"Don't Belittle Our Southern Neighbor": Chen Xujing's View of Thailand[*]

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ABSTRACT

A major dilemma faced by Chinese intellectuals of the early twentieth century was how they could acquire Western learning without compromising national sovereignty. This article focuses on the attempt by Chen Xujing 陳序經 (1903-1967) to resolve this dilemma with his concept of "Wholesale Westernization," which posited that non-Western nations must shed all their native or traditional elements and Westernize completely to become sovereign. By analyzing Chen Xujing's *Siam and China*, the article suggests that his view of Thailand was an extension of his Wholesale Westernization concept. For Chen Xujing, Thailand, observed through the lens of this concept, was a progressive nation created by its kings and their Chinese subjects in the image of the West. For that reason alone, Chen Xujing argued, Thailand deserved the admiration and respect of Chinese intellectuals, who should no longer belittle the strength of their southern neighbor. In the milieu of nationalism and self-determination in wartime China, *Siam and China* might be regarded as a political commentary that critically examined Thailand's pro-Japan policy and the oppression of the Thai Chinese, who were described as constituting the crucial means through which the highly Westernized country could modernize further.

Key words: Chinese culture, nationalism, Pan-Asianism, Thailand, Westernization

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1. Introduction

Chinese intellectuals of the early twentieth century faced a major dilemma. The Qing Empire (1644-1912) to which they and their fathers or scholarly mentors had owed their political allegiance fell apart as a result of internal conflicts and wars with foreign powers. Over time, they concluded that forming a modern, republican—in short, Westernized—nation-state was the only way for China to survive foreign colonialism and imperialism. For them, the nation-state was a measurement of civilization, and China had to assume this political form in order to join the civilized community of nations.[1] The dilemma, then, was how China could strike a balance between its participation in the global march (or competition) to modernity and, with minimal damage to personal and collective pride, accentuate its identity and uniqueness in the world of sovereign nation-states.

This dilemma came in various forms. For some intellectuals, their alienation from tradition, due to exposure to Western learning and a desire to change China through Western ideas and practices, resulted in a tension between self-imposed obligations to the nation and emotions that remained tied to their Confucian upbringing.[2] For others, the dilemma was institutional: though dissatisfied with the monarchical structure established or proposed by the traditional literati, they failed to replace it with a functional and sustainable model during the 1910s and 1920s, when warlordism and political infighting thwarted most attempts to restore order in China.[3] Although several sources of inspiration for political reform existed,[4] Japan remained the primary model for Chinese

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[1]   Hon Tze-ki, "Marking the Boundaries: The Rise of Historical Geography in Republican China," in Brian Moloughney and Peter Zarrow (eds.), *Transforming History: The Making of a Modern Academic Discipline in Twentieth-Century China* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011), p. 306. But not all Chinese intellectuals believed that the republican form worked best for China. See Lin Chih-hung 林志宏, *Minguo nai diguo ye: zhengzhi wenhua zhuanxing xia de Qing yimin* 民國乃敵國也：政治文化轉型下的清遺民 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban, 2009).

[2]   Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 98.

[3]   Wang Fan-sen, *Fu Ssu-nien: A Life in Chinese History and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. i.

[4]   Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham:

intellectuals because it supposedly shared the same culture and race as China. Chinese intellectuals believed that culture, or its adaptation, was the foundation of meaningful progress toward modernity. Japan had proven that it might be possible for China to develop into an industrialized power and yet retain elements of traditional culture as part of its national identity.

Many late Qing literati had failed to adjust to the dramatic changes of the times and make the transition to becoming new-style technocrats or intellectual officials in the wake of the Qing collapse. These "intellectuals in crisis," to borrow historian Chang Hao's term, sought to define traditional Chinese culture, their own roles in it, and its relevance to China's quest for modernity.[5] Despite their divergent political views, they shared the opinion that culture, however they conceptualized it or whatever it might be, could not be completely discarded because it was deeply ingrained in the national character that made them "Chinese." They thus compartmentalized culture and determined the parts to retain or downplay for the development of self and nation. The emotional turmoil they experienced, wrought by tensions between past and present and between "native" and "foreign," can hardly be overstated. Failing to reconcile their sentiments with the perceived reality of change in the cosmological, historical, and political visions of China, many departed from public life and led an obscured existence; a few committed suicide. As historian Lin Yu-sheng suggests, this crisis of Chinese consciousness was, in its various manifestations, "a kind of Confucian conscience at work in the midst of deep cultural crisis," and Chinese intellectuals continued to feel its ramifications during the May Fourth era (1919) and beyond.[6]

Duke University Press, 2002).

[5] Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890-1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). On how developments in the Qing Empire shaped what is now known as traditional Chinese culture, see Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

[6] Lin Yu-sheng, "The Suicide of Liang Chi: An Ambiguous Case of Moral Conservatism," in Charlotte Furth (ed.), *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 155. See also Lin Yu-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979). For a biographical account of experiences of this crisis, see Henrietta Harrison, *The Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man's Life in a North China Village, 1857-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

Among the Chinese intellectuals concerned about the level or "standard" (*benwei* 本位) of Chinese culture vis-à-vis the West, we find the unique scholar Chen Xujing 陳序經 (1903-1967), to whom China historians of today have variously referred as a "Westernistic nationalist" who emphasized the use of Western culture for the welfare of China as a nation,[7] a "fervent nationalist" who suggested that China faced extinction unless it followed the global trend of Westernization,[8] and, by inference, a "totalistic iconoclast" who perceived culture or tradition as a barrier to the future of China and demanded a retrograde amnesia of the Chinese.[9] As we shall see, although "totalistic iconoclast" might be too strong or sweeping a label to be placed on Chen Xujing, he did suggest that the cultural-political order of the past was an organic whole and argue that it must, therefore, be rejected as a whole. According to Lin Yu-sheng, this attitude of totalistic iconoclasm characterized much of twentieth-century Chinese intellectual history, especially the May Fourth Movement, which supposedly culminated in the Communist revolution and subsequent establishment of Communist rule in 1949.

In this push for what historian Edmund S. K. Fung calls "Westernized radicalism," Chen Xujing was active, but his writings were confined largely to a small coterie of like-minded colleagues at his home institution at Lingnan University, situated in the southern coastal city of Guangzhou. Cultural conservatism, which morphed into a kind of neo-conservatism that acknowledged the superiority of Western culture but continued to contest how it could be best assimilated, remained dominant in intellectual and political circles under the influence of military leader Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975).[10] More importantly, as a "nationalist," Chen Xujing appeared less patriotic than the traditionalists or cultural conservatives during the surge in the 1930s of Chinese nationalism when he was most active. The neo-conservatives stressed moderation in

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7   James H. Cole, "'Total Westernization' in Kuomintang China: The Case of Ch'en Hsu-Ching," *Monumenta Serica*, 34.1 (1979), p. 131.

8   Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 53.

9   Lin Yu-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era*, pp. 6-7.

10 Historian Frederic E. Wakeman Jr. considers Chiang Kai-shek's rule a form of "Confucian fascism." See Frederic E. Wakeman Jr., "A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism," *China Quarterly*, 150 (1997), pp. 395-432.

Westernization as part of a national identity and denounced the indiscriminate imitation of Western ways, which they claimed would jeopardize Chinese interests and sovereignty in the long run.[11]

The perception of Chen Xujing as a maverick intellectual by even the May Fourth iconoclasts suggests that post-1911 Chinese historiography is indeed more complex than simply a story of the radicals triumphing over the conservatives in the intellectual battle for China's past and future.[12] This article weaves an intellectual and political history of Chen Xujing's work in the 1930s and early 1940s, when he was most actively involved with the Western radicalization of Chinese intellectuals. But instead of tracing the sociopolitical context of his ideas and discussing the ideology underlying his so-called nationalist writings during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945 (which historians such as James H. Cole, Edmund S. K. Fung, and Hon Tze-ki have accomplished), the article focuses on his lesser-known book *Siam and China* (*Xianluo yu Zhongguo* 暹羅與中國).[13] It suggests that the book was an extension of his concept of "Wholesale Westernization" (*quanpan xihua* 全盤西化), or the argument that non-Western nations must shed all their native or traditional elements and Westernize completely to become powerful—or, at the very least, to survive as a people. For Chen Xujing, Thailand, observed through the lens of this concept, was a highly modernized nation created by its kings and their Chinese subjects in the image of the West. For that reason alone, Chen Xujing suggested, Thailand deserved the respect of the Chinese, who should not belittle their southern neighbor (*buyao miaoshi women de nanlin* 不要藐視我們的南鄰).

By contextualizing Chen Xujing's view of Thailand as described in *Siam and China* in the milieu of nationalism and self-determination (*minzu zijue* 民族自決) in wartime

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[11] Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era*, p. 56.

[12] Hon Tze-ki, "Cultural Identity and Local Self-Government: A Study of Liu Yizheng's *History of Chinese Culture*," *Modern China*, 30.4 (2004), p. 531.

[13] Selected chapters of the book can be found in Tian Tong 田彤 (ed.), *Chen Xujing juan* 陳序經卷 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015). As Chen Xujing himself points out, his book is a collection of articles on Siam previously published in various journals and magazines. There is considerable overlapping of content among the chapters, some of which have titles that are slightly different from those of their previous incarnations. The book, which comprises over a hundred pages, carries more substantial content than the seven papers on Siam contained in Tian Tong's volume.

China, this article considers the book more a political commentary than a collectanea of *Historical Materials* (*Wenshi congshu* 文史叢書). Although Chen Xujing did intend for his book to introduce the strengths and comparative advantages of the Thai nation for a general readership, his key objective was to highlight Thailand's mistake in aligning itself with Japan and purging itself of Chinese culture and political influence (*qin Ri pai Hua de cuowu* 親日排華的錯誤). In his vision of an ideal geopolitical situation for China, Thailand should reject Japan's Greater (or Pan-) Asianism (*Da yaxiya zhuyi* 大亞細亞主義) and instead ally with China against Japanese imperialism. For Chen Xujing, the Chinese should not discriminate against the Thai people not only because the latter were actually more advanced in the linear progression to universal modernity, but also because they, like the Chinese themselves, belonged to a semi-colonized nation. But Japan was not a force for liberation; Western imperialism, regardless of its desirability, might have been the lesser of two evils for both China and Thailand. As Hon Tze-ki suggests, by the 1930s, historical geography as a scholarly discipline and the nation-state system that it represented had failed to resolve the contradiction between imperial expansion and national independence; it had thus become, for Chinese intellectuals, a "strategic study of national defense."[14] Chen Xujing's view of Thailand as a victim of Japanese imperialism marked the end of Japan's informal tutelage of China. More specifically, it revealed a Chinese intellectual's attempt to resolve his dilemma with regard to Westernization by disentangling it from Japan's mediation and hence its Pan-Asianist doctrine.

After tracing Chinese impressions of Siam—or the image of "Siam" in China—during the late Qing and early Republican periods, this article turns to the "revelations" that the First World War (1914-1918) brought to China, the most important of which was the decline of European colonial power and the rise of Japanese imperialism in Nanyang 南洋 (i.e., Southeast Asia).[15] It then describes Chen Xujing's basis for regarding

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[14] Hon Tze-ki, "Marking the Boundaries: The Rise of Historical Geography in Republican China," p. 326.

[15] "Southeast Asia" as a term first emerged during the Second World War, when the Allied forces set up the South East Asia Command in 1943. In an article published in February 1941, Chinese intellectual and politician Yu Youren 于右任 (1879-1964) proposed viewing the region that covered Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and the Malay Peninsula as "Mid-South Peninsula" (*Zhongnan bandao* 中南半島). In response to those who considered Yunnan Province a part of the Mid-South Peninsula, he suggested that Yunnan was "deeply seated on the mainland" (*shenju neilu* 深居內陸) and culturally and politically a region of China. Because the source of rivers in the Mid-South Peninsula lay in Yunnan, the point of

Thailand as a progressive nation and discusses, from his perspective, the role of nationalism in the self-determination of Thai people. Finally, the article examines why, in the context of China resisting Japanese imperialism at war, Chen Xujing believed that Japan's Pan-Asianism might prove counterproductive to Thailand's revanchism. For him, Japan, by encouraging irredentist behavior in the Thai state, threatened to cancel out the progress made by generations of Siamese kings and their Chinese settlers in Westernizing the Thai nation.

2. Chinese Impressions of Siam

In Chinese historical records, "Siam" had been used since 1377 to refer to the Ayutthaya Kingdom, which paid tribute to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing courts and traded extensively with Chinese merchants. After Burmese armies destroyed Ayutthaya (1767), the Chakri house founded the new Rattanakosin Kingdom, which the Chinese continued to call "Siam."[16] Qing China's relationship with Siam was founded primarily on trade and tribute. Although its court annals upheld the Qing emperor's superior status in the Sinocentric tributary order by describing the Siamese as "barbaric" 蠻 (*man* or *yi* 夷), they indicated that Siam was the paramount power in Indochina.[17]

During the late nineteenth century, foreign-style newspapers appeared in the major cities of China. They helped create a flourishing print culture that facilitated the exchange of ideas among educated Chinese, some of whom began to pay attention to Siam in the 1880s and 1890s. In *Huatu xinbao* (*Chinese Illustrated News* 畫圖新報), a pictorial

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reference for naming the peninsula should be China. See Yu Youren 于右任, "Zhongnan bandao zhi fanwei yu mingming wenti 中南半島之範圍與命名問題," in *Yu Youren xiansheng wenji* 于右任先生文集 (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 1978), pp. 270-274.

[16] Ayutthaya was also known variously as "Dacheng" 大城 or "Ayutuoye" 阿瑜陀耶. Siam was the name consistently used to refer to the kingdoms that preceded the modern Thai nation. For sources relating to the historical relationship between China and Siam, see Huang Zhongyan 黃重言 and Yu Dingbang 余定邦, *Zhongguo guji zhong youguan Taiguo ziliao huibian* 中國古籍中有關泰國資料匯編 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2016).

[17] Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1977); Guo Yanfang 郭艷芳, "Qingdai Zhongguoren de Xianluo guan 清代中國人的暹羅觀," MA Thesis (Jinan: Shandong University, 2006).

Chinese newspaper founded in 1880, King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868-1910) was described as an "enlightened ruler" (*mingjun* 明君) who, by adopting Western methods, transformed Siam into a modern state.[18] *Xifa* (西法) became a political topos for changing China, as suggested by the newspaper reports that covered the Franco-Siamese War (1893). One report urged defeated Siam to continue its "self-strengthening [movement] through Western methods" (*xifa yi ziqiang* 西法以自強) as China did after failing to defend Vietnam's sovereignty during the Sino-French War (1884-1885).[19] Another report suggested that Siam should repay its indemnities quickly so that the French would leave the kingdom.[20] By using terms relating to Chinese experiences of defeat, loss, and modernization to describe Siam, late Qing writers were encouraging Siam as much as they were urging China not to lose hope in its own dire situation.[21]

Most reports through the 1900s sustained the trend of understanding Siam through Chinese experiences, albeit with a twist. They included comparing Siam's "resurgence" (*zhongxing* 中興) after the Franco-Siamese War with the Tongzhi Restoration (c. 1860-1875),[22] describing how King Chulalongkorn visited Europe and sent his children abroad for Western education to "fully breathe civilized air" (*baoxi wenming kongqi* 飽吸文明空氣), and praising Siam for being able to persuade Britain to abrogate its extraterritorial rights.[23] China's setbacks in the late 1890s and early 1900s—its defeat in the 1894-1895

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[18] Wang Yucun 王漁邨, "Xianluo kao 暹羅考," *Huatu xinbao* 畫圖新報, 1.1 (1880), p. 177.

[19] Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, "Lun Xianluo ji yi ziqiang 論暹羅亟宜自強," *Xinwen bao* 新聞報 (Shanghai 上海), 19 July 1893, p. 1.

[20] Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, "Lun Xianluo yi ji qingchang kuan yi gui tudi 論暹羅宜亟清償欵以歸土地," *Zilin Hubao* 字林滬報 (Shanghai 上海), 6 September 1893, p. 1.

[21] For the development of newspapers in late Qing China, see Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Rudolf G. Wagner (ed.), *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007); Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004). For the involvement of "bandit" armies in the Sino-French War, see Bradley Camp Davis, *Imperial Bandits: Outlaws and Rebels in the China-Vietnam Borderlands* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017). For a comprehensive discussion of Qing China's self-strengthening movement, see Liu Kwang-ching, "The Ch'ing Restoration," in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China: Vol. 10* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 409-490.

[22] Wang Yucun 王漁邨, "Xianluo zhongxing ji 暹羅中興記," *Wanguo gongbao* 萬國公報, 123 (1899), pp. 18-21.

[23] Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, "Shijie xin shi: Xianluo guo guoshi xiaoshi 世界新史：暹羅國國勢小史," *Xuanbao*

Sino-Japanese War, the conservative elite's rejection of the Hundred Days' Reform (1898), and the foreign occupation of Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion (1900)—convinced many Chinese intellectuals that they had to do more to arrest China's decline. Sardonic commentaries emerged, as suggested by an editorial that praised Siam for having the foresight to "reform" (*weixin* 維新), unlike China, which "would never change until death" (*zhi si bu bian* 至死不變).[24]

The Chinese practice of comparing their experience with that of Siam mirrored what literary scholar V. Y. Mudimbe calls "epistemological ethnocentrism" (i.e., nothing can be learned from "them" unless it is already "ours" or comes from "us.")[25] Late Qing Chinese intellectuals appear to have accepted Westernization as a universal value or unit of positive change by separating it from the imagined West that had humiliated or oppressed China. For them, Siam was a helpful model for having successfully negotiated its passage to modernity and resisted foreign domination in its own way.[26] But the impression that Siam was a backward and weak nation, at least when compared to China, remained entrenched in the minds of many Chinese intellectuals, who refused to believe that Siam had truly overtaken China in economic development and political reform.

As late as the 1930s, after a bloodless coup replaced the absolute monarchy with a constitutional government in Siam in 1932, Chinese intellectuals continued to "belittle" Siam, often subtly, as a lesser partner in China's anti-imperialism. In their writings, Siam was either grouped with formal possessions such as British Singapore as a "weak nation and colony" (*ruoxiao minzu yu zhimindi* 弱小民族與殖民地)[27] or characterized as a

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選報, 42 (1903), pp. 22-23; Xu Yunqiao 許雲樵, "Ying yun huan Xianluo zhiwai faquan 英允還暹羅治外法權," *Xinwen bao* 新聞報 (Shanghai 上海), 5 March 1908, p. 8.

[24] Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, "Shijie tanpian: Xianluo zhi xiaofa Riben 世界談片：暹羅之效法日本," *Dalu bao* 大陸報, 3.11 (1905), pp. 3-4.

[25] V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 15. For Chinese conceptualization of modernity with space, see Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, pp. 10-11; Tang Xiaobing, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[26] For China's internalization of Western judgments and values, see Arif Dirlik, "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism," *History and Theory*, 35.4 (1996), pp. 96-118.

[27] Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, "Diguo zhuyi zaizhi xia de Xianluo yu Xinjiapo 帝國主義宰治下的暹羅與新嘉坡," *Shijie zhishi* 世界知識, 1.12 (1935), p. 544.

"lazy elephant" (*lan xiang* 懶象) that "miraculously retained its head under the knife of British and French imperialisms" (*qiji si de you Ying Fa liang diguozhuyi de dao xia liu xia tou lai* 奇跡似的由英法兩帝國主義的刀下留下頭來).[28] Although Chinese intellectuals recognized that both China and Siam shared the dubious status of being "half colonies" (*ban zhimindi* 半殖民地) and "fellow sufferers" (*nan xiong nan di* 難兄難弟) of foreign imperialism, their tone toward Siam ranged from didactic to backslapping. They believed that Siam could only liberate itself from exploitation and manipulation by foreign powers by mobilizing the "entire nation's revolutionary masses" (*quanguo geming minzhong* 全國革命民衆).

According to Chen Xujing, however, Chinese intellectuals had underestimated Siam's abilities and potential, and their disdain for Siam was ahistorical and ill-informed. He also identified two worrying trends: rather than rallying only its own people to resist foreign imperialism, the post-1932 Siamese state was developing a kind of ethnonationalism that threatened China's sovereignty over minority-populated regions in the southwest. Siamese leaders were also accepting help from Japan to cast off the yokes of British and French imperialisms. Their pro-Japan policy resulted in the oppression of the Chinese population, which Chen Xujing believed was the source of Siam's power and success as a highly modernized—and Westernized—nation.

3. Declining West and Progressive Siam

In 1914, merely two years after the collapse of the Qing Empire, the First World War broke out in Europe. Chinese newspapers covered the war extensively, which they had more accurately featured as the "European War" (*Ou zhan* 歐戰) for their readers. The Chinese state (more specifically, the Beijing or Beiyang 北洋 government of the north) pursued a role in the European War by sending tens of thousands of laborers, collectively known as the Chinese Labor Corps, to dig trenches and serve the logistical needs of British and French frontline troops in Europe. These Chinese laborers, mostly

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[28] Wang Yucun 王漁邨, "Yazhou ruoxiao minzu jianying: Xianluo 亞洲弱小民族剪影：暹羅," *Shijie zhishi* 世界知識, 5.1 (1936), p. 38.

illiterate, were drafted from rural north China. They unwittingly forged a sense of national identity among themselves vis-à-vis the Allied personnel, and their mere presence on the European war front served as the basis for Chinese intellectuals and statesmen to increase China's international profile. More importantly, by participating in the war on the side of China's greatest oppressors (i.e., Britain and France), the Chinese elite aimed to rid their nation of extraterritorial legal provisions and unequal treaties after the Allied victory, which appeared likely after 1917 when the laborers were dispatched.[29]

Unfortunately, the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles that concluded the First World War did not achieve the objectives of the Chinese. German-controlled Shandong Province was transferred to the Japanese, and the extraterritorial rights of foreign nationals in China were not abrogated. In contrast, Siam's overtly military diplomacy yielded far more positive outcomes for itself. Siam also entered the war in 1917 by dispatching 1,200 soldiers to fight the Central Powers in Europe. Although Siamese troops engaged in little combat, they demonstrated a largely self-acquired skill of long-haul military deployment. The existence of a Siamese contingent in the Allied forces allowed King Vajiravudh (r. 1910-1925) to confirm his leadership as the head of the nation, a status that was increasingly disputed by young, Western-trained military officers. It also gained Siam membership in the victorious league of civilized nations, which had upheld the principles of morality and international law against the "evil" empires of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and the Ottomans. Siam's "meaningful" military participation in the war nudged European powers toward revising their unequal treaties with it and renouncing their extraterritorial rights. By the end of King Vajiravudh's reign in 1925, Siam had achieved full fiscal and judicial autonomy.[30] (China accomplished that only in 1943, when it was combatting Japanese armies as an Allied power.) China's contribution of coolie labor thus appeared less potent than Siam's deployment of military units.

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[29] Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Xu Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[30] Gregory V. Raymond, "War as Membership: International Society and Thailand's Participation in World War I," *Asian Studies Review*, 43.1 (2019), pp. 132-147. See also Stefan Hell, *Siam and World War I: An International History* (Bangkok: River Books, 2017).

The unfavorable outcomes of China's involvement with the European War revealed for its intellectuals the hypocrisies and realpolitik of a liberal, Wilsonian-rules-based global order that struggled to emerge after the war; it was American president Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) who had bowed to domestic pressures and geopolitical concerns by signing off Shandong to Japan. Chinese intellectuals saw the Versailles settlement as a badly disguised attempt by the old empires of Britain and France (as well as, to a lesser extent, Italy and the United States) to preserve their sway over their protectorates and semi-colonies. For them, despite the promise of self-determination and national sovereignty in Wilson's vision, the creation of the League of Nations to govern the conduct of diplomacy, treaties, and war was an imperialistic ploy to stop non-Western nations from gaining true independence.

The European War thus helped develop the discipline of historical geography in China, which was increasingly deployed by Chinese intellectuals to define the geo-body of China, delineate the boundaries of the Chinese nation, and identify the nation's natural resources. As Hon Tze-ki suggests, the postwar nation-state system produced a new set of contradictions and incongruities for Chinese intellectuals, the most significant of which was the "hierarchy in space" that allowed strong nations to acquire lands and resources without regard to the territorial sovereignty of weak nations. But the West presented itself as a "measurement of civilization" by inviting the weak—Africans, Asians, and Eastern Europeans—to join the global march for equality, fraternity, and liberty.[31] For Chinese intellectuals, then, the decline of the West was both real and imagined. It was real because the West was exhausted from the war and required the alliance or cooperation of Japan and the United States to secure its empires and forge a new world order. It was imagined because the West, as the self-professed bearer of morality and universal truth, acted against these principles for its own interests.

The bitter disappointment with Western treatment of China in postwar settlement and the perceived moral vacuum in Westernized intellectual circles in China constituted the root causes of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The so-called bankruptcy of Western civilization forced Chinese intellectuals to seek their own enlightenment and national self-determination. But a paradox soon emerged in this "Chinese Enlightenment":

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[31] Hon Tze-ki, "Marking the Boundaries: The Rise of Historical Geography in Republican China," p. 326.

how could China continue to modernize without becoming the West or like the West, since the definition and standards of modernization remained decisively Western?

The radicalization of the Chinese mind developed in two main directions. One group of intellectuals, identified by Edmund S. K. Fung as "Westernized radicals," maintained that there was nothing moral or Western about modernity; the West simply had a head start, and China could still imitate the West in achieving its level of progress. Another group, the "cultural conservatives," exaggerated the cultural differences between peaceful China and the aggressive West and disputed the applicability and compatibility of the Western model. In many ways, this was an old debate from the late Qing period, when Confucian bureaucrats and political reformers had discussed whether the difference between China and the West lay in the degree or in the kind of development. As different as both groups might appear, they were similarly dissatisfied with the cultural and political status quo and were responding to a "crisis of modernization" that had failed both China and Europe. Above all, both groups were concerned with "saving the nation"—a task that not even the overthrow of Qing rule could help accomplish—amid the surge of nationalist feelings among the Chinese intellectuals and populace.[32]

To be sure, Chen Xujing was not a May Fourth intellectual. He never claimed to have inherited any "May Fourth spirit" (*Wusi jingshen* 五四精神) and was active only from the 1930s on. Nevertheless, the role of culture in modernity and nationhood remained contentious into the 1930s, and Chen Xujing might be seen as offering a belated response to the May Fourth debates, which he believed were still relevant even during the "moment of gravest danger" (*zui weixian de shike* 最危險的時刻) when China was fighting Japan for its survival as a nation. He tried to reignite the debates with his controversial, somewhat politically incorrect concept of "Wholesale Westernization," which was proposed and elaborated in a series of writings published in the 1930s and early 1940s.

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[32] Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era*, pp. 28-31. See also Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Eugene W. Chiu 丘為君, "Zhanzheng yu qimeng: 'Ou zhan' dui Zhongguo de qishi 戰爭與啟蒙：「歐戰」對中國的啟示," *Guoli zhengzhi daxue lishi xuebao* 國立政治大學歷史學報, 23 (2005), pp. 91-146.

As one of the first American-trained sociologists in China, Chen Xujing had earned his doctoral degree in sociology from the University of Illinois (1927) with a dissertation on sovereignty. In 1931, when he was teaching at Lingnan University, Chen Xujing published his earliest exposition of Wholesale Westernization in *Journal of Sociology* (*Shehui xuekan* 社會學刊), one of the first sociological journals founded in China. In the article "A View of Eastern and Western Cultures" (*Dong Xi wenhua guan* 東西文化觀), he expressed an argument that became standard in his subsequent writings—that the East must accept Western culture fully to survive. But his views, radical as they sounded, were not entirely anti-traditionalist. They targeted Chinese culture strategically, and they appeared iconoclastic only when compared with those of reformers of the late Qing and early Republican period. Chen Xujing thus belonged to a "transitional generation, with obligations to both the past and the future, and [he was] no less influenced by traditional concerns."[33]

In 1934, Chen Xujing published *The Future of Chinese Culture* (*Zhongguo wenhua zhi chulu* 中國文化之出路), his first book on Whole Westernization. A critique of Chinese culture through the lens of his experiences and observations of the West, the book conveyed his hopes for China. As he suggested succinctly in another article, he wished that China could Westernize the countryside, harmonize it with Westernized cities, and create a Westernized civilization. More specifically, he meant the Anglo-Americanization of China. He argued that China was progressing in the right direction due to its adoption, albeit partial, of Western ideas and practices. Once the partial acceptance of Western culture became total, China would be saved. Frustrated with extraterritoriality and the slow progress of China's modernization, he identified the West as the source of a desirable culture, even though the West, as a collection of states, had humiliated China in war and diplomacy.[34]

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[33] Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era*, p. 39.

[34] This part on Total Westernization draws heavily from James H. Cole, "'Total Westernization' in Kuomintang China," pp. 77-143, which has excellent translations of Chen Xujing's writings on Total Westernization. More recent works on Total Westernization include Liu Jilin 劉集林, *Chen Xujing wenhua sixiang yanjiu* 陳序經文化思想研究 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2003); Hon Tze-ki 韓子奇, "Chen Xujing de quanpan Xihua lun 陳序經的全盤西化論," in Chen Mingqiu 陳明銶 and Rao Meijiao 饒美蛟 (eds.), *Lingnan jindai shi lun: Guangdong yu Yue Gang guanxi, 1900-1938* 嶺南近代史

In a book-length article titled "A View of Southern and Northern Cultures" (*Nanbei wenhua guan* 南北文化觀), Chen Xujing argued that Western culture was world culture, one to which all progressive nations were expected to aspire. Chinese culture, synonymous with "old" or "traditional" culture, was "northern" because it originated in northern China. Western culture in China's context was "southern" because it entered China in the south. China's southern culture was "new" culture. Influenced by French anthropologist Albert Terrien de Lacouperie's (1844-1894) migration theory, Chen Xujing contended that Chinese culture was introduced by the Han people from an unspecified Western location. No issue of authenticity existed because the Han people had migrated from elsewhere. If northern culture was not original, then accepting Western culture via the south, where its impact was strongest, was acceptable. By affirming southern China's role as the vanguard of cultural revival, Chen Xujing envisioned the reunification of northern and southern China sharing a Western culture mediated by the south after the annihilation of the old culture.[35]

By reviving the theory of "Sino-Babylonianism" (*Xilai shuo* 西來說) that had been used to mobilize the Han people against Manchu rule,[36] Chen Xujing tried to debunk the myth of a culturally or racially pure Chinese race descending from a single progenitor, which racial nationalists were promoting among both Han and non-Han peoples during the 1930s and early 1940s.[37]

The primary targets of Chen Xujing's writings were "compromisers" (*zhezhong pai* 折衷派) who followed Qing-dynasty official Zhang Zhidong's 張之洞 (1837-1909) principle of "Chinese learning as essence, Western learning for practical use" (*Zhong ti Xi yong* 中體西用). The compromisers were appealing to nationalistic Chinese because their arguments did not imply an inferiority to foreigners. Another reason for Chen Xujing's attack on the compromisers was warlord Chen Jitang's 陳濟棠 (1890-1954) rule of the southernmost province of Guangdong. Chen Jitang promoted the study of Confucian classics while building modern infrastructure to industrialize the provincial economy. His

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論：廣東與粵港關係 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2010), pp. 326-340.

[35] James H. Cole, "'Total Westernization' in Kuomintang China," pp. 91-96.

[36] Hon Tze-ki, "Marking the Boundaries: The Rise of Historical Geography in Republican China," p. 312.

[37] James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 139.

success in retaining the old and developing the new strengthened the compromisers' claim that modernization was compatible with traditional culture.[38] This contradicted Chen Xujing, who argued that Guangdong was the first location to be exposed to Western culture and hence the birthplace of a new culture. He wanted Guangdong to serve as the vanguard of the new, not as the bastion of the old.[39] Influenced by the theory of evolution, he sought to alert his readers to the universal forces of competition and to the need for a complete overhaul or Westernization of China.[40]

Chen Xujing's interpretations of Chinese culture would form the basis for his book on mirroring between China and Siam. To be sure, what we retrospectively know as "frontier studies" flourished during the 1930s and 1940s for a reason—the perceived encroachment on China's borderlands by foreign powers, most notably Japan—and Chen Xujing's book was one of many writings published on the subject. One of the pioneers of modern Chinese historiography, Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896-1950), started to study the geography and history of northeastern China after the Mukden Incident, which served as a pretext for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. He introduced the trend of Chinese intellectuals seeking historical explanations for political outcomes and inspired not only the historical geographers, who had been doing such work, but also a new generation of anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and political scientists to defend China's sovereignty over its lands and resources in writing. Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 (1902-1981; on the ethnic groups in Tang-dynasty Yunnan Province), Fang Guoyu 方國瑜 (1903-1983; on whether the ancient Nanzhao 南詔 Kingdom was originally Thai), and Cen Jiawu 岑家梧 (1912-1966; on the prehistory of China) had discussed the Chinese frontier vis-à-vis notions of historical continuity and national sovereignty,[41] but they did not offer a discursive cultural context in which to examine nominally "national" ethnicities.

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[38] Hon Tze-ki, "Chen Xujing de quanpan Xihua lun," pp. 331-335.

[39] Liu Jilin, *Chen Xujing wenhua sixiang yanjiu*, pp. 52-57.

[40] Western sociology, in which Chen Xujing majored in college, was the intellectual basis of a total reconstruction of the sociopolitical order in China. See Chen Hon Fai, *Chinese Sociology: State-Building and the Institutionalization of Globally Circulated Knowledge* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 10.

[41] Yu Dingbang 余定邦, "Chen Xujing yu Taizu yanjiu 陳序經與泰族研究," *Dongnanya zongheng* 東南亞縱橫, 4.1 (2005), p. 1.

Born in China, raised in Singapore, and educated in the United States, Chen Xujing was sensitive to the difficulties faced by ethnic minorities and sojourning Chinese like him and his father in navigating their political circumstances and assimilating into their host societies. He thus paid close attention to the discourses that marginalized these communities.[42] Because he visited Thailand frequently, he took an interest in the country, identified the perils of ignoring its threat to China, and proposed an understanding of it derived from his concept of Wholesale Westernization and the East-West dichotomy.

At first glance, Chen Xujing's *Siam and China* appears unsophisticated or even unworthy of scholarly analysis. A collection of short essays previously published in various Chinese newspapers during the late 1930s, the book is written in a highly accessible style devoid of academic jargon and conceptual framework. Published in Yunnan where Chen Xujing was based at the wartime National Southwest Associated University (Guoli xinan lianhe daxue 國立西南聯合大學, or Lianda 聯大 for short), it appeared at the height of military confrontation between China and Japan, when the embattled regime under Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Chongqing, a mountainous city in the landlocked Sichuan Province. Although *Siam and China* could be easily written off as a typical work of historical geography, it also functioned as a political commentary on China and Siam, given the circumstances under which it was printed. The continued relevance of the book to China's wartime conditions was a testament to the foresight of Chen Xujing, whose assessments and predictions about Siam had become reality by the early 1940s.

Siam and China comprises three parts and a total of fifteen chapters. The first part sketches Siam's history and current situation. The second part clarifies Siam's historical relationship with China, China's cultural influence on Siam, and the importance of overseas Chinese to Siam. The third part describes Siam's symbiotic relationship with British and French imperialisms and the outcomes of Westernization in Siam. Together, they reveal Chen Xujing's view of Siam and how the direction of mirroring had reversed: unlike in the past when Siam looked to China for guidance, China should now learn from Siam.

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[42] Chen Qijin 陳其津, *Wo de fuqin Chen Xujing* 我的父親陳序經 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 67-68.

For Chen Xujing, if Guangdong was the model province for China's progress, then Siam would be the model nation for China's reference.[43] According to him, Siam had encountered problems similar to those experienced by China. By explaining Siam's problems from China's perspective (*yi Zhongguo de lichang qu jieshi* 以中國的立場去解釋), he suggested, China might be able to find its own solutions. At closer reading, he was referring to the ways in which Siam "progressed," "modernized," or "Westernized"—these terms were synonymous in his writings—and the problems that accompanied its progress.[44] Before China's defeat in the Opium War (1839-1842), he wrote, Siam saw China as the apex of world civilization. However, increasingly aware of China's failings and the inadequacies of their own culture, Siamese kings began to Westernize their nation. They abolished slavery, undertook legal reforms, built railroads, established a postal service, and formed a modern army. More importantly, the Siamese kings sent their children to Europe where they received a Western education and became the modernizers of Siam.

Unlike China, Chen Xujing argued, Siam could progress easily because it had no original culture of its own that resisted Western culture—Siamese culture was an amalgam of Chinese and Indian cultures. Buddhism was India's gift to Siam, where it became a national religion and an instrument of rule. Vassalage tied Siam to China, and the Siamese practiced Chinese customs for centuries—Siamese kings were part Chinese in ancestry.

Chen Xujing concluded that "progressive Siam" (*jinbu de Xianluo* 進步的暹羅) became one of only three sovereign nations in Asia (the other two being China and Japan) because it could "adapt to global trends" (*yinghe shijie chaoliu de quxiang* 迎合世界潮流的趨向) and "proactively adopt Western culture" (*zidong di qu caina Xiyang de wenhua* 自動地去采納西洋的文化).[45] Like southern China, which was devoid of an organic culture, Siam was an empty vessel that could be filled and strengthened with Western culture.

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[43] Siam was known as Thailand after 1939, but contemporaries continued to call Thailand "Siam" into the 1940s. This article uses "Siam" and "Thailand" interchangeably, depending on the context.

[44] Chen Xujing 陳序經, "Zixu 自序," in *Xianluo yu Zhongguo* 暹羅與中國 (Kunming: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941), p. 1.

[45] Chen Xujing, *Xianluo yu Zhongguo*, pp. 77-84.

For Chen Xujing, Siam became powerful because its kings were skilled in Western ways and well-versed in Western learning. The kingdom gradually earned the respect of Western nations and removed the extraterritorial rights of foreign nations. With legal reforms, Siam managed to convince Western governments that its courts were similar to Western ones and could guarantee its foreign residents a fair trial and a good measure of legal protection. By building railways and roads, Siamese kings were able to extend effective rule to hitherto remote territories. Siam's improved communications resulted from strong royal leadership and a lack of the popular resistance that was seen in China, where the people bitterly opposed first the construction and then the nationalization of railroads.

Advised by Dutch engineers and American agriculturalists, the Siamese government irrigated fields and increased their yield. Rice exports provided Siam with the capital to establish modern banks and offer low-interest loans to farmers, whose lives were thereby further improved. Schools were founded to train Siam's own generation of agricultural, banking, and industrial experts and break the monasteries' monopoly on education, which emphasized religious rather than technical learning. Hygiene, sanitation, and health services improved with the help of Western medical specialists. Even Buddhism's hold over the Siamese weakened as young people converted to Christianity or enrolled in missionary schools to acquire Western knowledge, work in modern professions, and advance in their careers. In Chen Xujing's view, Siam had developed into an enviable nation, one that was independent and highly modernized because of Westernization.[46]

According to Chen Xujing, the progress made by Siam suggested that the Chinese people, who had viewed it as a "barbaric and barren" (*manhuang* 蠻荒) land, must recognize that Siam had transformed from a Chinese tributary state into a "free and sovereign nation" (*ziyou yu duli de guojia* 自由與獨立的國家). That Siam could Westernize and retain its independence in the face of foreign imperialism was worth China's contemplation.[47] In retrospect, his observations were not surprising. Subsequent generations of historians have established that Siamese kings excelled in representing themselves as modern, Western-style monarchs in the form of consumption habits, royal

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[46] Ibid., pp. 85-91.
[47] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

spaces, and public spectacles.[48] But they have also rejected the idea that Siamese kings were, as Thai nationalistic historiography suggests, solely responsible for maintaining Siam's independence. The "great modernizers," as the Siamese kings were called in such historiography, were aggressors rather than victims when negotiating their borders with Britain and France and consolidating a previously loose confederation of polities into a bureaucratic nation. Chen Xujing conceded that Siam's independence was incomplete and at best nominal—it came at the price of a limited or informal form of extraterritoriality, and Western advisers curtailed the monarchy's executive powers. Depending on the perspective, then, Siam was either colonized or Westernized.[49]

For Chen Xujing, Siam's fate was inevitable if not enviable, and Siam had made its best decisions under its difficult circumstances. His view of the Nationalist government of China was unclear as he had not compared it with the Siamese monarchy. He saved the thrust of his arguments for culturally intransigent Chinese intellectuals who insisted that a "real," authentic, or original Chinese culture existed and was at risk of disappearing should China pursue its reforms too far. Siam's example demonstrated that national progress could only be complete if ideas about culture and the self were not held as absolute. Chen Xujing showed how culture was deeply intertwined with politics and national strength; his Westernization proclivities and views on parallel tendencies in twentieth-century Chinese and Thai modernizations pointed to Siam as a model and source of inspiration for China's future development.

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[48] Thongchai Winichakul, "The Quest for 'Siwilai': A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59.3 (2000), pp. 528-549; Maurizio Peleggi, *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Sud Chonchirdsin, "The Ambivalent Attitudes of the Siamese Elite towards the West during the Reign of King Chulalongkorn, 1868-1910," *South East Asia Research*, 17.3 (2009), pp. 433-456.

[49] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994); Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (eds.), *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010); Shane Strate, *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).

4. Thai Ethnonationalism and Pan-Asianism

Contemporary Thailand historians have identified King Vajiravudh as one of the earliest ideologues of modern Thai nationalism, so it might be instructive to begin this section on Thai ethnonationalism and its implications for the Chinese in Thailand during the 1930s and early 1940s with him. Educated in Britain and well-read on foreign affairs, King Vajiravudh observed the revolutions in Persia, Portugal, Turkey, and China and wrote essays on how they were no example for Siam. His writings on China were most numerous because he feared that the substantial Chinese minority in Siam might be politicized by the revolution in China and cause unrest. The China he saw remained mired in chaos and warlordism after its revolution. For him, Westernized Chinese intellectuals failed to establish a true republic because they were overly idealistic and politically immature. They picked up Western ideas ill-suited for their purposes and willfully applied them in China with disastrous results.[50]

Chen Xujing would have disputed King Vajiravudh's claim, had he known it earlier. For him, it was the cultural conservatives and compromisers, not the Westernized intellectuals, who had failed the Chinese nation. But he would have understood King Vajiravudh's apprehension about the Chinese—the latter called the Chinese "Jews of the Orient," describing them as possessed by a moneymaking instinct and a feeling of racial superiority. For King Vajiravudh, the Chinese were similar to the Jews in that they also preserved their allegiance to their race and reaped the benefits of foreign residency without giving their loyalty in return. The Chinese, he suggested, lived and worked in Siam not to assimilate into Siamese society, but to accumulate enough wealth to return to China.[51]

In the 1930s, Siam's political leaders developed King Vajiravudh's views further. Under military strongman Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun; 1897-1964), the Thai government in the late 1930s and early 1940s demonstrated ethno-chauvinism against the

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[50] Walter F. Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1978), pp. 60-75.

[51] Ibid., pp. 186-196.

Chinese. The cultural nationalism of the Phibun regime emphasized Buddhist piety, historical glory, and language purity. Whereas King Vajiravudh made anti-Chinese remarks, Phibun enacted anti-Chinese legislation.[52] The change in the country's name, in 1939, from Siam to Thailand stemmed from Phibun's desire to signify conclusively that the nation belonged to the Thai majority as opposed to the Chinese.[53]

Although the Siamese aristocracy had never been humiliated by a colonial status hierarchy, had never viewed the Chinese as collaborators with foreign rulers, and had never denied the fact that commerce was a Chinese niche, the Chinese and the Thai had become so indistinguishable that it worried the Phibun regime. Phibun tried to assimilate the Chinese into Siamese society more completely through three principal measures: intermarriage, education, and legislation. Phibun's measures were intended to reduce Chinese influence on Siam's economy and politics and induce the Chinese to publicly identify with being Thai. In Phibun's Thailand, "Thai-ness" involved being a Buddhist who was loyal to the king and spoke Thai rather than Chinese or any other language.[54]

But Thai nationalism was not merely an outgrowth of Thai-Chinese distinction; it was also subject to political exigencies. Britain and France were longstanding allies of the Thai monarchy, remaining so after the 1932 coup; King Prajadhipok (r. 1925-1935) lived in exile in London for the rest of his reign. To deliver the Thai economy fully from the Great Depression and gain international support for the new constitutional government, Phibun and other political leaders increasingly looked east to Japan, which appeared eager to displace the Anglo-French presence in Indochina by investing in the region. Moreover, they wanted to capitalize on the outbreak of war in Europe and recover the so-called lost territories of Cambodia, Laos, and northern Malaya, which had been ceded to Britain and France in previous decades.[55]

In exchange for Japan's support of his rule and vision, Phibun launched a crackdown on Chinese clan associations and printing presses for anti-Japanese material and arrested

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[52] Ibid., pp. 270-272.

[53] David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 253.

[54] G. William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957); Kasian Tejapira, "Pigtail: A Pre-History of Chineseness in Siam," *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 7.1 (1992), pp. 95-122; Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

[55] Shane Strate, *The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation*.

Chinese political activists. Chinese businesses faced heavy restrictions on the production, distribution, and sale of their goods and were soon outcompeted by state companies. Then, urged by Japan, which wanted to manipulate the national aspirations of non-Chinese minorities in China in order to support its own war against China, Phibun also claimed that parts of southern China constituted the original homeland of the Thai people and thus belonged to Thailand. [56] Thailand's irredentism caught the attention of Chinese intellectuals and publishers, which translated the writings of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1862-1943), a self-taught historian who lent legitimacy to Phibun's discourse of Greater Thailand with his argument that modern Thais emerged from historical waves of migration from southern China.

Authorities in the provinces of Guizhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan were alert to the Thai military threat across the border and invited Chinese intellectuals to counter Prince Damrong's argument.[57] Chen Xujing had read the translated writings and understood China's geopolitical context. He argued that the fact that the Thais were Westernized did not mean that they were "civilized," and the Thai authorities' disregard for academic objectivity and intellectual rigor showed it. In his Lianda environment, where professors had made some effort to present their findings as objectively as possible despite the Nationalist party whip, his displeasure with the Thai nationalists was perhaps understandable.

In response to Thai ethnonationalism and state discrimination against the Chinese in Thailand, Chen Xujing constructed a history of China's positive influence on the country in *Siam and China*. He wrote that gifts bestowed by Chinese emperors to Siamese kings, particularly ceramics, were widely circulated in Siam and contributed to the rise of art and manufacturing in the Thai kingdoms. For centuries, Chinese artisans, carpenters, and craftsmen had followed Siamese envoys paying tribute to the Chinese court back to Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and finally Siam where they transferred knowledge and skills to Thai people. Citing both Chinese and Thai sources, Chen Xujing argued that the Thais

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[56] James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese*, pp. 137-139.

[57] Wang Lianhao 王連浩 and Chen Yong 陳勇, "Kangzhan shiqi guomin zhengfu ji zhishijie dui da Tai zhuyi zhi huiying 抗戰時期國民政府及知識界對大泰主義之回應," *Nanjing daxue xuebao* 南京大學學報, 3 (2012), pp. 86-95.

had adopted Chinese clothing, customs, and measuring standards for a long time.[58] He also identified similarities in architecture, food, and language and sought to explain the shortsightedness of Thai politicians in oppressing the Chinese. For him, Thailand owed both its culture and economy to the Chinese. He professed to understand the anxiety of Thai leaders: unlike the Burmese and Cambodians who shared more cultural traits with the Thais, and unlike the Laotians who did not enjoy a sophisticated culture of their own, the Chinese were not easily subjugated culturally and economically. The Chinese dominated the major industries of rice and wood. They plied their trades from big cities such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai to the most remote villages. By acting against Chinese business interests, the Thai state was destroying its own economic infrastructure.[59]

Overseas Chinese, including those in Thailand, were more patriotic toward China than the Chinese who remained in China, Chen Xujing suggested. The Phibun regime's anti-Chinese measures had put the local administrators in a difficult position because many of them were Chinese and hence loath to implement the policies. The Chinese in Thailand might be able to take state discrimination in their stride, Chen Xujing wrote, but their strong patriotic feelings might not allow them to accept Thai designs on southern China. Their support of China's war effort was an excellent display of such patriotism. The increasingly common use of Mandarin among the Chinese, he added, would bridge geographical and language divides and unite them in the causes of resisting Thai antagonism and defending China's interests. He surmised that the Thais' Sinophobia would only strengthen Chinese ethnic consciousness and hurt their interests in the long run, given that the Chinese were their economic backbone.[60]

According to Chen Xujing, Phibun's nationalistic vision of making the Chinese more Thai was doomed to fail because Thailand was already highly Westernized; making the Chinese more Thai meant making the Chinese more Westernized. If Thai nationalism was an outcome of Westernization, then making the Chinese more Thai would fuel the existing Chinese nationalism within Thailand. Thai Chinese were exposed to both the Westernization of Thailand and the Westernization of China, so Chinese nationalism

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[58] Chen Xujing, *Xianluo yu Zhongguo*, pp. 41-47.

[59] Ibid., pp. 54-61.

[60] Ibid., pp. 62-67.

would engulf Thai nationalism.[61] Chen Xujing apparently believed that Westernization could be quantified and transferred from one nation to another. While he conceded that Thailand had become more advanced and complex than China in terms of its Westernized culture, he believed that there was room for improvement because it could not identify or contain the excesses of its own nationalism.

But the Phibun regime was not the only promoter of Thai nationalism. According to Chen Xujing, Japanese agents were encouraging Thai nationalism to further Japan's interests in Southeast Asia. After all, Chen Xujing wrote, Thailand and Japan shared many similarities. Compared to China, Thailand and Japan were small nations with small populations. They had been exposed first to Chinese culture and then to Western culture. Having no culture of their own, they absorbed Western culture more completely and modernized more quickly than China. And both Thailand and Japan had territorial designs on China. Chen Xujing lamented that his compatriots, who had long considered Thailand to be a backward nation, had focused only on the Japanese threat from the east and neglected to pay sufficient attention to the Thai threat from the south. Thai nationalism could raise ethnic tensions and destabilize southern China, he warned, adding a reason to why Chinese intellectuals should not belittle Thailand.

Chen Xujing examined past Thailand-Japan relations and suggested that the flow of goods had reversed. Several centuries before, more cargo was shipped from Siam to Japan. Since the 1920s, Japanese products were being consumed in huge quantities in Thailand, and Thai exports to Japan had become negligible. For Japan, then, Thailand was more of a market than a friend. After its invasion of China, Japan hoped to isolate China and break Chinese defenses in the south; securing Thailand's friendship was key to achieving its objectives. In this, Japan was successful—in the League of Nations, Thailand abstained from a vote of censure against Japan for invading Manchuria. Japan set up the puppet state of Manchukuo and wanted the international community to recognize it as a sovereign nation.[62] In the name of boosting Thailand's economy, Japan proposed building a canal across the Isthmus of Kra in southern Thailand, which would

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[61] Ibid., p. 75.

[62] Chen Xujing did not mention Thailand's recognition of Manchukuo in August 1941, so it was most likely that *Siam and China* was published prior to the event.

eclipse the British port of Singapore and render the Singapore Naval Base obsolete. By securing Thailand as a friendly power, Chen Xujing wrote, Japan was preparing to invade British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. But by including Thailand in its "East Asian new order" (*Dongya xin zhixu* 東亞新秩序), he asked, was Japan not insulting Thailand, which had maintained its independence and required no assistance or tutelage from Japan? He thus warned that Japan had far greater ambitions than mere economic control of Thailand or Southeast Asia.[63]

By the "East Asian new order," Chen Xujing was referring to Japan's Pan-Asianism, which could be broadly defined as a "[Japanese-led] umbrella for all conceptions, imaginations, and processes that emphasized commonalities or common interests among different Asian regions and nations."[64] After the First World War, Western empires encountered a legitimacy crisis. Debates in the colonies among African and Asian intellectuals revealed an anti-imperialist attitude that envisioned alternatives to the "European conceit that discovery and invention were necessarily progressive and beneficial to humanity."[65] In Asia, Asianist discourses flourished as Asian intellectuals searched for their own alternatives to Western modernity and promoted concepts of a peaceful and spiritual Eastern civilization.[66] But Chinese intellectuals emphasized differences between China and India; in due time, the "East" became synonymous with China. Japanese intellectuals and especially statesmen considered their nation advanced, civilized, and modern like the West and rejected being part of a "backward" Asia. An all-Asian alliance appeared difficult, but the Japanese expansion in China and Southeast Asia emerged as "the first manifest effort from within Asia to restructure Asia in regional terms."[67]

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[63] Chen Xujing, *Xianluo yu Zhongguo*, pp. 102-103.

[64] Marc Frey and Nicola Spakowski, "Introduction," in Marc Frey and Nicola Spakowski (eds.), *Asianisms: Regionalist Interactions and Asian Integration* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016), p. 1.

[65] Michael Adas, "Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology," *Journal of World History*, 15.1 (2004), p. 41. See also Maria Moritz, "'The Empire of Righteousness': Anagarika Dharmapala and His Vision of Buddhist Asianism," in Marc Frey and Nicola Spakowski (eds.), *Asianisms: Regionalist Interactions and Asian Integration*, p. 20.

[66] Dominic Sachsenmaier, "Searching for Alternatives to Western Modernity: Cross-Cultural Approaches in the Aftermath of the Great War," *Journal of Modern European History*, 4.2 (2006), pp. 241-259.

[67] Marc Frey and Nicola Spakowski, "Introduction," p. 6.

In 1940, just a year before *Siam and China* was published, the Japanese government proclaimed the ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was Japan's vision of solidarity with Asia and pledge to aid all Asian nations struggling for self-determination to gain independence from their Western colonial masters. Notwithstanding the semi-colonial status of Thailand, Chen Xujing was highly critical of Thailand's economic and political reorientation to Japan after its 1932 coup. While the outbreak of war in Europe left few alternatives to a leaning toward Japan, he remained skeptical about Japan's desire and ability to liberate Thailand—as well as China—from Western imperialism.

That Japan was trying to forge a military alliance with Thailand was alarming, Chen Xujing thus warned. Although Thai leaders, fearing reprisals from the international community, had rejected some of Japan's advances, German military successes in Europe might embolden both Japan and Thailand and encourage joint action against China and Western-colonized Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, Japan had welcomed Thai students into its colleges and Thai officer cadets into its military schools. With Japan's support, Thailand had developed the largest and best equipped military force in Southeast Asia. Thailand also received military advisers and technical specialists from Japan to build up its industrial capacity—a role that Japan had taken over from Britain and France. Japanese agents understood the Thai leaders' desire to recover their supposedly lost territories and were trying to convince them that their territorial claims were legitimate and feasible. For its part, the Phibun regime knew that Thailand was no match for Britain and France and had to rely on Japan in order to realize its vision of a Greater Thailand. For Chen Xujing, such thinking was dangerous. If Japan could help Thailand defeat the British and the French and recover its territories, it could also easily dislodge the Thais from Indochina and northern Malaya and move on to conquer Thailand. He suggested that the British and French colonies were in fact Thailand's best buffer against Japan.[68]

Chen Xujing acknowledged that Thailand had a bittersweet relationship with Britain and France. On the one hand, the balance of power between Britain and France had guaranteed Thailand's independence and forestalled the outright partition of Thailand.[69]

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[68] Chen Xujing, *Xianluo yu Zhongguo*, pp. 104-105.

[69] For a similar argument, see Nigel J. Brailey, *Imperial Amnesia: Britain, France and "The Question of*

Britain had eliminated the Burmese threat to Siam and paved the way for Siam to expand into Indochina. Together, Britain and France had helped Westernize Siam at the turn of the twentieth century. On the other hand, Siam's sovereignty was compromised as it had had to cede land to Britain and France and grant extraterritorial rights to foreign nationals until the 1920s, when the Western powers began to renounce extraterritoriality in Siam.

Since the outbreak of war in Europe, Chen Xujing wrote, Thai leaders had considered ways to remove the British and French presence on Thailand's borders and recover Indochina and northern Malaya. They also resented the fact that King Prajadhipok was residing in Britain. Fearing that Britain might intervene in Thai politics and restore the absolute monarchy, they sought Japan as their patron. Chen Xujing argued that Thai politicians needed to realize that centuries before, the Thai people had had no homeland. They had founded their kingdoms by taking Burmese, Khmer, and Laotian lands. Had Britain and France not removed the Burmese and Khmer threats for good, Siam might not have consolidated its territorial gains so successfully. Chen Xujing believed that the Thai people should be content with what they had already achieved—a sovereign nation that was well respected by the West. Had Britain and France wanted to partition Thailand, Thailand would have ceased to exist as a nation. Confident that Britain and France would emerge victorious against Germany, he advised Thailand not to ally with Japan against China, fighting wars that it could not win.[70]

For Chen Xujing, the solution to breaking Japan's stranglehold on the Thai economy was simple: lift the restrictions on Chinese businesses and allow the Chinese to conduct trade under normal conditions. Given sufficient legal protection and political power, the Chinese could generate wealth for Thailand and help resist Japanese economic imperialism.[71] Chen Xujing argued that as the only independent nation in Southeast Asia, Thailand was an excellent example for people desiring to free themselves from colonial rule. With a high degree of modernization and economic support from the Chinese, Thailand could assist the Western colonies in achieving self-determination. If the Thais were proud of their own independence, then they would feel even prouder by helping to

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Siam" (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV, 2009).

[70] Chen Xujing, *Xianluo yu Zhongguo*, pp. 92-99.

[71] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

create more independent nations like them in Southeast Asia. According to Chen Xujing, the Americans, British, French, and Dutch might grant a degree of self-rule to their colonies in the future, so Thailand should foresee the scenario and support the existing independence movements in Southeast Asia. The Western powers would not submit their colonies to Thai rule, Chen Xujing suggested, and Southeast Asia's nationalist leaders would not accept a Thai takeover. Thai leaders should realize that Britain and France, which had allied with the Netherlands and the United States, would eventually rout Japan. Conversely, if Japan could defeat the West, it could also vanquish Thailand. By supporting other regional nationalisms and mobilizing Chinese manpower and economic resources that had been spread across Southeast Asia, Chen Xujing wrote, Thailand could become even more secure and powerful—a quiet yet positive force for anti-imperialism and self-determination that Japan was trying to appropriate for its own self-serving purposes.[72]

Chen Xujing's analysis of Thailand's geopolitical environment revealed key aspects of his concept of Wholesale Westernization. In his case study of Thailand, Wholesale Westernization resulted in a strong and powerful nation, and the Thais took pride in having built it and maintained its sovereignty despite being sandwiched between British and French spheres of influence. At the same time, however, Westernization produced not only nations (in the image of Western ones) but also contradictions, as manifested by the First and Second World Wars, whereby sovereign nations, for either defense or further development, abandoned their principles of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence by waging destructive and violent wars on one another. Japan, the most Westernized of all Asian nations, was treading a dangerous path of imperial expansion in the name of Pan-Asianism, and Thailand, another highly Westernized nation, was caught up in the allure of Japan's slogan of "Asia for Asians," which really was "Asia for Japan," according to Chen Xujing. While Chen Xujing had explored the links between Westernization and Thai nationalism and revanchism, he left the question of sovereignty—his doctoral dissertation topic—unanswered. How free or independent was Thailand if it was perpetually courting patrons and could not determine its own destiny?

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[72] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

Subsequent developments revealed that Thailand's sovereignty remained tenuous after it pledged support for Japan's Pan-Asianist vision. After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and invasion of British Malaya in December 1941, Phibun publicly urged Chiang Kai-shek to end his war of resistance and submit to Japan. In June 1942, the Thai army occupied the Shan States along the Burma-Thailand border, where it clashed with Chinese troops sent to reinforce the British. In July 1942, Phibun recognized Wang Jingwei 汪精衛's (1883-1944) puppet regime in Nanjing.[73] With that, all three sovereign nations of Asia—China, Japan, and Thailand—were, at least nominally, partners in Pan-Asianism. Key opponents of Japan's Pan-Asianist allies, such as Chiang Kai-shek's "Free China" regime and anti-Phibun "Free Thai" forces that operated clandestinely in Thailand, were dismissed as cronies of the oppressive West and enemies of Asians desiring self-determination.[74]

But Japan increasingly treated Thailand as a conquered nation rather than an equal partner. Japanese troops stationed in Thailand were not subject to Thai laws—an instance of extraterritoriality—and were contemptuous of Thai officials and people. More importantly, Japan did not transfer enemy assets in Thailand and Indochina and northern Malaya to the Phibun regime, despite the promises made in the treaty of alliance. Thai-Japanese relations thus cooled rapidly, especially after Japan began to suffer defeats in the Pacific. In 1943, Phibun eased his anti-Chinese measures and proposed giving all Chinese in the country Thai citizenship. In 1944, shortly before he was ousted from office by covert Free Thai sympathizers, Phibun ordered Thai troops in the Shan States to negotiate with the Nationalist army in Yunnan for joint military operations against the Japanese.

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[73] Wang Wenlong 王文隆, "Kangzhan qijian Zhong Tai junshi shang de chongtu yu mimi wanglai 抗戰期間中泰軍事上的衝突與秘密往來," *Guoshiguan guankan* 國史館館刊, 59 (2019), pp. 1-26; Donald E. Nuechterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 67-92; Yu Dingbang 余定邦, "1937-1946 nian de Zhong Tai guanxi 1937-1946 年的中泰關係," *Shijie lishi* 世界歷史, 70.1 (2000), pp. 68-74; E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand's Secret War: OSS, SOE and the Free Thai Underground During World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 47-81.

[74] For wartime Japan's Pan-Asianism and its origins, see Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Torsten Weber, *Embracing "Asia" in China and Japan: Asianism Discourse and the Contest for Hegemony, 1912-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

The Thais' underground activities against the Japanese ultimately paid off. Benefiting from American postwar policy that favored the rise of sovereign nations rather than the restitution of colonial empires in Southeast Asia, the Thais argued that the Allies had been in no position to help them resist Japanese control back in 1941. Thai overtures to improve relations with China also worked. Chiang Kai-shek regarded Thailand as a reluctant ally of Japan and overlooked Phibun's complicity. In return, Thailand established formal relations with China and repealed repressive laws against the Chinese.[75]

As later scholarship would suggest, the effect of war on Thailand and the Phibun regime's anti-Chinese policies ironically elevated the status of the Chinese in Thailand in the long run. Chinese firms, forced by the policies to diversify their businesses, successfully forged alliances with the new Thai political elite after the closure of Western banks and trading companies during the war—the Japanese failed to fill the resulting void. After the war, the Chinese provided Thai military and police officers with sinecures for political protection; this symbiosis between Chinese businessmen and Thai politicians continues in the present.[76] Chen Xujing's wish for Thai-Chinese cooperation has come true, but whether Thailand has become a better nation—or a free nation, given its heavy reliance on the United States for investments and military protection—remains an open question. In retrospect, his assessments were largely accurate. Although the processes unfolded differently, that he arrived at similar conclusions as Thailand historians who have not consulted his writings is remarkable. In the end, it was Japan, rather than Thailand, that had unleashed the nationalisms that dismantled the colonial empires of Southeast Asia. War, rather than diplomacy, had done the trick.

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[75] Donald E. Nuechterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia*, pp. 67-92; E. Bruce Reynolds, "'International Orphans': The Chinese in Thailand during World War II," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 28.2 (1997), pp. 365-388; Eiji Murashima, "The Thai-Japanese Alliance and the Chinese of Thailand," in Paul H. Kratoska (ed.), *Southeast Asian Minorities in the Wartime Japanese Empire* (Abingdon: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 192-222.

[76] E. Bruce Reynolds, "'International Orphans': The Chinese in Thailand during World War II," pp. 387-388. See also Kevin Hewison, *Bankers and Bureaucrats: Capital and the Role of the State in Thailand* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1989).

5. Conclusion

With *Siam and China*, Chen Xujing hoped to have made a timely and valuable contribution to Chinese intellectuals' understanding of Thai affairs. Although Chen Xujing and most Chinese intellectuals viewed themselves and Thailand through the lens of Westernization, they drew vastly different conclusions about the country. Chinese intellectuals who held onto "dynastic histories" believed that Thailand had remained backward into the 1930s—how could Thailand, a longtime vassal state of the Ming and Qing courts, have overtaken China in its progression to modernity? In contrast, Chen Xujing's concept of Wholesale Westernization allowed him to view Thailand as a fully Westernized and therefore modern nation worthy of admiration or at least of basic respect. His unique insights into Thailand inspired other studies of the country during and after the war, most of which attempted to explain how it became one of a few sovereign nations in Asia and to challenge the ideology of Greater Thailand.[77] Chen Xujing thus established the theme and vocabulary for discussing Thailand as a cultural and political entity for a non-specialist readership.

After the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949, when it became obvious to Chinese intellectuals and statesmen that frontier studies were integral to national defense and territorial sovereignty, Chen Xujing focused on studying the Xiongnu 匈奴, a nomadic people who had been active in modern-day Mongolia, Siberia, and Xinjiang from the third to the first century B.C.. In his posthumously published *A Draft History of the Xiongnu* (*Xiongnu shigao* 匈奴史稿), Chen Xujing applied a similar format in examining the Xiongnu. He first investigated the origins of the Xiongnu and then Han China's impact on its culture and politics. He then described the historical relationship between China and the Xiongnu. Finally, he suggested how the Chinese-influenced Xiongnu migrated westward to Europe and built the Hunnic Empire, which hastened the

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[77] Cai Wenxing 蔡文星, *Taiguo* 泰國 (Chongqing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943); Cai Wenxing, *Taiguo jindai shilue* 泰國近代史略 (Chongqing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1944); Xu Yunqiao 許雲樵, "Nanzhao fei Taizu guguo kao 南詔非泰族故國考," *Nanyang xuebao* 南洋學報, 4.2 (1947), pp. 1-8.

demise of the Roman Empire.[78] His study of the Xiongnu matched Lacouperie's migration theory, which suggested that Chinese culture was introduced from an unspecified Western location, most probably Europe. Westernization was Sinicization in origin and had come full circle when it arrived back in China.

Both *Siam and China* and *A Draft History of the Xiongnu* shared an emphasis on the dialectical relationship between culture and history. Equipped with the right cultural attributes, a people could progress into a modern, Westernized nation and claim a rightful place in history, which would develop the superior culture further. This article has suggested that *Siam and China* was an extension of Chen Xujing's concept of Wholesale Westernization. A political commentary that appeared when wartime nationalism crept into Chinese academia, *Siam and China* urged the eponymous countries to Westernize, which would ultimately lead to self-determination. It also pointed out that Thailand should reject Japan's version of Pan-Asianism, which professed to liberate all Asian nations from Western imperialism but would aggrandize only Japan. The most significant message of the book, then, was that a truly organic form of self-determination should derive from a "direct" source of Westernization (i.e., Europe) rather than from the mediator or pretender that was Japan.

(Proofreader: Li Qi-hong)

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[78] Chen Xujing, *Xiongnu shigao* 匈奴史稿 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989).

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「不要藐視我們的南鄰」：陳序經對泰國的看法

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摘　　要

　　二十世紀的中國知識分子面對一個兩難的處境：他們想要推行西學，但又覺得此舉會讓西方勢力滲透中國，使中國喪失主權。陳序經 (1903-1967) 反駁此見，提出全盤西化論，主張西方以外的國家必先摒棄一切傳統知識及習俗，徹底西化，方能捍衛主權。本文重點分析陳序經的《暹羅與中國》，闡明陳氏對泰國的看法濫觴於其全盤西化論。根據此論，泰國是其歷代國王及華裔商民以西方為模本建立的先進國家，故此陳氏認為，中國知識分子應重視泰國，不可低估其實力。在抗日時期民族主義和民族自決的氛圍下，《暹羅與中國》實為時論之作，呼籲國人借鏡泰國西化的同時，亦審視其親日政策及對泰籍華人的壓迫，並指出高度西化的泰國仍可藉泰籍華人之力，進一步現代化。

關鍵詞：中國文化，民族主義，大亞細亞主義，泰國，西化