"Some New Evidence for the Cultural History of Central Thailand", The Siam Society's Newsletter, Volume 2, Number 3 (September 1986), 4-6.

Over the past few years there has been increasing awareness in scholarly circles of the significance of the Mon, their language, and their culture in the early history of Thailand. Whether in Art History, Economic History, or Linguistics new publications have clearly indicated the importance of the Mon.1

In an earlier publication I indicated that a few terms found in historical records of Thailand and which had mystified earlier students were probably Mon.2 In particular, some of the first Europeans to visit Ayutthaya, as the Portuguese Fernão Mendes Pinto reported, found that Wats were called 'Quiai', that is kyãk, the Mon term.

Another such term from Pinto's Peregrinations, in a section on travels through the Burma-Thailand borderlands, is calaminham, which Pinto glossed as 'Seigneur du Monde', with cala meaning 'seigneur' and minham 'monde'.3 On the first term Pinto was certainly correct. Cala, written kala by modern linguists, is a Middle Mon development from trala, 'lord', 'master', owner'; and Pinto's writing attests the development at an earlier date than Mon specialists hitherto believed. The full term 'Calaminham', probably represented kala + mbuiwña, muiwña (Mohnyin).4

---

4. H.L. Shorto, DOMI, 172. This identification was made years ago by Dr. Joaquim de Campos, "Early Portuguese Accounts of Thailand", Journal of the Thailand Research Society 32/1 (September 1940), pp. 1-28, see p. 20. De Campos also identified minham as Thai mūang, which is less certain, and said Pinto was recounting a trip to Luang Prabang. Dr. Christian Bauer, a linguist specializing in Mon, informs me that kala<trala had not
Closer to home, a term in a Sukhothai inscription which has plauged several generations of Sukhothai scholars may now be confidently identified as Mon. In Inscription no. 38, line 15, is the phrase ลูกขูนมุนทวน, indicating grades of officials. ทวน has usually been identified as Malay ตวน, 'master', without regard for the plausibility of a Malay term in the Sukhothai hierarchy at that time; ⁵ but ทวน is in fact Mon for 'village'. ⁶

As historical and archaeological study of the Sukhothai-Sri Satichanalai area develops there is increasing reason to think of possible Mon connections.

Thus the earliest identifiable type of local pottery in the Ban Koh Noi kiln fields 5 km north of the old city now known as Sri Satichanalai has traditionally been called 'Mon' by local villagers, who themselves have been Thai for generations, if not centuries. Since the term 'mon' there has been handed down from one generation to the next, not brought in by scholars from outside, it suggests that there were formerly Mon potters who worked those kilns. Mon potters on the river Yom should not astonish, since there is epigraphic evidence of a Mon population in Lopburi and Lamphun between the 7th and 13th centuries; and Mon pottery villages still exist along the lower Menam Chao Phraya. ⁷

Taking such a Mon-centric view may permit explanation of some elusive terms connected with pottery in Sukhothai-Sri Satichanalai.

The only certain reference in the Sukhothai inscriptions to the old pottery industry is in Inscription no. 2, face 2, line 54, in the account of a marvelous relic which flew through the air emitting a radiance ติดสุภาพทรรศ

---


⁶ Shorto, DOMI, 178. This was first noted by Barend Jan Terwiel, "Ahom and the Study of Early Thai Society", JSS 71/1-2 (1983), pp. 42-62; see p. 47.

⁷ For example at Koh Kret, Nonthaburi.
Earlier scholars had simply translated suñ as 'flame' or 'fire', without resolving the difficulty of the lack of such a word for 'fire' in all known Thai languages, even in distant relatives of standard modern Thai. The new version of Inscription no. 2 has 'solved' the problem by emending suñ to sum, 'bonfire', which would be legitimate if (1) linguistic comparison showed n and m in alternation at the end of Thai words, or (2) if the characters for n and m in 14th-century script were of sufficient similarity to be confused in writing or reading. Neither of these conditions prevails. The sounds /ŋ/ and /m/ do not alternate; and the two characters were quite distinct in the 14th century as they are now. Sum 'bonfire' as an interpretation of suñ in Inscription no. 2 does not hold up on linguistic grounds.

It would be weak on cultural grounds, even if there were some evidence for suñ = sum. In the 14th century the pottery industry of Sukhothai and Sri Satchanalai was highly developed, and its famous pots and jars had already for centuries been fired in kilns, not bonfires, a

---

8. The latest study of Inscription no. 2, which I follow here, is that published in Silācārīk sukhoday hlak 2 (cārīk vat srī jum). Edition from seminars in B.E. 2520, 2522, and 2523, Bangkok, The National Library, B.E. 2527 (cited further as Hlak 2), and in Silā cārīk Sukhothai, published by the Fine Arts Department for the 700th anniversary of Thai writing, 2526. The passage is on p. 35 of Hlak 2. The current controversy over the location of the incident described in Inscription 2 is irrelevant to the interpretation offered here, for the simile was directed at a Sri Sajjanalai-Sukhothai audience, wherever the event had taken place. Unfortunately Hlak 2 has provided far too little scholarly apparatus to justify the often startling new readings proposed, and it is thus of little use as a tool for further scholarly work.

9. George Coedès, ed., Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, Première partie, Inscriptions de Sukhodaya, Bangkok 1924, p. 72; A. B. Griswold and Prasert Na Nagara, "Epigraphic and Historical Studies" no. 10, Journal of the Siam Society 60/1 (1972), p. 130. For convincing evidence that there is no Thai, or related-language, word like suñ for 'fire', see Fang Kuei-Li, "The Tai and the Kam-Sui Languages", Lingua 14 (1965), pp. 148-179, no. 151 in his vocabulary list, with 'fire' ranging from wi, vi, vui, v i, and wii in Kam-Sui languages to fai in Siamese and fii in the Northern group of Tai languages spoken in China.


11. See Marvin Brown, From Ancient Thai to Modern Dialects, p. 26, for the question of n/m alternation; and the table of scripts in Hlak 2, pp. 73-75 for the 14th-century written forms of n and m.
procedure used to make crude, and rather weak, utility wares. Neither would
the type of bonfire used in ceramic production have produced the intense
light mentioned in Inscription 2, but which does come from a kiln chimney
during firing. Whoever wrote Inscription 2 must have been thinking 'kiln'
when writing suñ.12

The solution is found in Mon. In Old Mon sruñ was 'hole in the
ground'; and the first kilns, the 'bank kiln' type, were specialized holes dug
into the ground. The word became sruñ, suñ, in Literary Mon, and sañ in
modern spoken Mon. Another form without the r is cuñ/chuñ of Mon-
related Nyah Kur, a language in which c/ch regularly corresponds to Mon s.
Furthermore, in modern Mon a word for 'kiln', kok, has in some places been
combined with sañ in another term for 'kiln', sañkok. Thus 14th-century
Sukhothai suñ, must have been borrowed from Mon sruñ, and used for 'kiln'
in Thai, probably because the pottery industry had been founded by Mon
who left their technical terms attached to the process.13

One more mysterious pottery-related expression in Sri Satchanalai
may also be explained through Mon. Locally, since time immemorial, the
kiln fields of Ban Koh Noi have been called tau duriañ (/thuriang/); and
various implausible hypotheses have been put forward to derive 'thuriang'
from Chinese, based on the idea that Phra Ruang went to China and returned
with potters, something increasingly in doubt.14

Old Mon had a word dulāñ, dulāñ, 'saucer, dish', the second vowel of
which not being found in Thai would be transformed into the nearest native
Thai vowel if borrowed; and the Thai initial consonant corresponds to old
/d/. Since Mon dulāñ/dulāñ would have become /hōleang/ at a later stage of

12. The information on kilns and firing here is from the work of Mr. Don Hein of the
Thai Ceramics Archaeological Project. See in particular Don Hein, Peter Burns, Dick
Richards, "Sawankhalok Export Kilns--Evolution and Development", mimeographed
undated, and Don Hein, "Field Report on the Excavation of Kiln 42, Ban Ko Noi,
assumption of a break between the ancient and modern Mon populations of Central
Thailand needs to be reexamined.
13. See Shorto, DOMI, p.397; Shorto, Dictionary of Spoken Mon, pp. 63, 76, 192;
Diffloth, Dvaravati Old Mon, p. 133. The term sañkok for 'kiln' came from an old Mon
potter in Koh Kret, Nonthaburi, interviewed in April 1986.
14. For an illustration see Sanur Niladej, "Sangkhloak Wares" [Thai text], Muang Boran
XII/2 (April-June 1986), pp. 18-31, see p. 22.
the language, the Thai borrowing dates from the time the kiln fields were active.\(^{15}\)

Still another puzzling term, which interpreters of Inscription no. 2 have failed to elucidate, may perhaps also be explained through Mon. On Face 2, line 39 speaks of a "tall large chedi with 500 jataka carved around it very beautifully", the last part of the passage reading in Thai, หารอยชาติสิริทัง ราม ติณ(ศ) หนา (หนา) สวารกุลกาว, and containing the term *rådes*, which has no meaning in Thai. The editors of *Hlăk 2* failed to offer an explanatory footnote as they did for other unusual terms, Coedès gave up, while Griswold and Prasert speculated on a Pali origin. Probably it is the Old Mon *dirdas*, glossed by Shorto as "(Human) existence, incarnation, coming into existence, birth", and serving in Inscription 2 as a doublet for *jàti*.\(^{16}\)

Having established this much, it is worth going on to something more speculative, the name 'Sawankhaloke'/svarggaloka.

According to tradition, this name was established sometime in the Ayutthaya period in replacement for the earlier Sri Sajjanalaya and Chaliang. In fact on 17th-century European maps of Thailand the name Sanquelo/Sankhalok appears, and is conventionally explained, as a popular corruption of the correct 'sawankhalok'. This is an assumption, however, and in the absence of any pre-17th century contemporary record of *svarggaloka/sawankhalok*, it is equally legitimate to ask whether modern 'sawankhalok' is nothing more than a hyper-correction of the earlier 'sankhalok', which itself originated from something quite different from *svarggaloka*. Certainly some early 19th-century court officials had not yet made the assumption 'sankhalok' < *svarggaloka*, for on the base of Buddha images brought to Bangkok from the north at that time one finds the inscribed notation, "sangalok/sangkhalok".\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\) See Shorto, *DOMI*, p. 197; apparently *dulānī* is attested only in a 12th-century inscription. The information on the word's later development, if it continued to be used, and on the quality of Mon vowels, is from Dr. Christian Bauer.

\(^{16}\) *Hlak 2*, p. 32; Coedès, op. cit., p. 71, n. 2; Griswold and Prasert, EHS 10, p. 125, n. 143. Shorto, *DOMI*, p. 193.

\(^{17}\) *Caru'k samay Sukhodai*, published by the Fine Arts Department for the 700th Anniversary of Thai writing, 2526, p. 135. Without prejudging the issue by reference to the modern name, 'sankhalok' suggests a connection with the Mon *sankok*, 'kiln', not unexpected given the large ancient ceramic industry around the old city of Sri Sajjanalai. As the terms stand it is only a possible connection, not an identity. Sankhalok is not
[*New material added 2012. This article was written and published before I had discovered the chronicle fragment 2/k.125 describing 15th-century events, but the age of which seems impossible to determine beyond the probability that it is from the Ayutthaya period. Lacunae at several points show that the contents did not originate with the manuscript at hand, which must in turn be a copy of an older one.

With respect to the argument of the present paper, the 2/k.125 fragment makes Bañā Jalian the most important chief in the Sukhothai region, and besides his own mo’an Jalian seems to give him authority over mo’an Savarrgalok as well, using this spelling which I have proposed above as perhaps a 17th-century development, at which time, in fact the extant text of 2/k.125 could have been written, bringing some terms up to date, even if its basic story is from the 15th century. Thus, when the king of Ayutthaya called the chiefs of the northern mo’an to Ayutthaya, “Bañā Jalian left mo’an Savarrgalok [to] Cau Rāj Śrī Yaś, who was his son”; and when they left Ayutthaya to return home “Bañā Jalian, when he had reached mo’an Savarrgalok, he left all affairs to Hmu’n Hluōñ Bal…” while he became involved with the affairs of Nan and Chiang Mai. ‘Satchanalai’, however written, does not appear in 2/k.125*]

\[sanlok, and we must suspect a very early hyper-correction, or another name based on Mon san < sun.\]

18 “The 2/k.125 Fragment, a Lost Chronicle of Ayutthaya”, in this volume pp 00-00.
19 Conversation with Khun Prasarn Bunprakong, June 1975, which concurs with the opinion of Khun Bunnag. In a conversation Dr. Prasert ṇa Nagara has said that the epigraphy of the Ayutthaya and Ratthanakosin periods has been too little studied to permit a definite statement about the date of the script.