

The Dissemination of Chinese in Siam from Ming to Qing Dynasties

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Abstract: During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the spread of Chinese in Siam was mainly through government and nongovernment channels. The official dissemination revolved around tributary trade activities. The demand for exchanges prompted Siamese officials to study Chinese at the Imperial College of China. Chinese books and ink stones appeared on tributary items. The Siamese envoys who came to China for tribute took the initiative to learn Chinese poetry. This kind of dissemination is of characteristics like single mode, narrow scope and fixed content; under the influence of multiple waves of Chinese immigrants, dissemination at the non-governmental level has resulted in multiple dissemination channels such as oral and written dissemination of Chinese novels and family Chinese education. This mode of dissemination is of spontaneous and flexible and long-term characteristics. On the whole, the spread of Chinese in Siam is not ideal, the reasons are as follows: first, ancient Thailand had little contact with China, but was deeply influenced by Indian civilization. Based on Indian characters, Chinese characters lost the possibility of entering the Thai writing system. Second, Siam's strategic position to China is not as important as Vietnam. Therefore, Siam does not have the high language, cultural education and communication costs to "transform foreigners in Chinese". Only after meeting the exchange needs of tributary trade, there will be no official measures to promote the spread of Chinese.

1. Introduction

In the territory of present-day Thailand, the countries with which China has recorded exchanges generally show a spatial sequence from the south to the center and then to the north of Thailand.

From the 1st century to the 11th century A.D., the kingdoms of Shenli, Fugandulu, Panpan, Chitu, appeared in the Malay in southern Thailand, had more or less exchanges with China, as recorded in historical texts. The *Book of Han* recorded the itinerary of the envoys of the Han Dynasty from Guangdong to India by boat that "It took about five months to travel by boat from Rinan Barrier (present-day County Bijing, Lingjiang Estuary, Hue, Vietnam) to Xuwen (present-day Xuwen

County, Guangdong) and Hepu (present-day Hepu County, Guangxi), and there was the Kingdom of Duyuan (present-day Sumatra); it took about four months to travel by boat, and there was the Kingdom of Ruhmi (Near present-day Bogu, Myanmar); it took about twenty days to travel by boat, and there was the Kingdom of Shenli (in the Malay in southern Thailand); in about ten days by foot, there was the Kingdom of Fugandulu (in the Malay in southern Thailand); and about two months by boat from Fugandulu, there was the Kingdom of Huangzhi (near present-day Madras, India), where the folk customs are more or less the same as those of the Kingdom of Zhuya.” The two ancient states mentioned in the literature, Shenli and Fugandulu, located in the region of Surat Thani and Chumphon in present-day southern Thailand, were two ancient kingdoms around the 1st century A.D. They were located on the east and west sides of the Kra Isthmus in the Malay Peninsula, and were in an important transportation position on the passage from China to India. The geographical peculiarities of their location led to the discovery of these two kingdoms in present-day Thailand by envoys of Han Dynasty on their way to India. The Kingdom of Panpan survived around the 5th-8th centuries A.D. It established official tribute relations with China during the Southern Dynasties, and there are records of envoys to China until the Zhenguan period of Tang Dynasty (627-649 A.D., during the reign of Li Shimin, the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty). The Kingdom of Chitu was located in the area of Songkhla in southern Thailand and emerged around the 6th-10th centuries. During the reign of Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty, he ever sent an envoy to visit Chitu; and later Chitu also sent a prince back to China, who was received by Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty.

In the 8th century A.D., when the kingdoms of Pappan, Chitu on the Malay Peninsula in southern Thailand were exchanging with the Tang Dynasty, the kingdom of Halipunchai emerged in the area of Lamphun in northern Thailand, which is known as the “Queendom” in ancient Chinese texts. It was later invaded by the Kingdom of Lanna, which was established in the northeast, and ever sent an envoy to the Yuan Dynasty for help in 1289, but was still annexed by the Kingdom of Lanna in 1292. After the annexation of the Queendom, Lanna established a new capital in Chiang Mai in 1296, which is known as the Kingdom of Babai Xifu in Chinese history. The Yuan dynasty sent an envoy to the Kingdom of Babai Xifu for solicitation and set up Babai Dadian Army Consular Division in the area. The Kingdom of Babai Xifu maintained friendly relations with the Yuan and Ming dynasties in China, and the Ming Dynasty’s Ethnic House had a special Babai Xifu House, which was responsible for translating the documents between Lanna and China. It was annexed by Burma in the late Ming Dynasty (1522-1566). It was not until 1773 that the Thai army recovered Chiang Mai and officially incorporated into Thailand in 1803.

The kingdom of Dvaravati emerged in the 6th-11th centuries A.D., equivalent to the Sui and Tang dynasties in China, and was located in the area of present-day Phra Tum province in Thailand. During the Zhenguan period of the Tang Dynasty, it sent an envoy to China to offer memorial and exchange with the Tang Dynasty. In 1238, Sukhothai Dynasty (known as “Siam” in ancient Chinese texts, in present-day Sukhothai Province in the center of Thailand) was established in central and southern Thailand, and sent seven missions to establish a stable tribute trade relationship with the government of Yuan Dynasty. In 1349, the Kingdom of Lopburi, which was located on the lower Chao Phraya River in present-day Thailand, eventually defeated the once flourishing Sukhothai Dynasty because of its fertile land, warm climate and strong power, and then moved its capital to Ayutthaya (present-day Ayutthaya Province) in 1350, starting the history of the Ayutthaya Dynasty in Thailand. The new Ayutthaya Dynasty and the previous Sukhothai Dynasty were known together as “Siam” in ancient Chinese texts. At this time, China was in the midst of a stormy and turbulent period between the Yuan and Ming dynasties, and 18 years later (1368) the Ming Dynasty regime was established. When the Ming Dynasty established its rule in the Central Plains, the Ming emperor sent the envoy Lyu Zongjun with an imperial edict to King Canlie Zhao Kunya of Siam to “send an envoy with gold-leafed memorial and to pay tribute”, ^[1] which received a positive

response from the King of Siam. The following year, King Canlie Zhao Kunya sent an envoy with a gold-leafed memorial and local products as tribute, kicking off the friendship between the Ming Dynasty and the Ayutthaya Dynasty of Siam. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Ayutthaya Kingdom came frequently to pay tribute, with 110 visits recorded in the *Ming History* and the *Ming Record*; and the Ming Dynasty also sent envoys to Siam 19 times ^[2]. In 1644, after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty entered China and ruled the Central Plains, issuing an imperial decree to Siam to continue the tribute trade relations established by the Ming Dynasty. The Qing Dynasty survived 268 years (1644-1912), during which time Siam passed through the Ayutthaya Dynasty (1644-1767), the Thonburi Kingdom (1767-1782), and the Bangkok Dynasty (1782-present). The two countries maintained friendly tribute relations until the mid-19th century.

In a nutshell, China and Thailand began friendly relations in the 1st century A.D. and established tribute trade relations from the 5th century A.D. onwards. Subsequently, most of the countries of all kinds in the Thai territory maintained diplomatic relations with China during the same period, either as tribute trade or by sending envoys to pay tribute. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Kingdom of Babai Xifu in the north of Thailand were losing their power, while the Siamese in the south of the country were becoming stronger. During this long period of history, the Chinese language also spread to a certain extent in Siam. Given this fact, this paper focuses on the dissemination of the Chinese in Siam during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

2. The Dissemination of Chinese under the Tribute Trade between China and Siam

2.1 The Demand for Tribute Trade and Exchange Drives the Training of Translators

With the aim of facilitating official exchanges between the two countries during tribute trade in Qing Dynasty, Siam also sent officials to the Imperial College of China to learn the Chinese language, receiving generous treatment from the Ming government. This is the earliest recorded instance of the education and dissemination of Chinese language between the two dynasties. As recorded in Volume 47 of the General Study of Continued Literary Records, “in the third year of Emperor Hongwu’s reign of Ming Dynasty, Goryeo sent four people including Jin Tao to study. The next year, Jin Tao became a scholar and went home. From then on, official students from Japan, Ryukyu, Siam and other countries were admitted to study at the Imperial College, and the court would rewarded them generously and gave them entourages.”

The frequent tribute trade also encouraged officials to train translators who were proficient in Chinese and Siamese. In the 10th year of Zhengde (1515), the King of Siam sent envoys to pay tribute. After paying the gold-leafed memorial, no one understood it. After the Grand Secretary Liang Chu submitted to the emperor a proposal that one or two of the Siamese ambassadors be left behind for teaching the Siamese language, and that a number of sons and daughters of the clan be selected from among the officials of the Ethnic House to learn the Siamese language. In the seventh year of Wanli (1579), the Ming government set up the Siam Translation House, and the Chief Secretary of Guangdong sent Siamese ambassadors who were proficient in Siamese language to the capital to teach Siamese and learn Chinese, specializing in training translators for the exchange of documents between Siam and China. Both Chinese and Siamese general officials co-authored a bilingual dictionary called Translation from Siam Translation House, in which most of the words were related to tribute, rituals and imperial decrees. The Chinese words Huang Di (黄帝, emperor), Sheng Zhi (圣旨, holy decree), Chi Shu (敕书, royal decree), Kan He (勘合, operator and agreement), Guangdong Buzhengsi (广东布政司, Chief Secretary of Guangdong), Cha (茶, tea), Yan (砚, ink-stone), Luo (罗, silk gauze), Sha (纱, gauze), and Yin (银, silver) were introduced into the Siamese language in the form of Chinese pronunciation, enriching the Siamese vocabulary as a

foreign source.[3]

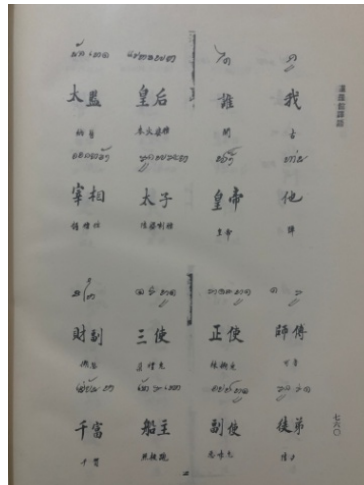


Fig.1 Part of Translation from Siam Translation House

For smooth communication between the royal families of China and Siam, China also sent people who were proficient in Chinese to Siam to translate the gold-leaved memorial for the King of Siam. In a letter to Prince Orange in 1838, King Basse Copper wrote, “In ancient times, the kings of China and Ayutthaya (the Siamese kings of the Ayutthaya Dynasty) used to send each other gold-leaved memorial to strengthen their friendship, but since the Chinese emperor could not understand its central meaning (for lack of experienced translators), four learned men were sent to Siam to serve as resident attendants to the King of Siam.”[4]

2.2 Siamese Envoys in China Study Poetry

Siamese ambassadors to China also took the opportunity to learn Chinese from Chinese literati and asked for poetry. In the 20th year of Jiaqing (1815), when Captain Tang Yifen escorted the Siamese envoys to China, the second envoy learned Chinese and asked him for Chinese poems. Tang Yifen, on the other hand, adhered to the modest style of the Chinese literati, and although he composed a poem as a gift, he also humbled himself that his literary talent was not enough to be his teacher. Tang Yifen recorded what happened at that time in his collection of poems “Qin Yin Yuan”, “The heart of my hometown was first driven to Yue Wang Tai, and my horse’s feet could not tread on the ice. It will be two years to finish the journey, then three years towards the sky. I was really blessed with a lot of food and clothing, and my children and grandchildren were always talented. I am ashamed to be able to write about Xiao Ying Shi, how can I be your teacher.”[5]



Fig.2 Portrait of Tang Yifen

2.3 Tributes Serve as the Medium of the Dissemination of Chinese Language

2.3.1 Books

In the fourth year of Yongle (1404), Emperor Yongle of the Ming Dynasty presented the King of Siam with a hundred copies of the Ancient and Modern Martyrs, in the hope that the Siamese people would follow the example of the martyrs and promote a culture of benevolence and peace. Although the Siamese royal family could not necessarily understand these books, let alone appreciate the Chinese culture of martyred women, the books, printed with Chinese characters, could still be seen as a medium for spreading the Chinese language and culture from the perspective of communication.

3. 3.2Ink-Stone

In 1644, the Qing court replaced the Ming Dynasty as the new ruler of the Central Plains. In the fourth year of Shunzhi (1647), it twice issued edicts to attract Siam, Annam, Japan, Ryukyu and other tributary countries of the former Ming Dynasty. In the ninth year of Shunzhi (1652), Siam requested tribute to the new dynasty, and the Shunzhi emperor readily agreed, giving him seals, edicts, and operators and agreement in exchange. Siam's interaction with the Qing Dynasty began with the tribute trade in Guangzhou. When Siam offered tribute, the Qing court would usually offer several times the amount of goods in return, including ink-stones, one of the four treasures of the literary house. For example, Inkstone in turquoise was given back in the second year of Yongzheng (1724), Inkstone in turquoise in the seventh year of Yongzheng (1729), and Inkstone in turquoise in the 27 year of Emperor Qianlong (1766). It can be seen that the Siamese court and aristocrats had the atmosphere of learning Chinese and Chinese calligraphy at that time. [6] As one of the indispensable "four treasures" of Chinese calligraphy, ink-stones represent a symbol of Chinese writing and a tool for the dissemination of the Chinese language. At the same time, it can also be seen from the behavior that the Qing royal family gave back the ink-stone as a gift many times, the ink-stone has a certain use value in the Siamese royal family and the upper society, so it has the value of giving back many times. Since it has practical value, it proves that at least among the upper elites, there are people who can master Chinese calligraphy and acquire Chinese.



Fig.3 Inkstone in Turquoise Made in the Yongzheng Period.

4. The Wave of Chinese Immigrants Promotes the Dissemination of Chinese

4.1 The Historical Background of Many Waves of Chinese Emigration

Although the strict sea ban policy was implemented in the Ming and Qing dynasties, private caravans were not allowed to trade at sea except for the official fleet to carry out tributary trade with other countries. However, during this period, there were many large waves of Chinese immigrants with different historical backgrounds, such as policy change, dynasty replacement, Siam Chinese governing the country and so on.

With the entry of western capitalism into China in the Ming Dynasty, it stimulated the trade demand between China and the West and Southeast Asian countries. During the Longqing period of the Ming Dynasty (1567-1572), after the “dispute over the sea ban”, the policy was adjusted, and the sea ban was partially opened in Zhangzhou, Fujian Province, allowing people to go overseas for trade. For a time, trade activities at home and abroad are very active, and Siam is an important country of overseas trade of Chinese. Many Chinese settled in Siam through trade activities and had certain private trade contacts as well as overseas immigrants.

In the mid-17th century, during the transition of the Ming and Qing dynasties, many Ming courtiers and anti-Qing forces along the southeast coast fled to Southeast Asian countries, forming a trend of immigration. After the army of the Qing Dynasty invading Shanhaiguan especially, a large number of Chinese fled to Siam and settled there.



Fig.4 Taksin, the Great Emperor of the Thonburi Dynasty

In the period of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, there was another upsurge of Chinese immigrants to Siam. When the Tonburi Dynasty of Siam replaced the Ayutthaya Dynasty, Taksin, the founder of the new dynasty, was of Chinese descent in Guangdong Province and was originally born in Chaozhou County, Guangdong Province. The Chinese background of the rulers made the Chinese play an important role in the government rule of Siam and the trade between China and Siam. In particular, the Chinese from Chaozhou were more respected than other Chinese groups, and they were once known as “royal Chinese”. At that time, a large number of Chaozhou people emigrated to Siam.

4.2 The Dissemination of Chinese under the Tide of Chinese Immigrants

Many waves of Chinese immigrants to Siam have brought Chinese language and culture to this land. When groups of different languages come into contact with each other, they will inevitably have language contact and influence. During the Tonburi Dynasty, a large number of Chaozhou people immigrated to Siam, which made Chaozhou dialect not only become the main language of Chinese immigrants at that time, but also had an impact on the local Thai. Some Chaozhou words were absorbed by Thai and became an integral part of Thai, including diet, utensils, commerce, religion and other aspects.[7]

With the folk trade and Chinese immigrants, the Chinese classics of ancient Chinese novels

began to be introduced into Siam. The Qing-engraved Chinese texts of historical novels such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West*, *Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty* also began to be imported into Siam in large numbers. However, due to the change of the Thonburi and Bangkok dynasties and the warfare, these Chinese texts were burnt and buried in large numbers, and only 39 Chinese texts of historical novels, chivalric novels, divine and magical novels, and worldly novels are now available in the National Library in Bangkok. [8] From these Chinese texts, we can get a glimpse of the popularity of Chinese literature in Siam at that time, moreover, the spiritual food essential for the local Chinese to live and settle in Siam. The influence of the Neo-Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu in the Ming and Qing dynasties made it impossible for women to emigrate overseas, so it was almost always Chinese men who arrived in Siam, who married Siamese women and, by the second generation, tended to be “Siameseized” from language to thought. The external characteristics of Chinese identity can only be maintained and reinforced through hairstyles (Chinese wear braids, Siamese shave their heads or go bald), the way they do their duty to the government (Chinese pay taxes, Siamese sell their labor), whether or not they wear a logo on their wrist, etc. The strange and wonderful Chinese novels are the best way to inherit Chinese language and culture, and to spread Chinese and Chinese culture in Chinese families through text reading and oral narration.

This trend of Chinese immigration continued until the mid-19th century, with large numbers of Chinese immigrants furthering the linguistic and cultural exchange between China and Siam. By the mid-19th century, church schools for Chinese children appeared sporadically in Siam. In those families consisting of first-generation Chinese men and Siamese women, the Chinese men, as the fathers of the family, were often more committed to maintaining their own native culture, customs, and religious beliefs. They taught their children the “Four Books” and “Five Classics” at home, sent their children to church schools for Chinese children. Wealthy Chinese, on the other hand, invite local learned Chinese to teach Chinese language and culture to their children. Rushn Berger describes what he saw and heard in Siam between 1835 and 1837, “two or three schools for Chinese children have opened, but it is difficult to organize and maintain these schools, because the mothers of Chinese children here include Siamese women, Burmese women, Lao women and even women from other countries, and their prejudices are stronger than the Chinese.” [9]

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, due to the frequent tribute trade between China and Siam and the many waves of Chinese immigrants, Chinese language and culture were spread and influenced in Siam in the form of Chinese education, language contact, Chinese novels, etc. Some Chinese words also entered the Siamese language, but mainly spoken and phonetic, Chinese characters, as another vehicle for the spread of Chinese, did not enter the Thai language. The depth and breadth of the spread of Chinese characters is not ideal, and the history of the spread of Chinese is poorly documented. This paper will sort out the history of the development of spoken and written languages in Thailand and analyze the reasons for the unsatisfactory spread of Chinese characters in ancient Thailand from the perspective of strategic relations between Siam and China.

5. Reasons for the Poor Dissemination of Chinese in Siam during the Ming and Qing Dynasties

5.1 From the Perspective of the Development History of Thai Spoken and Written Languages

The Thai script currently used in Thailand was created in the 13th century after the establishment of the Sukhothai dynasty by King Ram Khamhaeng on the basis of the ancient Khmer script and the ancient Mon script, which in turn were created on the basis of the Indian Pallava script and the post-Pallava script. Therefore, the Thai script in Thailand has been historically influenced by the language and script of India.

In the 2nd-3rd centuries AD, Indian scripts began to spread to Thailand and other Southeast Asian regions with the development of trade and religious exchanges between India and Southeast Asia. The language engraved on two 2nd-3rd century A.D. stone tablets found in Khamtong District, Krabi Province, Thailand is the Brahmi script, which records the Indian Tamil language and a certain Prakrit language. [10] In ancient Chinese texts, the history of interactions with the Kingdom of Jinlin in the Three Kingdoms period (231-245), located in the ancient city of Uthong in present-day Suphan Province, Thailand, is recorded in the books *Fuanan Yiwu Zhi* and *Wushi Waiguo Zhuan* written by Wu officials after they returned from their mission to the South Central Peninsula region; but unfortunately, these two books are lost today and no specific events can be found. Duan Lisheng found out through checking Thai materials that “two Indian monks walked from India and arrived in Phunan via Burma to promote Buddhism, and most of the 100,000 households in the Kingdom of Jinlin believed in Buddhism.” [11] It can be seen that the Kingdom of Jinlin were indeed influenced by the religious culture of India.

In the 5th century A.D., the Panpan Kingdom emerged on the Malay Peninsula in southern Thailand, and the Liu Song regime, which had sent envoys to visit China between 424-464 A.D., sent envoys to the Liang Dynasty in 527, 529, and 534, respectively, and also sent envoys to China until the Tang Dynasty's Zhenguan period, which was still close to China. At the same time, with the spread of Indian Buddhism to the east and maritime trade, the “southern” descendants of the Brahmi script, the Pallava script of South India, also began to spread in Southeast Asia. The location of Panpan Kingdom was the present-day Thailand's Krakatan Strait, which was the hub of India's connection with Southeast Asia, and was more influenced by India's language, religion, and culture. The volume 188 *Panpan Article of Tong Dian* by Du You mentions that, “There were many Brahmins in this country who came from Tianzhu and begged the king for finances, and the king paid much attention to them.” By the mid-to-late 6th century A.D., the Panpan kingdom was in decline and was replaced by the Dvaravati kingdom, located in south-central Thailand. The Dvaravati kingdom used the Pallava script to record not only Sanskrit and Pali, but also the native languages, ancient Mon and ancient Khmer. In the area of the Buddhist government in present-day Thailand, Dvaravati sent envoys and paid tribute during the Zhenguan period of the Tang Dynasty, and established a tributary relationship with the Tang Dynasty. It has been recorded in Chinese ancient books that Dvaravati has different characters from China. The ancient Chinese texts refer to the country of the Dvaravati as the “Thou He Kingdom” or “Du He Luo Kingdom” (Tang) in the volume 188 of *Tong Dian* written by du you, it was recorded, “Tou He Kingdom is heard in the Sui Dynasty. In the South China Sea continent, to the south of Zhenla, there are Buddhists and Taoists in this country from the southwest of Guangzhou for a hundred days. There are schools, and the writing is different from that in China”. In the 8th-10th centuries A.D., the Pallava script was slightly changed in its form, but it was still used by the Dvaravati kingdom to record the Sanskrit, ancient Mon, Pali and Khmer scripts, and was called the “post-Pallava script”.

In the 10th-13th centuries A.D., the Mon and Khmer people of Southeast Asia began to rewrite their own languages on a large scale, using the Pallava and Post-Pallava scripts as the basis, creating the ancient Khmer and ancient Mon scripts. These two scripts also spread to Thailand, and a large number of inscriptions in Khmer script from that period still exist in Thailand. As the Thai people grew, the Sukhothai Kingdom was established in 1238 in the central region, and King Ram Khamhaeng carefully conceived and created his own script based on the Khmer and Mon scripts, starting the history of the Thai people having their own native language and script. The Sukhothai Dynasty was later annexed by the Ayutthaya Dynasty, but the native script created during that dynasty laid the foundation for the development of the Thai language and script later. Although Chinese was introduced into the Thai language during the Ming and Qing dynasties with the frequent interaction between the two countries, it was limited to the phonetic form and was only

something specific to China, and was far less profound and long-term than the influence of the Indian language and script on the Thai language and script. Moreover, after the Thai people produced their own script, it was no longer possible for Thailand to borrow Chinese characters to record their own language, as was the case in historical Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Therefore, due to historical reasons, Chinese language and Chinese characters were disseminated in ancient Thailand, but the depth of dissemination was limited and the effect was not very satisfactory.

5.2 From the Perspective of Siam's Strategic Position to China

Literacy education and language education in China have always been inseparable from cultural education. Since the beginning of the Han Dynasty, the idea of "Great Unification" clearly put forward the cultural and educational policy of "transform foreigners in Chinese" to change the customs of barbarians in order to achieve the purpose of stable rule. After generations of development, the specific management measures under the thought of "transform foreigners in Chinese" have become systematic to a certain extent in the Qing Dynasty. After the Qing government gained control over local politics, it set up free schools and academies, and issued fixed Confucian classics to the government offices, which then distributed them to the various righteous schools and academies. At the same time, a professor was set up to teach and explain these scriptures and classics. In barbarian places where it was difficult to find professors, the local governors were even given part-time positions, and the spread of Confucianism culminated in the selection of talents through the imperial examinations. Local officials often cited the development of local economy, the flourishing of Confucian education, and the remarkable effect of changing customs as an achievement of local governance in their repeated reports to the ruler. It can be seen that the rulers of the Central Plains Dynasty attached great importance to the dissemination of Confucian culture in the "barbarian" lands outside of China, and the carrier of Confucian culture was the various scriptures, histories and collections written in Chinese, and the success of the dissemination of Confucian culture was also the success of the dissemination of Chinese characters. Therefore, under the Great Unification ideology, the rulers of the Ming and Qing dynasties had a clear strategy and plan for the dissemination of Confucian culture, and also had special funds to support the establishment and maintenance of academies and schools of righteousness; but from today's perspective, the spread of language was not divorced from cultural education and cultural dissemination, but by the integration of politics, language, culture and education. With the support of political, cultural, economic and other powerful means of the official government, Chinese and Confucian culture have achieved remarkable results in the domestic minority areas and even in the vassal countries of North Korea and Vietnam in the "Chinese character cultural circle" countries.

Adhering to the idea that "the great country is the barrier itself", the Qing government established a political alliance with the neighboring vassal states, and established a territorial defense system of "defending the southeast with Ryukyu, the northeast with Koryo, the northwest with Mongolia and the southwest with Vietnam". Among the four countries chosen by the Qing government to defend the barrier, Ryukyu, Koryo and Vietnam are all "Chinese character cultural circle" countries, which are very similar to Chinese language, culture and political system, especially Vietnam, which is on the Indochina peninsula with Siam. Since the Qin Dynasty, it has been incorporated into China's political territory and unified management by the central government. The Confucian civilization has a deep origin. Before the French intervention in the late Qing Dynasty, Chinese characters had always been the official language of Vietnam. In contrast, the strategic position of Siam, which has great linguistic and cultural differences, is not as important as Vietnam. The central government has no strategic demand for Siam, so it has no incentive to spread Chinese and Confucian culture. From the Siamese point of view, the tributary trade goods given

back by China are far more attractive than its civilization, so the official language and cultural exchanges between the two sides are limited, and the loose vassal relationship is maintained only in the form of tributary trade. In addition, if China wants to “transform Siam in Chinese”, it must further strengthen political ties, increase economic costs and set up special educational institutions to spread Confucian culture in order to be effective. But the cost is so high that since there is no necessary strategic need, the central government will not consider spending a huge cost to spread Confucian culture in Siam.



Fig.5 Snow Mountain Academy Established during the Qing Dynasty in Lijiang, Yunnan

6. Conclusion

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the spread of Chinese in Siam was mainly divided into two ways: official and folk communication. Chinese education and communication at the official level is based on meeting the needs of smooth exchanges in tributary trade between China and Siam. The education and dissemination of Chinese language at the official level was based on the need to meet the needs of the smooth tribute trade between China and Siam, mainly through the selection of Siamese officials to study Chinese at the Imperial College, as well as the selection of Chinese officials to perform translation-related services for the Siamese court, the establishment of the Ethnic House, which specialized in training translators, and the organization of the Translation from Siam Translation House, which promoted language and cultural exchanges between China and Siam. In addition, around the tribute trade, the Chinese rulers gave Chinese texts and writing ink-stones, and the Chinese ministers met the needs of the Siamese ambassadors by giving them Chinese poems and texts, which were also acts of direct or indirect promotion of the Chinese language and provided a material medium for the further spread of the Chinese language in the Siamese court and nobility. After satisfying the needs of the tribute trade and official exchanges, the Chinese government did not further promote the spread of the Chinese language in Siam. As a result, the official Chinese language was disseminated in a single way, with a narrow scope and fixed content, during both the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Turning the attention to the folk, with the “Opening up in the Period of Emperor Longqing” of the Ming Dynasty, the chaos of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the historical opportunities such as the establishment of Siam Tonburi Dynasty by Chinese descendants in the mid-Qing Dynasty, it set off an upsurge of commercial exchanges between Chinese and Siamese folk and even direct emigration to Siam. Human activities inevitably need the communication of language, and it is also bound to deepen the exchange of language and culture. The new Siamese dynasty was established by the descendants of the Chaozhou people, who encouraged the Chinese to come to Siam, and the policy of recruiting Chinese attracted a large number of Chinese immigrants to Siam, who soon established close relations with the Thai court by virtue of their hometown relations with Dasin. The dignity of the status of “royal Chinese” makes many words in Chao language have an impact on Thai and directly enter Thai and become a part of Thai. Folk commerce and Chinese immigrants bring Chinese classical novels to the humid and sultry land of Siam in the form of Chinese texts and oral legends, enriching the spiritual world of generations of children of Chinese families with strange and romantic imagination. Here, the Confucian classic “four Books and five Classics” still plays an important role in literacy and enlightening education in some Chinese families with a higher level of knowledge and culture. Chinese families who do not have the educational conditions send their children to local ecclesiastical schools for Chinese children, hoping that through the culture carried by Chinese characters, the next generation will always remember that the northern mainland is the place to come. At the folk level, due to private trade exchanges, the tide of Chinese immigrants and other reasons, there are a variety of ways to spread Chinese and Chinese culture, showing the characteristics of spontaneity, flexibility and durability.

From the collection of loose historical materials, we find that the spread of Chinese in Siam during the Ming and Qing dynasties is not ideal for two reasons. First, by combing the development of Thai language and the history of communication with China before the emergence of Thai characters in the 13th century, the author holds that there is not much communication between China and ancient Thailand. With the Indian maritime trade activities and the eastward spread of Buddhism to Southeast Asian countries, Thailand, as a country in the center of Indo-China Peninsula, is deeply influenced by Indian language and culture. So much so that Thai characters are created on the basis of Indian characters, and Chinese characters eventually lose the possibility of entering the Thai writing system. Even though there were frequent exchanges between China and Siam during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the influence of Chinese on the Thai language was only to the extent that Chinese words entered the Thai vocabulary, which was incomparable to the influence of Chinese characters in the “Chinese cultural circle” countries. Second, although China had been influenced by the idea of “Great Unification” since ancient times, and had a systematic language and cultural education strategy to spread Confucianism to “transform the foreign into Chinese”, Siam was not as important to China as Vietnam, which was a linguistically homogeneous country, and was not included in the Qing government’s strategy of “defending the southwest”. All of these factors led to the spread of the Chinese language in Siam during the Ming and Qing dynasties, but after the official demand for tribute trade was met, the spread of the Chinese language and culture in Siam was not further promoted. On the contrary, there have been several waves of Chinese language and culture spread by Chinese immigrants, but the effect, strength and depth of the spread have been relatively limited.

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