

# **Qing China's View of Its Border and Territory in Southernmost Yunnan in the 1830s: Analyses of Historical Sources Concerning Sipsongpanna**

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This paper discusses Qing China's view of its border and territory in Southernmost Yunnan in the 1830s by analysing historical sources such as *Pu'er Fu Zhi*, the official account of Pu'er Fu, written in the Dao Guang Period (1821–1850) and Captain McLeod's 1837 Journal. In Yunnan's southernmost borderlands, approximately thirty Tai principalities called *moeng* (*muang*) formed 'Sipsongpanna', where the lord of Moeng Cheng Hung held the position of supreme ruler. Sipsongpanna had paid tribute to both the Chinese and Burmese dynasties.

It was found that the understanding of what constituted 'Chinese' territory in this region was still vague, but at least in 1837, Moeng Cheng Hung was considered to be on the edge of Chinese territory and functioned as a barrier. The Chinese view of where exactly the border was situated was also not clear, but, in practice, the line that China had to protect was Jiulong Jiang or the Mekong River, which flowed next to Moeng Cheng Hung. Here, the entry of 'foreign' officials across the 'border' was very strictly controlled, whereas merchants had far easier access.

Keywords: Sipsongpanna, Qing, border, Yunnan, McLeod

## **I Introduction**

Sipsongpanna was a Tai pre-modern state that was located at the southernmost part of the present-day Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). It consisted of approximately thirty principalities or autonomous political units called 'moeng (*muang*)'<sup>2</sup>, and was governed by its own lord called 'Chao Moeng (Chao Muang)'.

Sipsongpanna had paid tribute to both the Chinese and Burmese dynasties since the latter half of the sixteenth century and the lord of Moeng Cheng Hung (Muang Chiang Rung)<sup>3</sup>, who also held the position of supreme ruler of all of Sipsongpanna, was given official titles by both the Chinese and Burmese dynasties. The Chinese title was Cheli Xuanwei Shi (車里宣慰使), which was called 'Saenwifa' in Tai<sup>4</sup>. He was the head of a Chinese office named Cheli Xuanwei Si (車里宣慰司), which was usually located at Moeng Cheng Hung<sup>5</sup>.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss China's perception of its border and territory in Southernmost Yunnan around 1837 by analysing Captain McLeod's 1837 Journal (CMJ)<sup>6</sup> as a main source of information. *Pu'er Fu Zhi* (普洱府志) (PFZ)<sup>7</sup>, or the official account of Pu'er Fu, which was compiled in the Dao Guang (道光) period (1821–1850), is also used as an additional source.

As for discussion regarding pre-modern or 'pre-colonial' views of border and territory in the 'upper-Mekong borderlands,' which includes Southernmost Yunnan, we should note Walker's argument [Walker 1999: 43]. As against the 'widely-held view' that in the pre-colonial

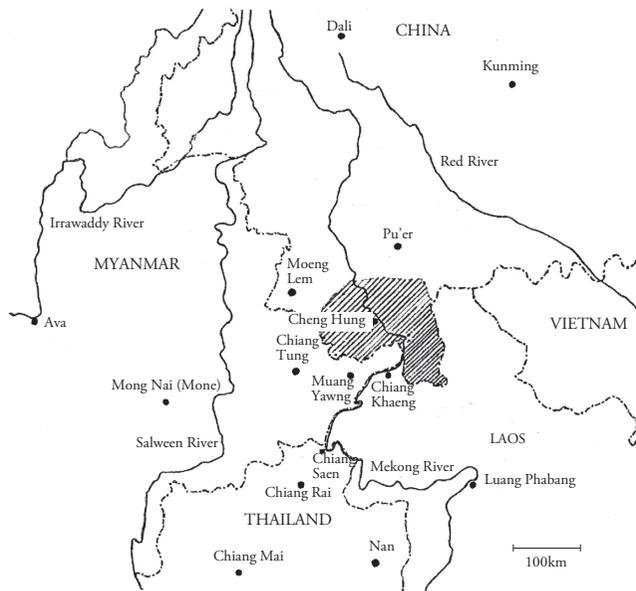


Fig. 1: Map around Sipsongpanna

The shaded area indicates present-day Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture of Day Nationality

-----: borders between present-day nation states

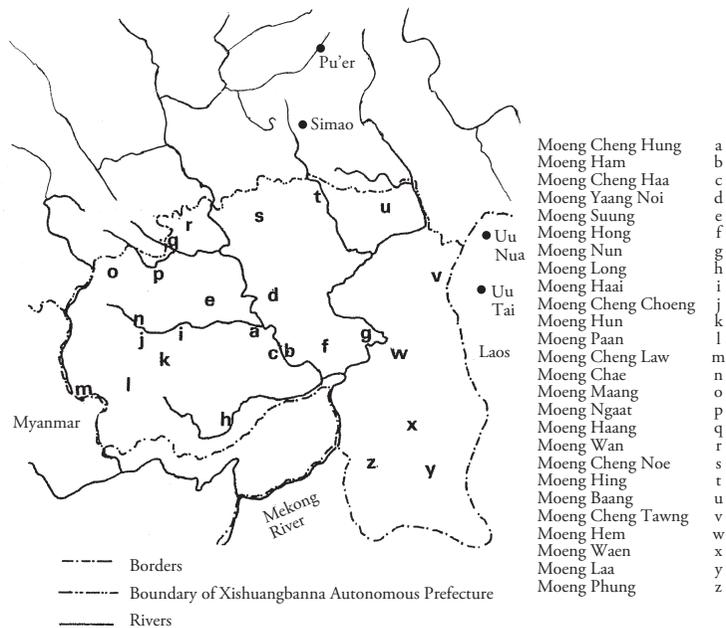


Fig. 2: Map of Sipsongpanna

era “the supposedly fluid, ambiguous and non-bounding spatial practices” existed, Walker argues that “territorial borders were far more important...than many commentators had suggested<sup>8</sup>.” [Walker 2009: 102, 1999: 43] He gives some concrete examples of demarcations and boundary disputes among local Tai polities, as well as noting the existence of boundary markers made by them. This is a very important point. However, the cases Walker highlights happened at the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century and he provides no examples before then. Therefore, we still do not know whether the same things happened or existed in the first half of the nineteenth century or before that. Moreover, although the examples indicate the viewpoint of local Tai people about the border, we still cannot find out how the greater political powers, such as China, Burma, and Siam, viewed the borderlands, where the Tai polities existed as their tributaries. We should distinguish between the local Tai polities that needed to define the border precisely for the sake of “their control of trade and natural resources” [Walker 1999: 44] and the greater political powers that still did not directly control the borderlands.

If we see how China dealt with the borderlands of Yunnan, Giersch's discussion could be highly suggestive. Giersch wrote that Zhang Yunsui (張允隨), who served as governor and governor-general in Yunnan during the 1730s and 1740s [Qing Shi Gao: chapter 307], had permitted Chinese to cross freely into frontier zones and the Qing court had supported him [Giersch 2006: 105]. This means that the Qing dynasty gave Chinese people free access to the borderlands of Yunnan during the 1730s and 1740s. If so, there is also a good possibility that around 1837 Chinese people could access the borderlands of Yunnan freely<sup>9</sup>. What then if ‘non-Chinese’ or ‘foreign’<sup>10</sup> people wanted to access the borderland from outside China? This paper will discuss those cases.

Next, I will move to explanations of the historical sources that I intend to use. Captain McLeod, the author of the journal, visited Sipsongpanna in 1837 as a British envoy and planned to proceed to China in order to open “a commercial intercourse with the traders of” China<sup>11</sup>. His journal had plenty of descriptions of Moeng Cheng Hung, as well as its relationships with China and Burma. Some of them were observed by McLeod himself and others were gained through other informants<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, *Pu'er Fu Zhi*, which will be analysed before examining McLeod's Journal, was the official account of Pu'er Fu. Pu'er Fu was a Chinese administrative unit that administered Cheli Xuanwei Si and the other moengs of Sipsongpanna.

This paper will proceed as follows: first, I will briefly outline the situation in Sipsongpanna from the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century to clarify the meaning of discussing Chinese perceptions of its border and territory in Southernmost Yunnan around 1837. Secondly, I will discuss the official Chinese view of the moengs of Sipsongpanna and its surrounding area in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*. Thirdly, Moeng Cheng Hung's tributary relationship with China will be illustrated by descriptions from Captain McLeod's Journal. Burmese counterparts will be also referred to for comparison. Fourthly, Chiang Tung's tributary relationship with China and Chiang Khaeng's tributary relationship with China will be shown to illustrate the difference between them and Sipsongpanna. Chiang Tung (Keng Tung) and Chiang Khaeng were located beyond Sipsongpanna in the present-day Shan States

of Myanmar. Fifthly, the entry into China of ‘foreign’ officials will be discussed in order to consider what the Chinese perception of its border in this area was in practice. We will see 1) how difficult the entry was, 2) where and how ‘immigration examinations’ were conducted and 3) what were the roles expected of Moeng Cheng Hung as a border ‘checkpoint’. Finally, the entry of ‘foreign’ merchants into China will be discussed. We will also find that merchants coming through Moeng Cheng Hung were protected by it but also had to pay a toll.

## **II Background: Sipsongpanna from the Eighteenth Century to the First Half of the Nineteenth Century**

### **II-1 Establishment of Pu'er Fu and Giving Official Titles to Lords of Moengs in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century**

In my previous paper, I showed what changes were brought about in Sipsongpanna by the Qing Dynasty in the 1720s and 1730s [Kato 1997].

In 1728, 1729 and 1732 (Youg Zheng 雍正 6, 7 and 10), after suppressing rebellions in Sipsongpanna, the Qing Dynasty gave Chinese official titles, such as Tu Shoubei (土守備), Tu Qianzong (土千總), and Tu Bazong (土把總)<sup>13</sup>, to the lords of moengs (Chao Moeng) of Sipsongpanna who had aided the suppression or had not sided with the rebellions. The Qing Dynasty also established Pu'er Fu in the northern part of Sipsongpanna in 1729 (Youg Zheng 7), as well as Simao Ting (思茅廳) under Pu'er Fu in 1735 (Youg Zheng 13). Cheli Xuanwei Si and most of the moengs of Sipsongpanna belonged to Simao Ting<sup>14</sup>. [PFZ chapter 3: 2–3, 15–16] Around the same time, the Qing Dynasty started to impose taxes, defined as a precise amount of silver, on Sipsongpanna<sup>15</sup>.

In 1837, even after about a hundred years, these structures and institutional frameworks remained essentially unchanged.

### **II-2 Destabilization and Intermittent Warfare in Sipsongpanna until the Middle of the Nineteenth Century**

However, during those hundred years, Sipsongpanna experienced destabilization and intermittent warfare. Because the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna had to be sanctioned both by China and by Burma, the Sino-Burmese war from 1765 to 1769 brought instability to Sipsongpanna. After that, succession conflicts for the position of the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna arose and continued intermittently until 1850. Occasionally Chiang Tung, Chiang Mai, Nan, Luang Phabang, and some other Tai polities located to the south of Sipsongpanna also became engaged in Sipsongpanna's succession conflicts.

Having considered all these things, the issue that will be discussed in this paper is how China viewed its borderlands around Sipsongpanna at a time when it was engaged in succession conflicts and vulnerable to interference by other political powers.

### **II-3 Moeng Cheng Hung in 1837**

When McLeod stayed in Sipsongpanna in 1837, it was enjoying a brief period of peace. Maha Wang or Dao Tai Kang (刀太康)<sup>16</sup>, who ruled Sipsongpanna, had died in 1836<sup>17</sup> and

China had agreed to his young son, Suchawanna or Dao Zheng Zong (刀正綜), becoming the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna<sup>18</sup>. However, before his formal coronation, some of the members of the royal family, joined by the Burmese Sitke<sup>19</sup>, the resident military officer, launched a coup d'état. Chao Cheng Haa, the prime minister of Sipsongpanna<sup>20</sup>, pretended to join the coup d'état, allowed Suchawanna to cross the Mekong River and flee, and, finally, suppressed the coup d'état. It seems that China also delivered reinforcements<sup>21</sup>.

When McLeod arrived at Moeng Cheng Hung on 9 March 1837, although the coup d'état had already been suppressed<sup>22</sup>, Suchawanna was still in Simao. [CMJ: 372, 379] In Moeng Cheng Hung, Chao Cheng Haa “transacted all the business of the country”<sup>23</sup> [CMJ: 371] and Maha Dewi, the queen, who was Maha Wang's first wife, “was acting as Regent for” Suchawanna, who was the son of another wife of Maha Wang's<sup>24</sup>. [CMJ: 372] Chao Cheng Haa was pro-Chinese<sup>25</sup>. In spite of having been one of the members plotting the coup d'état, the Burmese Sitke had remained at Moeng Cheng Hung, but he probably did not have a good relationship with Chao Cheng Haa<sup>26</sup>.

### III Chinese Official Attitudes towards the Moengs of Sipsongpanna and its Surrounding Areas in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

#### III-1 Maps in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

*Pu'er Fu Zhi* compiled in the Dao Guang period<sup>27</sup> contains twenty chapters. The first chapter, ‘Tu shuo’ (圖說, illustrations or maps), consists of eleven illustrations or maps of Pu'er Fu and the four smaller administrative units.

In ‘Pu'er Fu di yu zong tu’ (普洱府地輿總圖) or the map of whole area of Pu'er Fu (Fig. 3), the border with Burma (Miandian guojie, 緬甸國界) is drawn with a double line on the right bank of ‘Jiulong Jiang’ (九龍江, Jiulong River) or the Mekong River. The line of the border is almost parallel to the river. ‘Jiu Cheli’ (舊車里) or old Cheli<sup>28</sup>, Meng Long Tu Bazong (猛龍土把總, Moeng Long in Fig. 2), Meng Zhe Tu Qianzong (猛遮土千總, Moeng Chae in Fig. 2), and Meng Aa Tu Bazong (猛阿土把總, Moeng Ngaat in Fig. 2) lie between ‘Jiulong Jiang’ and the border. The other moengs of Sipsongpanna, including the new Cheli Xuanwei Si (車里宣慰司) or Moeng Yang Noi<sup>29</sup>, are shown on the left bank of the Mekong River. The border with Siam (Xianluo guojie, 暹羅國界) is drawn with a double line across ‘Jiulong Jiang’. One end of the border with Siam starts from the border with Burma and the other side crosses a tributary of ‘Jiulong Jiang.’ On the other hand, the border with Lansang (Nanzhang guojie, 南掌國界) is drawn with a single line under Meng La Tu Bazong (猛腊土把總, Moeng La in Fig. 2). The difference between the single line and the double lines probably shows that China viewed Lansang as a less independent state than either Burma or Siam.

In ‘Simao Ting yu tu’ (思茅廳輿圖) or the map of Simao Ting (Fig. 4) and ‘Pu'er Fu yanbian tu’ (普洱府沿邊圖) or the map of the borderlands around Pu'er Fu (Fig. 5), we can also find borders with Burma, Siam, and Lansang. All of the borders are drawn with dotted lines in these two maps.

The locations of the borders and the positional relationships of the borders and rivers are slightly different in each of these three maps. This would explain that Chinese authorities

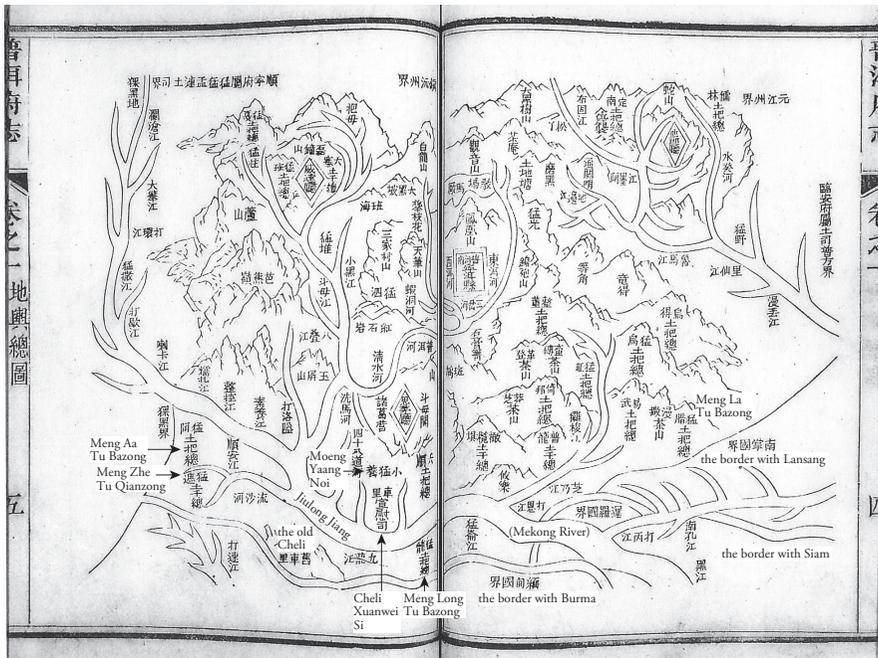


Fig. 3: 'Pu'er Fu di yu zong tu' (普洱府地輿總圖) or the map of the whole area of Pu'er Fu in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

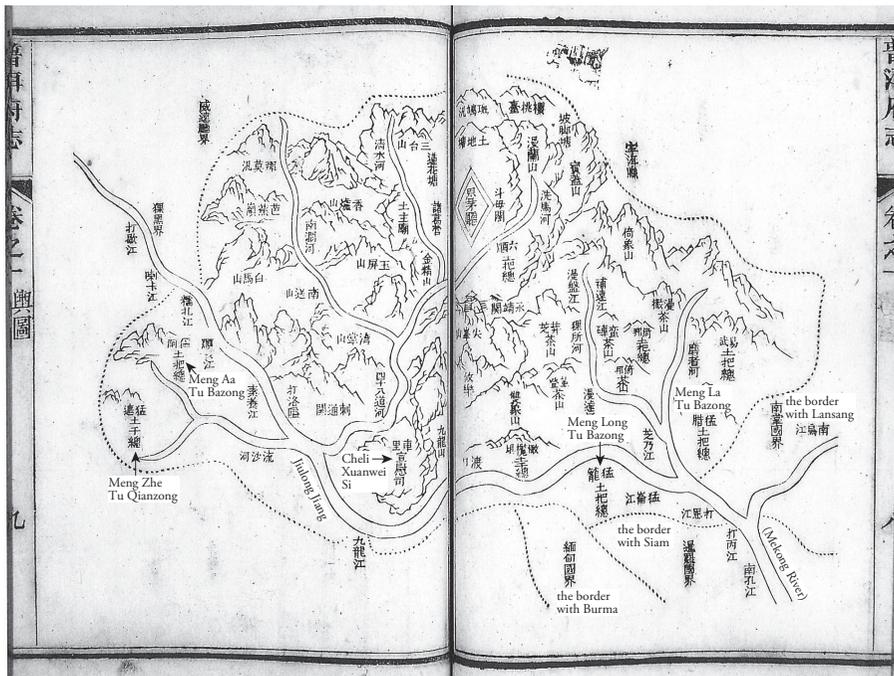


Fig. 4: 'Simao Ting yu tu' (思茅廳輿圖) or the map of Simao Ting in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

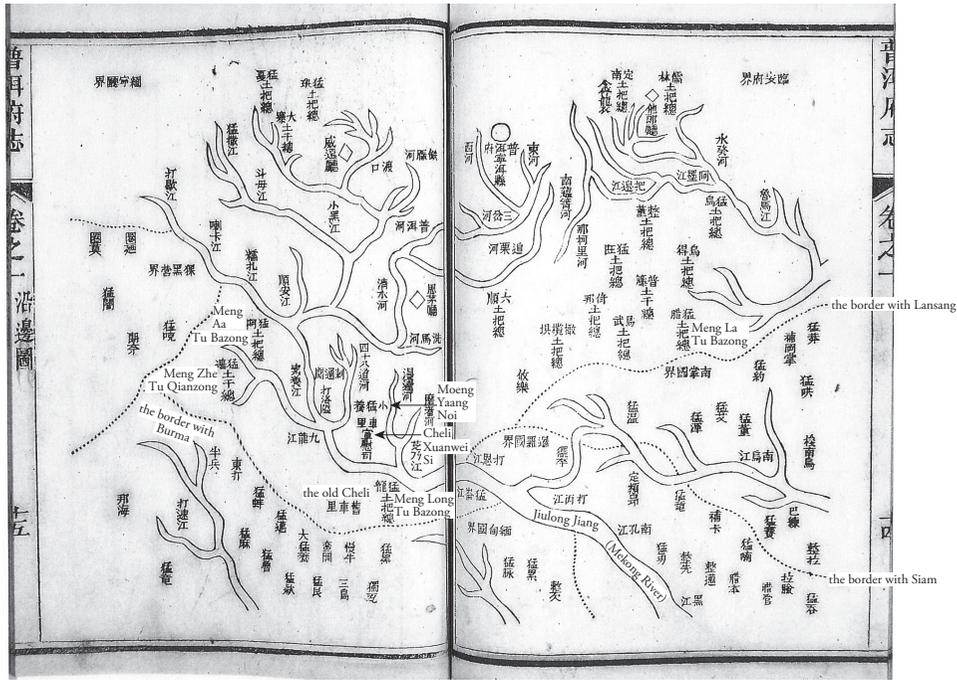


Fig. 5: 'Pu'er Fu yanbian tu' (普洱府沿邊圖) or the map of the borderlands around Pu'er Fu in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

could not specify the exact locations of the borders or did not need to do so<sup>30</sup>.

### III-2 Descriptions of 'Tu si' in *Pu'er Fu Zhi*

The eighteenth chapter of *Pu'er Fu Zhi* is titled 'Tu si 土司', which means indigenous non-Han leaders who were given Chinese official titles. This chapter includes descriptions of Cheli Xuanwei Si and the other moengs of Sipsongpanna. On the first page, there is a phrase 'Cheli Xuanwei and thirteen panna<sup>31</sup> under it (Cheli Xuanwei er xia shisan banna 車里宣慰而下十三版納)'. It explains that Chinese authorities acknowledged Cheli Xuanwei or Moeng Cheng Hung as having a leading position in Sipsongpanna.

*Pu'er Fu Zhi* says that Cheli Xuanwei Si had been outside of the Jiulong Jiang or the Mekong River boundary (Jiulong Jiang wai 九龍江外) before, and 'now' was located at Moeng Yaang Noi, which was inside the river boundary (jiang nei 江內). We can find here how to divide the area into inside and outside of the Jiulong Jiang boundary. On the other hand, *Pu'er Fu Zhi* says all of the other moengs of Sipsongpanna were located in 'Pu'er Fu bianwai' (普洱府邊外), which probably means 'borderlands or periphery of Pu'er Fu'<sup>32</sup>.

As an appendix (fu 附) titled 'bianwai san Tusi 邊外三土司' (three Tusi outside the borders or in the borderlands), descriptions of Meng Geng (孟艮, Muang Koen or Chiang Tung in Fig. 1), Zheng Qian (整欠, Chiang Khaeng in Fig. 1), and Meng Yong (猛勇, Muang Yawng in Fig. 1) follow those of the moengs of Sipsongpanna. *Pu'er Fu Zhi* says that Chiang Tung

and Chiang Khaeng were located outside the territory of Cheli Xuanwei Si (Cheli Xuanwei Si jingwai 車里宣慰司境外). Moeng Yawng, on the other hand, was located to the west and outside the territory of Pu'er Fu (Pu'er Fu xi jingwai 普洱府西境外) and was between Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng. This appendix describes how all three of them became subject to China (Neishu 內屬 or Neifu 內附) in 1766 (Qianlong 乾隆 31) after China defeated Burma, and that the lords of Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng were given the title 'Tu Zhihuishi 土指揮使' while the lord of Moeng Yawng was given the title 'Tu Qianzong 土千總,' which were Chinese official titles for indigenous non-Han leaders. We can establish from this that Chiang Tung, Chiang Khaeng, and Moeng Yawng were still recognised as Chinese Tusi in the official account.

#### IV Tributary Relationship of Moeng Cheng Hung as Written in McLeod's Journal

##### IV-1 Nomination of the 'Governor' of Sipsongpanna by China and Burma

The supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna had to be a man with the correct bloodline from Moeng Cheng Hung's royal family and had to be nominated as the 'governor' by China and Burma. As an important part of the tributary relationship of Moeng Cheng Hung, I would first like to give a description of the nomination of the 'governor'.

McLeod wrote: "The arrangement which exists between China and Burmah regarding to the nomination of the Tsen wi fuá<sup>33</sup> is not clear. I am told that the one nominates and the other confirms; that for this purpose a consultation takes place, but how, or where, I cannot discover." [CMJ: 377]

It means neither China nor Burma had priority right to nominate a new ruler of Sipsongpanna.

##### IV-2 Tributes paid to China and Burma

McLeod also described tributes paid to China and Burma: "The Muang Lóng Tsóbua<sup>34</sup> (the lord of Moeng Long)<sup>35</sup> told me that his share towards a tribute to China was 10 viss<sup>36</sup> of silver; that each Tsóbua pays according to the extent of his territory. ... They are not obliged to pay their tax to China in silver; it may be paid in anything they please...." [CMJ: 394] This would be the same tax shown in amounts of silver that was first imposed in the first half of the eighteenth century (see II-1). These words of the lord of Moeng Long explain that the lord of each moeng had to pay their share of the tribute to China and the allocation to each moeng was determined according to the extent of that moeng's territory. The tribute could be considered as being paid collectively from all of Sipsongpanna.

On the other hand, Sipsongpanna also paid tribute to Burma triennially. Each moeng presented to Burma a gold cup weighing two-and-a-half ticals<sup>37</sup>, a piece of tinsel cloth, a piece of silk cloth, a pair of shoes, a cake of salt, one viss of tea, one viss of candles covered with gold leaf, one viss of candles covered with silver leaf, one viss of candles covered with gold flowers, and one viss of candles covered with silver flowers. Moeng Cheng Hung presented the same with the addition of two ponies and a gold cup weighing seven-and-a-half ticals. [CMJ: 394]

The tribute to Burma consisted of specific items of a specific quantity. It should be said that the tribute to Burma might also have had symbolic or ritual meanings compared to the tribute to China, which was shown as a weight of silver, not concrete items, and could be paid in anything they pleased.

McLeod also wrote about 'the duty on grain' paid to China: "The duty on grain here is collected at the rate of three-quarters of a tical for 20 baskets of seed sown, by some accounts; others tell me that each cultivator pays three-quarters of a tical for whatever quantity he may sow. The transplanting system is adopted as at Kiang Tung. The above tax is paid to China. An officer comes round annually to look into the state of the crops, and make remissions if necessary. The petty Tsóbuas pay direct to China." [CMJ]: 391] We can see from this that there was also 'the duty on grain', paid to China, apart from the tribute, and that it was paid to China by the lords of the moengs directly, not paid collectively by all of Sipsongpanna<sup>38</sup>.

In conclusion, China had closer and more direct relations with Moeng Cheng Hung and Sipsongpanna than did Burma at that time, although neither China nor Burma had a superior right to the other to nominate the 'governor' of Sipsongpanna. China could extract a substantial tax or tax-like tribute from Sipsongpanna, whereas Burma requested a tribute of a more symbolic form.

#### IV-3 Mutual Recognition between China and Moeng Cheng Hung

Lastly, I will identify descriptions showing mutual recognition between China and Moeng Cheng Hung.

Chao Cheng Haa "remarked ... that it was true the state was tributary both to China and Ava<sup>39</sup>, but it was nearer the former and looked upon it as its father<sup>40</sup>." [CMJ]: 373] On the other hand, in the letter from China, Chinese authorities recognised Moeng Cheng Hung as 'a town of their own' and ordered Moeng Cheng Hung's authorities to "pay me (McLeod) every attention and settle all my (his) business." [CMJ]: 390]

These descriptions show us that China had a direct influence on the court of Moeng Cheng Hung at that time.

### V Tributary Relationship of Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng

In the McLeod journal, there are also descriptions related to the tributary relationships of Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng, whose lords were recognised as Chinese 'Tusi' in *Pu'er Fu Zhi* (see III-2). I would like to illustrate the tributary relationship of Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng here.

#### V-1 Chiang Tung

McLeod recorded Chao Cheng Haa's words about the relationship between Chiang Tung and Burma: "he (Chao Cheng Haa) had received a letter from the Kiang Tung Tsóbuá (the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung), entreating him to send me (McLeod) back by that place (Chiang Tung), as after my departure [from Chiang Tung] he (the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung) had received orders from Moné (Mongnai, Muang Nai) to detain me until instructions could be

received from Ava; but that I (McLeod) had been permitted to come on on the Tsóbuá (the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung)'s responsibility, and if he, the Minister, did not now comply with his (the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung's) request, the Tsóbuá (the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung) would incur the displeasure of his Government." [CMJ]: 390]

We can see from this that there was a Burmese line of command from Ava to Mone and from Mone to Chiang Tung. Chao Cheng Haa also said that the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung would incur the displeasure of his Government if McLeod did not return via Chiang Tung. These things show that at that time Chiang Tung was under the strong influence of Burma and that Moeng Cheng Hung knew this very well.

The letter sent by the lord of Moeng Chiang Tung to Moeng Cheng Hung was forwarded to China. McLeod also recorded Chao Cheng Haa's words about the Chinese response to the letter: "this letter had been forwarded to China, and he (Chao Cheng Haa) had, in reply, been directed to have me (McLeod) escorted, when I wished to return, by the same road as I had come up by. He therefore hoped, that I would not object to this, for he would be obliged, in that case, to apply again for instructions to China." [CMJ]: 390] This description shows that Chinese authorities also acknowledged that Chiang Tung was under strong Burmese influence.

## V-2 Chiang Khaeng

In Chao Cheng Haa's words of praise of the Chinese in McLeod's journal, we can detect the Chinese attitude to Chiang Khaeng: "they (Chinese) never exacted more than they had a right to claim, and never retained any sum, however small, to which they were not entitled. In proof of their disinterestedness, he mentioned that the Tsobua of Kiang Khing, or Kiang Khaing (the Lord of Chiang Khaeng), a small State to the southward of this, and tributary to Ava, wished lately to throw off his allegiance to that kingdom, and place himself under China, but the offer was unhesitatingly rejected." [CMJ]: 375]

This illustrates that, at that time, Chiang Khaeng was a tributary to Burma but did not have a tributary relationship with China, and that China did not want Chiang Khaeng to move away from Burma and become closer to China.

## VI Chinese Border for 'Foreign' Officials

Moving on from the titles of 'Tusi' and tributary relationships, we will proceed to discuss how the Chinese allowed or did not allow 'foreigners' to enter China. McLeod's journal mentions about himself and other officials of neighbouring countries as well as 'foreign' merchants. First, the entry into China of 'foreign' officials will be discussed.

### VI-1 Difficulty of 'Foreign' Officials' Entry

McLeod wrote: "He (Chao Cheng Haa) compared the Chinese to the English, so far as he had heard of our (English) character, except in one point, namely: that the English allowed anybody, who wished it, to go through any part of their country, and to see all that is to be seen, while the Chinese are so jealous, that they will not admit any strangers within their territories." [CMJ]: 375] In addition, some of the Burmese Sitke's people also said to McLeod:

“on the appearance of any official, however inferior his rank, attempting to enter their (Chinese) country, their suspicions are immediately aroused.” [CMJ: 386] These indicate that the Chinese tended to control strictly the entry of ‘foreign’ officials.

Chao Cheng Haa also provided an example of a Burmese officer: “that he had been lately severely reprimanded for allowing a Burmese officer to proceed to that place (Simao) with a letter from Mone.” [CMJ: 376]

As for officers from Muang Chiang Tung, Chao Cheng Haa said: “even the officers from Kiang Túng (Chiang Tung) have never been permitted to go beyond Pu'er, except on one or two occasions, on most urgent business, and then only as far as Yunan (Yunnan)<sup>41</sup>.” [CMJ: 375]

On the other hand, other rulers of Sipsongpanna assured McLeod “that none, even of their body, was permitted to advance far into China.” [CMJ: 380] The Burmese Sitke's people mentioned above also said “that officers even from this place, have not the privilege of going there (China), except on duty.” [CMJ: 386]

We can deduce the following from these descriptions:

- 1) ‘Foreign’ officials, including Burmese officials, were not allowed to proceed even to Simao, where Simao Ting, the first Chinese town after leaving Moeng Cheng Hung, was located.
- 2) Officials from Muang Chiang Tung, which had a lord with a Chinese “Tusi” title, might be allowed to go to Pu'er but were not normally allowed to go beyond Pu'er.
- 3) Officials of Sipsongpanna, some of whom might have Chinese “Tusi” titles, were allowed to go into China ‘on duty’, but were not free to go to China otherwise.

McLeod, who was an English officer, was also not permitted to proceed to China after all. McLeod's journal shows: “It (the letter from China) set forth that the authorities there had consulted all their historical works, and could not find a precedent for an officer entering China by the Muang Lá (Simao) road; that English vessels daily repaired to Canton, to which place I (McLeod) ought to have gone.” [CMJ: 389]

In short, we find that it was difficult for people in official positions to enter China by the route through Sipsongpanna, Simao, and Pu'er.

## VI-2 Where and How ‘Immigration Examinations’ were Conducted

Next, I would like to investigate what level of administrative units carried out the ‘Immigration Examination’ of ‘foreign’ officials and what methods they employed.

### ① Moeng Cheng Hung

Moeng Cheng Hung was the place that McLeod directly approached and asked for permission to enter China. However, McLeod wrote in his journal: “They (rulers of Sipsongpanna) said, with reference to my journey to China, that orders must first be received from that place; that they regretted they could not possibly let me proceed without them.” [CMJ: 372] Moeng Cheng Hung did not have the authority to let him proceed to China, but needed orders from China to permit him to go.

Therefore, a “letter was to be sent... forwarding the copy of the letter from the Commissioner in the Provinces<sup>42</sup> to the Tsóbuá of this place (Moeng Cheng Hung)” to ask Chinese superior authorities how to deal with McLeod’s request<sup>43</sup>. [CMJ: 380] McLeod had to wait for the reply at Moeng Cheng Hung.

However, the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna actually did have the authority to permit someone to travel as far as the boundary of Sipsongpanna. McLeod recorded the words of Mahá Wang’s sister that “had Mahá Wang been alive it would have been very different, and he would have permitted me (McLeod) to proceed onwards, at least to the boundary of his territory, if not into China itself.” [CMJ: 385]

## ② Simao (Muang Lá)

Simao was the administrative unit that controlled Cheli Xuanwei Si or Moeng Cheng Hung directly (see II-1)<sup>44</sup>. McLeod wrote: “On my applying for information regarding the likely length of time I should be delayed for a reply, they said that the officer at Esmok (Simao) had no power to permit my advance, and the reference would be made from one officer to the next officer, and therefore they could not say.” [CMJ: 373] This shows that even Simao had no authority to permit ‘foreign’ officials to proceed to China and that the reference would be passed from one official to the next official, and probably also from Simao to the higher administrative unit, Pu’er.

On the other hand, Simao had a role in gathering information on ‘foreign’ officials and reporting it to the higher administrative units. McLeod tried to send his Chinese interpreter to Simao and have him communicate with the merchants at Simao to find out the feelings of the authorities “without being brought into contact with any of the officers of Government or running any personal risk.” Chao Cheng Haa, however, “said the chiefs (of Simao) would certainly hear of his (McLeod’s interpreter’s) arrival, have him up before them, and question him most minutely; detain him, he thought until they sent up the information obtained to Yunan, to which he might be ultimately ordered.” [CMJ: 383] Actually, at Simao, merchants who had met McLeod at Chiang Tung before<sup>45</sup> were “sent for and questioned particularly by the authorities at Muang Lá (Simao)”<sup>46</sup>. [CMJ: 383–384]

## ③ Pu’er

As for Pu’er, the next higher administrative unit, McLeod wrote: “The authorities in these towns (Tale, Puer, Yung Chiang Fú, and Quang Long Fú) have no power to admit strangers to pass without a reference to Yunan, where the viceroy, Tsoungsu (總督), resides.” [CMJ: 376] It shows that Pu’er did not have the authority to allow strangers to pass but had to ask for Yunnan’s instruction. The letter from Pu’er even said that if McLeod “still persisted in coming up, it would be necessary to obtain the Emperor’s sanction.” [CMJ: 390]

Although Pu’er could not use its own judgment to permit strangers to enter China, it could dismiss a request for entry at its own discretion. McLeod wrote: “the reply had arrived from China to the reference made from this” and “it was unfavourable to my advancing.” The letter, which bore<sup>47</sup> the impression of the seals of both the civil and military authorities at Pu’er<sup>47</sup> “set forth that the authorities there had consulted all their historical works, and could not find

a precedent for an officer entering China by the Muang Lá (Simao) road.” [CMJ]: 389–390] It is worthy of note that the reason they dismissed McLeod’s request is that they could not find a precedent in all their historical works and that this was the judgment of both the civil and military authorities of Pu’er.

### VI–3 Roles expected of Moeng Cheng Hung as a ‘Border Town’

As mentioned above, Moeng Cheng Hung had no authority to permit ‘foreign’ officials to enter China. So what, therefore, were the roles expected of Moeng Cheng Hung as a ‘border town’?

Firstly, Moeng Cheng Hung was probably expected to send information about ‘foreign’ officials planning to enter China to higher Chinese administrative units. McLeod wrote: “A report was dispatched to China when information of my arrival at Kiang Túng and intended journey onward reached this place, as well as on my advent here.” [CMJ]: 380] We should pay attention to the fact that a report had already been sent even when McLeod had not yet arrived at Moeng Cheng Hung. This report was probably the first one regarding McLeod that was sent to China, and a second report was sent when McLeod arrived at Moeng Cheng Hung.

In McLeod’s case, after sending the information, a letter was sent to ask how to deal with McLeod’s request to enter China. I would like to demonstrate the process of preparing the letter. “A letter was to be sent to-day (13 March 1837), forwarding the copy of the letter from the Commissioner in the Provinces to the Tsóbuá of this place.... While my writer was with the Talau Tsóbuá (Chao Cheng Haa) to-day, the Chinese Secretary brought the despatch for China, with a translation of the Commissioner’s letter, to be stamped with the Kiang Húng (Cheng Hung) seal, which is kept by the minister (Chao Cheng Haa). The former was read and translated; it set forth most satisfactorily the object of my mission, the advantage which both countries would derive from the trade proposed to be established, and my wish to proceed towards China, having letters to the authorities there. It was altogether worded in a very proper manner.” [CMJ]: 380]

The despatch for China itself was written by the ‘Chinese Secretary’, but before being sent, it should have been stamped with the Cheng Hung seal that was kept by Chao Cheng Haa. This means that at least Chao Cheng Haa and some other Tai officials could check what was written in the letter. In this case, the despatch was also translated to let McLeod’s side verify the contents.

The Commissioner’s letter to the lord of Moeng Cheng Hung, which McLeod had brought with him, was copied and also translated<sup>48</sup> to be sent with the despatch. This might show that copies of diplomatic letters to Moeng Cheng Hung would be sent to higher Chinese administrative units, with translations into Chinese if needed.

McLeod noted, the despatch “will reach Muang Lá (Simao) in three days; the journey is ordinarily made by the Chinese caravan in five days.” [CMJ]: 380] There may have been an express messenger system between Moeng Cheng Hung and Simao as well as the higher administrative units like Pu’er. The reply from Pu’er arrived at Moeng Cheng Hung on 23 March 1837, around ten days from when the despatch was sent on 13 March. The reply from Pu’er was written after consulting ‘all their historical works’, so if we take this into

consideration, the case of McLeod would have been dealt with without delay in Pu'er.

## VII Chinese Border for Merchants

### VII-1 Ease of Merchants' Entry

Entry into China of merchants was treated very differently to that of officials shown above. There are some references in McLeod's journal to merchants, entering China by the road through Sipsongpanna.

McLeod was told by Chao Cheng Haa that if McLeod "were a merchant they would permit" him "to proceed, but that there was a great difference between a merchant and an officer." [CMJ: 373] In another part, McLeod wrote: "The minister (Chao Cheng Haa) declares that if I (McLeod) had been a merchant, he would have sent me on with people to Muang Lá (Simao)." [CMJ: 376]

Pu'er also set forth in the reply mentioned above that they welcomed merchants. McLeod wrote: "It (the reply) contained the same observation about no merchants having accompanied me (McLeod), &c., as were urged here, but ended, I was told, by inviting our merchants to come up and trade, and that their own traders were at liberty to proceed to Moulmein if they wished it." [CMJ: 389-390] This also explains that Chinese authorities allowed merchants to exit China freely as well as to enter.

On the other hand, some of the Sitke's people "spoke of the contempt the Chinese authorities have for merchants." [CMJ: 386] We do not know if it was a truth or an intended calumny from the Burmese side. However, the Sitke's people also admitted, "no objections are made to traders" [CMJ: 386] for entry into China.

### VII-2 Moeng Cheng Hung's Profits From and Responsibility Towards Merchants

Next, we move to the question of how Moeng Cheng Hung related to merchants who came there.

McLeod wrote: "In crossing the Mé Khong at the ferry<sup>49</sup>, one-quarter of a tical is levied on each mule or pony, which goes to the Tsen-wi-fuá, likewise three-quarters of a tical on entering the Kiang Húng (Cheng Hung) territory." [CMJ: 386] This description shows that the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna collected tolls from merchants.

However, this is followed by, "this last sum being paid, renders the Tsen-wi-fuá responsible for any losses the traders may sustain from theft within his territory; and as the Ka Kúis at times attack the caravans, armed parties are stationed at certain places to escort the traders for some distance." [CMJ: 386-387] Therefore, the toll was also a kind of theft insurance as well helping to defray security costs<sup>50</sup>.

McLeod also wrote: "The usual number of mules passing through this place annually is about 5,000." [CMJ: 387] If this number is reliable, the Saenwifa could collect a few thousand ticals a year as tolls and was responsible for the security of the traders.

The rulers of Sipsongpanna pressed McLeod to send merchants up or bring merchants up with him, [CMJ: 382, 395] probably because the more merchants passing through Moeng Cheng Hung, the more tolls they could collect, but they also said: "every protection shall be

afforded them (the merchants), and if they wished to proceed to China, every assistance shall be rendered, and no duty be at any time levied on their goods.” [CMJ: 395] This explains that the rulers of Sipsongpanna believed they had to give protection to merchants and could assist merchants to proceed to China. As for duty levied on goods, we do not know whether the rulers could levy duties if they wanted to or whether this was not the custom.

In short, Moeng Cheng Hung had the role of protecting merchants from theft and robbers. In exchange for the responsibility, Saenwifa, the supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna could levy tolls from the merchants.

### VIII Concluding Remarks

I would like to summarise the discussion above in terms of Qing China's understanding of where its borders and territory lay in Southernmost Yunnan in the 1830s.

China regarded Chiang Tung and Chiang Khaeng, which were located beyond Sipsongpanna, as being ‘outside’ of Chinese territory. Despite writing in an official account, *Pu'er Fu Zhi*, that the lords of these two moengs were ‘Tu si’ with Chinese official titles, in fact, China also acknowledged these moengs were under Burmese control. Chiang Tung, in particular, was the end of a Burmese line of command, which connected through Mone to Ava.

In contrast, Moeng Cheng Hung, the capital moeng of Sipsongpanna, was the end of a Chinese line of command, which connected through Simao and Pu'er in a line as far as ‘Yunnan’. Chinese authorities recognised Moeng Cheng Hung as ‘a town of their own’ to which they were entitled to give orders. China could also collect tribute from Sipsongpanna in the form of a fixed weight of silver and grain duties. However, borders between Sipsongpanna and other outer Tai polities were not recognised as the Chinese border. In other words, it could be said that the territory of Sipsongpanna itself functioned as a border.

In such circumstances, Moeng Cheng Hung functioned as a barrier that formed part of the Chinese ‘border’. Chiang Tung's officials and even Cheng Hung's officials were not permitted easily to go into China, let alone English officers like McLeod or Burmese officials. Moeng Cheng Hung was just on the west bank of Jiulong Jiang or the Mekong River. For China at that time, Jiulong Jiang would be the last line that ‘foreign’ officials could not cross eastwards without Chinese permission<sup>51</sup>.

If a ‘foreign’ official visited Moeng Cheng Hung and wished to proceed to China, Moeng Cheng Hung passed on the information to Simao. Simao would relay that to Pu'er, maybe adding some information about the official that they had gathered by themselves. In practice, Pu'er could reject the request for entry if they could not find a precedent in their historical works. If the request for entry was approved, the permission would be granted by Yunnan or by the Chinese emperor.

On the other hand, merchants could easily gain access to China. ‘Foreign’ merchants were welcomed by Pu'er as well as by Moeng Cheng Hung. The latter could collect tolls from merchants and was responsible for the security of merchants.

We can conclude that, in the 1830s, the Chinese perception of where its territory ended in this region was still vague and ambiguous but, at least in 1837, Moeng Cheng Hung was

considered to be on the edge of Chinese territory and functioned as a barrier. The Chinese perception of where the border lay was not very clear either, but in practice, the line that China had to protect was Jiulong Jiang or the Mekong River, which flowed next to Moeng Cheng Hung. The ‘border’ here was controlled very strictly in terms of entry by ‘foreign’ officials, whereas merchants were afforded easy access.

#### Notes

- 1 Most of Sipsongpanna belongs to the present-day Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture of Day Nationality (西双版纳傣族自治州). It borders on Myanmar and Laos.
- 2 I have written Tai words from Sipsongpanna in a form as close as possible to the pronunciations of Tai in Sipsongpanna. For some words, spellings showing Thai pronunciation are added in parentheses when they first appear so that they can be related to Thai words used in previous studies. On the other hand, Tai place names outside present-day China are basically spelled showing Thai pronunciation.
- 3 The names of moeng (muang) were called ‘Moeng’ (‘Muang’) plus the proper name following that. If the proper name had more than one word or syllable, it was sometimes called only by the proper name without ‘Moeng’ (‘Muang’). I also sometimes follow this system to indicate a moeng’s (muang’s) name, such as Cheng Hung, Chiang Tung, and Chiang Khaeng.
- 4 The supreme ruler of Sipsongpanna was also called ‘Chao Phaen Din’, which means ‘the lord of the land’ or ‘the lord of the earth’.
- 5 When the one appointed as Saenwifa was forced by another having a claim to the throne to leave Moeng Cheng Hung, Cheli Xuanwei Si also moved to the place where the Saenwifa was.
- 6 I use the version printed in *The Gold and Silver Road of Trade and Friendship: The McLeod and Richardson Diplomatic Missions to Tai States in 1837*. [Grabowsky and Turton 2003] When I cite or refer to McLeod’s journal, I use the abbreviation CMJ to refer to the pages of this book.
- 7 I use the abbreviation PFZ to indicate *Pu’er Fu Zhi* in citations and references.
- 8 Walker mentioned Thongchai’s *Siam Mapped* [Thongchai 1994] and the works of six other researchers [Walker 1999].
- 9 Giersch also referred to the Panthay regime, which followed the Panthay uprising in 1856, and said, “it may prove to be that the Panthay regime represented an older vision of Yunnan. This was a vision of multiple, diverse communities, drawn together under imperial rule, yet flexible enough to allow an orientation toward Southeast Asia through the caravan routes. Such a vision would not have been foreign to eighteenth century officials like Zhang Yunsui”. [Giersch 2006: 219]
- 10 I use the words ‘foreign’ and ‘foreigner’ for convenience to mean people who did not belong to China. The question of what China would consider ‘foreign’ and ‘a foreigner’ is discussed in this paper.
- 11 The document attached to a copy of McLeod’s journal when it was submitted to ‘the Honourable the Court of Directors of the East India Company’ in 1838 said that “he (Mr. Commissioner Blundell) had deputed his assistant, Captain McLeod, on a mission to the Shan States tributary to the Siamese, instructing him to penetrate to the frontier towns of China, with a view of opening a commercial intercourse with the traders of that nation”. [Grabowsky and Turton 2003: 249]
- 12 We should think about the credibility of each piece of information that McLeod wrote in his journal and consider how we can use and how we cannot use the information. Some consisted of observations by McLeod himself, others were the words of Moeng Cheng Hung’s officials, still others were given by other informants, and, in some cases, we do not know who the informants were.
- 13 They were Chinese official titles given to non-Han indigenous leaders. These ranks were lower than the rank of Xuanwei Shi.
- 14 Pu’er Fu contained four smaller administrative units, namely, Ning’er Xian (寧洱縣), Simao Ting (思茅廳), Wei Yuan Ting (威遠廳), and Talang Ting (他郎廳) in the Dao Guang period (1821–1850). The government office of Ning’er Xian was located in the same town as the government office of Pu’er Fu. Five moengs of Sipsongpanna belonged to Ning’er Xian, while all the other moengs belonged to Simao Ting. [PFZ chapter 1: 4–7, 16, chapter 3: 2–3]
- 15 A silver mine was discovered in Moeng Lem, a moeng near Sipsongpanna, (Fig. 1) around the beginning of the eighteenth century. [Kato 1997: 12] Tea cultivation and the tea trade also began in Sipsongpanna around the same time.
- 16 Tai rulers in Sipsongpanna also had Chinese names.
- 17 A Tai manuscript says he died on the first day of the waning moon, 12th month, cs1198. [Yunnansheng Shaoshuminzu Guji Zhengli Chuban Guihua Bangongshi ed.: 582, 350]

- 18 McLeod said that Burma also allowed Suchawanna to succeed. [CMJ]: 378]
- 19 McLeod spelled it 'Tseitke'.
- 20 'Chao Cheng Haa' means 'the lord of Moeng Cheng Haa', which was a small moeng near Cheng Hung, but actually 'Chao Cheng Haa' was the title of the prime minister of Moeng Cheng Hung. McLeod called him 'the Minster' or 'the Talau Tsóbuá'. The prime minister at that time was also the lord of Moeng Cheng Law (Fig. 2) or 'Talau' (Taa Law), which was a moeng located on the route to Chiang Tung and on the present-day border between China and Burma.
- 21 McLeod wrote: "A force of 2,000 men from the province of Yunnan only left this three or four days before my arrival". [CMJ]: 375]
- 22 McLeod wrote that Sitke told McLeod's people that McLeod's "arrival had allayed the ferment here to a great extent; that before it, armed parties were hourly parading the streets, persons were apprehended, several executed, and numbers banished to other towns". [CMJ]: 381]
- 23 This was written in a descriptive style without reference to informants or the origin of the information.
- 24 This information was given to McLeod by the rulers of Sipsongpanna, including Chao Cheng Haa.
- 25 There are many descriptions in McLeod's journal of Chao Cheng Haa and other Tai rulers praising China.
- 26 For example, we can find a description as follows: "He (Sitke) told them (some of McLeod's people) that he is in constant dread of losing his life; that there is a party against him in particular, who wish for his removal; that the Shans are not, he thought, over partial to the Burmans...". [CMJ]: 381]
- 27 It was compiled in 1840 (Dao Guang 20) and printed in 1850 (Dao Guang 30). There is another version of '*Pu'er Fu Zhi*' that was compiled in the Guangxu period (1875–1908).
- 28 It means Moeng Cheng Hung. See note 29.
- 29 *Pu'er Fu Zhi* says it was located at Moeng Yang Noi instead of Moeng Cheng Hung in the Dao Guang period (1821–1850). [PFZ 18: 2] See note 5.
- 30 Even though the borders' locations were vague, one important thing to be pointed out is that Chinese authorities considered that China bordered directly on Siam.
- 31 Panna was a unit for preparing tributes that was originally set up in the latter half of the sixteenth century to pay tribute to Burma.
- 32 'Pu'er Fu bianwai' can also mean 'outside of the borders of Pu'er Fu'.
- 33 Saenwifa was called 'Tsen wi fuá' or 'Tsen-wi-fuá' in McLeod's journal.
- 34 McLeod calls 'Chao Moeng' 'Tsóbuá' in Burmese style.
- 35 I have added information in parentheses to the text.
- 36 Viss was a Burmese unit of measure for weight, approximately 1.63293 kilograms (3.6 pounds).
- 37 Tical was a unit of weight equal to 0.01 viss.
- 38 McLeod wrote: "The grain is chiefly grown in the Muang Khie (Moeng Chae), Muang Háam (Moeng Hun or Moeng Ham), Kiang Khieng (Chiang Khaeng), and Muang Hai districts". [CMJ]: 391] This means that these moengs, at the very least, may have been paying grain tax to China. It is noteworthy that Chiang Khaeng is also referred to here. McLeod seemed to use the same spelling 'Muang Háam' to indicate both Moeng Hun and Moeng Ham, while he sometimes used 'Muang Lam' to indicate Moeng Ham.
- 39 Ava was the capital city of Burma at that time.
- 40 The expression that Sipsongpanna regards China as its father and Burma as its mother is found in some versions of the Cheng Hung Chronicle.
- 41 'Yunan' or Yunnan in McLeod's journal meant the capital of Yunnan, Kunming.
- 42 It was probably the official letter written by the British Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces.
- 43 On the same day, McLeod "endeavoured to persuade them (rulers of Sipsongpanna) to permit me (McLeod) to proceed towards China to meet the expected reply on the road, and be guided by its tenor". However, McLeod "was told the letter could not be opened by the chiefs at Kiang Húng (Cheng Hung), and that however anxious they were to prove the sincerity of their professions of friendship for us, yet it was impossible to comply with my (McLeod's) wishes". [CMJ]: 379] It is not clear what the phrase that "the letter could not be opened by the chiefs at Kiang Húng" means. It might mean that only the Chinese officials at Moeng Cheng Hung could open the reply.
- 44 Simao was called 'Muang Lá' or 'Esmok in McLeod's journal. Moeng Lá was a moeng of Sipsongpanna, and still had a Tai lord at that time. The Chinese town of Simao, which was built in Muang Lá, was only separated from the Tai town of Muang Lá by a small stream. [CMJ]: 381]
- 45 McLeod wrote that the merchants had "informed all the merchants they had met with the real object of" McLeod's mission. [CMJ]: 384]
- 46 In addition, the "first intelligence the Chinese authorities received of my (McLeod's) intended journey to their country was from some Chinese traders, who left Zimme (Chiang Mai) a week after me *via* Dakhong". [CMJ]: 384]
- 47 It was sent in an envelope stamped with the same seals.
- 48 McLeod's journal does not tell who translated the letter.

- 49 McLeod did not mention from which side to which side they crossed the Mekong.
- 50 McLeod also wrote: “On their return one-quarter tical is likewise collected; this is the only regular and acknowledged perquisite that the Burmese Tseitké receives; he with his followers, however, are supplied by the Tsen-wi-fuá with provisions.” [CMJ: 387]
- 51 However, many moengs belonging to Sipsongpanna were also located on the east side of the river.

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