

# The Origins of Chinese Nationalism in Thailand

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## Introduction

An editorial in the *Bangkok Times* dated 1 August 1905 concluded that “Foreign residents in China, it is interesting to note, are finding in the agitation a hopeful awaking of the national life. The people are coming to resist what they believe to be a wrong done to their country, and that in the case of a people who never give any evidence of being a nation, is certainly significant.”

The rise of nationalism among the Chinese during the Russo-Japanese War (8 February 1904 to 6 September 1905) did not happen only in mainland China, but also among the overseas Chinese, including those in Thailand. This can be seen from the rapid change in the Chinese society of Thailand in the same period.

It’s well known that Thailand (the old name of “Siam” was changed to “Thailand” in June 1939; in this article, Siam will be used only in quotations or in proper names) before the World War II was the country with the largest number of overseas Chinese or those of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia and in the world. Yet studies on the origins of Chinese nationalism in Thailand are very few compared to those in other Southeast Asian countries—indeed, almost non-existent. The main reasons may be that newspapers published by Chinese in Thailand have not been well preserved, and access to sources is difficult because hardly any current researchers on Chinese studies can read Thai documents.

This study focuses on facts about nationalism among the Chinese in Thailand, which appeared for the first time in mid 1905, using various data sources including newspapers printed in Thailand in the early twentieth century and Thai-language documents kept in the National Archives of Thailand.

This study has four main parts. The first examines a Japanese view of the Overseas Chinese by Touten Miyazaki (宮崎滔天), who came to Thailand in 1895 in order to locate a revolutionary cadre among the Overseas Chinese, and the establishment of the Overseas Chinese Association by Buntaro Kashiwabara, a close associate of Kang You Wei (康有為), who arrived in Thailand in September 1901 and co-operated with Manjiro Inagaki, the Japanese minister to Thailand, to establish the Overseas Chinese Association. The second looks at the muted reception that Dr Sun Yat Sen (孫逸仙) received from the Overseas Chinese in Thailand on his first visit during May–June 1903. The third traces the

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rise of Chinese nationalism during the Russo–Japanese War, highlighting the key roles of the Chinese boycott of US goods and the foundation of the Tian Hua Hospital. The fourth describes the split of Chinese in Thailand into conservative and revolutionary factions around the time of Dr Sun Yat Sen's second visit to Thailand in 1908.

In 1905, during the latter stages of the Russo–Japanese War, there appeared several signs of enormous changes in the Chinese society in Thailand. Various unprecedented activities suddenly arose as a result of a new consciousness of being a modern nation. A Chinese hospital, Thian Hua Uy I or Tian Hua Hospital (天華医院), now known as Thian Fah Foundation Hospital, was established in Bangkok through the first-ever cooperation between five dialect groups, namely Teochew, Hakka, Cantonese, Hailam and Hokkien. Moreover, this hospital was used to mobilize Chinese inside and outside the country to organize a strict boycott of US goods. At the same time, Chinese media were founded. The first Chinese daily newspaper was printed in October 1904. With respect to the reforms in China after 1906, the Chinese in Thailand gradually divided into two groups, those supporting the emperor (Bao Huang, 保皇改革派) and those supporting the republican revolution (共和革命派). Following the second visit to Thailand by Dr Sun Yat Sen in November 1908, the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中国同盟会) was formally established, using the Chinese Association (Zhong Hua Hui Guan, 中華會館) as a front. This prompted the beginning of serious confrontation between the two opposing Chinese groups.

### **1. The Chinese awakening by the Japanese: The visit by Touten Miyazaki in 1895**

Touten Miyazaki, who had studied English well enough to be a skilled interpreter, decided to join the Chinese revolution at the age of 20 in 1891.<sup>1</sup> A year later he traveled to Shanghai to study Chinese, but faced difficulties after being there only two months and returned to Japan.

A meeting with Dr Sun Yat Sen in early September 1897 in Yokohama was the beginning of Miyazaki's involvement in the Chinese revolution. At that time Dr Sun Yat Sen, who had set up the anti-Qing Revive China Society (Xing Zhong Hui, 興中會) in Hawaii in 1894, was in exile after the failed first Guangzhou uprising (第一次廣州起義) in October 1895, just after the close of the Chino-Japanese War.

Earlier in October 1895, Miyazaki had brought twenty Japanese migrants to Thailand. He related his intentions as follows:

I heard that Siam was an easy country to live in and had many Chinese residents. If I went there, I could study to become expert on Chinese language and culture and prepare the way for revolution among the Chinese in this country. Later I would find an opportunity to travel to mainland China.<sup>2</sup>

In other words Miyazaki planned to set up a base for the Chinese revolution by trying to find funding and create a network among the Chinese in Thailand.

According to his memoirs, Miyazaki came to live in Thailand twice, first for two months from mid October 1895, and second for another two months from early April to early June 1896.<sup>3</sup> Miyazaki related his experiences in Thailand in an article entitled “Chinese in Siam” (*Kokumin Shimibun*, 15–17 December 1896). He wrote that the Chinese in Thailand surpassed the Thai both in numbers and strength:

Generally speaking, the Chinese in Thailand can be divided into three types. The first are those of mixed blood between the Chinese and the locals. They are very numerous. Among them the women dress as Thai, while the men dress as Chinese. For the men this is a way to avoid being drafted for military service. Those men who want to be government officials must follow the customs of this country. Many mixed bloods work as officials, such as being provincial governors. Apart from them, there is a group that supports the current Manchu Qing Dynasty. Then there are the descendants of the revolutionaries who supported the Ming Dynasty in the past, who were part of a secret society, Gelaohui 哥老会. The groups which are often in conflict and fight with one another in this country are the last two. The numbers of those who support the Qing Dynasty and of those revolutionaries who support the Ming Dynasty are equal, hence the fighting is very violent.<sup>4</sup>

Even though Miyazaki refers to a strong group of “revolutionaries” among the Chinese residents in Thailand, there is no trace of evidence that he contacted them, and it is questionable whether there was in Thailand at that time an organization of “revolutionaries” with a clear objective to overthrow the Qing Dynasty. It is true that secret societies or *angyi* were powerful among the Chinese residents in Thailand at that time, resulting in the Thai government passing a law to suppress them in 1897, but not Gelaohui which Miyazaki mentioned but others such as Sa Tiam [San Dian Hui] 三点会 (in Thai, Sam Taem). *Angyi* is Han language, written as “Hong Zi 洪字” or “Hong Zi 紅字”. It was impossible that the *angyi* at the time would adhere to the extreme ideology of overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. This same thing could be said about the Chinese secret societies in other countries or in other regions.

*The establishment of the Overseas Chinese Association by Manjiro Inagaki, the Japanese minister to Thailand, and Buntaro Kashiwabara*

In February 1900 when King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) saw from the newspaper that Kang You Wei, who had been in exile since the political change on 21 September 1898, was about to travel from Hong Kong to Singapore, he instructed the minister of foreign affairs, Prince Dewawong Waropakarn, to prevent him entering Thailand as he was *persona non grata*. In a letter sent to the Thai consul in Singapore, Prince Dewawong stated that “Kang You Wei had earlier sent a confidant to Bangkok to make enquiries through Mr. Manjiro Inagaki, the Japanese minister to Thailand, whether the Siamese government would permit Kang You Wei to come to Bangkok.”<sup>5</sup>

Manjiro Inagaki had become the first Japanese minister to Thailand in May 1897. He was very keen

to expand Japanese influence among the Chinese in Thailand. Possibly it was he who brought Buntaro Kashiwabara to Thailand on 3 September 1901 to set up the Oriental Chamber of Commerce (Kongsi Tang A Siangbu, 東亜商務公司). Kashiwabara (1869–1936), secretary general of the Toadoubunkai Association (東亜同文会), had helped Kang You Wei and Liang Qi Chao 梁啓超 while they were in Japan in 1899. Inagaki talked about this matter in a lecture in 1903 as follows:

However, at present in Thailand there is no middle class society, that is, a class of people engaged in trade, manufacturing, and agriculture. On the one hand, I would like Japanese to migrate to Thailand to do this kind of work, which would require them to co-operate with the Chinese who are already resident. On the other hand, we must try to create a middle class of Japanese in Thailand as they could carry out trade and manufacture very well. On this matter it is not wrong to say that there is plenty of room for us. As for the point that nowadays Japanese travel to their country and work with the Chinese, we have our methods. On this we must thank Waseda University and others a great deal because Mr. Buntaro Kashiwabara, who graduated from Waseda and traveled to Thailand two years ago, arranged for the Chinese to set up an organization called the Oriental Chamber of Commerce. Most of the Chinese in that country who have one or two million yen are members of this association. Now there are 500 members. Why have the Chinese become members in such large numbers? Because China and Siam have not made a treaty, as a result of which the Chinese in Siam have to follow the laws of that country. Although Siam has tried to reform the courts, the result is incomplete and hence the Chinese have legal difficulties. However, as a result of the great efforts made on many fronts by Kashiwabara to the best of his abilities over the two years since his arrival in Siam, we find it better to set up our own organization rather than asking for protection from the ministers or consuls of other countries. As long as we have to follow the laws of that country, setting up an association under those laws to protect lives and property is a better method. The Chinese joined together to hire a Japanese legal consultant to facilitate protection of their lives and property, no matter where they are, and this has been very successful. Everyone in Bangkok with more than 10 thousand yen joined as members, so we now have more than 500 members already.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Yoshifumi Toyama, the Japanese Consul in Bangkok, arranged the registration of the Oriental Chamber of Commerce on 31 October 1901. Its charter stipulated that members were “Chinese and Japanese residents of Siam engaged in trade,” and the association’s objective was “to increase profits from trade and manufacture for the Japanese and Chinese residents in Siam.” The five founding directors of the association included Buntaro Kashiwabara, Chan Tao Nam [Chen Dou Nan]<sup>7</sup> 陳斗南, and Chia Ek Hong [Xie Yi Feng] 謝乙峰, while the 61 founding members included two Japanese, Buntaro Kashiwabara and Ryuhei Shiroiwa.<sup>8</sup>

This association attracted Chinese members by offering Japanese protection. It hired Sanju Muramatsu (1867–1937), a professional lawyer who completed his law degree from the US, as legal advisor, and laid plans to print a daily newspaper in Chinese. The motive behind the association was not only economic, as there was certainly a hidden political agenda. The association was registered under the Secret Society Act of 1897, and should be considered the first political association registered under this law by using an economic motive as a front. Subsequently the Chinese in Thailand registered other political organization under this law, such as the Chinese Association (Zhong Hua Hui Guan, 中華會館), registered in November 1908.

Less than a year after its foundation, the Oriental Chamber of Commerce faced some difficulties due to the dictatorial nature of one director, Chan Tao Nam. Kashiwabara, who had left Bangkok after the Chamber was registered, returned in January 1903, to restructure the organization.<sup>9</sup> Sanju Muramatsu resigned and left for Japan. Chan Tao Nam was dismissed and left Bangkok. Yet Chan Tao Nam seems to have made a name for himself as a leader of reformers among the Overseas Chinese in Thailand as Dr Sun Yat Sen referred to him and talked about the Chamber's plan to publish the first newspaper in Chinese on his first visit to Bangkok half a year later.

In October 1904, the Chamber did publish the first Chinese newspaper. In October 1908, Mr. Eric St. J. Lawson, a British national employed as the Commissioner of Police in the Police Department, Ministry of Local Government[hereafter the Ministry of the Capital], asked Luang Thoraninaruebet, Assistant Superintendent of Police for Chinese Affairs, about the activities of the Chamber. Luang Thorani reported that the Chamber was located in a shophouse on Ratchawong Road, the same location as the Japanese Goods Exhibition Centre, which Minister Inagaki rented from the Privy Purse. Many traders had become members by paying fees of several hundred baht each, amounting to several tens of thousands of baht in total. The Chamber had been active for two years, but the membership had begun to slacken. The newspaper *Maenam Kongpo* [Meinan Gongbao] 湄南公報 was printed on the first floor of the Chamber building. The paper was managed by Tan Khai Ho [Chen Kai He] 陳開河, 1867?–1929. (He was alternatively known as Tan Hai Chiu [Chen Hai Qiu] 陳海秋, or Tan Theng Po[Chen Cheng Bo] 陳澄波, a French protégé, tax farmer, and the third chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok in 1914). Before Minister Inagaki returned to Japan on 21 December 1905, he entrusted the Chamber to Tan Khai Ho. Between then and the Police Commissioner's enquiry in 1908, there had been no meeting whatsoever. The shophouse was rented to *Phim Thai*, a Thai newspaper, first printed in mid 1907, but the second floor still contained some property worth 3–4 thousand baht in the care of Tan Khai Ho.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Dr Sun Yat Sen's first visit to Thailand in May–June 1903

In October 1900, Dr Sun Yat Sen seized the opportunity created by the Boxer Rebellion in northern China to stage a coup at Huizhou 惠州 in Guangdong province in the southern China, but the attempt failed. In the aftermath, he went to Japan and did little for almost two years. He laid plans to invade

southern China from French Indochina with the help of French military support with the aim of establishing a republic. In December 1902 he traveled to Hanoi and tried to meet with the French Governor-General who declined the meeting but sent his deputy, Charles Hardouin.

Dr Sun did not know beforehand whether there were any Chinese sympathetic to the revolutionary cause in French Indochina. He met with some in Hanoi, but did not succeed in receiving any financial support from them.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, this activity constituted the first step of establishing a Chinese revolutionary organization in Southeast Asia. Even though Dr Sun received no cooperation from the French, he obtained from Hardouin, who had been the French consul in Siam for a long time, letters of recommendation to influential Chinese in Bangkok, who were French protégés. Dr Sun Yat Sen traveled to Bangkok in the hope of collecting funds but was unsuccessful. It is not clear whether he met with any Chinese with revolutionary sympathies in Bangkok. Previous studies on Dr Sun's first visit to Bangkok have insufficient detail on when he arrived and who he met. Here I shall study this issue in detail, using Thai government sources.<sup>12</sup>

The date of his arrival is not known, but he stayed at Hotel De La Paix, owned by a French woman, under a false name as a Japanese doctor, Takano. His stay was around 20 days on 4 June 1903, so he must have arrived around mid-May. He left Bangkok on 21 June 1903 by a ship, Namtung, for Saigon.

The Thai government learned about Dr Sun's visit from Phraya Narison Ratchakit (1865–1951), who reported meeting a person like Dr Sun, who was a “Chinese reformer” at the Hotel de La Paix. Phraya Narison had studied in the UK for seven years, been Commissioner of Monthon Phayap in the north of Thailand, and served as the second Thai minister to Japan from November 1903 until April 1910.

When King Rama V received the report from Phraya Narison, he sent an order dated 3 June 1903 for Phraya Narison and Prince Naret Worarit, the minister of the capital, to investigate the matter. On 4 June, Phraya Narison and Luang Samphakitpricha (1873–1936, his last official position was minister to Italy), a relative who had just come back from the Tokyo embassy, met with Dr Sun Yat Sen who told them that he had recommendation letters from Mr. Hardouin to meet three people:

Ng Lam Sam [Wu Lan San] 伍藍三 ; company name Kwong Nguan Long, 廣源隆, a Hakka Chinese, French protégé, teak trader, and founder of the Lamsam family;

Yi Ko Hong [Er Ge Feng] 二哥豐 ; or Tae Ti Wong [Zheng Zhi Yong] 鄭智勇, 1851–1935, a Teochew Chinese, French protégé, gambling tax farmer, and founder of the Techawanit family, who was given the title of Phra Anuwatrachaniyom in June 1918 by King Rama VI ;

Akon Tia Teng [Zhang Ding] 張丁 ; or Teng Sopha-nodon, Luang Udonphanphanit, 1842–1919, company name Kim Seng Lee, 金成利, a Teochew Chinese, teak trader and rice miller.

Phraya Narison and Luang Samphakitpricha asked Dr Sun whether Chinese in Thailand were interested in revolution in China at all. He replied “there are people who want a revolution in China, but only a small minority, maybe because the lives of Chinese in Thailand are not so hard.”<sup>13</sup>

Dr Sun met with Akon Tia Teng twice. On the first in May he was accompanied by a Frenchman

called Jourdan, and the second time he went alone. The minister of the capital's report to King Rama V dated 11 June stated that a person claiming to be Dr Sun Yat Sen tried to persuade Akon Tia Teng through an interpreter with the following message. If there was no revolution to change China into a republic, China would become a European colony. In Thailand there were many Chinese residents, and as Akon Tia Teng was a wealthy man, he could assist the revolutionary cause by mobilizing some funding and helping to create nationalist sentiment among his Chinese compatriots. He asked for help to raise money to buy arms also. In Guangxi province there were as many as 200,000 revolutionaries, but no arms. If they had some funds to buy arms, the French could be asked to assist in transporting them into Yunnan so they could be used for the revolution in Guangxi and Guangdong where a republic could be established and gradually expanded to cover the whole country.<sup>14</sup> Akon Tia Teng refused on grounds that the rich Chinese in Thailand only traded and did not understand politics, so raising funds would be impossible and he could not accept responsibility for the matter.

While in Thailand Dr Sun met with some people other than those listed above. Phra Phakdiphiratchaphak was sent by the minister of the capital to talk with Dr Sun at least six times. On 5 June, Dr Sun told him that Chan Tao Nam [Chen Dou Nan] was a leading reformer who had entered Thailand and had the support of the Japanese minister.<sup>15</sup> Phraya Inthrahibodi Siharatrongmuang, under-secretary of the Ministry of the Capital, commented on this report as follows:

Mr. Chan Tao Nam is no longer in Bangkok. He is a Cantonese who came from Saigon to Bangkok three years ago. He traded and helped administer the Oriental Chamber of Commerce, which received support from Japanese. He bought cheap goods from the saw mill of B. Smith, mortgaged them to Indochina Bank for more money than they were worth, and fled from Bangkok about ten months ago. What Dr Sun related is an old story that we cannot accept as truth.<sup>16</sup>

As noted above, Chan Tao Nam was probably a reformer in the camp of Kang You Wei. In addition, at a meeting on 13 June 1903, Dr Sun told Phra Phakdi that he had

heard that some Japanese are trying to print a newspaper in Chinese in Bangkok. If this is true, Japan should be popular among the Chinese, but I don't know whether it is good luck or bad luck for Siam. We don't know what Japan is thinking of doing next. If it's bad luck, the Siamese government will be in difficulty, so it would be better for the Siamese government to print its own Chinese newspaper as that would create a feeling of closeness with the Chinese and would be most beneficial for the Siamese government as well.<sup>17</sup>

From this we know that the group of Buntaro Kashiwabara, who tried to start a Chinese newspaper, was a different group from that of Dr Sun.

In mid 1903, when Dr Sun was in Thailand for the first time, key people in the Thai government had not yet classified Chinese in Thailand into conservative and revolutionary groups, but lumped all together as “reformers.” In a letter to the King on 13 June, summarizing Phraya Phakdi’s report on his meeting with Dr Sun, the minister of the capital stated: “About reform, the reformers may be divided into two groups. One wants reform for constitutional government, the other for a republic.”<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the under-secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Phraya Srisathap, invited Dr Sun to meet with him at his home on 8 June. Dr Sun seems to have liked Luang Samphakitpricha, a young diplomat who could speak English better than Thai. Dr Sun invited him for a dinner at the hotel on the night of 10 June and talked about the reasons why so many Chinese in Thailand were French protégés.

Did Dr Sun meet with any revolutionary Chinese in Bangkok? Throughout his stay, he was looked after by someone who knew English well and worked with Ng Lam Sam, a wealthy Chinese merchant and French protégé. The Thai secret police also watched Dr Sun constantly after learning of his arrival. Thus if Dr Sun had met with a Chinese revolutionary group then, there would be a report, but no such report exists.

Dr Sun died on 12 March 1925 and on 20 June, the hundredth day of merit making, the Kuomintang newspaper *Hua Siam Sinpo* [Hua Xian Xin Bao] 華暹新報 printed a special issue “to commemorate the 100th day of Sun Zhong Shan (Sun Yat Sen)’s departure” under the names of all the members of the Kuomintang in Thailand. On the first page of this special issue there was an article called “The Special issue to commemorate the 100th day of departure” written by Seow Hoot Seng (蕭佛成), 1864–1939, a Hokkien Chinese and British protégé who was head of the Siamese branch of the Kuomintang. Another article entitled “Record of important events of Sun Yat Sen” referred only to his visit to Thailand in 1908, noting that “Sun Yat Sen failed time after time. He could not stay freely in Annam, Japan, Hong Kong or Siam. He had to travel to America to collect funds.” The article did not mention Dr Sun’s visit to Thailand in 1903. For the years 1901–03, it mentioned only that, “In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion occurred, and it was thought that the Qing Dynasty would not have time to take care of southern China, thus a revolution broke out in Guangdong, but did not succeed. After that he went to spread his ideas and collect funds in Japan.”

Apart from this, “Record of important events” above mentioned reported that when Dr Sun went to Honolulu in 1894 and 1896, consciousness of nation among the Overseas Chinese was very weak, and the numbers mobilized were meager. In Japan he received support from members of Japanese anti-bureaucratic parties, but the Chinese in Japan were no different from other Overseas Chinese, who did not understand the meaning of revolution. Later when he went to Hawaii and the US in 1904, Dr Sun proposed his Three Principles of the People and Five Principles of the Constitution (三民主義五權憲法) to mobilize support, and joined hands with Huang Xing 黃興 and Song Jiao Ren 宋教仁 to set up a Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中國同盟會) in Japan.

From the above we now know that, according to the leaders of the Kuomintang in Thailand, revolutionary consciousness arose among the Chinese in Thailand after the year 1904. Seow Hoot Seng became

head of the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League established during Dr Sun's second visit to Thailand in November 1908. Seow Hoot Seng played a major role at the centre of Chinese politics in the 1920s and 1930s. Had he met Dr Sun in Thailand in 1903, he would surely have recorded the event, but it does not appear in the article "Records of important events of Sun Yat Sen," mentioned above. It is certain that on his first visit to Thailand in 1903, Dr Sun did not have an opportunity to meet with the group surrounding Seow Hoot Seng, which clearly adopted a revolutionary ideology few years later.

In 1903, political consciousness and nationalist feelings among the Chinese in Thailand were still very weak, and there was no core of a revolutionary movement. Dr Sun could not collect any funds or find ideological sympathizers among his compatriots, and went back to Japan via Saigon empty-handed.

### **3. The birth of Chinese nationalism during the Russo-Japanese War**

In 1905, two years after Dr Sun's first visit to Bangkok, a big change occurred within the Chinese community in Thailand, when five dialect groups joined hands to establish the Tian Hua Hospital. Previous to this event, each dialect group carried out its own activities separately.

The directors of the hospital, who were the heads of each dialect groups, would meet regularly at the hospital and had ample opportunities to discuss joint activities. The hospital became a very valuable meeting place for Chinese of all dialects. Discussion about a boycott of US goods by Chinese in Thailand took place there.

In addition, the US boycott was the first occasion when the Chinese in Thailand joined hands with compatriots on the mainland and in other countries for political action. The move to boycott US goods in China arose because of an agreement signed between the US and the Qing government to extend the life of a treaty, due to expire in 1904, which the US used to block immigration into the US and expel Chinese workers. Chinese in the US protested against the Qing government's cooperation in extending the old treaty in order to legitimate the expulsion of Chinese workers under international law. They called on all Overseas Chinese to boycott American goods. The movement began in China in May 1905, and spread all over the world, including British Malaya and Thailand, creating the earliest widespread nationalist movement in the modern history of China.

#### *The boycott of US goods*

On 8 April 1905, Russia's Great Baltic Fleet sailed past Singapore and docked at Cam Ranh Bay in Indochina. It was later destroyed in a battle in the Sea of Japan on 27–28 May. All Thai newspapers reported on both the Russo-Japanese war and the boycott of US goods that had begun to spread among the Overseas Chinese in all Southeast Asian societies.

The first report by the *Bangkok Times* on the boycott stated, "The success which has attended the Japanese in their war against Russia seems to be inspiring the 'meek and lowly' Chinese with an unwonted degree of determination for the resistance of American anti-Chinese legislation."<sup>19</sup> This article linked the boycott against US goods in China, which was becoming more violent, with Japan's fight for its

dignity in the Russo-Japanese war.

The *Bangkok Times* also reported a meeting in Singapore on 20 June 1905 about a decision on the boycott by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce (上海總務商会):

There was a large gathering of Chinese merchants and other members of the Chinese community in Tan Tock Seng's hospital, to discuss the question of taking joint action with Shanghai in regard to American goods and the American Chinese Exclusion Act. The meeting was representative of every section of Chinese traders, over 200 persons being present. A resolution was proposed by Mr. Chan Teow Nam and seconded by Mr. Tan Hoon Chew, that the action of the Shanghai Chinese Chamber of Commerce in deciding to boycott American traders and goods, until such time as satisfactory amendment be made in the laws dealing with the admission of Chinese into the United States, be approved, and that similar action be taken by the Chinese merchants in Singapore. This resolution was carried unanimously and it was decided to cable the decision to Shanghai, and also to cable to the Board of Commerce, and the Wai-wu-pu [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] at Peking urging them to strengthen the hands of the Chinese Minister in the matter. Action locally will be taken at once, but will not be retrospective; all contracts made up to the present will be carried out, but after that the boycott will be continued till such time as alteration is made in the laws.<sup>20</sup>

The Shanghai Chamber of Commerce was the first official such chamber in China, established in 1904 with the support of the Qing government.

The newspaper also reported a Cantonese meeting in Bangkok:

A very large and enthusiastic gathering, numbering over seven hundred Chinese, including all the Cantonese towkays and merchants, met yesterday [23 July 1905] afternoon at the old Chinese hospital [Kwong Shiu 廣肇, Cantonese hospital] at Sam Yek.... The meeting was in full accord with the sentiments expressed, and a resolution was unanimously adopted that, from this present date, all the Cantonese merchants and dealers pledge themselves to join their compatriots in China and elsewhere in this movement; not to do business with Americans or American firms, and to cease dealing or trading in American goods; and to forthwith instruct their agents in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore not to ship any further consignment of American goods to them in future.

A telegram sent to Yan Xiao Fang 嚴筱舫, head of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, stated: "We strictly adhere American boycott and approve unanimously your scheme. Kwong Shiu [Cantonese] Guild." The person who played an important role in this meeting was Wong Hang Chao [Wang Xing

Zhou] 王杏州, comprador of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank.<sup>21</sup>

One week later, a newspaper reported another meeting.

Yesterday [30 July] afternoon there was held another meeting of Chinese, at the Temple, near Sampeng, to consider the adoption of the American boycott. There were between four and five hundred persons present, chiefly belonging to the 'Kheh' [Hakka] section of Chinese.... There were six or seven speakers, who urged upon the audience the necessity of standing in with the boycott of Americans and all things American. The principal speaker was one Lin, said to be a mandarin, and a delegate from the central committee in China. A resolution, similar to that adopted at the Cantonese meeting, was passed unanimously and with great enthusiasm.<sup>22</sup>

The *Siam Observer* in its Thai-language edition of 1 August 1905 reported on the same meeting, stating that there were 400–500 participants at the Tian Hua hospital to discuss the boycott of US goods, and six Chinese went up on the podium to talk. Mr Liew To Sun, who was said to have graduated from a university in China, made a speech calling on Chinese traders to cooperate for their own protection. He referred to the bad government by the Manchu court and bureaucrats, which was detrimental to China, and called for all to cooperate in boycotting US goods until the US treated Chinese fairly.<sup>23</sup> Although reporting on the same event, the two newspaper accounts were different.

Mr. Lin or Liew To Sun might be Lin Ru Chun 林如春 (Lin Wen Ying 林文英), 1873–1914, a Hailam who studied in Japan and was associated with the Chinese revolutionary group in Japan. When he returned to Bangkok he collected a lot of funds, had a role in publishing the newspaper *Hua Siam Sinpo*, and joined with the Chinese United League.<sup>24</sup>

Big anti-US meetings organized on 1 and 6 August at the Tian Hua Hospital involved Chinese of all five dialect groups in Thailand, including two Cantonese leaders, Wong Hang Chao 王杏州 and Sam Hing Si [Shen Xing Si] 沈荇思, a comprador of Banque de l'Indochine. Three thousand attended the second meeting on 6 August.<sup>25</sup> A newspaper reported:

Another largely attended meeting of Chinese was held at the New Chinese Hospital [Tian Hua Hospital], Sam Yek, yesterday, at which further resolutions of a nature similar to those adopted at the previous meetings, were passed. This meeting was composed of Cantonese, Swatow [Teochew], Hylam [Hailam], Hakka and Hokkin [Hokkien] Chinese. It was decided, by the Hylams, we understand, to bring influence to bear upon household servants employed in American households in Bangkok and persuade them to leave such employment, and upon others not to engage themselves to Americans during the continuance of the boycott. It was further suggested that a number of 'inspectors' be appointed to go the rounds of shops etc. to mark all American goods, and to exercise a check upon the intro-

duction of further stocks of American commodities into Bangkok.<sup>26</sup>

The Hailam included many who worked as servants and cooks in the households of westerners.

On 4 August 1905, Tan Khai Ho (or Hai Chiu) and Wong Hang Chao went as representatives of the Tian Hua Hospital to request the head of the Police Department to issue a document stating that the meeting every Sunday at the Chinese hospital was about the administration of the hospital and so was not illegal.<sup>27</sup> This was to prevent these events being seen as meetings of secret society, which were against the law.

On 8 August, a telegram was sent from Tian Hua Hospital in Bangkok to the Tung Wah Hospital (established in 1870 to give free services to impoverished Chinese) in Hong Kong and Tung Tsai Hospital in Singapore, stating: "Communicate all our agencies ship no American goods. Boycotted strictly here by whole community. Tin Wah Hospital [Tian Hua Hospital ]."<sup>28</sup>

#### *Establishment of the Tian Hua or Chinese Hospital*

The Tian Hua Hospital, the first set up by the five Chinese dialect groups in Thailand, was established by six leading Chinese traders: (1) Ng Lam Sam, Hakka; (2) Tia Kiang Sam [Zhang Jian San] 張見三, son of Akon Tia Teng or Phra Sophonphetcharat, Teochew; (3) Wong Hang Chao, Cantonese; (4) Ko Hu Chia [Gao Hui Shi] 高暉石, Luang Phakdiphatharakon, Teochew; (5) Min Laohasetthi (Liu Cong Min, 劉聰敏), Phraya Charoenratchathon, Hokkien; and (6) Lao Ki Ping [Liu Ji Bin] 劉繼賓, Phraya Phakdiphatharakon, Teochew.<sup>29</sup> Of the six, Ng Lam Sam and Akon Tia Teng had met Dr Sun Yat Sen, as related earlier. Ko Hu Chia (1873?-1931) was a British protégé and the first chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok, established in November 1909 and now known as the Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (泰國中華總商會). Wong Hang Chao was one of the leaders of the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中國同盟會), established at about the time of Dr Sun Yat Sen's second visit to Bangkok in 1908, and became deputy chairman when this organization was converted into a branch of the Kuomintang at a general meeting on 23 March 1913. On that day, 200 out of the total membership of 700 attended the meeting.<sup>30</sup> Min Lao-hasetthi and Lao Ki Ping were both Chinese who received noble ranks from King Rama V.

King Rama V attended the ceremonial opening of Tian Hua Hospital on 19 September 1905. The hospital, located in Yaowarat and equipped with 250 beds, opened for patients on 20 September, the king's birthday. The total cost of the building was 160,000 baht, to which the king contributed 8,000 baht at the ceremonial opening.<sup>31</sup>

The building of the Tian Hua Hospital had meaning not only as a public health service but also as a symbol of the unity of Chinese society in Thailand, and as a center for common activity among the five Chinese dialects. The building was completed in mid 1905 in time to be used as a meeting place for the anti-US movement.

In August 1905 the boycott movement intensified. Dock workers refused to unload US goods such

as wheat flour, cigarettes, and lamp oil. Chinese importers at the Bangkok port sent all the boycotted goods back to Hong Kong and Singapore. Cigarettes that evaded the boycott and were sold in front of shops, were seized and kept in Tian Hua Hospital.

But by mid October, the boycott of wheat flour and lamp oil became less stringent, as wheat flour was an important ingredient in various kinds of sweets consumed in the everyday life of both Thai and Chinese, and lamp oil was also crucial for everyday lighting because electricity was not yet widespread. The major reason for this relaxation of the boycott may have been the situation in Shanghai where the boycott was first eased. In addition, the US government gave a clear indication that it would review its policy on Chinese immigration.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. The division of Chinese into revolutionary and conservative factions, and the first Chinese daily newspaper

The newspaper *Maenam Kongpo* [Meinan Gongbao] 湄南公報<sup>33</sup> mentioned at the end of the first section above, was originally issued as *Menam Yet Poh* [Meinan Ribao] 美南日報, printed for the first time on 10 October 1904. According to the *Bangkok Times*, “The first number of the new Chinese daily newspaper in Bangkok, the Me-Nam Yet Poh appeared today [10 October 1904]. The editor is an ex-Mandarin from China.”<sup>34</sup> This editor probably referred to Tan Keng Hua [Chen Jing Hua] 陳景華.

The links between *Menam Yet Poh* (Meinan Ribao, 美南日報) and *Maenam Yitpo* (Meinan Ribao, 湄南日報); (note the different Chinese characters), and what happened to *Maenam Yitpo* were reported by Xie You Rong in an article on “A History of Newspapers in Siam,” printed in the journal *Nanyang Xuebao* in 1947<sup>35</sup> as follows.

After Tan Keng Hua took refuge in Thailand, he published the newspaper *Menam Yet Poh* in association with another two Chinese who were there before him, namely Seow Hoot Seng and Sam Hing Si, with himself as editor. But as the enterprise made a loss, before long they reorganized the structure and changed the name to *Maenam Yitpo*. At about that time Xu Qin 徐勤 from the pro-imperial Bao Huang group, came to Thailand and tried to write articles in support of the Qing Dynasty. Half of the newspaper board appreciated these articles, so another reorganization took place with a split into two groups. 1. The Bao Huang group continued to run the *Maenam Yitpo*, but changed the name to *Kinam Yitpo* (啓南日報). 2. The revolutionary faction started another newspaper called *Hua Siam Yitpo* (華暹日報) in the four years before the inauguration of the Chinese republic with Seow Hoot Seng as the chairman of the company and Tan Keng Hua as editor.

A book on *History of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand*,<sup>36</sup> published by a committee set up by the Taiwanese government in 1959 to collect information and publish histories of the Overseas Chinese, which can be considered a good-standard book, reprinted the above article of Xie You Rong with very

little change from the original.

Xie You Rong appears to be the only authority on the history of Chinese newspapers in Thailand, still some facts are wrong or unclear. For example in the short quotation cited above, he misspelled *Hua Siam Sinpo* (華暹新報) as *Hua Siam Yitpo* (華暹日報) and *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報) as *Kinam Yitpo* (啓南日報). Also, *Hua Siam Sinpo* (華暹新報) was first published on 15 April of 1907<sup>37</sup> not 1908 (four years before the foundation of the Chinese republic). As for Xu Qin (1873–1945), a top student of Kang You Wei, he was the editor and publisher of *Kinam Sinpo* [Qinan Xinbao] 啓南新報 which first appeared on 1 January 1909.<sup>38</sup> The first issues of these two newspapers were two years apart, hence Xie You Rong's account of the split into two factions is incorrect.

Several other issues are unclear. For example, it is not certain whether Seow Hoot Seng and Sam Hing Si were involved in the initial publication of *Menam Yet Poh* (美南日報), when *Menam Yet Poh* was renamed as *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報), and how long *Maenam Yitpo* continued to appear.

The holdings of Chinese newspapers in the National Library of Thailand begin after 1917. When Xie You Rong wrote his “A History of Newspapers in Siam,” he might not have had the opportunity to read the papers themselves but relied on oral evidence. Given the lack of source material, it is very difficult to clarify the issues noted above. Here I will present four documents to throw some light on the matter.

1. The *Bangkok Times* of 6 December 1905 reported on a burglary:

In the early hours of this morning, there was a burglary at the office of the Chinese morning paper, the Menam Daily Press, which is published in Bangkok. It appears that after the paper went to press, the type was left in the formes, to be distributed this morning. In the interim, however, some person entered the premiers [premises] from the back and made off with the lot. The result is that tomorrow there will be no issue of the paper, as there is hardly any type left in the office. The Police are endeavoring to trace the type, which the Editor is sure can be identified as it is practically all new type, and there are not many Chinese printers here who possess so extensive an outfit of new Chinese type.

2. An article on “Various Thoughts on Siam” by Kurumi Rakseki, which appeared in the journal *Katsudo no Nihon* (活動之日本, “Japanese Activist”) in 1906, presented an account on the state of newspapers in Siam according to a Japanese gentleman who had lived in Siam for seven years, was knowledgeable about Japan and China, and understood French, English and Thai.

All the papers are printed in Bangkok. There are four titles. Only one is printed in Thai by a Siamese, and that is a weekly. Of the four daily newspapers, three are managed by Englishmen, namely, *Bangkok Times*, *Free Press* and *Observer*. All have six pages, four in English and two in Thai. The first of these sides with Japan. The second takes a pro-French stance. The third is more or less neutral. The other publication is a Chinese-language newspaper

called 美南日報 *Menam Yet Poh*, which is the organ of Chinese revolutionaries. The chief editor is a Cantonese, family name Tan, and thus knows about the level of education of the Siamese.<sup>39</sup>

The account possibly came from Inagaki, the Japanese minister who had returned to Japan, or from Dr Tokichi Masao, a legal advisor to the Thai government at the time, who later became Phraya Mahithonmanupakonkosonkhun, and returned to Japan temporarily. The story refers to the period before June 1906

3. In an article titled “Traditional Policies of the Reactionary Forces”<sup>40</sup> in *Hua Siam Sinpo* on 10 August 1929, Seow Hoot Seng described Chinese newspapers in Siam before and after the establishment of the Chinese republic in 1911:

Before the revolution there were Chinese newspapers which showed a clear stance of “protecting the Manchu Dynasty” (保滿旗幟) and were in conflict with the newspaper *Hua Siam Sinpo*, that is *Kinam* (啓南) and *Maenam* (湄南). After the revolution, these newspapers closed down according to the law of natural selection. Some tried to adjust to the mainstream for survival.

The article states clearly that before the revolution the *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報) was an organ of the conservative faction fighting against *Hua Siam Sinpo*.

4. A letter from the minister of the capital to King Rama V dated 9 January 1909 reported that *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報) was published by Xu Qin and Nia Pek Meng [Liang Bo Ming] 梁伯鳴, who traveled to Thailand on the orders of Kang You Wei and received help from the group of Tan Khai Ho, a Chinese in Thailand.<sup>41</sup>

From the first and second documents, we can assume that *Menam Yet Poh* (美南日報), which was first published on 10 October 1904, continued to be printed under the same name until at least December 1905.

But this does not tally with the police report of October 1908, cited at the end of the first section above, that before Minister Inagaki returned to Japan at the end of 1905, *Maenam Kongpo* or *Maenam Yitpo*<sup>42</sup> was printed at the meeting hall of the Oriental Chamber of Commerce under the management of Tan Khai Ho, and that before 1908 [probably in the mid 1907] *Maenam Yitpo* had ceased publication and the hall was rented instead by the *Phim Thai* newspaper. But possibly the discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the police report did not properly distinguish between *Menam Yet Poh* (美南日報) and *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報), which had changed its name.

When did *Menam Yet Poh* change to *Maenam Yitpo* and come under the control of the conservative faction?

*Hua Siam Sinpo*, which belonged to the Kuomintang, reported in issue 7337 published on 31 Janu-

ary 1930 that this would be the final issue due to the Thai government suppression of the Kuomintang. Its rival, *Tonghua Minpo* (中華民國報), which *Hua Siam Sinpo* constantly attacked for being an organ of the conservative faction or old Bao Huang group and supporting the Peking government, enemy of the Kuomintang, began to print in English the words “Established 1906” underneath its masthead from issue 6863 dated 5 February 1931. This newspaper was first published in 1912 and gave no explanation why it pushed back its claimed origin to 1906. Maybe this newspaper thought that the accusation of being an old conservative organ had become a thing of the past, like the power of the Kuomintang which had declined with the passage of time. Possibly *Tonghua Minpo* claimed origins in 1906 because it thought of itself as the descendant of *Maenam Yitpo*, the first conservative newspaper managed by Tan Khai Ho, a prominent conservative among the Chinese in Thailand. If that is the case we can assume that *Menam Yet Poh* (美南日報) changed its name to *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報) in 1906.

If the third document above is accurate about the conflict between *Hua Siam Sinpo* and *Maenam Yitpo*, then *Maenam Yitpo* must still have existed in April 1907 when *Hua Siam Sinpo* was first published. But in October 1908 *Maenam Yitpo* no longer existed for sure.

The fourth document above, which states that Tan Khai Ho, who managed *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報), had a role in the launching of *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報), shows the continuity of management between the two papers.

From the above, the early history of Chinese newspapers can be reconstructed as follows. The Oriental Chamber of Commerce, which was under the control of Minister Inagaki, published *Menam Yet Poh* (美南日報) for the first time on 10 October 1904, with Tan Keng Hua as editor. Early in 1906 after Inagaki left for Japan, Tan Khai Ho came to manage the newspaper in lieu of Mr. Tan Keng Hua, and reorganized it as *Maenam Yitpo* (湄南日報) with a conservative stance. *Maenam Yitpo* was printed continuously until around the end of 1907. Two years later Xu Qin (徐勤), an important person from the Bao Huang or pro-Qing Dynasty faction, came to Thailand and launched *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報) in January 1909, with co-operation from Tan Khai Ho. In April 1907 Seow Hoot Seng, Tan Keng Hua and friends from the revolutionary faction launched *Hua Siam Sinpo* which became the paper of the Kuomintang and continued printing until the end of January 1930.

#### *The emergence of the revolutionary faction*

Tan Keng Hua [Chen Jing Hua] 陳景華 1865?–1913, born in Xiang Shan, Guangdong, China, chief editor of *Menam Yet Poh*, passed the local level examination of the Imperial examination system to enter Chinese government service in 1888. While serving as a district chief of Gui Ping (桂平) in Guangxi province in 1903, he was jailed for killing a gangster sent to collect information by Cen Chun Xuan (岑春煊), the governor of the both Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, but escaped and fled from Hong Kong to Thailand. Learning about this from an English newspaper printed in China, the Thai police carried out an investigation which revealed that in October–November 1903 Tan Keng Hua was living in the house of Wong Hang Chao, a Cantonese comprador of Bangkok branch of Hongkong

and Shanghai Bank, and in the house of Sam Hing Si, a Cantonese comprador in the Bangkok branch of the Banque d'Indochine. He had met with only a handful of Cantonese.<sup>43</sup> The fact that such an important convict had come to Thailand might be because Thailand had no diplomatic relations with the Qing government, so there was no risk of him being repatriated. *Menam Yet Poh* was launched in October 1904, a year after Tan Keng Hua arrived in Thailand, but there are no documents about his movements in Thailand at this time. He became secretary general of the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中国同盟会) which Dr Sun Yat Sen had set up in November 1908, with Seow Hoot Seng as chairman and Sam Hing Si as treasurer.

It is not clear whether there were any open revolutionaries among the Chinese in Thailand around the time *Menam Yet Poh* was launched in late 1904. Most likely there were “reformers” who were aligned neither with the revolutionaries nor the conservative Bao Huang group. People who later divided into different factions were working together in this earlier period at *Menam Yet Poh*. Wong Hang Chao and Sam Hing Si, who were later revolutionaries, cooperated with Tan Khai Ho of the later Bao Huang group over the boycott of US goods in August 1905.



**Photo 1.** Seow Hoot Seng

Seow Hoot Seng wrote in *Hua Siam Sinpo* of 24 August 1928 that he “had the intention to oppose the Manchu dynasty” long before Dr Sun Yat Sen established the anti-Qing Revive China Society (Xing Zhong Hui, 興中會) in 1894.<sup>44</sup> In the edition of 17 July 1929, he wrote that “Seow Hoot Seng had devoted his body for society for 25 years.”<sup>45</sup> If he truly had been involved in political movements for 25 years, the start would have been around 1905. His ancestors were Hokkien, but he was also fluent in Cantonese, the language of most early revolutionaries. As a representative from Thailand at the first general meeting of Kuomintang representatives from all over China at Guangzhou in January 1924, he made a report in Cantonese which Wang Jing Wei (汪精衛) translated into Mandarin.<sup>46</sup>

Seow Hoot Seng wrote little about his memoirs except articles published in *Hua Siam Sinpo* in the late 1920s. There is very limited study of the man due to the lack of documents or insufficient efforts to find more.

A study of “Hsiao Fo-ch'eng [Seow Hoot Seng] and the Revolutionary Movement in Early Republican China” (暹華蕭佛成與民初革命) by Chiang Yung Ching (蔣永敬)<sup>47</sup> is highly valuable, but does not use his writings in *Hua Siam Sinpo* cited above. Chiang Yung Ching refers to an article of “A Brief History of Revolutionary movement of oversea Chinese in Siam” (暹羅華僑革命過程述略) which is the record of an interview with Seow Hoot Seng, transcribed by Deng Xue Feng (鄧雪峯) and published in the monthly journal *San Min Zhu Yi* in 1936.<sup>48</sup> This document is an oral record and includes passages where Deng Xue Feng misunderstood what Seow Hoot Seng had said. The most serious mistake is a statement to the effect that sometimes Seow Hoot Seng sent anti-Manchu articles to be printed in *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報) edited by Tan Keng Hua. Chiang Yung Ching's article repeats this error.

#### *The contest between conservatives and revolutionaries*

In *Hua Siam Sinpo*, Seow Hoot Seng related his memory of the contest with the conservatives as follows.

During 1907–8 this newspaper(*Hua Siam Sinpo*) called for a revolution against the Manchu. This angered the bull-headed people with power. Eventually they held a meeting at a hospital [Tian Hua Hospital] and boycotted this newspaper. At that time the evil power forces of the old order were very bull-headed. Their boycott reduced the total sales by four-fifths. This showed how much the newspaper caused anger to the people in general. But this newspaper did not lose heart and announced that it would be printed even if there was only one Chinese in Siam to read it. We did not lose heart from being threatened by the evil power of bull-headed people. We will not sue them in court for only this matter. The fight between the conservatives and the revolutionaries should be decided by the society, by open debate. When the newspaper called on people to give up pigtailed, the bull-headed people were angry. Their newspaper showered contempt on me and Tan Keng Hua using dirty words. But I and Tan Keng Hua did not take offence at all.<sup>49</sup>

In a later article he related about the boycott of *Hua Siam Sinpo* in more detail as follows.

When Emperor Guang Xu and Empress Dowager Xi Tai Hou died [mother and adopted son passed away together on 14–15 November 1908], powerful Chinese in Bangkok set up an altar at one of the big hospitals [meaning Tian Hua Hospital]. *Hua Siam Sinpo* carried an article warning that such practice was inappropriate, causing much anger among those in the old order. The powerful among them boycotted this newspaper. But the people of this newspaper did not lose heart because of this threat. We boasted in the newspaper that we would print even if there was only one reader.<sup>50</sup>

On 7 January 1909, Luang Thorani, Assistant Superintendent of Police for Chinese Affairs, reported that daily sales of *Hua Siam Sinpo* fell due to the boycott from 300 to 100, while *Kinam Sinpo* (啓南新報) from the conservative faction, which was printed for the first time on 1 January of same year, could sell more than 300.<sup>51</sup>

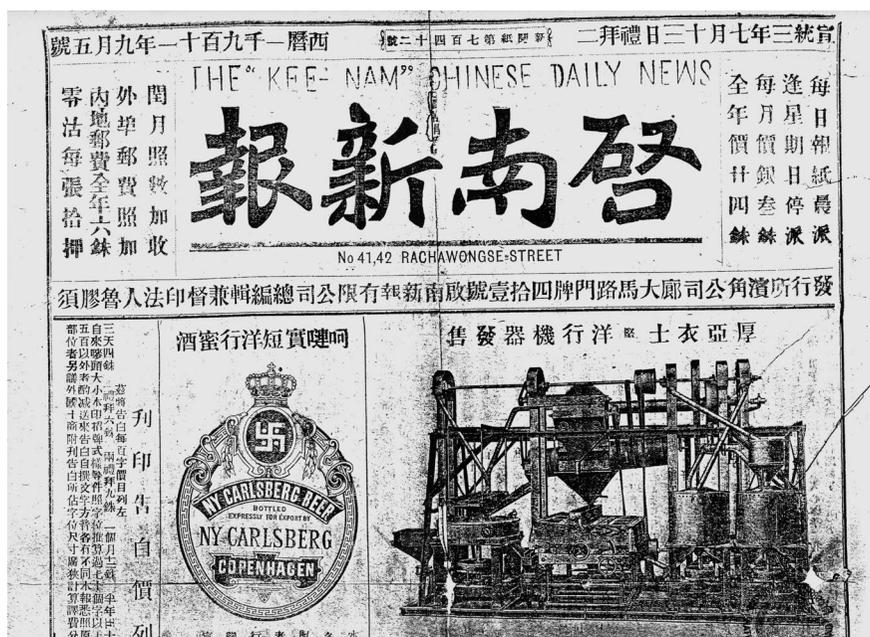


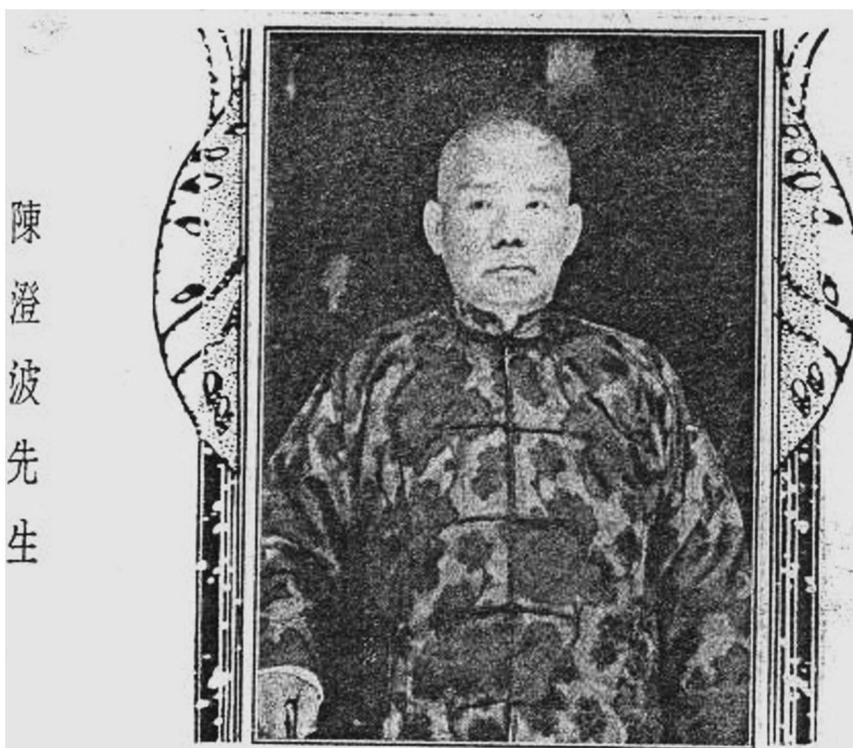
Photo 2. Kinam Sinpo

*Bangkok Times* reported that

A well attended meeting of the Chinese community was held yesterday at the Chinese Hospital [Tian Hua Hospital] for the purpose of considering what steps should be taken to go into mourning for the deaths of the Emperor of China and the Dowager Empress. It was re-

solved to observe the 2nd of the Chinese Moon (Wednesday next) as a day of mourning.<sup>52</sup>

The date for mourning was 25 November 1908. The most powerful figure on the Tian Hua Hospital Committee in 1908 was Tan Khai Ho of the conservative faction. While on the committee, he objected strongly to his Chinese friends using the name of the hospital in sending a petition to the police for the release of Ma Heng Soon (馬興順), a Teochew revolutionary in Thailand who was arrested in China.<sup>53</sup>



**Photo 3.** Tan Khai Ho

*Dr Sun Yat Sen's second visit to Thailand*

Seow Hoot Seng did not mention any conflict between the conservative and the revolutionary factions prior to the controversy over the ceremonial for the deaths of the Emperor and Dowager. This suggests that the conflict first became apparent in late 1908, about the time that the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中国同盟会) was established using the Chinese Association (Zhong Hua Hui Guan, 中華会館) as a front, and Dr Sun Yat Sen openly traveled to Bangkok.

On 18 November 1908, the Chinese Society led by Seow Hoot Seng invited the minister of the capital, Chaophraya Yommarat, to preside over the opening of the Chinese Association. The event began

with more than a hundred members of the Association's members standing before a portrait of King Rama V while Seow Hoot Seng read respectfully a celebratory address before the portrait.<sup>54</sup> This action was in contrast to their stance towards the Qing Dynasty, but preserving good relations with the Thai government was an important condition to ensure their political movement in Thailand went smoothly. Seow Hoot Seng was very careful to ensure that important people in the Thai government liked him. His capability was manifested in the long run. But King Rama VII who ascended the throne in November 1925 was very wary of the increased power of the Chinese. Force was used to suppress the Kuomintang in Thailand from 1929 onwards, causing the Chinese Association (Zhong Hua Hui Guan) to close itself down in June 1931.<sup>55</sup>

On 20 November 1908, Dr Sun Yat Sen left Singapore for Bangkok together with Hu Hang Min [Hu Han Min] 胡漢民, Hu Ngi Sae [Hu Yi Sheng] 胡毅生, Ho Khwok Hu [He Ke Fu] 何克夫, and Lo Tang Sang [Lu Zhong Shan] 盧仲珊. On the day before their departure, the revolutionary group in Singapore tried to obstruct a memorial service arranged by the conservative for the late Emperor and Empress Dowager, resulting in a clash. Dr Sun Yat Sen had just been warned and reprimanded heavily by the British colonial government in Singapore.<sup>56</sup>

After his first visit in 1903, Dr. Sun left Bangkok without much benefit, and traveled via Saigon to arrive in Japan at the end of July. In Japan he tried to find funding for his travel costs by various methods so that he could go to Hawaii. After staying in the US and Europe for about two years, he returned to Japan and cooperated with new members to set up the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中国同盟会) in Tokyo in August 1905. In the same year, he went to establish a branch in Saigon, then in Singapore in April 1906, followed by branches in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and the Dutch East Indies. Because of pressure on Japan by the Qing government, Dr Sun had to leave Japan in March 1907 together with Wang Jing Wei (汪精衛), Hu Han Min (胡漢民) and others to stay in Singapore, Saigon and Hanoi. In December 1907 he mounted an invasion into southern China from Indochina but it was not successful. On 29 April 1908 the He Kou Rebellion (河口) broke out along the Yunnan border but failed. Dr Sun Yat Sen planned to go to Europe to collect more funds on a large scale. He traveled to Bangkok to raise funds for travel expenses, and sent Wang Jing Wei to Yangon for the same purpose. Around this time branches of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui) were established in Bangkok and Yangon.<sup>57</sup>

On his second visit to Bangkok, Dr Sun Yat Sen and others stayed at Seow Hoot Seng's house. He gave speeches at the house of Wong Hang Chao in Sampeng and on 1 December 1908 at the Chinese Association (Zhong Hua Hui Guan, 中華會館), which had just been established. In these speeches Dr Sun Yat Sen pledged to develop the standard of living of the Chinese people and ensure equal treatment for all, which would require a revolution by those who loved the nation. The speech was printed in *Hua Siam Sinpo*. The minister of the capital ruled that though Siam do not have diplomatic relations with the Qing government, a speech advocating a revolution to overthrow the emperor was a threat to public order. The minister decided to expel Dr Sun from Thailand under an order dated 3 December.

Eric St. J. Lawson, Commissioner of Police, Police Department, Ministry of the Capital (Local Government), was to execute the order. Dr Sun met with Lawson and the under-secretary of the Ministry of the Capital on 5 December with Seow Hoot Seng acting as interpreter, with the aim of asking for leniency and permission to remain for another seven days. The two also went to meet the US minister in order to show proof that Dr Sun was an American citizen, born in Hawaii, and to request his assistance to prolong Dr Sun's stay until the end of December. Eventually however, Dr Sun had to leave Thailand on 10 December 1908.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

This research shows that nationalist sentiment arose among the Chinese in Thailand around the time of the Russo-Japanese war. Comparing Chinese society in Thailand before and after this war reveals how the movement changed.

When Dr Sun Yat Sen came to Thailand for the first time in 1903, nobody was interested in him except a few Thai government officials. The Chinese in Thailand were not political at all. They began to be conscious about being a modern nation and engage in political movements around the time of the Russo-Japanese war.

The establishment of the Tian Hua Hospital in 1905 was a first example of successful cooperation among the five Chinese dialect groups in Thailand. It was also symbol of unity for the Chinese in Thailand. A daily newspaper in Chinese appeared at this time.

In mid 1905 the Chinese in Thailand mobilized to boycott US goods in cooperation with Chinese both inside and outside China, with the same objectives of protecting Chinese interests, Chinese dignity, and equality of treatment for Chinese. Many meetings were held to display this unity, and the recently established Tian Hua Hospital was the center of activity.

But this period of happy cooperation among the Chinese in Thailand to demand reform was short-lived. From 1906 onwards, especially after the Siamese branch of the Chinese United League (Zhong Guo Tong Meng Hui, 中国同盟会) was established in November 1908, the Chinese Thailand became divided into the conservative Bao Huang group on one side and the revolutionaries on the other. Subsequently the conflict between the two became more acute.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Miyazaki Toten Zenshu, Vol. 1 [宮崎滔天全集 第一卷] (in Japanese), Heibonsha, Tokyo, 1971, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Miyazaki Toten Zenshu, Vol. 5 [宮崎滔天全集 第五卷], 1976, pp. 662-3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>5</sup> NAT (National Archives of Thailand) Ro. 5 To. 21/6 [5.5 21/6].

<sup>6</sup> Inagaki Manjiro [稲垣満次郎], "Siam Jijo [暹羅事情]" (Situation in Siam), *Waseda Gakhou* [早稻田学報], No. 89, 1903, pp. 13-15 (in Japanese).

<sup>7</sup> Names of Chinese resident in Thailand are transcribed as they appear in Thai documents with the Mandarin pronunciation in brackets.

- <sup>8</sup> NAT Ro.5 Koso.12.2/9 [ร.5 กษ.12.2/9]; also see Japanese Diplomatic Record Office 3.3.5.5-1 “Zai Kaigai no Bu (File on Chambers of Commerce in foreign countries)”
- <sup>9</sup> Taishi Korousha Denki Hensankai [対支功勞者伝記編纂会], *Zoku Taishi Kaikoroku, Gekan Retsuden* [統对支回顧録 下巻列伝] (Memoirs of activities towards China, a personal history), Dai Nihon Kyoka Toshiyo Kabushikikaisha [大日本教化図書株式会社], 1941, pp. 658–660 (in Japanese).
- <sup>10</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/3 [ร.5 น.8.7/3].
- <sup>11</sup> Chen Xi Qi [陳錫祺] ed, *Sun Zhong Shan Nianpu (Shang)* [孫中山年譜長編 (上)] (Table of dates and details of Dr Sun Yat Sen’s early activities, the first part), Zhong Hua Shuji [中華書局], 1991, Beijing, pp. 281–288 (in Chinese).
- <sup>12</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>13</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>14</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>15</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>16</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>17</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>18</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [ร.5 ต.21/10].
- <sup>19</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 27 May 1905
- <sup>20</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 28 June 1905
- <sup>21</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 24 July 1905
- <sup>22</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 31 July 1905
- <sup>23</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/2 [ร.5 น.8.7/2].
- <sup>24</sup> Zou Lu [鄒魯] “Lin Wen Ying Shilue [林文英事略]” (History of Lin Wen Ying), in *Zou Lu Quan Ji (6) Zhongguo Guomindang Shigao (4)* [鄒魯全集 (六), 中国国民党史稿 (四)], Sanmin Shuju [三民書局], Taipei, 1976, p. 1499 (in Chinese).
- <sup>25</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/2 [ร.5 น.8.7/2].
- <sup>26</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 7 Aug.1905
- <sup>27</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.2.12/28 [ร.5 ต.2.12/28].
- <sup>28</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 9 Aug.1905
- <sup>29</sup> *โรงพยาบาลเทียนฟ้ามูลนิธิศิริราชรอบ 100 ปี 2446–2546* (Centenary of Thian Fah Foundation Hospital, 1903–2003), 2004, p. 98 in Chinese, p. 47 in Thai.
- <sup>30</sup> NAT. Ro.6 No.25/33 [ร.6 น.25/33].
- <sup>31</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 20 Sept. 1905
- <sup>32</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 20, 21 Oct. 1905
- <sup>33</sup> I understand that Maenam Kongpo (湄南公報) and the Maenam Yitpo (湄南日報) are the same newspaper.
- <sup>34</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 10 Oct.1904
- <sup>35</sup> Xie You Rong [謝猶榮], “暹羅報業史 (History of Newspapers in Siam)”, in *Nanyang Xuebao* [南洋學報] Vol. 4, No. 2 (1947), p. 40 (in Chinese).
- <sup>36</sup> 華僑志編纂委員會編 (Committee to compile historical facts of the Overseas Chinese), 泰國華僑志 (*History of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand*), Taipei, 1959, pp. 97, 190 (in Chinese).
- <sup>37</sup> NAT. Ro.7 Mo.26.3/30,31 [ร.7 ม.26.3/30, 31].
- <sup>38</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/8 [ร.5 น.8.7/8].
- <sup>39</sup> Kurumi Rakseki [胡桃樂石], “Siam Zatsukan (ge) [暹羅雜感 (下)]” (Various thoughts on Siam, final part), *Katsudo no Nihon* [活動之日本] (Japanese activists), Vol. 4, No. 3, 1906, p. 67 (in Japanese).
- <sup>40</sup> *Hua Siam Sinpo* (華暹新報), 10 Aug.1929
- <sup>41</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/8 [ร.5 น.8.7/8].
- <sup>42</sup> See note 33
- <sup>43</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.99/66 [ร.5 น.99/66].
- <sup>44</sup> Seow Hoot Seng [蕭佛成], “罪言 [An accusation]”, in *Hua Siam Sinpo*, 24 Aug. 1928.
- <sup>45</sup> Seow Hoot Seng [蕭佛成], “蕭佛成控告中華民國報之原因 [Reasons for the case against Tonghua Minpo]”, in *Hua Siam Sinpo*, 17 July 1929.
- <sup>46</sup> *Hua Siam Sinpo*, 5 Feb. 1924.
- <sup>47</sup> Ng Lun Ngai-ha, Chang Chak Yan eds [吳倫霓霞, 鄭亦瑛編], 兩次世界大戰期間在亞州之海外華人 (*Overseas Chinese in Asia Between the Two World Wars*), Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1989, pp. 245–246 (in Chinese).
- <sup>48</sup> Seow Hoot Seng, transcribed by Deng Xue Feng [蕭佛成口述·鄧雪峯筆記], “暹羅華僑革命過程述略 (A Brief History of Revolutionary movement of oversea Chinese in Siam)”, *San Min Zhu Yi Yuekan* [三民主義月刊], Vol. 7, no. 4, 1936, pp. 23–25 (in

Chinese).

- <sup>49</sup> Seow Hoot Seng, "Reasons for the case against Tonghua Minpo," in *Hua Siam Sinpo*, 17 July 1929.
- <sup>50</sup> Seow Hoot Seng [蕭佛成], "自懺 (Self-appraisal)," in *Hua Siam Sinpo*, 9 Aug. 1929.
- <sup>51</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/7 [໓.5 ໙.8.7/7].
- <sup>52</sup> *Bangkok Times*, 21 Nov. 1908.
- <sup>53</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.8.7/9 [໓.5 ໙.8.7/9].
- <sup>54</sup> NAT. Ro.5 No.20/29 [໓.5 ໙.20/29].
- <sup>55</sup> *Tonghua Minpo* (中華民國報), 3 June 1931.
- <sup>56</sup> Chen Xi Qi [陳錫祺] ed, *Sun Zhong Shan Nianpu (Shang)* [孫中山年譜長編 (上)], p. 447; *Bangkok Times*, 2 Jan. 1909.
- <sup>57</sup> Chen Xi Qi [陳錫祺] ed, *Sun Zhong Shan Nianpu (Shang)* [孫中山年譜長編 (上)], pp. 358-452.
- <sup>58</sup> NAT. Ro.5 To.21/10 [໓.5 ໓.21/10].