he fathered more than eighty children. This is regarded as natural, and the enforced celibacy of the monk is regarded as equally unneeding of remark; it is not considered as a serious frustration. Even today reformers speak of the harm not eating after midday may do to a delicate constitution, but they do not speak of sex frustration.

The villages, especially in later life, enjoy bandying insults, and they have a language for this which is obscene in their sense. It accuses the other person of sexual irregularities, even of incest. This is what is referred to when they speak of "the mouth of a market woman," but the older men take active part also. The more usual form of insult, however, is a delicate manipulation of respect terms and gestures; the least shade of difference carries the insult.

### Summary

The psychic security which makes possible Thai cheerfulness, easy conviviality, and non-violence is grounded in a long and remarkably permissive infancy during which no disciplines are imposed either in feeding or sleeping routines or in toilet training, and no attention at all is paid to infantile erections or to the child's playing with his genitals. The Thai as adults are not pursued by a sense of catastrophe, and they have faith that the world is not fundamentally against them. They gamble with pleasure, are indolent rather than hard-working and accept easily subordinate positions in a hierarchy which was first presented to them in infancy as based on relative age in the family. Without an authoritarian family, in the Western sense, without disciplining parents, they accept without resentment the reverence due to the hierarchy. The Thai also do not punish themselves with masochistic practices; they greatly prefer jollity and relaxation.

Their self-reliance is inculcated in their first learning of motor skills, in which they are thrown on their own responsibility; in later life they stress self-responsibility as the chief tenet of Buddhism. In relatively unpatterned relationships which lie outside the hierarchical arrangements, this self-responsibility becomes the virtue of bringing any situation to a this-worldly satisfactory conclusion, a procedure in which guile may be used without censure and in which one may capitalize, also without censure, on one's opponent's ignorance, greed, etc. In the words of their proverbs: Use a thorn to draw a thorn. And: Keep your eyes crossed in a cross-eyed town. Thai attention is directed, not toward condemnation of the means but toward ridicule of the person duped.

Finally, the Thai identify psychic security with not being a dupe. A little story used in children's schoolbooks neatly expresses their view. "There were rabbits living in a wood. When they came out to feed in the fields, they were afraid of the bullocks, they were afraid of the water buffalos, they were afraid of people. At last they said, 'We had better be dead. We are frightened every day. It is not worthwhile to go on living.' In the morning they all went down to the river to die. As soon as the frogs down by the river saw them, they jumped into the water, scared as they could be. The oldest rabbit said to his relatives, 'The frogs were afraid of us. We couldn't have hurt them. Perhaps the bullocks and water buffalo are just as harmless. We were dupes. Why should we die? We'll go back to our woods and not be frightened any more.'" Anxiety is not only unpleasant; the person who is afraid is a dupe.