

# The Peoples of French Indochina

Michael C. Howard

French colonial rule created an environment in which the various peoples inhabiting the region underwent significant changes within their own societies and in the ways in which they related to one another. In addition to adding more Europeans to the local ethnic mix and increasing their cultural influence, it set in motion a transition from a pre-colonial feudal system that controlled only a portion of the territory encompassing Indochina, while leaving many people relatively autonomous from state control, to a colonial one that sought to exert greater control over all of the people living within the entire territory.

The area encompassing Indochina includes a wide variety of different peoples mostly speaking languages belonging to the dominant linguistic families found in Southeast Asia: Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic), Daic (Tai-Kadai), Hmong-Mien, Malayo-Polynesian (Austronesian), and Sino-Tibetan. Peoples associated with these linguistic families migrated to Southeast Asia at different times and subsequently interacted with one another and underwent differing degrees of change and assimilation over the centuries.

Mon-Khmer speaking peoples arrived in Indochina first from their homeland along the Yangtze River, over 4,000 years ago, settling in the northern part of Vietnam and Laos, migrating down the Mekong River, and subsequently spreading out from the river into adjacent areas of Laos, central and southern Vietnam, and Cambodia. Daic (Tai-Kadai) speaking peoples began migrating south from the Yangtze River to settle in northern Vietnam initially 3,000 to 2,500 years ago and later moved into Laos as well. Tai speaking peoples established early feudal kingdoms in northern Vietnam such as Van Lang, Nam Cuong, and Ou Lo (Au Lac). Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples sailed from Borneo and settled along the coasts of central and southern Vietnam around 2,500 years ago, with some later moving east into Cambodia and the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples of coastal central and southern Vietnam formed the kingdom of Champa.

Sino-Tibetan speaking peoples include those speaking Chinese and Tibeto-Burman languages. The spread of Chinese speaking peoples south of the Yangtze River under the Han

Dynasty resulted in direct Han rule being established over the lowlands of northern Vietnam in AD 40 and to the migration of some Chinese speaking peoples into this region. Larger numbers of Chinese migrated to northern Vietnam in the 600s and 700s under the Tang Dynasty. After the end of Chinese rule in the 900s most of these people mixed with local Mon-Khmer (Vietic) and Tai speaking peoples to form the Vietnamese or Kinh majority of Vietnam. Over the centuries other Chinese migrants settled in Indochina in small numbers, especially as merchants. The initial appearance of Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples in northern Laos and Vietnam is associated with the spread of the kingdom on Nanchao (AD 732-1253) from Yunnan in the 700s. A few Hmong-Mien speaking peoples left China and settled in the far north of Vietnam around 600 years ago. Political instability in southern China in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, around the time that the French began to establish colonial rule in Indochina, led to new waves of migration by groups of Tibeto-Burman, Chinese, and Hmong-Mien speaking peoples. The new Tibeto-Burman and Hmong-Mien migrants settled across the highlands of northern Vietnam and Laos, while Chinese migrants settled throughout the area, but especially in southern Vietnam and Cambodia.

The population of French Indochina in the late 1930s was roughly 23 million. As today, the population was unevenly distributed with most of the people living in the lowlands near the coasts and along main waterways, while the highland areas were lightly populated. Over 80% of the population lived on 13% of the land.<sup>1</sup> Population densities were highest in the Red River and Mekong River delta regions, exceeding 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometer in some areas. In contrast, densities generally were 10 inhabitants per square kilometer or less in the remaining 80% of Indochina.<sup>2</sup>

A distinction is commonly made between lowland and highland peoples in Indochina. It is important to recognize, however, that most lowland and highland peoples ultimately share a common heritage, but that over time they evolved differently. For the most part, lowland peoples have a history of living within kingdoms or empires where they came to share a range of cultural features resulting in the formation of national societies out of a number of formerly distinct groups. As for highland peoples, they lived largely beyond or on the margins of such political entities in tribal or other types of non-state societies. Moreover, lowland societies tended to be subject to more external influences than highland societies that were more

isolated from the outside world. Lowland societies can be further distinguished between rural and urban ones, although this distinction was less important in the pre-colonial era.

## **The Rural Lowlands**

Most of the people living in the lowlands of Indochina in the 1930s were small-scale farmers, mainly growing paddy rice. The population of the densely populated lowlands was comprised predominantly of peoples identified as members of the ethnic majority of the respective territories of Vietnam (which included Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina), Cambodia, and Laos.

Table 1. Population of Indochina

Territory	Total Population	Ethnic Majority	%
Tonkin	8,700,000	7,647,000	87.9
Annam	5,656,000	4,835,000	85.5
Cochinchina	4,616,000	3,979,000	86.2
Cambodia	3,046,000	2,597,000	85.3
Laos	1,012,000	565,000	55.8

[source: Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 212.]

The creation of these ethnic majority groups is closely linked with the history of the region, reflecting initial patterns of migration followed by subsequent development of polities that assimilated diverse groups to form national majorities. These national majorities are especially linked to the pre-French kingdoms such as Dai Viet in Vietnam, the various Khmer kingdoms in Cambodia, and the small Lao kingdoms of Laos. Chinese rule in the lowlands of northern Vietnam for almost 1,000 years is also important in the case of Vietnam. These kingdoms fostered the evolution of national societies with shared cultures. Religion was one element of these cultures and all of the kingdoms of Indochina promoted versions of Buddhism mixed with local religious beliefs. Theravada Buddhism mixed with Hindu elements with strong links initially to India and later to Sri Lanka predominated in Cambodia and Laos, while Mahayana Buddhism mixed with Taoist and Confucian elements with links to China was dominant in Vietnam.

Economically, whereas foreign trade certainly was important to these kingdoms to varying degrees at different times, it was not so important in the rural areas and the core of the kingdoms' economies was domestic paddy rice

production, largely by small-scale farmers. The plots that rural people tended generally were tiny and large landowners were a rarity. These rice producers lived in fairly small communities (e.g., communes, villages, and hamlets) ranging in size from a few hundred to a couple of thousand inhabitants. These communities were incorporated into a feudal system that exacted a portion of the rural people's products and occasionally their labor to support a small feudal elite that included district and provincial officials, to build public works, and to carry out the other basic tasks of government.

## **Towns and Cities**

Prior to French colonial rule the region encompassing Indochina included few towns and only a handful of these could be characterized as cities, albeit small ones. These included capitals of the various kingdoms, ports, and some provincial towns. Hà Nội (aka Thăng Long) was the largest city in the region. It had served as Đại Việt's capital until the unification of what was to become modern Vietnam by the Nguyễn lords in 1802, when the capital was moved to their stronghold of Phú Xuân that was renamed Huế. The Khmer capital of Phnom Penh was a small city, while the old Cham capitals and the capitals of the various kingdoms that came later to comprise Laos were little more than large villages. There were also a handful of ports that boasted several thousand inhabitants such as Faifo (Hội An), Qui Nhơn, and Prei Nokor (aka Saigon). The ethnic composition and cultures of these pre-colonial cities and towns were not too different from the countryside, although the capitals and ports were also home to small numbers of foreign traders and diplomats.

Even in the 1930s, the few cities that did exist in Indochina were relatively small. A total of about 1 million people lived in cities and small towns (a little over 4% of the total population), with about half of this number living in Indochina's three largest cities: Sài Gòn-Chợ Lớn (they were joined in 1932, pop. 256,000), Hà Nội (pop. 149,000), and Phnom Penh (pop. 103,000).<sup>3</sup> These were small cities even for the time. By way of comparison, Bangkok in the late 1930s had almost 900,000 inhabitants, Singapore about 600,000, Batavia (Jakarta) over 500,000, and Rangoon around 400,000.

Another significant characteristic of Indochina's three main cities in the 1930s is that although all three had pre-colonial histories, the French had transformed them

into distinctly colonial cities. As such they were developed "primarily to play a transnational role linking the colony to the colonial power."<sup>4</sup> Physically and ethnically they featured distinct French and 'Native' quarters. They had a core administrative, commercial, and residential area built according to French plans and featuring a number of European-style and hybrid European-colonial style buildings and with roads and other infrastructure built along European lines. Thus, Hà Nội "With its shady boulevards, numerous squares and imposing public buildings, Hanoi resembles the towns of France."<sup>5</sup> This was where Europeans lived and worked. In contrast, the 'Native' parts of the cities were more Asian in character in terms of styles of architecture, infrastructure, and population. This was where Asians lived and where 'native' businesses were located. Other smaller colonial towns featuring quarters with distinctly French characteristics and French quarters included Haiphong (pop. 70,000), Huế (pop. 43,000), Tourane (pop. 23,000, modern Đà Nẵng), Battambang (pop. 20,000), and Vientiane (pop. 16,000). The old Nguyễn capital of Huế, for example, featured the Nguyễn citadel and native quarter and commercial district on one side of the Perfume River and a newer French quarter on the other side of the river.

In fact, Indochina's cities and towns generally included three major distinct groups, not two: Europeans, people from the local ethnic majority, and Chinese. Both Europeans and Chinese constituted only a small portion of the total population and were over-represented in the cities, with only very small numbers of either group found in the countryside. Moreover, they dominated the political and commercial life of cities. Taking 1913 census figures as an example, the total population of Hà Nội was 86,000. This included 80,000 Vietnamese and 2,000 Chinese, with Europeans and others accounting for the remaining 4,000. Haiphong had a total population of 35,000, which consisted of 25,000 Vietnamese, 8,500 Chinese, and 1,500 Europeans and others. Chợ Lớn (it was not joined with Sài Gòn until 1932) had a total population of 181,000, which included 96,000 Vietnamese, 85,000 Chinese, and only a small number of others. It is worth noting that a decade later, in the mid-1920s, Hà Nội's population had grown to 130,000, which included 99,000 Vietnamese, 25,000 Chinese, and 6,000 Europeans and others.

## **Lowland Peoples**

The peoples of the rural lowlands of Indochina were primarily associated with the old kingdoms of Vietnam (i.e., Đại Việt and Champa), Cambodia, and Laos. All featured a core associated with a particular ethno-linguistic group: Kinh (Annamite), Cham, Khmer, and Lao that had assimilated other peoples and elements of their cultures.

**Kinh.** The French used the term Annamite or Annamese to refer to what is more commonly referred to as Vietnamese in English and as Kinh or *người Việt* within Vietnam. Numbering about 17 million in the late 1930s, they were by far the largest ethnic group in Indochina (72.4% of the total population). While a few hundred thousand Kinh lived in cities and towns, the overwhelming majority lived in the rural lowlands (very few lived in the highlands).

In addition to comprising the majority of people in Vietnam (86.8%), they were also significant minority groups in Cambodia (191,000, 6.2%) and Laos (27,000, 2.7%), where the establishment of French colonial rule had encouraged their numbers to increase through migration. Thus, passing through the small town of Tha Khaek ("Tha-Khek") in Laos, Despujols remarks that the population is three-quarters Annamite and the Laotians appear to have been dispossessed.<sup>6</sup> In fact, under the French Tha Khaek had become essentially a Vietnamese town in Laos.

The Kinh in northern Vietnam evolved out of a mixture of Mon-Khmer, Tai, Chinese, and Cham peoples and this can be seen in many aspects of their culture, including the Vietnamese language.<sup>7</sup> Vietnamese is one of a number of Mon-Khmer languages that are classified as Vietic. Proto-Vietic speakers lived in central Laos and migrated to adjacent parts of Vietnam, where today they are represented by a number of small groups such as the Chut, Liha, and Nguon and a larger group the Muong who live in the highlands (to be discussed later).<sup>8</sup> The languages and culture of these groups have been strongly influenced by neighboring Tai-speaking peoples. As these early Vietic speaking people moved into the lowlands of northern Vietnam during the Tang Dynasty they came under Chinese influence. It is this Vietic-Tai-Chinese mixture that evolved into a distinctive Kinh or Annamite society. After Chinese rule in the northern lowlands came to an end the Vietnamese kingdom of Đại Việt (the forerunner of modern Vietnam) expanded southward at the expense of the Cham kingdom of Champa in central and southern Vietnam and the Khmer Empire that for a time controlled much of southern Vietnam. In the process

the Kinh of central and southern Vietnam assimilated people as well as cultural elements from the Cham and Khmer.

In the 1930s most Kinh lived in small, agricultural villages with rice grown on miniscule plots being the principal crop.<sup>9</sup> There were also craft specialists, including families and villages specializing in particular crafts (e.g., weaving, wood-working, lacquering, pottery-making, iron-working, bronze-working, paper-making, and shoe-making).<sup>10</sup> Fishing was especially important among the Kinh of central Vietnam.<sup>11</sup>

As exemplified in the Civil Code of Tonkin that was enacted in 1931 (and applied in large part to Annam in 1936), the French colonial administration sought "not to encroach in any way on the fundamental institutions of Vietnamese society."<sup>12</sup> This meant that the fundamental elements of Kinh society such as those pertaining to family, clan, and commune were left largely intact and that the villages and communes were able to retain considerable autonomy. The French allowed vestiges of the Kinh feudal system to survive since, for the most part, it did not interfere with the aims of the colonial state. There was still an emperor and his court based in Huế, though he had little power, as well as mandarins scattered throughout Kinh society that continued to play a role in local administration. Buddhist and other religious temples had important functions in the life of Kinh communities and there were monks and other religious specialists. The French allowed for the retention of 'native' schools in villages, towns, and in the cities of Huế and Hà Nội that employed a fairly traditional curriculum. Many of these, especially in villages were attached to Buddhist monasteries and some provided training for entry into the mandrinate.

Alongside the more traditional Kinh society, French colonialism encouraged the emergence of a small, but significant element that was more modern in its orientation. Education provided by the colonial administration and by the Catholic Church were important institutions promoting such modernity. Most Kinh who went to school attended local elementary schools with traditional curricula, but a small number of Kinh children attended schools with more of a European-oriented curriculum. Especially important in this regard were the 'native' secondary schools that could be found in most of the major towns, vocational schools in Huế, Haiphong, and Sài Gòn, a veterinary school in Hà Nội, and the University of Indochina in Hà Nội.

Soon after establishing colonial rule in Cochinchina in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the French sought to train local Kinh so that they could "assume auxiliary positions within the administration."<sup>13</sup> Schools performing this role included the Collège d'Adran and École Normale in Sài Gòn. The colonial administration also sent a few young Kinh to France to study, with the first group leaving Sài Gòn in 1865.<sup>14</sup> The Quốc Học (National High School) in Huế is also worthy of mention. It was founded in 1896 and run for a time by Ngô Đình Khả (Ngô Đình Diệm's father). Among those who graduated from the school were future communist leaders Võ Nguyên Giáp, Phạm Văn Đồng, and Đỗ Mười, and Nguyễn Sinh Cung (aka Hồ Chí Minh, who attended in 1908).

The University of Indochina (aka University of Hà Nội) was founded in Hanoi in 1906. In 1937 it had 87 French, 541 Annamite, and 3 Chinese students.<sup>15</sup> We will discuss its fine arts school later in the section on Europeans. Other faculties included medicine, law, education, agriculture, and commerce. There were also Kinh who went to France to study at the university level. Nguyễn Văn Huyền (1908-75), who became Democratic Republic of Vietnam's first minister of education in 1946, was one these. He went to study in France in 1926 and received a Ph.D. in literature from the University of Paris in 1934. Upon returning to Vietnam in 1935 he taught at the *Lycée du Protectorat* and then became a researcher with the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient*.

Christianity, primarily Catholicism, also served to promote modernity and Kinh who converted to Christianity commonly were given favorable treatment by colonial authorities. Catholics comprised as much as 10% of the population of Vietnam by the 1930s. In addition to Catholic churches there were also Catholic elementary and secondary schools scattered throughout Vietnam and many Vietnamese students sent to France attended Catholic schools there.

Kinh Catholics tended to be concentrated in certain areas.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in Tonkin the main concentration of Kinh Catholicism was near the coast to the south of the Red River. This area included the Vicariate Apostolic of Bùi Chu (est. 1848) in Nam Định Province and the Vicariate Apostolic of Coastal Tonkin (est. in 1901) in Ninh Bình Province. Both had Kinh bishops in the 1930s. Statistics for 1950 provide some indication of the number of Catholics in these two vicarates: Bùi Chu, total population 697,009, Catholics 190,329 (27.3%), 182 priests; Coastal Tonkin, total population 250,000, Catholics 99,904 (40%), 163 priests.<sup>16</sup>

The feudal elite was no longer a particularly traditionalist sector of Kinh society by the 1930s. Thus, the emperor Bảo Đại (aka Nguyễn Phúc Vĩnh Thụy), who ruled from 1926 to 1945, had been sent to France to study in 1922, first at the *Lycée Condorcet* and then at the *Institut d'études politiques de Paris*. He returned to Huế briefly when his father died in 1926 to be proclaimed emperor and then went back to Paris to resume his studies until 1934. His primary wife, Marie-Thérèse Nguyễn Hữu Thị Lan, was from a prominent Catholic family. Ngô Đình Diệm's father, the mandarin Ngô Đình Khả, was also from an influential Catholic family (they had been converted in the 1600s). He served in the court of the Emperor Thành Thái as chamberlain, minister of rites, and keeper of the eunuchs. One of Ngô Đình Khả's son's, Ngô Đình Thục, studied philosophy and theology in Paris and Rome, and in 1938 became a bishop in Vĩnh Long in the Mekong Delta (he later became archbishop of Huế). Ngô Đình Diệm graduated from the School of Public Administration in Hà Nội and joined the civil service as a mandarin. He married the daughter of another prominent Catholic mandarin, Nguyễn Hữu Bài, who was head of the emperor's council of ministers. The Emperor Bảo Đại had Ngô Đình Diệm appointed to a ministerial position, but Diem's efforts to create a Vietnamese legislative body ran him afoul of the French and caused him to lose his position.

Livelihood or occupation was another contributor to modernity among the Kinh population at large. The number of Kinh in 'modern' occupations was relatively small, but they were a significant part of colonial society and their contribution to Vietnamese history far exceeded their number. Within Indochina there were around 20,000 Kinh employed by the colonial government in various capacities in the 1930s. There were also a few thousand working in mines or on plantations. In addition, a number of Kinh left Vietnam for varying periods to work in France and elsewhere around the world (often as plantation and mine workers). The French employed around 140,000 Annamites in Europe during World War I as soldiers and laborers. Nguyễn Sinh Cung (aka Hồ Chí Minh) is the most famous Kinh who went abroad to work. After working as a teacher for a short time in Phan Thiết, in 1911 he left Vietnam employed as a cook's assistant on a ship and then lived and worked briefly in the United States prior to going to Paris, where he came under the influence of European leftist ideas.

**Khmer.** The Khmer are also known as Cambodians. The Khmer comprise about 90% of the population of Cambodia and there is also a distinct Khmer population in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam (Khmer Krom, *Khơ Me Crôm*), which was part of the Khmer Empire in the past. In 1936 there were 2,597,000 Khmer in Cambodia, 326,000 in Cochinchina, and 2,000 in Laos.<sup>17</sup>

Most Khmer in the 1930s were small-scale wet rice cultivators who lived in villages that tended to be smaller than those of the Kinh (averaging between 300 and 400 inhabitants).<sup>18</sup> Fishing was also an important activity in many parts of Cambodia, especially around Tonlé Sap and along the Mekong and other rivers. Most of their economic activities were for subsistence, with commerce and craft specialization being largely in the hands of Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham, and other non-Khmer. However, there were small numbers of rural Khmer who were craft specialists or active in commerce.

The Khmer are Theravada Buddhists and Buddhism plays an important role in peoples lives. During the 1930s it was common for almost every boy to spend time in a monastery and a significant proportion of young men became monks. In addition to monks there were also a variety of specialists who could communicate with spirits.

The French allowed the Khmer feudal system to continue to operate on a limited basis. The king and his court in Phnom Penh were at the top of the feudal hierarchy. In the late 1930s the king was Sisowath Monivong (r. 1927-41). As in Vietnam, the Cambodian court was a blend of traditionalism and modernity, with the modern element becoming increasingly evident. Osborne refers to King Norodom's (r. 1860-1904) court as "cosmopolitan" and surrounded by Siamese, Chinese, and "a motley group of Europeans."<sup>19</sup> Sisowath Monivong was sent to France to study at the *École coloniale* in 1907 and then served in the French army. His second son, Sisowath Monipong (b. 1912), was also sent to France to study between 1927 and 1930. He returned to Cambodia briefly and entered a monastery and then returned to France again in 1939 for further studies until 1941.

Outside of the court the modern-oriented portion of Khmer society in the 1930s was much smaller than that of the Annamites in Vietnam. Writing of Cambodian society in 1960, Ebihara notes, "there are relatively few Khmer in commercial or professional pursuits as compared to the number of Chinese and Vietnamese."<sup>20</sup> Even fewer Khmer were

Christians. Nor were there many Khmer employed on plantations or in mines.

Most Khmer who attended school in the 1930s went to so-called 'pagoda schools' in their villages. These were elementary schools that taught a fairly traditional curriculum in Khmer. There were elementary schools in some of the towns and in Phnom Penh with more of a French-oriented curriculum that were attended by small number of Khmer. Relatively few Khmer went on to secondary school.

King Sisowath sought to spread French-style education in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the number of pupils attending such schools remained small. The *École cambodgienne* in Phnom Penh increased its intake of students to 487 in 1904 and those over 12 were sent to the *École professionnelle* to train as government secretaries, teachers, and commercial officers.<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s children of elite Khmer families could attend the *Lycée Preah Sisowath* in Phnom Penh that provided elementary and secondary levels of instruction. It was founded as a college in 1873 and elevated to a *lycée* in 1933. Its primary role was to prepare students for work in the government, including both the French colonial administration and the 'native' administration. In the late 1930s it had 732 students.<sup>22</sup> While open to Khmer, most of its students were Kinh. There was a vocational school in Phnom Phenh that offered instruction in agriculture, public hygiene, and law. There were also Catholic schools in Cambodia. Saloth Sar (aka Pol Pot, b. 1925) received such a modernist education. He attended a Catholic school in Phnom Penh between 1935 and 1943 and later the *Collège Preah Sihanouk* in Kampong Cham, the *Lycée Preah Sisowath* (1948-9), and finally the *École Française de radio-électricité* (1949-52) before becoming head of the Khmer Rouge.

**Lao.** The Lao are also known as Laotians. They speak a Southwestern Tai language. The Lao emerged as a distinct group among Tai speakers in southern Yunnan before migrating to the Mường Thanh area in northwestern Vietnam. Some Lao remained in the Mường Thanh area while others migrated to the west along the Ou River to settle adjacent to the Mekong River in the vicinity of Muang Sawa (Luang Prabang). As they spread south along the Mekong River they divided into the Lao and Phutai peoples. The Lao themselves include a number of distinct sub-groups such as the Lao Khrang. The early Lao migrants settled in territory already occupied by various Mon-Khmer speaking groups and the

modern Lao people are an amalgamation of the original Lao and assimilated Mon-Khmer peoples.

In addition to the 565,000 Lao living in Laos in 1936, there were another 20,000 in Cambodia and 3,500 in Tonkin (plus a few in Annam and Cochinchina). Most of the Lao in Vietnam live along the Ma River (*Sông Mã*) in the vicinity of Mường Thanh or further north in Bình Lu District.<sup>23</sup> The Lao Khrang live in adjacent areas of southeastern Xieng Khoang Province in Laos and Kỳ Sơn District of Vietnam's Nghệ An Province.<sup>24</sup> Other Lao live mainly along the Mekong and in adjacent low-lying areas of western Laos.

Most Lao lived in small villages as subsistence farmers in the 1930s. The relative lack of flat land and small population meant that their villages tended to be smaller than those of the Kinh and Khmer, often hamlets comprised of only a few houses. A study of Lao in Vientiane Province, where there was a relative abundance of flat land, in the 1950s found that Lao villages ranged in size from 50 to 1,000 inhabitants, with 350 being the average.<sup>25</sup> Rice grown on small fields was the primary crop, but because of the terrain the portion grown on dry fields rather than irrigated ones was higher than among other lowland groups.

There were some craft specialists in Lao society, such as silversmiths and blacksmiths. Specialized craft villages were found only in the vicinity of Luang Prabang where weavers, pottery-makers, and silversmiths produced for the feudal rulers living there. Few Lao engaged in commerce. Traders sometimes passed through villages providing Chinese and other goods, but most of these traders were not Lao. Almost all Lao were Buddhists and in the 1930s many boys spent some time in a monastery, with a small portion of these going on to become monks.

As with other Tai peoples the traditional Lao political system was a feudal one based on a unit known as a *muang* (*muong, meuang, mường*) with a *chau muang* (*chau muong*) serving as its ruler. A *muang* typically consisted of several villages and is sometimes referred to as a principality or province in English, reflecting its relative small size. Initially a Lao *muang* usually included an upper stratum of ethnic Lao and a lower stratum of indigenous ethnic Mon-Khmer, but over time these distinctions became blurred. The feudal elite of a *muang* typically lived in the principal village.

Muang Sawa (Luang Prabang) was one of the most important early Lao *muang*. In the early 1300s its ruler was forced to go to the Khmer capital of Angkor in exile. His

son, who later assumed the name Fa Ngum, married a Khmer princess and with Khmer assistance was able to conquer most of Lao territory and form a united kingdom known as Lan Xang in 1353. Fa Ngum is also important for establishing Theravada Buddhism as the state religion. Lan Xang's history was a troubled one marked by considerable instability. The reign of Suligna Vongsa (aka Surinyavongsa, r. 1637-94) is often viewed as the golden era of Lan Xang. Vongsa died without an heir and the kingdom eventually was divided into three smaller kingdoms: Luang Prabang, Vieng Chan, and Champasak. From this time until the French assumed control of the area in 1893 there was no single Lao state and the Tai of Siam came to exercise considerable influence over the Lao (including the forcible movement of many Lao to help populate Siamese territory). The French gradually created a unified colonial state out of the older small political entities.

The French left many parts of the Lao feudal system in place. Thus, while the center of French colonial rule was in Vientiane, a king, with greatly reduced power, was left on the throne in Luang Prabang with a court of other nobles and a variety of others employed by the court including musicians, dancers, craftsmen, and artists. As in Cambodia and Vietnam, the Lao feudal elite preserved many vestiges of traditional culture while at the same time adopting many things that were modern. Sisavang Vong (r. 1904-59) was king during the 1930s. He was educated at a *lycée* in Sài Gòn and then sent for further study at the *École coloniale* in Paris. He was known as a strong supporter of French colonial rule, but such views were not shared by all of the Lao elite. This is aptly exemplified in three of *Chao Maha Ouphahat* (vice-king) Bounkhong's sons: Phetsarath Rattnavongsa, Souvanna Phouma, and Souphanavong. Phetsarath studied at a *lycée* in Sài Gòn and then went to Paris, where he also studied at the *École coloiale*. After he returned to Laos he held various high positions in the colonial administration and also was made vice-king. Souvanna Phouma studied in Hà Nội and France (obtaining degrees in architecture and engineering) and married a woman of French-Lao parents. Souphanavong also went to France, where he worked in the port of Le Havre and then received an engineering degree from the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* in Paris. In the 1940s both Phetsarath and Souvanna Phouma became prominent members of the *Lao Issara* (Free Lao) movement that opposed French colonial rule, while Souphanavong became a communist and founder of the *Pathet Lao*.

The modern-oriented segment of Lao society in the 1930s was even more limited than elsewhere in Indochina. Vientiane, the center of French colonial administration and the largest town in Laos, had a population of only a little over 15,000, while Luang Prabang, Savannakhet, Pakse, Champassak were more village-size. The populations of these towns included French, Kinh, Siamese, and Chinese as well as Lao. Non-Lao dominated the commercial life of such towns and most of the Lao in them were either members of the small feudal elite or other employees of the colonial administration. There were few French-oriented schools in Laos for Lao children to attend. There was a *lycée* in Vientiane, but otherwise young people were sent to Saigon or Hanoi for a French-oriented education. There were relatively few Catholics in Laos in the 1930s, and most of them were Kinh. A Catholic vicarate was established in 1899 that included both Laos and northeastern Siam with its headquarters located in Nakhon Phanom in Siam. A separate vicarate for northern Laos was created in 1938, but the number of Lao Catholics remained quite small.

**Phuthai** (Phutai). Despujols passed through Phuthai territory on his travels from Vietnam to Laos. The Phuthai live in central Laos along the Mekong River from southern Khammuan Province to southern Salavan Province as well as inland in parts of these and Savannakhet Province. The majority of the Phuthai live in Savannakhet Province, including Savannakhet town. Population estimates for the Phuthai in the past and at present are vague and unreliable. Recent figures place their population from over 100,000 to around 15,000.<sup>26</sup>

The Phutai live mainly in villages and rice grown on irrigated fields in their principal crop. The Phuthai had a feudal system similar to that of the Lao that included *muang* that were ruled by a *chau muang*. The oldest Phuthai *muang* date from at least the early 1500s and like other Tai the Phuthai assimilated local Mon-Khmer speaking groups into their society. The Lao of Vieng Chan conquered the Phutai in 1767 and after that kingdom became a vassal of Siam the Phuthai too became Siamese vassals. The Siamese forcibly relocated many Phuthai across the Mekong River during the reign of Rama III (r. 1824-51).

The Phuthai also paid tribute to and maintained relations with the Đại Việt court in Huế. This is highlighted in Frenchman Dr. François Jules Harmand's account of his travels through this region by the in the 1870s. Harmand describes the tribute paid by the *chau muang*

of Muang Phin as comprised of "wax, elephant tusks and an insignificant sum of money, about fifty francs."<sup>27</sup> He also describes the *chau muong* as wearing an "Annamite robe," greeting him in "Annamese," and that the man had been to Hue "several times."<sup>28</sup> The Phuthai also traded with Dai Viet over the Annamite Cordillera. Harmond mentions, "Muong Phin quite often receives visits from Annamite traders. They bring cooking pans, iron, salt, salted fish and a spice much appreciated in Indochina called *nuoc mam* (fish sauce). They return home with cows, buffaloes and phloem fiber rope [*Boehmeria nivea* and *B. tenacissima*] or China nettle."<sup>29</sup> There are also alluvial gold found in Savvannakhet and some trade in gold.

The French turned the central Phuthai area and its *muong* into the province of Savannakhet in 1907. The town of Savannakhet was the provincial capital and it attracted a number of Kinh colonial civil servants. Meanwhile, the Phuthai in the western area remained under control of local Phuthai rulers.

**Cham.** The Cham live in Vietnam and Cambodia. In the late 1930s there were 23,000 Cham in Annam, 8,000 in Cochinchina, and 73,000 in Cambodia. The Cham ruled the kingdom of Champa that encompassed much of lowland central and southern Vietnam for over 1,000 years. Cham also settled inland along the Mekong River as far as southern Laos. Đại Việt conquered a good deal of Champa in 1471 and completed its conquest of the kingdom in 1832.

The Vietnamese conquest of central and southern Vietnam resulted in the Cham population being divided into three distinct groups: the Western Cham of Cambodia and the adjacent border region of southern Vietnam, the Eastern Cham who live to the vicinity of Phan Rang-Tháp Chàm in southern Vietnam, and the Cham Haroi of Phú Yên and Bình Định provinces in central Vietnam. The Cham Haroi moved into the highlands from the coast of central Vietnam following the Vietnamese conquest of northern Kauthara in 1611. Subsequent assaults by the Vietnamese on the Cham in southern Vietnam resulted in a number of Cham migrating to eastern Cambodia. The first of these Cham arrived in Cambodia in 1693 during the reign of King Chey Chettha IV and settled along the Mekong River in Kompong Cham Province and along the Tonlé Sap River in Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces. More Cham left the Phan Rang area to settle in Cambodia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the Cham in Cambodia subsequently returned to Đại Việt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and settled near the border in the vicinity of Châu Đốc.

The Cham in Cambodia are commonly treated as a single ethnic group along with the local Malay. The growth of international trade along the Mekong River during the 1600s attracted a large number of foreigners to the Khmer kingdom. These included a number of Malays, Bugis, and Javanese that settled along the Mekong River and who the Khmer tended to refer to simply as Malays. They were Muslims and, in part because of the generally important role of Muslims in international trade in the region at the time, Islam exerted unprecedented influence on Cambodia during this period. Thus, King Ramathipati (aka Ramathibodey, Ponhea Chan, r. 1642-59) married a Muslim woman, converted to Islam, and adopted the Muslim name Ibrahim. While some Cham in Vietnam were Muslim, most were Hindu. Those who arrived in Cambodia as refugees, however, overwhelmingly converted to Islam. Muslim influence among the Khmer subsequently all but disappeared, but it remained the religion of the Cham in Cambodia and over time the Khmer came to treat the Muslim Cham and Malays as a single ethnic group. In contrast to the Cham in Cambodia, at present about two-thirds of the Cham in Vietnam are Hindu. They refer to themselves as Cham Kaphia or Cham Chuh and follow the Hindu sect that worships Shiva. The remaining one-third of the Cham people in Vietnam are Muslim, but most adhere to an unorthodox version of Islam called Bani.

Under French rule, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Cham population had begun to recover from the devastating effects of their conquest by Đại Việt. Still, whereas prior to the conquest the number of Cham had been similar to that of the Kinh, slaughter and forced assimilation had almost led to their total annihilation in Vietnam and even in by the 1930s there were far fewer Cham than Kinh.

The Cham in Vietnam in the 1930s were mainly farmers, whose main crop was rice, living in small villages. Đại Việt had destroyed the old feudal elite. There were a few specialized craft villages among the Cham in Vietnam, such as the weaving village of Mỹ Nghiệp, which had provided cloth to the Cham nobility prior to the conquest. Cham villages are distinguished by being relatively bare since the Cham believe that the shade of trees exerts a bad influence on dwellings. Arriving as refugees, the Cham in Cambodia faced difficulties acquiring land on which to farm and many came to support themselves by commercial activities such as fishing and weaving. Most Cham in Cambodia lived in villages, but there were also a number of Cham living in Phnom Penh.

Descent, inheritance, and ancestral cults pass through female lines in Cham society. Cham society was formerly divided into two matri-clans: the areca palm clan and the coconut palm clan. Within each clan there were a number of matrilineages. Each of these lineages possessed an ancestral tomb and a female head of the youngest branch of the lineage was assigned responsibility for taking charge of an annual celebration that was held at the tomb. Flight to Cambodia resulted in the breakdown of this system of ancestor worship among the Cham living there since contact with orthodox Malay Muslims in Cambodia resulted in the Cham in Cambodia becoming orthodox Muslims.

### **The Highlands**

There are two main highland regions of Indochina, what can be referred to as the Northern Highlands that includes the northern part of Laos and Cambodia and the Central Highlands that is located in central Vietnam and Laos. The ethnic groups occupying these two areas are quite different, but both areas shared a common characteristic in the 1930s of being ethnically far more heterogeneous than the lowlands of Indochina and of being relatively autonomous from the lowland polities. In fact, lowland kingdoms tended to view these highland areas as useful buffers. This was especially the case with Dai Viet to the east and Ayutthaya/Siam to the west.

When the French arrived in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Siam and Đại Việt already had a long history of conflict in Cambodia and had effectively divided the kingdom into separate spheres of influence. Further to the north Siam had established control over the western lowland areas of Laos, but exerted only limited authority in the highlands.<sup>30</sup> Many local Tai rulers in the highlands paid tribute to Bangkok and Hue, and sometimes to Beijing as well. The northeastern highland areas of Indochina bordering China also had a history of conflict, between Đại Việt and China, that had eventually led to the creation of a fairly well demarcated border and to the integration of some of the highland valley areas and the Tay people living in them in this region into Đại Việt, but further west the border between China and Indochina was not so well defined and the peoples living there tended to be fairly independent of rule by the lowlanders.

A desire for tidy borders and establishing at least nominal control over the territories falling within those borders led the French to set about to exert political

control over the highlands of Indochina from the 1880s onward. In the case of the Central Highlands, the French based their claims over the area on prior tribute relations between Jarai shamans (*sadet*) and the Hue court. In fact, Đại Việt's authority in the Central Highlands was quite limited. The French administration sent a number of expeditions into the Central Highlands between the 1880s and early 1900s to make contact with various groups living there and gradually to establish their authority over the region. Tribute payments by local Tai rulers to the Hue court were also used by the French to bolster claims to the northern highlands. The French sent an expedition led by Auguste Pavie into the northern highlands west of the Red River in 1889. Pavie forced the White Tai ruler of Muong Lay to sign a treaty recognizing French suzerainty over the Tai highlands. French rule over the highland regions was further consolidated after the French made Siam to sign a treaty ceding its claims over Laos and the highland areas in 1893.

The French colonial presence in the highlands developed slowly during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even in the 1930s was still relatively limited primarily to a few small administrative centers. A number of factors served to curtail expansion of European economic activities and the settlement of Europeans and lowlanders in the highlands. In addition to the rugged terrain and relative lack of infrastructure, a number of the peoples living in the northern and central highlands were afforded special degrees of autonomy.

In the Central Highlands the French established an administrative center for the newly created Darlac Province at Buôn Ma Thuột in 1905. Ede and Mnong were the main groups inhabiting Darlac Province (later changed to Đắk Lắk Province), with Buôn Ma Thuột itself being located in Ede Kpa territory (a sub-group of the Ede). The French also divided the northern highlands into provinces and established a handful of administrative centers such as Hòa Bình, Sơn La, Lai Châu, and Phong Thổ in northwestern Vietnam. Muong (*Mường*), Black Tai, and White Tai peoples lived in the vicinity of these centers, but the settlements themselves included only small numbers of such peoples alongside French, Kinh, and others associated primarily with the colonial administration. The Frenchmen living there were mainly military officers.

Christian missionary activity in the highland areas was one aspect of colonial modernization promoted by the French. Catholic missionaries established a base at Kon Tum

in the Central Highlands in 1849 and French and Kinh missionaries began working among the Bahnar people living in the area. French and Kinh Catholic missionaries also worked further south on the Đăk Lăk Plateau of the Central Highlands among the Mngong and Jarai.

We have already discussed Catholicism as a force of modernization among the lowland Kinh. Mention also should be made of Protestantism, which also gained converts in Indochina. During the 1930s Protestant missionary work was conducted by the Evangelical Christian and Missionary Alliance, which had begun work in Indochina in 1911. Protestant missionary writings during the colonial period commonly make reference to "Heathenism and Modernism" and the French colonial government clearly viewed Protestantism as a force of modernism and progress like Catholicism.<sup>30</sup> The Kinh feudal elite was not always so sympathetic. Thus, the Royal Privy Council sought to ban Protestantism and Caodaism in an imperial circular issued in 1928 and some Kinh converts were arrested. The Governor-general intervened and had the circular modified to exclude Protestants from persecution.<sup>31</sup>

While the number of converts to Protestantism by the 1930s in Indochina was relatively small (a total of 7,508 people were reported to have been baptized by 1933),<sup>32</sup> the activity of these missionaries did lay the groundwork for future expansion that was to have an important impact among the peoples of the Central Highlands. During the 1920s the Christian and Missionary Alliance was able to establish missions catering to highlands peoples at Lạng Sơn, Hòa Bình, Đà Lạt, and Kratie (in Cambodia catering to Mngong [called Phnong locally]).

Protestant missionaries set themselves up in Đà Lạt in 1929. They started a Mois Bible School (Mois being the common generic term during the French period for people in the Central Highlands) there in 1930 that initially had only one student, with the number of students growing to 5 by 1933. In addition they set up a Mois shelter... with the purpose of providing a place where the tribes' people can stay when they come to Dalat to buy and sell."<sup>33</sup> This shelter was reported to serve people from 8 different tribes in the early 1930s. Further north the missionaries at Hòa Bình reported some success in gaining converts among the Muong in 1933 in a way similar to that of the Catholics: "One village official [i.e., feudal lord] has accepted the Lord, and this means free entrance into a village of about one hundred houses."<sup>34</sup> In Lạng Sơn they focused on the local Tay people (also called Tho). The

missionaries there describe a Tay convert from the village of Dong Mo (in Chi Lăng District south of Lạng Sơn town) who invited them to visit him and held a service there attended by about 50 people. His house later served as a chapel where there were regular services held attended by about 60 people.<sup>35</sup>

"The phenomenal expansion of the road system" in Indochina that began in 1913 served to provide unprecedented access to areas of the highlands.<sup>36</sup> Previously, construction of railroad tracks such as those from Hà Nội to Lạng Sơn and Lào Cai (completed in 1906) allowed for some improvement of access along adjacent stretches of countryside, but with little impact in the highlands. From 1913 onwards, however, a network of roads was built that served to connect several of the highland administrative centers with the lowlands and with each other. It was the presence of such roads that allowed Despujols to travel to many of his destinations.

All-season *Routes Coloniales* in the northeast of Vietnam not only linked Hà Nội with Lạng Sơn (Rte. 1), but also with the more mountainous towns of Cao Bằng (Rte. 3) and Hà Giang (Rte. 2), while Rte. 4 provided a more or less all weather link between Lạng Sơn and Cao Bằng. In the northwest all season Rte. 6 went as far as Hòa Bình before turning into seasonal roads that connected to Sam Neua, Điện Biên Phủ, and Lai Châu. These were the roads that gave access to the some of the highland valleys occupied by Tai speaking peoples in particular. Further south Rte. 7 went from the coastal town of Vinh to Xieng Khouang, passing through country occupied by various Tai-speaking groups along the way. At Xieng Khouang a road to the south went on to Vientiane and a dry season went northwest on to Luang Prabang.

Several all weather *Routes Coloniales* were built in the Central highlands. The northern-most of these, Rte. 9, went from Đông Hà in Quảng Trị Province to Savannakhet via Lao Bảo, passing through territory occupied by the Bru in the vicinity of the border and Phuthai territory on the Lao side towards the Mekong. Further south the highlands center of Kon Tum was linked to Qui Nhơn by all weather Rte. 19 that also connected to Pleiku. Groups such as the Jarai and Bahnar occupied this area. Another colonial road, Rte. 14, ran south from Pleiku to Buôn Ma Thuột and Rte. 26 linked Buôn Ma Thuột with the coast at Ninh Hòa. Ede and Mnong live in the vicinity of Buôn Ma Thuột. Rte. 14 continued on past Buôn Ma Thuột to the southwest into northeastern Cambodia. The colonial retreat of Đà Lạt, which was

established in 1912, was connected to Phan Rang Tháp Chàm (near the old Champa capital of Panduranga) by the all weather Rte. 11, which passed through territory occupied by the Koho, and all weather Rte. 20 headed south from Đà Lạt to Saigon. The latter is described in the 1940s as "a metalled road suitable for fast motor traffic"<sup>37</sup>

Such roads helped to develop the highland administrative centers into small towns that attracted Europeans, Kinh, and Chinese engaged in commerce in addition to those in the service of the colonial administration. Hickey refers to Buôn Ma Thuột, for example, as a "market center with largely Vietnamese and Chinese merchants, which served as a window to the outside world."<sup>38</sup> A similar description could be applied to most of the centers in the northern and central highlands. Sa Pa (aka Chapa) in Lào Cai Province in the north, for example, had developed starting in 1905 into a significant highlands resort catering to French people and local commercial center by the 1930s.<sup>39</sup> It was located near a Black Hmong village. but most of the labor and commerce in the town was in the hands of Kinh from the lowlands, although some of the local Black Hmong and Red Dao were employed on occasion and they used it as a place to buy and sell goods. Few highlanders actually resided in these centers, but people from nearby villages did engage in some trade with them and sometimes found employment. In the 1930s there were also elementary schools in many of these centers that were attended by children of local elites. Those graduating from such schools gained greater exposure to the French colonial world and sometimes found employment in the colonial administration after graduation.

In the Central Highlands the new roads also promoted the development of rubber and coffee plantations, which led to the arrival of European plantation administrators and Kinh plantation workers. However, there were still few plantations in the Central Highlands in the 1930s and production was not very great.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in 1930 the Franco-Javanese Compagnie Agricole d'Annam's 8,000 ha coffee plantation in Đắk Lắk Province employed 800 Kinh workers as well as 400 Ede.<sup>41</sup>

## **Peoples of the Central Highlands**

Over two-dozen different ethno-linguistic groups live in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Most of them speak Mon-Khmer languages, but there are also several groups that speak Malayo-Polynesian languages. People speaking Mon-

Khmer languages arrived in the region first, mostly migrating there from the west, while Malayo-Polynesian speaking peoples are related to the Cham and moved into the central part of the Central Highlands from the east. This Malayo-Polynesian intrusion served to divide the Mon-Khmer speaking groups with peoples speaking languages belonging to the Katuic and Northern Bahnaric branches living to the north of the Malayo-Polynesian groups and peoples speaking Southern Bahnaric languages living to the south. Malayo-Polynesian speaking groups include the Jarai and Ede; Katuic speakers include the Bru, Ta-oi, and Katu; Northern Bahnaric groups include the Bahnar and Hre; and Southern Bahnaric include the Mnong, Stieng, and Koho. Despujols visited the Buôn Ma Thuôt and the surrounding area in the Central Highlands, which includes territory inhabited by Ede and Mnong peoples. He also produced portraits of two young Hre.

**Ede** (*Ê Đê, Rhade, Rade*). The Ede speak a Malayo-Polynesian language.<sup>42</sup> The Ede and Jarai, who live to their north, were forced to move into the highlands due to conflicts with the Cham. There are no reliable population statistics for the Ede from the 1930s, but figures from the late 1940s give a population of about 50,000. Ede sub-groups include the Krung, Adham (Atham), Mdhur (Mthur), Blô, Kpa, Bih, Ktul, Epan, and Drao. As was noted above, the Kpa live in the vicinity of Buôn Ma Thuôt. The Adham live to the north of the Kpa and the Bih live to their south. Based on the 1940s figures, the Kpa were the largest sub-groups and comprised about 36% of the total. The Bih were the fourth largest group and comprised about 12% of the total.

The Ede trace descent through female lines and have matri-clans that are divided into matrilineages. They say that there were originally two named groups, Nie and Mlo, and that later others developed. Female clan members held property and inheritance was through female lines. The Ede traditionally live in raised longhouses. The residents in a longhouse form a matrilineal longhouse group. Upon marriage a man usually would reside in the longhouse of his wife's family. A village would be comprised of between ten and twenty longhouses. Before French colonial rule villages were autonomous. A female priest served as guardian of her clan's land and performed important agricultural rituals. Rice was the main crop and was grown mainly using the slash-and-burn method. Cotton was also widely grown in the past and households were generally self-sufficient in

meeting their food and clothing needs. Commerce was quite limited in the past and was restricted largely to luxury items such as bronze gongs.

The Bih are the southernmost Ede sub-group. They live in Krông Ana district and are almost completely surrounded by Mnong. Their culture is strongly influenced by the neighboring Mnong.

As was mentioned above, Buôn Ma Thuột developed as an important administrative and commercial center in Đắk Lắk Province. While Ede generally did not live in the town itself, at least on a permanent basis, there were Ede Kpa villages surrounding the town and a few Ede children (mainly sons of chiefs) attended a local primary school. As Hickey notes, the education received there "led to the emergence of a new type of Rhadé Kpa leader, one familiar with the French language and culture but still tied to the traditional world of the village."<sup>43</sup> Thus, a Ede leadership emerged with characteristics resembling those of the feudal elites of the lowlands with cultural orientations grounded both in their own traditions and a French version of modernity.

**Mnong** (*M'Nông*). The Mnong are a diverse group of Mon-Khmer speaking people who live to the south of the Ede in an area that extends into northeastern Cambodia.<sup>44</sup> The Mnong population in the late 1940s was 16,496.<sup>45</sup> There are about twenty sub-groups of Mnong. The Preh live to the west of Buôn Ma Thuột, the Gar and Rlam to the south, and the Kuênh to the east. The Mnong also trace descent matrilineally and matrilocal residence following marriage was the norm in the past. They too lived in longhouses in the past, but there are two distinct types of Mnong longhouse. Groups such as the Preh and Gar build their longhouses on the ground in typical highland Mon-Khmer fashion, while groups such as the Rlom and Kuênh build their longhouses on stilts like the Rade. The Mnong mostly grew rice using the slash-and-burn technique, the Rlam being an exception. They live near Lak Lake and cultivated paddy rice. They are well known for raising and hunting elephants as well as for the use of a type of stone xylophone (or lithophone).

**Hre** (*Hrê*). Despujols also depicted people that during the French colonial period were commonly referred to as Davak or Da Vach, but who subsequently came to be commonly called Hre.<sup>46</sup> They are sometimes referred to as Cham Re. They speak a Northern Bahnaric language and live well to the north of the Ede and Mnong in the western parts of

Quảng Ngãi and Bình Định provinces. In 1960 there were about 27,000 Hre.<sup>47</sup>

Hre traditions say that they originally migrated from the west in Laos. They came to be ruled by Champa in the 1000s. After Đại Việt conquered this area of Champa in 1471 the Hre were again free of outside rule. Soldiers from Đại Việt entered the area in 1819 to construct the Son Phong defensive wall and conflict broke out with the Hre. The Hre continued to resist Đại Việt until the French conquest. The Hre then resisted the French when they sought to build outposts in Hre territory between 1900 and 1902, but such resistance had come to an end by the 1930s.

The Hre are divided into sub-groups that reflect the relative elevations where they live. Those living at the highest elevations in the vicinity of the Hre or Re River were known as the Hre in the past, those living at mid-elevations along the To River called themselves To, and those living in the lowlands along the Lien River called themselves Lien. In the past Hre living at lower elevations also often spoke Cham as a second language and those living in the highlands also spoke Bahnar since they lived near the Bahnar.

Hre social organization is bilateral and residence after marriage might be with the family of the groom or the bride. All children are entitled to inherit property. Villages were autonomous with the village head chosen from among the wealthy men of the community. Traditional Hre houses are raised and inhabitants include member of an extended family. Rice is the main crop and it is grown in slash-and-burn or paddy fields depending on local conditions.

## **Peoples of the Northern Highlands**

The Northern Highlands of Indochina is bordered by China to the north, the Mekong River to the west, and includes parts of Laos and Vietnam. Many of the peoples living in this highlands region are also found living across the border in China.

**Muong** (*Mường*). A variety of Mon-Khmer speaking peoples are scattered throughout the northern highlands. They are descendants of the earliest inhabitants of the region as who were not subsequently assimilated into Tai groups that settled later. Such Mon-Khmer speaking groups can be further sub-divided into Northern Mon-Khmer speakers such as the Khmu and Mang (*Mảng*) and Vietic speakers such as the

Tho (*Thổ*, not to be confused with the Tay who are also sometimes called *Thô*) and Muong. Despujols visited the administrative center of Hòa Bình and the surrounding area, which is within territory inhabited by the Muong and passed through territory occupied by the Muong in Nghệ An Province.

The Muong population was estimated at around 200,000 in 1916, but it had been reduced to about 163,000 by the late 1930s largely due to diseases.<sup>48</sup> The majority of Muong lived in Hòa Bình and Thanh Hóa provinces, with smaller the remainder found in several of the neighboring provinces.

The Muong are a Vietic speaking people whose culture and social organization was influenced strongly by neighboring Thai. In a sense they represent an intermediate stage in the evolution of Vietic societies with the Vietic hunters and gatherers in central Laos at one end of the continuum and the more Sinicized Kinh, who migrated into the lowlands while the Muong remained in the hills, at the other end.

While some Muong live in areas where they grow rice on dry field using the slash-and-burn method, most grow rice in irrigated field like the Tai people. In addition to weaving, domestic industries include basket making. They do not make pottery or metal objects, but obtain these from others. The Muong traditionally lived in hamlets or small villages comprised of from five to a few dozen households. Groups of such villages in turn were organized into larger units called *muong* (the same term that is used by Tai speaking peoples for such units). Descent in Muong society was through male lines. The Muong worshipped a variety of spirits, including those associated with the land and of ancestors.<sup>49</sup>

The Muong had a feudal system (*lang dao*) similar to that of the Thai, with *muong* being ruled by noble families referred to as *thô lang* or *quan lang*.<sup>50</sup> The head of the senior *lang* in the *muong*, who was called the *lang cun*, served as the head of the largest village in the *muong*, while other nobles ruled over the other villages. These nobles managed communal lands, received tribute, and could demand corvée labor. An upper stratum of commoners called *âu* provided administrative assistance to the nobles. Other commoners were called *bùi* were given land to work on in return for providing tribute and corvée labor to the nobles. The poorest members of the society were referred to as *túa roong* (immigrants) and sometimes worked as servants of the nobles.

Under French colonial rule the forces of modernity appeared in Muong society in a number of ways. Thus, some Muong left their villages to take up temporary employment on French plantations.<sup>51</sup> Mention was made previously to Muong conversion to Protestantism. Conversion to Catholicism was an even more important factor in promoting change among the Muong. Writing in the 1940s, Cuisiner estimated that there were about 5,000 Muong Catholics.<sup>52</sup> French and Kinh priests not only ran local churches, but also operated medical facilities and schools.<sup>53</sup> Efforts at conversion focused on the feudal nobles and once a *thô lang* converted his subjects would follow. Nobles who converted lost their feudal title and privileges. Converts formed Catholic villages that were modeled on Kinh ones. The French viewed such conversion as evolutionary progress from feudalism to modernity and rewarded the converts.<sup>54</sup>

**Thai** (*Thái*). Tai-speaking groups are the main inhabitants of the northern highland valleys of Indochina. Speakers of most of the sub-divisions of Tai languages can be found living in Indochina, although there are only a few groups of people speaking Northern Tai languages, the largest of these being the Giay (*Giáy*, Zay) of northwestern Vietnam. Central Tai speakers include the Tay (*Tày*, Tho, *Thô*) and Nung (*Nùng*) who live mainly in the northeastern part of Vietnam. Despujols visited areas inhabited by the Tay and Nung in Lạng Sơn and Cao Bằng provinces, although he did not produce images of them.

Most of the Tai-speaking people living in northwestern Vietnam and adjacent areas of Laos speak Southwestern Tai languages. Southwestern Tai languages are sub-divided into Northwestern, Lao-Phutai, and Chiang Saen branches and speakers of all three of these can be found in the northern highlands of Indochina. Black Tai and White Tai are Chiang Saen Tai languages (and in Vietnam speakers of these languages are categorized as Thai), Lu is a Northwestern Tai language, and Lao and Phuthai are Lao-Phutai Tai languages.

Ethnic identification of particular Southwestern Tai-speaking groups is somewhat complicated. Their early homeland was located in southern Yunnan in the vicinity of the Black River (*Sông Đà* in Vietnamese, Lixian in Chinese) and the Red River (*Sông Hồng* in Vietnamese, Yuan River in Chinese). These Tai-speaking peoples identified themselves primarily according to their *muong*, but there was also a more general division into White Tai and Black Tai. This categorization initially seems to have referred to moieties

that sacrificed different colors of buffalo, but later became a form of ethnic classification. As will be discussed below, the White Tai and Black Tai migrated into Vietnam from Yunnan at different times and followed somewhat different routes. In Vietnam many of these Tai-speaking groups identified themselves both according to their *muong* and as White Tai or Black Tai. However, as they moved further south into the Nghệ An and Thanh Hoa area of Vietnam and on into Laos the division between Black Tai and White Tai often became blurred and confused.<sup>55</sup> In Vietnam it is common for non-Tai to treat the Black Tai and White Tai as a single ethnic group called Thai, which is one of the 54 official ethnic categories in Vietnam today. In Laos the tendency is to recognize the Black Tai-White Tai distinction as well as to recognize the dozens of other local names.<sup>56</sup>

Mention should also be made of the process of Tai-ization, "whereby the members of a non-Tai speaking group are partially or fully assimilated by the Tai."<sup>57</sup> As the Tai migrated into Indochina they conquered the local Mon-Khmer speaking peoples and integrated them into their feudal system. Initially such peoples retained distinct identities and some aspects of their pre-conquest culture, but over time many of them as completely or at least largely assimilated and became Tai. The Tai Muoi of Nghệ An Province provide an interesting example of a Mon-Khmer speaking group that was almost completely assimilated, but that retained a distinct ethnic identity.<sup>58</sup>

The Black Tai are called *Tai Dam* and the White Tai are called *Tai Dón* or *Tai Kao* (*Tai Khao*) in Tai languages. In Vietnam both groups are placed together within the official ethnic category of *Thái*. Within Indochina Black Tai and White Tai live in northwestern Vietnam and northern Laos (mainly in Hua Phan Province, but also in many of the other parts of northern Laos). In the late 1950s there were around 350,000 Black Tai and White Tai living in Vietnam, with the White Tai comprising around 20,000 of this number.<sup>59</sup> Populations of the two groups in Laos were considerably smaller, perhaps around 18-20,000 in total.<sup>60</sup>

The White Tai were the first to move into northwestern Vietnam from Yunnan, followed a short time later by the Black Tai. The White Tai settled in the vicinity of Bắc Hà near the Red River in the AD 700s and the Black Tai arrived there in the next century.<sup>61</sup> From there they spread to the southwest. This migration appears to be related to the extension of the Nanchao Kingdom into northern Vietnam in the 700s and 800s. Mường Lay became the most important

political center of the White Tai and Mường Thaeng (later it came to be called Mường Thanh and Điện Biên Phủ by the French and Kinh) the most important center of the Black Tai. Mường Thaeng was founded in the 900s or a little earlier and is viewed by all Black Tai and by the Lao as their homeland. It is here that their primal mythical ancestor Khun Borom (aka Khun Bulom, and possibly a king of Nanchao who ruled in the early AD 700s) is believed to have lived. As the Black Tai and Lao spread out from Mường Thaeng/Thanh their rulers continued to trace their descent back to Khun Borom. The actual seat of Black Tai political power shifted from Mường Thanh to Mường Muai in the 1200s.

The village (*ban, bản*) was the basic unit of Thai feudal society and remained so under the French. Villages tended to have from a couple of dozen to as many as 50 houses. The Thai generally settled in highland valleys with irrigated rice fields surrounding the villages. The terrain of these valleys placed limits on the size of villages. Groups of villages were united to form a *muong* (*mường, mueang, muang, müang*). Under the feudal system there were five main social categories. The hereditary rulers of a *muong* were called *phia tao* (*'phia tao*), with the person serving as the head of the *muong* called the *chau muong* or *chau pha* (*châu mường* or *châu 'phạ*). There were a variety of other notables under the *phia tao* who were primarily responsible for the administration of villages and the collection of taxes. Unlike Tai further to the west in Laos, Thailand, and Burma, the Thai in Vietnam did not convert to Buddhism and retained their traditional beliefs in spirits. Accordingly, rather than monks there was a priestly class (called *mot lao* or *mo chang*) dedicated to these beliefs. Within this class there were ten ranks of priest. Among the duties of the *mo* was the recitation of the official history of the local nobles and of the migration to the *muong* during an annual public ceremony. The mass of commoners was placed below these strata and there was a bottom stratum of domestic servants (*khun han*), who were mostly of Mon-Khmer origin.

Most Thai households were largely self-sufficient, although there sometimes were village craft specialists such as carpenters. Some of the more important villages where high-ranking nobles lived also commonly had silversmiths. Prior to the arrival of the French, commerce in the Thai highlands was quite limited and consisted mainly of the irregular exchange of goods between the valley-dwelling Thai and non-Tai peoples living in the surrounding highlands. This included the Thai exchanging

plain cotton cloth for baskets, opium, and other goods. There were also Chinese itinerant traders who provided lowland products like iron and satin cloth in exchange for highland products. Such traders sometimes travelled along tracks that passed through the area in caravans. Commerce increased a little under the French with an increasing number of Kinh and Chinese traders travelling through the area and sometimes settling in the administrative centers. They primarily engaged in trading lowland industrial products for opium.

While the Thai in northwestern Vietnam did not form a unified kingdom, by the late 1300s and early 1400s a loose confederacy incorporating around 100 *muong* had been formed that stretched from southern Yunnan near the Vietnamese border south to Hòa Bình. This confederacy lasted until the 1500s and came to be known as Sip Song Chau Tai (i.e., 12 Tai Chau). This was not a particularly centralized political unit. *Chau muong* jealously guarded their independence and individual *muong* retained considerable autonomy. However, while the White Tai and Black Tai within this confederacy kept separate identities, they did come to share some common cultural elements that distinguished them from Thai living to the south and in Laos. During the late 1700s the Burmese invaded the area around Mường Thanh and then Siam established suzerainty over this area through its Lao client king Nanthasen.

As was mentioned above, in the 1880s Pavie convinced the White Tai ruler of Mường Lay to agree to French suzerainty. This was in return for their recognition of his supremacy over other *chau muong*, although this recognition was little more than a symbolic gesture. This agreement by the ruler of Mường Lay was part of a pattern of *chau muong* of seeking to use external influence to bolster their political positions. As McAlister notes, "various group among the Tai had traditionally been eager and adept in using outsiders in attempts to establish hegemony over their rivals in the Tai highlands."<sup>62</sup> In the 1880s this included seeking alliances with the Siamese the Chinese Hồ bandits and then with the French.

The French gradually sought to reduce the power of the *chau muong* and to establish firmer authority over the Thai highlands. This included creation of the Vietnamese-style provinces of Lai Châu, Sơn La, and Phong Thổ and of districts, called *phủ*, to replace the *muong* (e.g. replacing Mường Thanh with Điện Biên Phủ). The capitals of these new provinces were not the old villages of the local *chau muong*, but local trading centers that were not so closely

linked to the old feudal system. The administrative head of the *phủ* was an elected official known as a *tri phủ*, replacing the office of *chau muong*. In practice, however, local Thai continued to recognize the *chau muong* and others of the old feudal system and to perceive the political environment in terms of *muong* rather than districts and *phủ*. Even today most Black Tai refer to Điện Biên Phủ as Muong Thanh. Moreover, it usually was the local *chau muong* who was elected *tri phủ*.

Alongside these *tri phủ*, however, other offices were created as part of a colonial administration and the French generally did not allow the Thai feudal lords access to these. At the district and provincial level administrative positions held by non-French usually were given to Kinh. Abadie, writing in the 1920s, comments that the *tri phủ* "is most often assisted by Annamese [Kinh] secretaries" and that the Tai officials obtain their authority from the central Annamese power [i.e., the court in Hue] under the control of the French authorities."<sup>63</sup> Thus, while the Thai feudal lords were able to retain some power, at least locally, a new governing hierarchy was created with the French at the top and Kinh occupying most of the middle. Nevertheless, as McAlister remarks, "Both the Vietnamese in earlier centuries and more recently the French were unable to break the ritual or temporal power of the *chau muong*" and the influence of the Thai feudal lords "persisted despite sustained French efforts to break their hereditary prerogatives."<sup>64</sup>

**Lu** (*Lự, Lü, Lue*). The Lu speak a language belonging to the Northwestern branch of Southwestern Tai. They are treated as a distinct ethnic group in Laos and Vietnam, but in China they are lumped together with other Tai-speaking peoples into the Dai official ethnic category. There are relatively large numbers of Lu and other Northwestern Tai languages living in Yunnan and Burma. The Lu in Yunnan are associated with the kingdom of Sip Song Panna (i.e., 12 *panna*, founded in the AD 1100s). Most of these *panna* were located west of the Mekong River in what is now Yunnan, but two of them were located east of the Mekong in what is now Laos in Phongsali and Luang Nam Tha (formerly Muang Sing) provinces. The French encountered some difficulty in establishing rule over the Lu of Muang Sing and ended up conquering it by force between 1914 and 1916.

Within Indochina the largest number of Lu live in northern Laos, while only a much smaller number live in northwestern Vietnam. Estimates from the late 1950s and

early 1960s give their population as 16,000 in Laos and 1,000 in Vietnam.<sup>65</sup> Most Lu in Laos live in Phongsali and Luang Nam Tha provinces, with some also living in adjacent provinces, including Luang Prabang Province.<sup>66</sup> The Lu in Vietnam initially settled in a locale called Sam Mun (*Xam Mun*), located near the present Điện Biên Phủ, in the AD 600s. The Black Tai conquered them when they established Mường Thaeng in the 900s. When the Burmese attacked the area in the early 1700s many of the Lu fled to northern Lai Châu Province where they settled primarily in Bình Lu District along with Lao refugees.<sup>67</sup>

Lu village (*ban*) organization was similar to that of the Thai in Vietnam and Laos. Lu villages also are usually located in highland valleys surrounded by irrigated rice fields. In the past 1950s and 1960s the Lu villages in Sip Song Panna ranged in size from 10 to 300 households, with an average of about 30, while elsewhere in Laos the average was around 20 households, with the largest villages having about 80.<sup>68</sup> Lu villages in Vietnam ranged from 30 to 40 households. However, the Lu kingdom of Sip Song Panna had a far more centralized power structure than the Thai confederacy of Sip Song Chau Tai. Moreover, Lu settlements in Sip Song Panna included walled towns and there were also larger well-developed market centers.

Such markets were in part linked to the development of an important tea trade between Sip Song Panna and China and Tibet along the famous Tea and Horse Road.<sup>69</sup> The Lu area, especially around Muang Hai, was a major center for the production of pu'er tea. The Tea and Horse Road had come into being in the late AD 600s, but grew considerably in importance from the late 900s to the 1200s as the Tibetans began to consume larger quantities of pu'er tea. Chinese caravans still conducted this tea trade in the 1930s.

In addition to being engaged in the tea trade, the Lu in Sip Song Panna also produced a range of other goods for sale locally and for export. Such goods included paper made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*, called *saa* in Lu and other Tai languages) and cotton cloth. Like the Thai, the Lu also served as middlemen in the opium trade. In addition, there were silversmiths and other craft specialists who produced goods mainly for the feudal elite.

The Lu feudal structure in China and Laos was similar to that of the Thai, with a feudal lord called a *chau pha* being the head of the *muong*. However, as was noted above, the Lu *muong* of Sip Song Panna were also part of a kingdom with another layer of feudal lords ruling over them. In

general the French treated the Lue *chau pha* much like the Thai *chau muong*. Muang Sing was an exception. Initially the French allowed the ruler of Muang Sing a fair degree of autonomy, but after a failed revolt between 1914 and 1916 the *chau pha* of Muang Sing was stripped of his feudal privileges and fled into exile across the border to China and the *muong* became a regular administrative unit within colonial Laos.

The situation of the Lu in Vietnam was different in that they had been conquered by the Black Tai and incorporated into the feudal structure of the Black Tai rather than retaining their own system. The Lu who fled to northern Lai Châu Province lived within territory that was part of the White Tai feudal system linked to Mường Lay.

Another important difference between the Lu in China and Laos and the Thai of Vietnam and Laos is that the Lu were Buddhists. Initially the Lu had a religion focused on spirits, but Theravada Buddhism had been introduced to Sip Song Panna during the 1300s from the neighboring kingdom of Lanna in northern Thailand. Like the Lanna Tai, however, even though they converted to Buddhism the Lu retained many of their traditional beliefs related to spirits

As with other Tai, as the Lu settled in their highland valleys they fully or partially assimilated many of the Mon-Khmer speaking peoples already living there. Also, like other Tai the Lu developed patronage relations with the groups living at higher elevations (especially Akha in Laos) that linked these peoples with the Tai feudal system and often provided a basis for the exchange of goods. In the case of the Lu this relationship was referred to as *po lam*.<sup>70</sup> It was a patron-client relationship between local Lu notables and several highland villages in which the notable served as an intermediary between the villagers and the Lu feudal lords.

**Hani** (Hà Nhì). Most Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples live in Yunnan and other parts of China, but there are some groups scattered around the northern highlands of Indochina, usually in fairly remote areas. These include the Lolo (*Lô Lô*, called Yi in China), Phula, Hani, Akha, Lahu, Cong, and Sila. Despujols encountered Hani and Lolo in Vietnam among these groups, but did not produce drawings and paintings of the Lolo. The Lolo refer to themselves as Man Zi and there are two sub-groups, the Flowery Lolo and the Black Lolo. The Lolo live east of the Red River, mainly in Hà Giang and Cao Bằng provinces, but a small number of Black Lolo live closer to Sìn Hồ in northern Lào Cai

Province's Mường Khương District. The Lolo that Despujols met came from the Black Lolo sub-group.

At present Hani is an official ethnic category in China, where most of them live, and Vietnam. There are a number of Hani dialects and sub-groups. The official ethnic category of Hani in China includes a several peoples who are not considered to be Hani in neighboring countries. Grimes comments, "The term 'Hani' has been applied to South, Central, and North Lolo languages."<sup>71</sup> This branch of Tibeto-Burman includes not only peoples referred to as Hani, but also to those called Akha in Laos, Thailand, and Burma, as well as other Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples. In Laos the Hani and Akha are recognized as distinct groups. These 'Akha' speak dialects that are "virtually identical to the Yani dialect of Hani spoken in Xishuangbanna [aka Sip Song Panna] (Yunnan)."<sup>72</sup> There are numerous Akha sub-groups in Laos and three sub-groups of Hani in Vietnam: Hà Nhì Cồ Chồ, Hà Nhì La Mí, and Hà Nhì Đen (i.e., Black Hà Nhì).<sup>73</sup> The Akha and Hani were also sometimes referred to as Ho Nhi, Hou Ni, Oui Ni, or Wo Ni during the French colonial period.<sup>74</sup>

The majority of Hani and Akha live in southern Yunnan, China, and those found in the northern parts of Southeast Asia migrated from this area starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Akha generally live in Sip Song Panna and adjacent areas, while the Hani live further to the east near the headwaters of the Black River (called the Lixian River in China). Small groups of Akha had settled in the far northwestern corner of Laos by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and more migrated to this area later in the century as a result of instability in Yunnan. In the early 1950s Roux and Tran estimated that there were 4,500 Akha in Laos.<sup>75</sup> The Hani in Laos live in a very remote part of Phongsali province near the Chinese border. There are no population estimates of these Hani from the French colonial period, but the 1995 Lao census gives their population as 1,122.<sup>76</sup>

The Hani in Vietnam live in the live in the northwestern corners of Lào Cai and Lau Châu provinces, mainly in Lai Châu Province's Muong Te District and Lao Cai Province's Bat Xat District.<sup>77</sup> The Hà Nhì Cồ Chồ and Hà Nhì La Mí live in Mường Tè District and the Black Hà Nhì in Bát Xát District. Some Hanhi appear to have settled in Lào Cai Province as early as the 700s as the Nanchao Kingdom expanded (they are referred to as Man Thoan), but later abandoned this area as the kingdom contracted. Ancestors of the Hanhi now living in Vietnam migrated from Yunnan later.

Apparently a few arrived around 1700, but most came in the early 1800s.

There are a few French sources that mention the Hani. Their small population, isolation, and not causing much trouble for the colonial authorities meant that they did not receive much attention. French authors from the colonial period generally used the term Ho Nhi and did not distinguish between the different sub-groups. Colonial era accounts such as those by Diguet and Abadie do not refer to sub-groups, but appear only to describe the Black Hani.<sup>78</sup> Abadie categorizes them as a "Lolo tribe" and says that they live in "a few hamlets with a total of 200 to 300 individuals."<sup>79</sup>

The Hani in Vietnam live in two types of village depending on their agricultural practices. There are a few permanent villages with 50 or more households that practice irrigated rice cultivation. Other villages are comprised of only a dozen or so households and practice slash-and-burn agriculture. Poor soils and the slash-and-burn farming method result in these Hani having to move their villages every five to ten years.

Because of their relative isolation Akha and Hani villages in Laos and Vietnam are largely self-sufficient. However, like their counterparts in China, in the past villagers commonly grew opium that was sold to Chinese traders. This allowed them to obtain a salt and few other items that are not available locally, including silver. The latter included silver coins. Craft specialization was limited. Specialists included blacksmiths in some villages.

Hani social organization includes patrilineages that are named after a founding ancestor. Hereditary headmen governed Hani villages traditionally. Hani villages in Vietnam were incorporated into the Thai feudal system and, during the French colonial period they were placed under the authority of a Thai *ly truong* (*chau muong*). Under the feudal system and its French counterpart the *chau muong/ly truong* had the right to appoint village heads (called *tao ban* in the Mường Tè villages) that commonly was the locally recognized hereditary head.

The Hani are animists who worship a variety of spirits, including those of their ancestors. There are village priests who act as curers and lead household and village-wide religious ceremonies.

**Hmong** (*H'Mông*, Meo, Mèo, Miao). Speakers of Hmong-Mien languages are among the more recent migrants to the northern highlands of Indochina and most settled at higher

elevations than the other peoples. Hmong languages are divided into four branches: Chuanqiandian, Qiangdong, Xiangxi, and Bunu. There are a number of different groups of Hmong living in northern Laos and Vietnam that speak languages belonging to all four of these branches, with those speaking Chuanqiandian languages being the most numerous. The Hmong in Indochina include the White Hmong, Flowery Hmong, Black Hmong, Blue Hmong, and Pa Then. Despujols encountered members of the Flowery Hmong and White Hmong groups. Both of these groups speak closely related Chuanqiandian languages.

The White Hmong were prominent among the early Hmong migrants to northern Vietnam. The Hmong first arrived in northern Vietnam in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and settled in the northern parts of Hà Giang and Lào Cai provinces. From there they spread across the highlands of northern Vietnam and to Hua Phan Province in Laos, generally settling at altitudes above 2,000 meters. Instability in China between 1855 and 1881 resulted in further migration to northern Vietnam and Laos. The Hmong invaded the lowlands of Vietnam in 1860, but the Kinh pushed them back into the Hà Giang and Lào Cai highlands. The Hmong also spread out from Hua Phan Province throughout the higher elevations of northern Laos.

In part because they live at high elevations in rugged terrain, the Hmong tend to live in villages comprised of dispersed households rather than compact villages. While most Hmong grow at least some rice in dry or irrigated fields, maize tends to be their principal crop since it grows better at high altitudes. During the French colonial period opium poppies were another important crop. Opium poppies were sold as a cash crop to Tai people at lower elevations who served as intermediaries in the colonial opium trade and sometimes directly to Chinese. Other Hmong crops included ramie, hemp, and cotton to produce cloth and a variety of vegetables for subsistence.

The Hmong trace descent patrilineally and have patrilines. Newly married couples usually live with or near the husband's family. Hmong religion includes worship of a variety of spirits, including those of their ancestors. Male and female shamans or priests preside at public and domestic rituals and ceremonies and also serve as healers. Writing about the Hmong in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Diguet found that people living in villages tended to be members of the same clan and the eldest member of the clan commonly served as the village head.<sup>80</sup> The Hmong in the Dong Van area of Hà Giang Province formed an independent polity for a

time that gave rise to the notion of there being a Hmong 'king' in the area, but generally Hmong villages were relatively autonomous, but loosely tied to the Tai feudal system, paying tribute to and providing corvée labor for Tai feudal lords.

The Hmong in some areas sought to resist the imposition of French colonial rule, especially when the French tried to have them pay taxes. The Hmong in Xiang Khoang Province in Laos refused to pay such taxes in 1896, forcing the French to send troops into the area and to negotiate a settlement. The imposition of taxes and other disagreements with French colonial authorities led to a Hmong revolt in northern Lào Cai Province in Vietnam known as the *Guerre du Fou* (Madman's War), in 1918.<sup>81</sup> This time the French deployed a large number of troops and violently suppressed the revolt, which lasted until 1921. A messianic leader named Pa Chay Vue led the revolt, which spread from Lào Cai across the northern highlands as far as Luang Province in Laos. The revolt ended after Pa Chay Vue was killed near Luang Prabang in 1921. Before this, however, the French had already agreed to give the Hmong a special status that allowed them considerable autonomy. Under this system separate Hmong territories were created and placed under the headship of a Hmong referred to as a *tông giáp*.

The White Hmong refer to themselves as Hmong Do (Hmong Daw).<sup>82</sup> French writers during the colonial period use names for them such as Peu Meo and Mong Tlao.<sup>83</sup> They are referred to as Hmong Khao in Laos. During the French colonial period most White Hmong lived east of the Red River relatively close to the Chinese border, primarily in Đồng Văn, Mèo Vạc, and Quản Bạ districts of Hà Giang Province and in Bảo Lạc District of Cao Bằng Province.<sup>84</sup> They had begun to settle west of the Red River during the French colonial period in the northern provinces of Lào Cai and Lai Châu and more recently they have moved further south into Sơn La and Yên Bái provinces.<sup>85</sup> The White Hmong are found scattered throughout the highlands of northern Laos from southeastern Bolikhamxai Province in the south to Luang Nam Tha Province in the north.<sup>86</sup>

The Striped Hmong (Hmong Qua Mba or Gu Mba) are a subgroup of White Hmong. There are no significant cultural differences between the Striped Hmong and other White Hmong, but their dress is different.

The Flowery Hmong refer to themselves as Hmong Lenh.<sup>87</sup> They are called *H'mông Hoa* in Vietnamese and Flowery Hmong or Variegated Hmong in English. The French tended to refer to the Hmong as Meo rather than Hmong. Thus, Abadie called

the Flowery Hmong Flowered Meo or Hoa Meo.<sup>88</sup> Some French authors also referred to the Flowery Hmong as Red Meo, making no distinction between them and the Red Hmong (who call themselves Hmong Si or Hmong Si).<sup>89</sup> The majority of Flowery Hmong in Vietnam during the French colonial period lived in Lào Cai and Yên Bái provinces in the highlands immediately to the east and west of the Red River.<sup>90</sup> Some also lived further to the east in Hà Giang and Cao Bằng provinces. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Flowery Hmong gradually migrated further south into Lai Châu and Sơn La provinces and then into the western highland parts of Thanh Hóa, Hòa Bình, and Nghệ An provinces. At present they are the largest sub-group of Hmong in Vietnam.

**Iu Mien** (*Dao, Yao, Man, Mán*). The Iu Mien are divided into the Kiem Mien and Kim Mun branches. The Kiem Mien branch can be sub-divided into the Dai Ban and Tieu Ban sub-branches and the Kim Mun into the Quan Trang and Lan Tien sub-branches. Each of these sub-branches can be further sub-divided into a number of different groups.<sup>91</sup> During the French colonial period it was common to refer to them as Man and the Vietnamese currently refer to them as Dao. Writing during the French colonial period, Girard lists ten sub-groups of Man that were in common use in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>92</sup> It is important to note that despite so many categorical distinctions, linguistic and cultural differences between these groups are relatively minor. They speak similar dialects rather than distinct languages and, while their style of dress is commonly a distinguishing feature, other cultural differences are small.

While Iu Mien belonging to the Dao Quần Trắng ('*Dao with White Trousers*') group settled in Quảng Ninh Province in northeastern Vietnam in the 1200s, most Iu Mien migration from China did not occur until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As with other groups, this was prompted by the instability in China at the time. The Iu Mien migrants to Vietnam generally settled in hamlets and villages the highlands at higher elevations than the Thai and lower than the Hmong. Abadie says that generally they live at elevations between 300 and 900 meters, but that sometimes they live as low as 200 meters and as high as 1,000 meters.<sup>93</sup>

Most Iu Mien use the slash-and-burn method and their main crops are corn and rice. Occasionally they were able to settle at lower elevations where they could grow irrigated rice. The rugged terrain and slash-and-burn agriculture meant that Iu Mien villages tended to be fairly small and to move periodically. Writers during the French

period mention village and hamlet sizes in Vietnam ranging from five to twenty households.<sup>94</sup> Iu Mien society is divided into patrilineages and ancestor worship plays an important role in Iu Mien spiritual life. This includes worship of their common ancestor Ban Vuong (aka Châu Dàng).

Iu Mien villages were relatively self-sufficient during the French period and households tended to produce most of what they needed. There were some craft specialists and the Iu Mien had a reputation as good blacksmiths and for making silver jewelry. They traded forest products for such things as iron and silver ingots, silver coins, salt, beads, and needles with Chinese and sometimes Kinh traders. Abadie notes that the Man Tien (i.e. Dao Tien) generally used Tai languages or dialects as trade languages and that it was much less common to use Vietnamese or Quan Hoa (the Chinese-based trade language of the borderlands).<sup>95</sup>

Iu Mien hamlets and villages were often incorporated into the adjacent Tai feudal structure, but the situation varied. As Abadie notes, "the Man tribes are too dispersed and mixed with the tribes of other groups to have an autonomous administrative organization. Their villages and hamlets are attached to the chiefs of the tribes closest to them."<sup>96</sup> The commune was the largest Iu Mien administrative unit, but generally the Iu Mien were not even dominant at the commune level. Abadie describes two locales in Lào Cai's Mường Khuong District in 1913 by way of example.<sup>97</sup> Mường Khuong District is ethnically very mixed and includes Iu Mien, Hmong, Nung (of the Din/Zin sub-group, Tay (of the Thu Lao and Pa Dí/Zí sub-groups), Tu Di (aka Tu Zi), Giay, Lachi, and Phula (of the Phula Han sub-group). In 1913 the Nung were politically dominant in the district town of Mường Khuong and the surrounding area. The head (*ly truong*) and his deputy (*pho ly*) were both Nung. Under them the heads of the communes (*ping t'eou*) included four Nung and two Hmong. Village heads (*siao phay*) came from the ethnic group living in each village and these included twelve Iu Mien village heads. Located at a higher elevation, the Hmong comprised by far the largest number of people living in the ethnically very mixed Pha Long area. There were some Nung in Pha Long, but in 1913 Hmong held the offices of *ly truong* and *pho ly* and four of the *ping t'eou* were Hmong and one Nung. In those locales where the Iu Mien comprised a more significant portion of the population there was the office *man tong* that was held by a Iu Mien. He served as an intermediary between the Iu Mien and higher ranking officials.

The Iu Mien worship ancestors and a variety of spirits. Priests (*tsai*) play an important role in Iu Mien society. There are three ranks of priest. The Dao have an ancient tradition of literacy using Chinese characters and have a variety of books. Most of these deal with religious matters and it is generally the priests who are literate.

Despujols encountered members of both the Dai Ban and Tieu Ban sub-branches of the Kiem Mien branch of Iu Mien. The Dai Ban sub-group includes several different groups such as the Dao Ta Pan (which includes Red Dao and Black Dao) and Dai Quân Chet. The particular group of Dai Ban Iu Mien that he encountered belong to the Tan Pan group. The Tai refer to them as Man Coc, the Vietnamese as Man Sung, and the Chinese as Man Ta Pan.<sup>98</sup> Abadie says that Man Ta Pan means "Man with large planks" and notes that they are also called Man Coc, which means "Man with horns" in Thai and Man Sung by the Vietnamese, which means "Man with horns" in Vietnamese, and that they refer to themselves as Kim Mien, "which means 'mountain men,' a name applicable to all Man."<sup>99</sup>

Iu Mien belonging to the Dai Ban sub-branch are found widely scattered across the highlands of northern Vietnam. The Dao Tan Pan group lives primarily in three areas.<sup>100</sup> Two of these are east of the Red River: one in Bắc Giang and Quảng Ninh provinces; another in Mường Khương District of Lao Cai Province and further east in Hà Giang and Cao Bằng provinces. West of the Red River they live in northern Lai Chau Province in the vicinity of Sìn Hồ, Phong Thổ, and Mường Hum. These are the people that Despujols encountered. The Vietnamese commonly call them Man Den (i.e., Black Man, Black Dao) to distinguish them from the Red Dao that live nearby. Abadie estimated that at the time of his writing there were about 25,000 Man Ta Pan in Vietnam.<sup>101</sup>

Dao Tien means Dao with coins in Vietnamese. Diguët says that the Vietnamese call them Man Son Dau, meaning Man with lacquered heads, and the Chinese call them Siao Pan Yao.<sup>102</sup> His use of the term Man Son Dau is somewhat confusing since this term is generally used to refer to another group of Iu Mien that lives in Lạng Sơn Province.<sup>103</sup> Lacquered heads refers to the practice by many Iu Mien women of shaving and waxing their heads. In discussing names used for them, Abadie mentions that the Man Tien call themselves Kim Mien (i.e., mountain men, aka Kiem Mien) like the Man Ta Pan, but "also call themselves Dzot Ton Mien (men with small turbans) better to distinguish themselves from the Man Ta Pan whom they call Dzot Toun Mien (men with great turbans)."<sup>104</sup>

The Dao Tien live in two distinct areas.<sup>105</sup> East of the Red River they live in Bắc Kạn, Cao Bằng, and Thái Nguyên provinces. West of the Red River they live in the southern part of Sơn La Province and the western parts of Hòa Bình and Phú Thọ provinces.

Girard provides a map indicating where the Dao Tien were located around 1900 and says that initially they settled east of the Red River in Cao Bằng, Thái Nguyên, and Tuyên Quang provinces after leaving China because of Chinese efforts to deprive them of their independence and impose corvée labor.<sup>106</sup> Abadie says that they arrived in Vietnam before the Man Ta Pan and Man Lan Ten and estimated their population to be around 8,000.<sup>107</sup>

## **Foreigners**

French colonial rule resulted in the migration of a number of groups of foreigners to Indochina. Prominent among these were Europeans, primarily French, and Chinese. Both Chinese and Europeans had visited and sometimes settled in the region prior to French colonial rule, but once the colonial administration was in place numbers of both groups came to Indochina in increasing numbers.

**Europeans.** Prior to the advent of French colonialism there were very few Europeans, French or otherwise, living in the territories that came to comprise Indochina. European traders, adventurers, and missionaries had spent time and occasionally settled in the region since the 1500s, but they were relatively few in number. As for the French, their arrival in the region was linked mainly to Catholic missionary activities. After the Pope appointed two French bishops to the Far Eastern Mission field in 1658 the Jesuit priest Alexandre de Rhodes (l. 1591-1660), who is best remembered for devising the Latin-based phonetic alphabet called *Quốc Ngữ* that is the basis of modern Vietnamese writing, established a mission at Đàng Ngoài in 1627. The fortunes of French Catholic missionaries in Vietnam varied over the next couple of centuries. The Nguyễn Dynasty emperor Minh Mạng passed an anti-Catholic edict in 1825, but French missionary activity continued nevertheless and in 1843 missionaries traveled into the Central Highlands, where they established a mission in Kon Tum in 1849.

The French presence grew considerably in southern Vietnam after they landed a military force on the coast of central Vietnam in 1858, leading to the capture of Sài Gòn

the following year and the cession of three southern provinces to the French by the Vietnamese in 1862. Due in part to its unhealthy environment, Sài Gòn's population when the French arrived in the 1860s was only around 6,000. Draining the adjacent marshlands and improving public health allowed Sài Gòn's European and Asian population to grow dramatically over the next couple of decades. While Vietnamese formed the largest group of people in Sài Gòn it also became home to a growing French and Chinese colonial population. The expansion of French control over the rest of Indochina during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the development of similar European colonial settler societies in other cities, especially in Hà Nội.

The number of people categorized as Europeans living in Indochina increased to 24,000 in 1913 and then to over 42,000 by 1937.<sup>108</sup> This included 18,171 in Tonkin, 4,982 in Annam, 16,084 in Cochinchina, 2,534 in Cambodia, and 574 in Laos.<sup>109</sup> The French included both actual Europeans, Europeans of 'mixed-blood', and people such as Japanese and Filipinos who were categorized as whites under this term. There were only a few of the latter (e.g., about 200 Japanese). As for the origins of these 'Europeans', 45% of them were born in France, 36.5% were born in Indochina, and 7.9% were born elsewhere in the French empire, for a total of 89.4%. The largest number among the remainder included British and Americans.<sup>110</sup> As for the French-born, "most originate from the departments of the Midi and, above all, from Corsica, though Bretons are fairly numerous."<sup>111</sup> Among those Europeans born in Indochina, it included a large number of mixed bloods that obtained citizenship through one of their parents and naturalized Asians (mainly women) married to Frenchmen.<sup>112</sup>

Most of the Europeans in Indochina (over two-thirds of those who were employed) were either in the military or worked for the colonial government.<sup>113</sup> As would be expected from such a population, whereas members of most other ethnic groups tended to live permanently in Indochina, many of the Europeans remained for only a few years. Thus, 40.3% of the Europeans in the late 1930s had lived in the territory for five years or less, only about 26% had lived in the territory for over 15 years, and many of these were "'Europeans' of mixed blood."<sup>114</sup>

Not all of the French expats in Indochina in the late 1930s were soldiers or bureaucrats. There were also about 6,000 who were employed in other capacities. Most of these were engaged in commerce, banking, insurance, mining, industry, or in running plantations, there were also about

1,800 employed in the "liberal professions" such as law, medicine, and teaching.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, this group included a number of people that had come to settle in Indochina more or less permanently, or at least for most of their working life. This included a handful of people associated with the *École française d'Extrême Orient* and *École supérieure des beaux-arts de l'Indochine*.

The *École française d'Extrême Orient* was founded in 1900 and headquartered in Hà Nội. It focused on the archaeology, history, and linguistics of Indochina and its work included both research and the renovation of archaeological sites like Khmer ones such as Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom and Cham ones such as Mỹ Sơn. It was also responsible for the running of six museums including one in Hà Nội, the Musée Cham in Tourane (Đà Nẵng), the *Musée Albert Sarraut* in Phnom Penh, and the *Musée de Vientiane*. It was associated the *Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres* in France. The archaeologist Louis Finot (l. 1864-1935) was its first director. He came to Indochina in 1898 with a French archaeological mission and is closely associated with early work at Angkor Wat and other Khmer sites. Georges Cœdès (l. 1886-1969) was the director when Despujols visited Indochina, serving from 1929 to 1946. Previously he had been director of the National Library of Siam for over a decade.

As was mentioned earlier, the University of Indochina was established in Hà Nội in 1906. The university's schools or colleges included one dedicated to fine arts, the *École supérieure des beaux-arts de l'Indochine*. As was also noted, almost 86% of its 631 students in 1937 were Kinh and only just under 14% were French.

The *École supérieure des beaux-arts de l'Indochine* (College of Fine Arts of Indochina) was established in 1925, modeled on the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, and continued to function until 1945. It was founded by Victor Tardieu (l. 1870-1937) in collaboration with the Kinh artist Nguyễn Nam Sơn (aka Nguyễn Vạn Thọ, l. 1890-1973).<sup>116</sup> Tardieu was born near Lyon and studied at the *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Lyon* prior to moving to Paris in 1889, where he studied at the Atelier Moreau along with Henri Matisse. Like Despujols, he served in the military during World War I. He won the *Prix de l'Indochine* in 1920 and went to Hà Nội. He was commissioned to produce murals for the university and main library. Intending to stay for only a short time, Tardieu ended up staying there for the rest of his life. He became acquainted with a number of local artists and became especially close to Nam Sơn. This

relationship played a crucial role in Tardieu's lobbying the government to create the college of fine arts. Tardieu remained director of the college until 1936.

Tardieu hired the French artist Joseph Inguimberty (1. 1896-1971) in 1925 to serve as head of the college's painting department.<sup>117</sup> Inguimberty was born in Marseille, studied at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts-Décoratifs* in Paris, and also served in the military in World War I. He trained a number of Vietnamese artists and is known especially for his promotion of lacquer painting. He himself produced a number of paintings of people and the countryside in Tonkin and the adjacent highlands. He remained head of the painting department until 1945, when the college was closed and left Vietnam the following year.

The *École supérieure des beaux-arts de l'Indochine* was an interesting bi-cultural French-Kinh colonial institution. In its twenty years of operation the college trained over 100 Kinh students. It played a crucial role in the development of modern Vietnamese art that is characterized by blending of European, Chinese, and Vietnamese influences, with a strong emphasis on the latter. Its more famous Kinh students included painter Lê Phổ (class 1925-30), silk painter Nguyễn Phan Chánh (1925-30 class), oil painter Tô Ngọc Vân (1925-30 class), lacquer painter Huyền Gia Tri (1931-36 class), oil and lacquer artist Trần Văn Cẩn (1931-36 class), and painter Nguyễn Đỗ Cung (1929-34 class). After graduating from the college a number of its students went to Paris to exhibit their works or for further study. Thus, Phan Chánh's work was exhibited in Paris in 1931. Lê Phổ went to Paris in 1930 for further study and then returned to Hà Nội in 1933 to join the faculty of the college. He went back to Paris in 1937 and exhibited his work there on a number of occasions over the next few years.

**Chinese.** Migration to northern Vietnam by Han and other Chinese date back over 2,000 years and lowland northern Vietnam was part of the Chinese empire for almost 1,000 years. Following the region's independence from China in the 900s the Chinese population of what was to become Đại Việt was largely assimilated into the Kinh or Vietnamese population. During the centuries immediately prior to the establishment of French colonial rule various groups of Chinese (some Han, but mostly people from the southern coastal regions and Hainan) continued to migrate to Đại Việt and also settled in neighboring kingdoms such as Cambodia. Some came for political reasons as exiles, but

most were merchants seeking commercial opportunities. Thus, when the French arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese were already living in the region. While their number was relatively small they were a significant presence in commercial activities.

Their number increased considerably following the French conquest of Vietnam, which created a hospitable environment in contrast to China at the time and stimulated domestic and international economic activity. French colonial policies viewed the Chinese favorably. The French viewed the Chinese as useful intermediaries between themselves and the 'natives' and perceived them to be hard-working people who promoted economic development. While these served as pull factors that attracted Chinese immigrants to Indochina, political instability and economic hardship in China during this period served as push factors, encouraging people to leave China. By 1912 their total number in Indochina had reached 293,000 and over the next couple of decades the number continued to grow, peaking at 419,000 in 1931 and then declining to 326,000 in 1936 as many returned to China because of the economic downturn brought on by the depression.<sup>118</sup>

The majority of these 'Chinese' were from the southern coastal regions from Fujian southward or the island of Hainan. They included Yue (Cantonese), Hakka, and Min Nan (Southern Min) and its dialects such as Hokkien, Teochew/Chaozhou and Hainanese. There were also a significant number of people of mixed Chinese ancestry who were categorized as distinct from the ethnic Chinese.

While Chinese could be found scattered throughout Indochina, most of them settled in Cochinchina and Cambodia. Thus, in 1936 there were 171,000 Chinese in Cochinchina and 106,000 in Cambodia, while there were only 35,000 in Tonkin, 11,000 in Annam, and 3,000 in Laos. Whichever territory they resided in, most of the Chinese engaged in commercial activities and lived in towns or cities.

A large proportion of the Chinese lived in the cities of Chợ Lớn, Sài Gòn, and Phnom Penh. During the time when southern Vietnam was part of the Khmer Empire, the Khmer had established an important port at Prey Nokor, in the vicinity of modern Sài Gòn. After 1679, shortly before the southern region was conquered by the Nguyễn lords (between 1698 and 1759), the Khmer ruler allowed Chinese supporters of the Ming Dynasty fighting against the Manchus to settle in the area, where they lived mainly in Biên Hòa. Merchants within this Chinese community became involved in the Tây

Son Rebellion in the 1770s and before long the entire Chinese community was caught up in the conflict. Eventually they fled their center at Biên Hòa and established a new one named Tai Ngon in 1782 that was later re-named Chợ Lớn (big market). This initial migration formed the basis of a substantial Chinese community in southern Vietnam and Cambodia. Trading in and milling rice was an especially important activity of the Chinese, but they were involved in many other commercial undertakings as well. In the case of Cambodia, especially noteworthy was the extent to which they were involved in the silk industry.<sup>119</sup>

The Chinese tended to live in distinct areas in the cities and towns of Indochina. Chợ Lớn began essentially as a Chinese town and developed as the most important regional center of Chinese commercial activities. The city served as the main market entrepôt for rice from Cochinchina and Cambodia and in the 1930s there were 27 Chinese-owned rice mills in Chợ Lớn.<sup>120</sup> Out in the Mekong delta, Cần Thơ (pop. 27,108) had a large Chinese population that was mainly engaged in the rice trade.<sup>121</sup> In Cambodia, the French had transformed Phnom Penh into a colonial city that was divided into three distinct parts: "to the north, the European quarter round the Phnom hill; in the centre, the Chinese quarter, where most of the commercial houses are situated; to the south, the Cambodian quarter."<sup>122</sup> To the north in Tonkin, the Chinese presence was especially noticeable in the port town of Haiphong that had served as a supply base for French forces invading Tonkin in the 1880s. It subsequently became the north's main port and a center of trade and industry, including a number of Chinese-owned rice mills. Hà Nội had a much smaller Chinese population. They lived in the so-called native quarter, where they tended to occupy distinct streets where their places of business were located. Elsewhere in Tonkin, the town of Thanh Hóa (with a population of about 10,000 in 1936) had a distinct Chinese quarter.

The Chinatowns of colonial Indochina were not simply places of business with Chinese living in their shop-houses. They also included a variety of Chinese cultural institutions. These included private Chinese schools and temples. As the largest Chinatown in Indochina, Cho Lon had the largest Chinese schools and temples. Such institutions tended to cater to particular groups of Chinese rather than to the Chinese population as a whole. Thus, in Chợ Lớn people from Fujian built the Quan Âm Pagoda in 1816 and later the Tam Sơn Hội Quán Pagoda. Cantonese built the Thiên Hậu Pagoda in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, dedicated to the

goddess Thiên Hậu who is believed to rescue people that are in trouble at sea and who is worshipped by most coastal Chinese people). Chaozhou migrants built the Nghĩa An Hội Quán Pagoda. Such Chinatowns also sometimes had Catholic and even Protestant churches that catered to local Chinese converts.

## Notes

1. Naval Intelligence Unit, *Indo-China* (Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 1943), p. 213.
2. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 214, 216.
3. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 248.
4. Michael C. Howard, *Transnationalism and Society: An Introduction* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), p. 87.
5. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 473.
6. Jean Despujols, *Voyage d'un Refractaire en Indochine et Autour du Monde* (Unpublished manuscript), p. 1188.
7. See Nguyễn Văn Huyền, *The Ancient Civilization of Vietnam* (Hà Nội: Thế Giới Publishers, 1995), p. 267-72.
8. See Michael C. Howard and Kim B. Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam: Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), p. 19-27; also see Jeanne Cuisinier, *Les Muong: Geographie humaine et sociologie* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1946).
9. See Nguyễn Văn Huyền, *Ancient Civilization*, p. 179, 219; Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 163-5; Pierre Gourou, *Les paysans du delta tonkinois: Etude de géographie humaine*. (Paris: Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1936); and Pierre Gourou, *Esquisse d'une etude de l'habitation annamite dans l'Annam septentrional et central du Thanh Hoá au Binh Dinh*. (Paris: Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1936).
10. See Frank M. Lebar, Gerald C. Hickey, and John K. Musgrave, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1964), p. 164.
11. See G. Landgrand, *Vie sociale et religieuse en Annam: Monographie d'un village de la côte Sud-Annam* (Lille: Editions Univers, 1945); G. Morechand, "Caractères économiques et sociaux d'une region de pêche maritime du Centre-Vietnam" *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 47, 1955, p. 291-354; and Nguyễn Văn Huyền, *Ancient Civilization*, p.230.
12. Nguyễn Văn Huyền, *Ancient Civilization*, p.19.
13. Milton E. Osborne, *The French Presence in Cochinchina & Cambodia: Rule and Response (1859-1905)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 103.

14. Osborne, *The French Presence*, p. 103.
15. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 158.
16. See individual entries under <[www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dbuic.html](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dbuic.html)>.
17. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 212.
18. May Ebihara, "Khmer," in Frank M. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1964), p. 99; also see Delvert, "La vie rurale au Cambodge"; and Jean Delvert, *La paysan cambodgien* (Paris: Mouton, 1961).
19. Osborne, *The French Presence*, p. 191.
20. Ebihara, "Khmer," p. 104.
21. Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), p. 75.
22. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 157.
23. See Michael C. Howard and Kim B. Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), p. 125-30.
24. See Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples*, p. 131.
25. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 216.
26. See Joaquim Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 3: Profile of Austro-Thai-Speaking Peoples* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2003), p. 97.
27. François Jules Harmand, *Laos and the Hilltribes of Indochina Journeys to the Boloven Plateau, from Bassac to Hue through Laos and to the Origins of the Thai* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1997), p. 218.
28. Harmand, *Laos and the Hilltribes of Indochina*, p. 216.
29. Harmand, *Laos and the Hilltribes of Indochina*, p. 218.
30. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 15, April-June, 1926, p. 13.
31. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 25, Apr.-Sept., 1933, p. 7.
32. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 38, Jan.-Mar., 1933, p. 4.
33. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 38, Jan.-Mar., 1933, p. 20.
34. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 38, Jan.-Mar., 1933, p. 20.
35. *The Call of French Indo-China*, No. 38, Jan.-Mar., 1933, p. 19-20.
36. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 416.
37. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 415.
38. Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Shattered World: Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the*

- Vietnam War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 3-4.
39. See Michael C. Howard, "Cultural Revival in Ta Van," in Nong Quoc Binh and Michael C. Howard (eds.), *Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune, Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), p 2-3; Nguyễn Trọng Khang, "A Brief History of Tourism in Sa Pa," in Nong Quoc Binh and Michael C. Howard (eds.), *Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune, Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013), p. 63-5.
  40. Parasites posed a problem for coffee production, but even "In 1937-8, a normal year, only 1,500 tons of coffee were produced from a plantation area of about 13,000 ha" (Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 300).
  41. A. Monfluer, *Monographie de la Province du Darlac (1930)* (Hanoi: Impremerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1931), p. 46.
  42. For more information on the Ede see Michael C. Howard and Kim B. Howard, *Textiles of the Central Highlands of Vietnam* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), p. 24-5; and L. Sabatier, *Recueil des Coutumes Rhades du Darlac* (Hanoi: Impremerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1940).
  43. Hickey, *Shattered World*, p. 3.
  44. For more information on the Mnong, see Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Central Highlands*, p. 65, 68; Paul Huard and A. Maurice, "Les Mnong du plateau central Indochinois," *Institut Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme, Bulletins et Travaux*, vol. 2, 1939, p. 27-148; Georges Condominas, *We Have Eaten the Forest: The Story of a Montagnard Village in the Central Highlands of Vietnam* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).
  45. Bernard Jouin, *La mort et la tombe: L'abandon de la tombe* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1949), p. 165-6.
  46. See Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Central Highlands*, p. 56.
  47. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 140.
  48. Jeanne Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông: Geographie humaine et sociologie* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1946), p. 33.
  49. See Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 340-414.
  50. See Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 299-339.
  51. Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 47.
  52. Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 46.
  53. Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 47, lists and describes the missions.
  54. Cuisinier, *Les Mu'ông*, p. 284-5.
  55. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples*, p. 97.
  56. Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 3*, p. 3, refers to "At least 39" distinct Tai-speaking groups in

- Laos; and Laurent Chazée, *The Peoples of Laos: Rural and Ethnic Diversities* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1999), p. 27, to 26 Tai groups. These groups include speaker of non-Southwestern Tai languages as well.
57. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam*, p. 139. Georges Condominas, *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai: Historical and Anthropological Aspects of Southeast Asian Social Spaces* (Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990), referred to this as Thai-ization.
58. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam*, p. 139.
59. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 221, 224.
60. See Henri Roux and Tran Van Chu, *Quelques Minorités Ethniques du Nord-Indochine* (France-Asie, Numéro Spécial no. 92-93, 1954), p. 364.
61. See Cam Trong, "Baan-müang: A Characteristic Feature of the Tai Socio-political system," *Tai Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1998, p. 20; Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam*, p. 71-2.
62. John T. McAlister, Jr., "Mountain Minorities and the Viet Minh: A Key to the Indochina War," in Peter Kunstader (ed.), *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations, Volume Two* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 805.
63. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland, with Special Reference to Thai Tribes* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001), p. 75, 76.
64. McAlister, "Mountain Minorities," p. 780, 779.
65. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 207.
66. See Chazée, *The Peoples of Laos*, p. 40; Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 3*, p. 61-2.
67. See Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam*, p. 133.
68. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 207.
69. Michael C. Howard, *Transnationalism in Ancient and Medieval Societies* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), p. 125-7.
70. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 207-9.
71. Barbara F. Grimes (ed.), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Thirteenth Edition* (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1996), p. 548.
72. Grimes, *Ethnologue*, p. 540.
73. On the Akha in Laos see Joaquim Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 4: Sino-Tibetan-Speaking Peoples* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2003), p. 33; Chazée, *The*

- Peoples of Laos*, p. 133; Henri Roux, "Deux tribus de la region de Phongsaly (Laos septentorial) I: A-Khas or Khas Kô's, II: P'u Noi," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 24, 1924, p. 135-419. Roux and Tran, *Quelques Minorités*, p. 154, list seven sub-groups. On the Hani in Vietnam see Michael C. Howard and Kim B. Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam: Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002), p. 89.
74. See Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 250.
  75. Roux and Tran, *Quelques Minorités*, p. 153.
  76. Schliesinger, *Ethnic Groups of Laos*, Volume 4, p. 85.
  77. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 89.
  78. E. Diguët, *Les Montagnards du Tonkin* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1908), p. 108; Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 250-1.
  79. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 250.
  80. Diguët, *Les Montagnards du Tonkin*, 137.
  81. See Geoffrey Gunn, *Rebellion in Laos: Peasants and Politics in a Colonial Backwater* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), p. 151-60.
  82. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 29.
  83. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 196; Diguët, *Les Montagnards du Tonkin*, p. 135.
  84. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 32.
  85. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 32.
  86. See Chazée, *The Peoples of Laos*, p. 131.
  87. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 29.
  88. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 196.
  89. Henry Girard, *Les Tribus Sauvages du Haut-Tonkin, Mans et Méos: Notes Anthropométriques et Ethnographiques* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1904), p. 11; Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 44.
  90. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 35.
  91. For a discussion of Iu Mien categorization see Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 50.

92. Girard, *Les Tribus Sauvages*, p. 10.
93. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 147.
94. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 89.
95. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 182.
96. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 156-7.
97. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 157.
98. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 88.
99. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 173. Diguët, *Les Montagnards du Tonkin*, p. 112, refers to them as "Man Sung, also known as Ta Pan, Yao Khao or 'Mans à cornes' (Man with horns)." Also see Girard, *Les Tribus Sauvages du Haut-Tonkin*, p. 10.
100. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 57.
101. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 174. Maurice Durand, "Notes sur les pays Tai de Phong-tho," *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, n.s., 27, no. 2, 1952, p. 199-200, provides census data on the Man Ta Pan in the Phong Thô area from the 1940s.
102. Diguët, *Les Montagnards du Tonkin*, p. 118.
103. See Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 61.
104. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 181-2.
105. Howard and Howard, *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam*, p. 63.
106. Girard, *Les Tribus Sauvages du Haut-Tonkin*, p. 17-18, and map at end of volume.
107. Abadie, *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland*, p. 182.
108. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 249.
109. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 250.
110. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 251.
111. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 251-2.
112. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 252.
113. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 251.
114. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 253.
115. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 250.
116. On Tardieu, see [www.witnesscollection.com/the\\_collection/Pages/Victor\\_Tardieu\\_\(1870-1937\).html](http://www.witnesscollection.com/the_collection/Pages/Victor_Tardieu_(1870-1937).html) and on Nam Son see "Nam Son, le peintre," by Huu Ngoc, AAFV Le Vietnam, 28 janvier 2009 [www.aafv.org/Nam-Son-le-peintre](http://www.aafv.org/Nam-Son-le-peintre).

117. See  
 <[witnesscollection.org/the\\_collection/Pages/Joseph\\_Inguimberty\\_\(1896-1971\).html](http://witnesscollection.org/the_collection/Pages/Joseph_Inguimberty_(1896-1971).html)>.
118. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 254.
119. See John Ter Horst, *Ikat Weaving and Ethnic Chinese Influences in Cambodia* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2011).
120. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 472.
121. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 472.
122. Naval, *Indo-China*, p. 475-6.

## References

- Abadie, Maurice. *Minorities of the Sino-Vietnamese Borderland with Special Reference to Thai Tribes*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2001. [Originally published in French in 1924.]
- Cam Trong. "Baan-müang: A Characteristic Feature of the Tai Socio-political system." *Tai Culture*, 3(2), 1998: 12-26.
- Chazée, Laurent. *The Peoples of Laos: Rural and Ethnic Diversities*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1999.
- Condominas, Georges. *We Have Eaten the Forest: The Story of a Montagnard Village in the Central Highlands of Vietnam*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai: Historical and Anthropological Aspects of Southeast Asian Social Spaces*. Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990.
- Cuisinier, Jeanne. *Les M'u'òng: Géographie humaine et sociologie*. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1946.
- Delvert, Jean. "La vie rurale au Cambodge," *France-Asie*, 15, 1958: 95-104.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La paysan cambodgien*. Paris: Mouton, 1961.
- Despjols, Jean. *Voyage d'un Refractaire en Indochine et Autour du Monde*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Diguet, E. *Les Montagnards du Tonkin*. Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1908.
- Durand, Maurice. "Notes sur les pays Tai de Phong-tho," *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, n.s., 27(2), 1952: 193-232.
- Ebihara, May. "Khmer." In Frank M. Lebar, et al, *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*: 98-105. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1964.
- Edwards, Penny. *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation, 1860-1945*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.
- Girard, Henry. *Les Tribus Sauvages du Haut-Tonkin, Mans et Méos: Notes Anthropométriques et Ethnographiques*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1904.

- Gourou, Pierre. *Les paysans du delta tonkinois: Etude de géographie humaine*. Paris: Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1936.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Esquisse d'une etude de l'habitation annamite dans l'Annam septentrional et central du Thanh Hoá au Binh Dinh*. Paris: Editions d'art et d'histoire, 1936.
- Grimes, Barbara F. (ed.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Thirteenth Edition*. Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1996.
- Gunn, Geoffrey. *Rebellion in Laos: Peasants and Politics in a Colonial Backwater*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.
- Harmond, François Jules. *Laos and the Hilltribes of Indochina: Journeys to the Boloven Plateau, from Bassac to Hue through Laos and to the Origins of the Thai*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1997.
- Hickey, Gerald Cannon. *Shattered World: Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
- Howard, Michael C. *Transnationalism and Society: An Introduction*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Transnationalism in Ancient and Modern Societies*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Cultural Revival in Ta Van." In Nong Quoc Binh and Michael C. Howard (eds.), *Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune, Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam*: 1-16. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Kim Be Howard. *Textiles of the Daic Peoples of Vietnam*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Kim Be Howard. *Textiles of the Central Highlands of Vietnam*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Kim Be Howard. *Textiles of the Highland Peoples of Northern Vietnam: Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2002.
- Huard, Paul, and A. Maurice. "Les Mnong du plateau central Indochinois." *Institut Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme, Bulletins et Travaux*, 2, 1939: 27-148.
- Jouin, Bernard. *La mort et la tombe: L'abandon de la tombe*. Paris: Institute d'Ethnologie, 1949.
- Landgrand, G. *Vie sociale et religieuse en Annam: Monographie d'un village de la côte Sud-Annam*. Lille: Editions Univers, 1945.
- Lebar, Frank M., Gerald C. Hickey, and John K. Musgrave. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files, 1964.
- McAlister, Jr., John T. "Mountain Minorities and the Viet Minh: A Key to the Indochina War." In Peter Kunstader

- (ed.), *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations, Volume Two*, p. 771-844. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967.
- Monfluer, A. *Monographie de la Province du Darlac (1930)*. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1931.
- Morechand, G. "Caractères économiques et sociaux d'une région de pêche maritime du Centre-Vietnam." *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 47, (1955): 291-354.
- Naval Intelligence Unit. *Indo-China*. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Press, 1943.
- Nguyễn Trọng Khang. "A Brief History of Tourism in Sa Pa." In Nong Quoc Binh and Michael C. Howard (eds.), *Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune, Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2013.
- Nguyễn Văn Huyền. *The Ancient Civilization of Vietnam*. Hà Nội: Thế Giới Publishers, 1995. [Originally published as *La civilisation annamite* in 1945.]
- Osborne, Milton E. *The French Presence in Cochinchina & Cambodia: Rule and Response (1859-1905)*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.
- Roux, Henri. "Deux tribus de la région de Phongsaly (Laos septentrional) I: A-Khas or Khas Kô, II: P'u Noi." *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 24, 1924: 135-419.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Tran Van Chu. *Quelques Minorités Ethniques du Nord-Indochine. France-Asie*, Numéro Spécial, 92-93, 1954.
- Sabetier, L. *Recueil des Coutumes Rhades du Darlac*. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1940.
- Schliesinger, Joachim. *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 3: Profile of Austro-Thai-Speaking Peoples*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ethnic Groups of Laos, Volume 4: Sino-Tibetan-Speaking Peoples*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2003.
- Ter Horst, John. *Ikat Weaving and Ethnic Chinese Influences in Cambodia*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2011.