

## Chapter Twelve

# The Thai-Japanese Alliance and the Chinese of Thailand

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The position of the Chinese in Thailand during the time of the Thai-Japanese alliance cannot be explained simply in terms of a two-way relationship between the Japanese and the Chinese as was the case in territories occupied directly by the Japanese army. In Thailand, Japan concluded an alliance with an independent state, and the Thai government stood between the Japanese and the local Chinese. The Thais were extremely sensitive about maintaining their independence and sovereignty, and opposed Japanese moves to deal directly with the country's Chinese population. The Japanese for their part wanted to maintain good relations with Thailand and so avoided such direct dealings, leaving policy toward the Chinese in the hands of the Thai government. Some Chinese leaders, however, turned to the Japanese to seek assistance in countering that government's repressive measures. Thus there existed in Thailand during the period of the Thai-Japanese alliance a complicated and delicate three-way relationship involving the Japanese, the local Chinese and the Thai government. (For Thailand, see Map 5).

These relationships varied in accordance with the changing state of Thai-Japanese relations. Through the treaty of alliance signed on 21 December 1941 and a number of supplementary agreements between the two countries, Japan secured Thailand's cooperation for the duration of the war. Nevertheless, relations between the two powers did not progress smoothly. The time covered by the alliance can be divided broadly into two intervals: one when the Axis powers were in the ascendant and the other when they were on the defensive. Each of these intervals can be divided into two shorter periods, creating a four-part framework. The first period extended from the signing of the alliance treaty until mid-1942 and was a time when Thailand, anticipating great benefits from its alliance with Japan, willingly endured the sacrifices that accompanied Japan's demands for cooperation. During the second period, which lasted from mid-1942 until May or June 1943, Thai leaders came to feel a sense of betrayal because they had not obtained the expected returns from the Japanese alliance, and grew increasingly wary of Japan's single-minded pursuit of its own interests in

Thailand. The major cause of Thailand's alienation from Japan during this second period was not the changing war situation outside the country but the behaviour of the Japanese inside Thailand. The third period commenced around June 1943 when Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun), aware of the Axis' deteriorating war situation, began developing plans to defend the country. Especially after December 1943, when Allied air raids on Bangkok began in earnest, Phibun became openly uncooperative toward the Japanese, causing a further deterioration in Thai-Japanese relations; by February 1944 Phibun was contemplating armed resistance, and attempting to contact the Chungking government. This period ended in July 1944 when anti-Phibun forces in Parliament forced his resignation as prime minister. The fourth period ran from August 1944, when the Khuang Aphaiwong government was formed, until the end of the war in August 1945. Phibun's dictatorial politics during the second and third periods had driven many members of parliament from the Phibun camp, and these people formed an anti-Phibun group centred on Pridi Phanomyong and his Free Thai movement. The new government, fearing a Japanese *coup de force* against Thailand, tried to improve Thai-Japanese relations, but also allowed the Free Thai movement to develop contacts with the Allies. In an attempt to improve relations with the Chinese in Thailand, the new government abolished many of Phibun's oppressive policies.

### Background

W. D. Reeve, a long-time advisor to the Thai government who served both before and after the war, declared in 1951 that the Chinese in Thailand were the only fundamental issue affecting the government's control of the country. According to Reeve, 20 per cent of the country's population was of Chinese ancestry; the Chinese controlled most of the country's commerce, finance and trade; and essentially all of its labourers and artisans were Chinese. While the Chinese were industrious and full of entrepreneurial spirit, they regarded themselves as Chinese, spoke Chinese in daily life, maintained Chinese customs, and were loyal to China rather than to Thailand. Meanwhile, Reeve said, the Thai population had little political consciousness and few problems in their daily lives, and seemed unlikely to cause political instability.<sup>1</sup>

The government had begun limiting the inflow of Chinese in the late 1920s. The political conflict in China, where the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party competed for political dominance, was mirrored among the Chinese in Thailand. Both had local branches formed by overseas Chinese, although because all political party activity was banned, a prohibition that remained in force until 1946, they had to operate illegally.<sup>2</sup> During the 1920s the local branch of the KMT, led by Seow Hoot Seng and his supporters, developed vigorous anti-British and anti-Japanese

movements in response to developments in China, but in the 1930s – at least until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 – the party was divided between a Xinan faction (under Seow Hoot Seng) and a Chiang Kai-shek faction. This split, along with repression by the Thai government, impeded the work of the KMT. Communist activity among the Chinese in Thailand from its beginnings in 1924 was suppressed by the government, which acted in many cases on the basis of information received from the British. Nevertheless, during the early 1930s the Communist Party of Siam, most of whose members were Chinese, conducted a vigorous propaganda campaign calling for a revolutionary soviet government in Thailand. The party also organized a Communist Youth Group, an Anti-Imperialist League, and a General Labour Union. Following a change of policy by the Comintern in 1935, communists in Thailand shifted the focus of their activities from promoting revolution to opposing the Japanese.

With the outbreak of a full-scale war between China and Japan in 1937, KMT and communist activities in Thailand, fuelled by strong anti-Japanese feeling within the local Chinese community, took on a new urgency. For its war effort, the KMT set up organizations such as the Association of Siam Chinese for National Resistance and Salvation, the Siam Chapter of the Association Encouraging Bond Subscriptions, and the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People. These movements drew primarily on a group around a leading Bangkok merchant named Tan Siew Meng, who had connections with Chiang Kai-shek, and on the Teochew (Chaozhou) Assembly Hall under Hia Kwang Iam and his followers, who had ties with Seow Hoot Seng and the Xinan faction. The Communist Party of Siam reshaped its mass organizations, and under the leadership of Liu Shu-shi, Qiu Ji (Khu Kip) and Li Hua set up the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Alliance of Siam Chinese from Differing Walks of Life (Khang Lian), which drew on anti-Japanese groups that the party had formed among labourers, students, women, merchants and intellectuals.

Outside the two parties, a number of politically unaffiliated patriotic youth organizations came into being. These groups helped mobilize the Chinese community in Thailand against the Japanese by collecting money and selling bonds to help finance the war in China, sending rice and clothing to China, despatching volunteers for military and medical service in the homeland, boycotting Japanese goods, and punishing Chinese businessmen who continued to handle Japanese merchandise or supply Thai products to Japanese trading companies. Some large merchants, particularly those who supported the KMT, were subjected to terrorist acts carried out by Khang Lian and the patriotic youth groups in league with secret societies (*ang ji*) when they failed to break off their business dealings with the Japanese.

In June 1932 the People's Party had carried out a constitutional revolution curbing the authority of Thailand's absolutist monarchy. With its strident nationalism, the People's Party was much less permissive toward

non-Thai elements within the country than the monarchical government it replaced, and introduced tighter restrictions on the activities of the Chinese. For example, a new compulsory education law for Bangkok, where many of the Chinese in Thailand lived, imposed limits on Chinese schools and Chinese-language education, and in 1933 the new government enacted anti-communist laws that were effectively directed against the Chinese.

In response to an upsurge of anti-Japanese activity among the Chinese in Thailand in 1937, the People's Party government enacted legislation banning fund-raising that was injurious to the country's foreign relations. The government also deported several thousand local Chinese accused of involvement in acts of terror against Chinese merchants. From the end of 1938, when Plaek Phibunsongkhram became prime minister, repression against the Chinese grew more severe. In 1935 the Chinese had operated more than 250 schools, and supported more than 10 newspapers. In 1939–40 the Phibun government closed all Chinese schools, and all but one Chinese newspaper, the *Tong Guan Pao*. It also created new companies in the distribution sector to 'put businesses into the hands of the Thais', thereby displacing Chinese merchants. In 1941, for security reasons, the government declared large areas of the country off-limits to all foreign residents, and gave Chinese living in these places, some of them long-term residents, 90 days to move out. Lastly, the government began reserving certain categories of jobs for Thai nationals, citing the need to guarantee employment for the Thai people. However, during this time of increasing repression, the government also took a positive step in April 1939 when it opened the way for Chinese nationals to obtain Thai citizenship, something previously denied to them.

The Phibun government's policy of eradicating Chinese loyalty to China while at the same time making it possible for the Chinese to become Thai had nothing to do with Japan, but rather was a Thai nationalist backlash against a perception that the Chinese felt they could do as they pleased politically and economically, despite being foreigners in the country. Even the British minister in Bangkok expressed sympathy for the Thai government's intentions in suppressing the Chinese. The Chinese criticized Phibun's policies, and linked them to Thai efforts to cultivate ties with Japan, but this assessment is hardly correct, for Phibun resisted Japanese demands, such as recognition of the Wang Ching-wei regime in Nanking, until July 1942. His government's general objective in foreign affairs prior to December 1941 was to avoid becoming caught up in the competition between Britain and Japan that was swirling around Thailand, and wait and see how events would develop; Thailand's relations with China were determined by this larger objective. Thus, the Phibun government's policy toward the Chinese in Thailand was already well established before December 1941 and remained basically the same even after Thailand's alliance with Japan.

There were, by and large, three responses within the Chinese community to the government's forced 'Thai-ification' policy. Some Chinese carried on as much as possible with China-related political activities; some chose to assimilate and become Thai-nationals; and some cooperated with the Thai government. The latter group – which included most of the prominent figures connected with the KMT – did not shy away from the benefits of doing business with the Japanese, although many of them also gave active or passive support to the anti-Japanese movement. For example, the Chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, Tia Lang Sing (Sahat Mahakhun) contributed money to the Thai government and cooperated with the cultural programme Phibun instituted with his 1939 Ratthaniyom proclamations concerning 'Thai-ness'. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce even sent telegrams to Chungking calling on it to exercise caution when criticizing Thailand in its radio broadcasts, noting that harsh commentary only worsened the situation for the Chinese living there. By the time Japanese forces attacked Thailand, a majority of the Chinese leaders in the country had submitted to the dictates of the Thai government, and there was little opposition when the Thai government allied itself with Japan and called on the Chinese to cooperate with the Japanese.

#### The Thai-Japanese alliance and Asian Solidarity

On 8 December 1941 the Fourth and Fifth regiments of the Imperial Guard Division moved into central Thailand from Cambodia. The leading unit was the Fifth Regiment's First Battalion under the command of Colonel Iwakuro Hideo, whose assignment was to occupy Don Muang, the airport serving Bangkok, and then move on to Bangkok, which it did on the 9th. Iwakuro's orders were to hold the city and operate as its security force; among other tasks, the unit was to watch over the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and see to the cleansing of stories published in the newspaper affiliated with Chungking, the *Tong Guan Pao*.<sup>3</sup> Other units under the Imperial Guard Division reached Lopburi, Saraburi and Prachinburi on the same day, and by 10 December the Japanese army had essentially completed its occupation of Thailand.<sup>4</sup>

On 11 December, Phibun concluded a 'Provisional Agreement of the Treaty of Alliance Between Thailand and Japan', and the following day he delivered a radio address to explain the change in policy. Later the Publicity Department issued a declaration that read:

The Government wishes to inform the people that the Agreement with the Japanese Government has been arrived at in view of the fact that, after careful consideration, it is deemed the best course to follow in the interests of the country in such circumstances. Hence from now on

please rest assured that Japan is Thailand's friend and that together we shall cooperate in enhancing honour.<sup>5</sup>

On 13 December (Thai official records say 14 December) the Thai and Japanese military signed a set of 'General Principles for Thai-Japanese Cooperation in Military Operations', which established guidelines for cooperation between the Thai and Japanese armies against the British and Chinese armies in Burma.

On 21 December the two countries signed a treaty of alliance under which Thailand pledged to support Japan 'in all political, economic and military ways'; a secret understanding attached to the alliance stipulated that 'Japan should cooperate in fulfilling Thailand's demands for the recovery of its lost territories'. On 25 January Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States, and on 3 February Wichitwathakan, the deputy foreign minister, sent a telegram to Direk Jayanama, the Thai ambassador in Tokyo, telling him to sound out the Japanese about Thai participation in the Axis.<sup>6</sup> This correspondence shows a considerable change in the way Thailand viewed its alliance with Japan. Phibun was no longer treating it as something forced upon him but as an arrangement he had entered into voluntarily; and beyond this he now intended to join the tripartite Axis alliance.<sup>7</sup>

Phibun also suddenly became an advocate of the principle of Asia for the Asians. In his mind the establishment of a common Asian identity as proposed by Japan was in accord with Thailand's own interests. In a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek dated 22 December (which could not be sent by wire and was broadcast by national shortwave radio), Phibun called upon the nationalists to see the folly and the calamity of Asians fighting Asians in China, and told the Chinese leader that what he was saying was a genuine expression of his own thoughts and not something he was being forced to say. He urged Chiang to make peace with Japan for the betterment of Asians who were all brothers, and said that the Thai people concurred in the alliance with Japan because the Japanese, who were highly virtuous people, had genuinely good intentions for the peoples of Asia. The slogan for the times was 'Asia for the Asians', and Phibun called on China to join this new tendency.<sup>8</sup>

Within Thailand, the government began to cooperate fully with Japan in providing rail transport, constructing roads, supplying materials and equipment, disseminating propaganda and the like. The Thais expected to benefit from this cooperation, and their views were expressed by Lt. Col. Chai Prathipasen, a Phibun confidant, at a meeting of government officials dealing with the Japanese military that he called on 1 January 1942.

We should go along with Japan's military operations and give the Japanese army the things it demands. But at the same time we should not forget that there is not loss to us. Our helping Japan does not make

us Japan's servants or slaves. It's the same as providing someone with a tool if we want to get him to do something for our benefit. If we help Japan today, we'll get our repayment another day.<sup>9</sup>

The Thai government's decision to cooperate with Japan made it easier for the Japanese military to deal with the Chinese in Thailand. The basic direction of their policy can be seen from a set of notes made by Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin'ichi, chief of the First Section of the General Staff and the officer in charge of operations planning for the Army, in his daily log on 27 October 1941. They included the following points: 'Chinese organizations will be left as they exist and we will take control of these in accordance with the overall situation; we will get these to support the Nanking government'; 'We will use their [Chinese] unity, business acumen, and acquisitiveness for wealth and guide these in line with our national policy'; and, 'For making our acquisitions we will rely on business transactions and appeal to their particular character.'<sup>10</sup>

Japanese operations involving the Chinese of Thailand were handled by Japanese embassy officials in Bangkok, and directed by the military attaché, Colonel Tamura, whose duties covered political, economic and propaganda aspects of Chinese affairs.<sup>11</sup> In a memorandum dated 9 December 1941, Tamura put down the names of the Chinese crusade groups, the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People, and the Lan Yi She (headed by Gen. Tai Li) as three hostile elements to be suppressed.<sup>12</sup> They were led by operatives infiltrated by Chungking to carry on underground anti-Japanese activities, and there was no doubt that the Japanese would take action against them. At the same time, however, as indicated by the principles set down by Lt. Gen. Tanaka, Tamura also hoped to win over the Chinese. Phibun, however, did not want the Japanese directly involved with the local Chinese population, and told Prime Minister Tojo, 'As Thailand has its own policy toward the Chinese, I would like you to be in harmony with it; of course I will not permit any sort of Chinese actions that would cause harm to the Japanese.'<sup>13</sup> With this message Phibun sought to contain Japanese initiatives directed toward the Chinese, but at this stage of the war, with Phibun waving the banner of 'Asia for the Asians' and being cooperative, Japan's Chinese policies met little opposition from the Thai government.

With the arrival of Japanese forces in Thailand, Chinese leaders went underground. Based on their guideline of using existing institutions, the Japanese did not destroy Chinese organizations, but they immediately commenced reorganizing the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, whose chairman, Tia Lang Sing, was in hiding and would not reappear for some time. The Japanese approached a former chairman, Tan Siew Meng, to take Tia's place, but he declined on grounds that he was not a member of the standing executive committee. Finally Chu Tia Súa, who was recommended by the head of the Japanese Commerce Promotion Office, agreed to become

interim chairman.<sup>14</sup> On 25 December, Chu along with chamber executive committee members Hun Kim Huat (Kosol Huntrakul), Nai Kur Tai (Luang Sitsuropakon), Tan Chin Keng, Tan Ek Yu (Ekyu Chansu), Tan Yong San and other leaders of the Chinese community accompanied Wanit Phananon, a minister without portfolio and a central figure in the government pro-Japanese faction, to visit the prime minister.<sup>15</sup> The group told Phibun that the Chinese community in Thailand wholeheartedly supported the alliance with Japan, and said the Chinese Chamber of Commerce believed that Thailand's alliance with Japan and its participation in the building of a new order in East Asia would benefit all Asians. They conveyed their sense of profound gratitude for the protection the Thai government provided the Chinese of the country, and promised wholehearted support for the government's policies.<sup>16</sup> Three days later, Chinese leaders convened an All-Thailand Overseas Chinese Assembly at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, with over 10,000 local Chinese in attendance along with officials from the Japanese embassy, officers from the Japanese army and representatives of the Indian Independence League. The chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Tia Lang Sing, came out of hiding to read an opening speech, and Wanit delivered a speech prepared by the prime minister. Tia Lang Sing, as chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the six Chinese assembly halls (Teochew, Hakka, Hainanese, Cantonese, Fukienese, and Shanghaiese), expressed support for Thailand and for Japan, and the assembly resolved to defend Thailand's national policy, to cooperate in the building of the new order in East Asia, and to organize a fund raising drive on behalf of the Thai government.<sup>17</sup>

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the six assembly halls represented the greater part of the Chinese community in Thailand, and a gathering of representatives of these groups could accurately be called an All-Thailand Overseas Chinese Assembly. On 2 January 1942 the same group jointly sent a message (via shortwave radio) to Wang Ching-wei, chairman of the national government in Nanking, announcing that the Chinese community in Thailand had resolved to support the Thai government's policy of cooperating with Japan in the building of a new order in East Asia. The statement said that Wang's efforts to rescue China and his cooperation with Japan had brought safety and security to great numbers of his countrymen and for this he was to be greatly admired, and had the support of all overseas Chinese. It added that Japanese forces had maintained strict discipline when they entered Thailand and had committed no crimes, for which the Chinese community was grateful. Another message directed to Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking appealed to the generalissimo to make peace with Japan and join in eliminating the influence of the Anglo-Saxons from East Asia and in building a new order.<sup>18</sup> On 18 February, the day the Japanese army triumphantly entered Singapore, the Chinese

Chamber of Commerce issued a statement calling on the Chinese community to celebrate the occasion by flying the three flags of Japan, Thailand and China – the latter referring to the flag of the Nanking government.<sup>19</sup>

Having gained the full cooperation of the Thai government and at least superficial cooperation from leaders of the Chinese community, the Japanese then revamped the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, the only surviving Chinese-language paper, which they regarded as pro-Chungking. This newspaper had been founded in 1939 by a group of Teochiu Assembly Hall leaders that included Hia Kwang Iam (who was assassinated on 21 November 1939), Tan Keng Chuang (Chuan Tanthana), Lio Kong Phow (Khun Sertphakdi) and Ua Chu Liang, all prominent figures in the anti-Japanese movement. When the Japanese army entered Bangkok, these men went into hiding, and the paper ceased publication. The Japanese embassy, using a lawyer as an intermediary, contacted Ua Chu Liang<sup>20</sup> and Hia Mui Kao, who had taken over Hia Kwang Iam's business affairs,<sup>21</sup> and through them arranged to purchase the newspaper. They then forced Tan Keng Chuang, the chairman of the Teochiu Assembly Hall, and Nai Kur Tai, a widely respected figure in the Chinese community, to persuade the paper's reporters and staff to return to work.<sup>22</sup> The head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Tia Lang Sing, became the new director of the *Tong Guan Pao*, and Fujishima Ken'ichi from the embassy its editor.<sup>23</sup> With this newspaper in their hands, the Japanese were able to control information reaching the Chinese community.

There was no overt opposition to these Japanese measures on the part of the Chinese, and the community experienced only minimal repression by the Japanese military police, the Kempeitai.<sup>24</sup> On 17 January 1942 the Japanese military police, the Thai military police and the Thai national police concluded a 'Pact Concerning the Liaison Council for Police Affairs' which stipulated that 'police matters affecting the Japanese military and persons legally under the authority of Thailand (with the exception of persons who are hostile nationals) will be dealt with through liaison between the Japanese Military Police and the Thai National Police through the intermediation of the Thai Military Police'. On 7 October 1942 the commander of the Japanese military police and the Thailand-Japan Coordination Committee Office (set up by the Thai military to handle liaison work between the armies of the two countries) reaffirmed that investigations and arrests of Thais or Chinese involved in theft or espionage would be done as joint Thai-Japanese operations.<sup>25</sup> The Japanese military police were in principle to act in cooperation with the Thai authorities, and a massive document entitled 'Concise Report of the Joint Thai-Japanese Military Police' provides details of incidents involving Japanese soldiers and Thais or Chinese that range from minor offences – traffic accidents, drunkenness and riding public conveyances without paying – to acts of

torture.<sup>26</sup> On occasions when the Kempeitai ignored the agreement and unilaterally arrested a Chinese suspected of working for Chungking (often someone with Thai nationality), the Thais protested.<sup>27</sup> According to a list prepared at the end of 1942 by the Thai Foreign Ministry to document ill-treatment of Thais and Chinese, there were 22 cases in Bangkok and 26 cases in the provinces where the Kempeitai was thought to have used torture. In eight of the 22 Bangkok cases, Thai authorities took part in the arrests; in the remainder the Kempeitai acted on their own. Six cases involved arrests of suspected Chungking spies (14 individuals with Chinese nationality and one with Thai nationality),<sup>28</sup> most of them members of an espionage organization infiltrated into Thailand by General Tai Li, Chiang Kai-shek's aide-de-camp.<sup>29</sup> The Kempeitai also arrested a first lieutenant who worked as a wireless operator for Chungking and turned him into a counterspy, using him until around March 1945 to collect information coming from Chungking.<sup>30</sup>

According to information assembled soon after the war ended, the Kempeitai arrested some 300 Chinese for anti-Japanese activities.<sup>31</sup> One well-known case is remembered by the Chinese as the 'Arrest of the Five Big Leaders Incident', and by the Thais as the 'Thai Isara Incident'. On 17 January 1942 the Thai police seized Tan Keng Chuang, chairman of the Teochiu Assembly Hall, Lio Kong Phow, and other prominent local Chinese leaders along with a number of Thai journalists; many of those arrested received life sentences. The *Tong Guan Pao* wrote after the war, 'Because these people were secretly leading the anti-Japanese national-salvation movement, they were arrested by the Phibun government which was a lackey of the Japanese. This incident was the most splendid page in the history of the Thailand Chinese anti-Japanese national-salvation movement.'<sup>32</sup> However, Thai government documents indicate that the Japanese were not involved in the affair, and in fact had been making use of Tan Keng Chuang and his colleagues.<sup>33</sup> The arrests were the result of political infighting and the need of the ruling faction to suppress anti-Phibun forces.<sup>34</sup>

To the extent that it produced no overt Chinese opposition, Japan's policy toward the Chinese in Thailand during this period can be regarded as a success. However, there was another aspect to the Chinese relationship with the Japanese, an attempt on the part of the Chinese to use the Japanese and their power to counter the repressive policies of the Thai government. In March 1942 Wichitwathakan, the deputy foreign minister, and Prince Wan, the advisor for foreign affairs, called attention to the danger that the Chinese would seek shelter under the Japanese,<sup>35</sup> and the following month Lt. Col. M. C. Phisitdisaphong Disakul (M. C. Phisit, a son of Prince Damrong), who handled Thailand's military liaison with the Japanese, was reported as saying,

Japan's way is to try to get on the good side of the Chinese while tramping on the heads of the Thais. The Japanese are showing the Chinese that the Thais are hostile to them and trying to make the Chinese rely on the Japanese. From what I have heard, the chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce [Tan Siew Meng] has been flattering the Japanese as never before while showing no attitude at all of trying to rely on the Thais. To make the Chinese understand that we Thais have no particular ill-will against them, we should maintain friendly contact with the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>36</sup>

Wisut Athayuk, Director of the Eastern Political Affairs Department of the Foreign Ministry, supported this view, as did the Governor of Bangkok.<sup>37</sup>

At the start of the war, as Japan gained supremacy over Southeast Asia, the Axis Powers were prevailing in Europe, and it seemed to the Thai leaders that Japan's ascent would continue for some time to come. Their strategic objectives were to limit Japan's influence within Thailand, and to use Japan's growing hegemony to expand Thailand's territory and increase its influence across the region, making Thailand the central nation of Southeast Asia. This sort of thinking can be seen in statements made by Wichitwathakan, who was promoted from deputy foreign minister to foreign minister on 19 June 1942, and also by Phibun. In May 1942, when the Japanese proposed a cultural treaty between the two countries, Wichit suggested that any such agreement should not be confined to relations between Thailand and Japan, but should establish Thailand as 'the cultural centre of Southeast Asia'.<sup>38</sup> And in a note on the construction of the Thai-Burma railway, Phibun wrote, 'It's all right for Japan to build it. We will follow behind the Japanese army and spread our culture. That's cooperating as an ally.'<sup>39</sup> Concerning an inspection trip by Japanese agricultural experts to an experimental farm on the outskirts of Bangkok, the Prime Minister commented that, 'Japan wants to learn about agriculture and other things from Thailand. . . . we lead [in various types of cultivation and cattle-raising], and we must with great speed become the school for all Asians.'<sup>40</sup>

In pursuit of these objectives, Phibun hoped to see Thai forces embark on a foreign military campaign to expand Thailand's territory as promised in the Thai-Japanese Treaty of Alliance. On 2 March 1942 the Interior Ministry had announced that the Shan, Karen and Mon peoples in Tenasserim were part of the Thai race, and would be given Thai nationality should they migrate to Thailand.<sup>41</sup> Some two years earlier, during Thailand's dispute with French Indo-China, the Thai government had made a similar point regarding Thai peoples living in Lao and Khmer territory, and this statement clearly signalled Thailand's interest in territory belonging to Burma. The Japanese accepted in principle Phibun's desire to begin the Thai military campaign in Burma, but withheld permission to take action. The Southern Army, which felt that Thailand had submitted only in

the face of Japan's superior military force, wanted Phibun to apologize for the armed resistance against Japanese troops at the start of the war,<sup>42</sup> while the Japanese government demanded that Thailand recognize the Nanking government before consenting to any foreign campaigns.<sup>43</sup> However, following the conclusion of the 'Supplementary Agreement Concerning Joint Thai-Japanese Military Operations' on 5 May 1942, a Thai expeditionary force entered the Shan states east of the Salween River, where it chased away Chiang Kai-shek's army and occupied the region. Japan's stand on formal reversion of this territory to Thailand, as set forth on 30 June 1942, was as follows: 'Concerning the restoration of lost territory to Thailand, you will avoid any definite statements; you will let it be known that whether or not the Thais can recover any territory will depend on the degree of their cooperation, and you will take care not to make any commitment.'<sup>44</sup> Thus, a victorious Japan was disregarding Thailand's expectations of marching along with its ally and benefiting from the new order in East Asia.

#### The Chinese in the period of cooling Thai-Japanese relations

From mid-1942 Thai-Japanese relations cooled rapidly. In a message dated 4 August, the Japanese ambassador in Thailand, Tsubokami, reported: 'Frankly there is nothing that could be regarded as a pro-Japanese faction existing right now, and especially among the young officers there are many who are against the policy of relying on Japan; the situation now is one of a gradually rising anti-Japanese atmosphere.' Tsubokami listed five causes for this state of affairs: (1) the economic inroads of Japanese companies in the wake of Japan's military success, (2) the Japanese Army's disregard of Thai laws and its contempt for Thai officials and people, (3) Japan's meddling in the Thai government's domestic policies, (4) the failure of Japan to transfer enemy assets in Thailand to the Thais, (5) Japan's practice of treating Thailand like an occupied territory or even a colony.<sup>45</sup> Thai sources indicate that this assessment was correct. Moreover, Japan remained reluctant to discuss the issue of territorial reversion even after the Thai army's invasion of the Shan states, despite the promises made in the treaty of alliance.

To protect Thailand from 'loss and damage' at the hands of Japan, Phibun ordered on 13 May 1942 that every ministry, department and bureau set up foreign relations committees 'to examine competition from new businesses, and interference and profiteering' by foreigners (meaning the Japanese), and 'devise preventive measures'. The results of their discussions were to be reported to the prime minister.<sup>46</sup> However, with Japanese power still overwhelming, Phibun sought to avoid any reckless moves that would worsen Thai-Japanese ties.

In January 1943 Thailand's relations with both the Chinese and the Japanese changed abruptly when the Thai government declared a 'restricted



zone' in the six provinces of northern Thailand (Lampang, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phrae, Lamphun, and Utrดิต), and declared them off limits to 'foreign nationals' - a term that included both the Chinese and the Japanese.<sup>47</sup> Citing the National Defense Preparedness Authorization Act promulgated on 6 December 1941, Adun Adundetcharat, the commander of the National Police and one of Phibun's most trusted subordinates, announced on 20 January that foreign nationals had 20 days to leave the designated area.<sup>48</sup> Less than a month earlier, on 28 December, Chinese in the Ban Pong District in Ratburi province and in Kanchanaburi province had received a similar order following an incident in Ban Pong, in which the Thai police killed six Japanese soldiers. The reason given was that the Chinese had tried to destroy Thai-Japanese friendship by spreading rumours that 'the Thais harboured ill-will toward the Japanese'.<sup>49</sup> This earlier order had affected some 7,000 Chinese, but in the six northern provinces tens of thousands of Chinese were forced to move. Since most of the rice mills and sawmills in northern Thailand were operated by Chinese, the policy threatened to cause a great deal of inconvenience and trouble for rice farmers and consumers, and also for the Thai expeditionary army stationed in northern Thailand. On 27 January an emergency cabinet meeting decided that the quasi-governmental Thai Rice Company would replace the Chinese rice dealers.<sup>50</sup>

Only a few dozen Japanese were affected by the expulsion order, and some of them ignored it. On his return to Chiang Mai from the Shan states on 7 February 1943, Phibun wired Adun in Bangkok, saying,

The Japanese still have not left. Go through the Foreign Ministry and tell the Japanese embassy to comply with the evacuation order like the other foreign nationals have. If they do not comply, Japan will not be observing Thai laws, and it will be seen by the public that they are not honouring Thai sovereignty. . . . I hear that with the other foreigners gone, the Japanese are bringing in a lot of money and doing a lot of business. In this case it is better to have the Chinese and Indians stay and compete against the Japanese. Order the governor of Chiang Mai to expel the Japanese, or if Japan opposes this, then let the Chinese and Indians compete against them. There is no problem in the other provinces.<sup>51</sup>

Three days later, Phibun sent similar instructions to the Interior Minister and Foreign Minister.<sup>52</sup>

Along with making the north off limits, Phibun showed antipathy toward the Chinese in another way as well. On 2 March 1943 the Japanese military attaché sent a message to the Thai-Japanese Coordination Committee Office that read: 'In order to accelerate construction of the railroad linking Thailand and Burma, the Japanese Army is urgently organizing personnel and equipment as set forth below, and it would like

your office to help facilitate this organizing in a timely manner.' The message asked the liaison director to provide construction equipment and 13,000 coolies to work on the project along. Anticipating that most of the work force would consist of Thai coolies, the Thai army officer in charge of mobilizing labour referred the request to the Public Welfare Department of the Interior Ministry. The railway was being constructed in Kanchanaburi, and he considered that the use of Chinese coolies would be unacceptable in view of the order expelling the Chinese from this province. However, upon learning of the plan, Phibun said, 'It's better to use Chinese and foreigners; we shouldn't make Thais go.'<sup>53</sup> On 25 March, Phibun told the Ministers of the Interior and of Defense, who were charged with raising Chinese levies:

Many of the people in Kanchanaburi, Ratburi and Phetburi have already been forcibly recruited and put to work building the military railroad, and this has caused great difficulties in the lives of the people in those provinces. To my thinking the Chinese should share pleasures and pains together with the Thais, for like the Thais they have long lived happily and comfortably. Now in this time of crisis, it's urgent that we ask for as much cooperation as possible from the Chinese. For this reason use whatever means you can devise to levy as many Chinese as needed for construction of the military railroad.<sup>54</sup>

The aide to the Japanese military attaché opposed Phibun's scheme, and told the Thai officer in charge that the Japanese wanted to recruit not only Chinese but also as many Thais as possible. Moreover, the Japanese disapproved of Phibun's plan to recruit Chinese workers through government departments because they needed a large number of labourers as soon as possible and were concerned about delays arising from Thai bureaucratic procedures. To collect workers quickly, the aide proposed that the Thais ask for the voluntary cooperation of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, but the Thais responded that the government did not have the authority to force a private organisation such as the Chamber of Commerce to act. They added that if the government sought the Chamber's cooperation for something that could be refused, it would become more difficult to control the Chinese in future, and suggested that the Japanese speak directly with the Chamber. The Japanese insisted that the Thai government act as an intermediary, and the reason, it transpired, was that the Japanese military police had already approached the Chinese Chamber of Commerce about this matter, only to be told that it operated under Thai laws and could not offer cooperation without an order from the Thai government.<sup>55</sup>

Phibun, as supreme commander of Thailand's military forces, initially ordered the Ministries of the Interior and Defence to carry out the forced recruitment of Chinese labour, but in the end Thai officials had to seek help from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. A meeting of provincial

governors and other officials under the Interior Ministry held on 3 April decided that the governors of Nakhon Pathom, Suphanburi and Ratburi provinces would each be assigned a quota of 500 Chinese coolies, and that another 9,850 coolies would be collected from Bangkok and Thonburi. The superintendent-general of the capital's metropolitan police, Phra Phinitch-onkhadi (whose Chinese name was Tan Yok Seng), was given the task of contacting the Chamber of Commerce, and later the same day he and the governors of Bangkok and Thonburi met with Tan Siew Meng, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. Tan said that the chamber would cooperate, but asked the government to negotiate with the Japanese army regarding the conditions of employment. This was done on 5 April, and that evening the Japanese embassy hosted a dinner party for Tan Siew Meng, Hun Kim Huat, Tae Kia Hung, Tia Lang Sing and other leading members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.<sup>56</sup> On 6 April Phibun confirmed the modification of his earlier recruitment order, saying, 'We'll talk about doing regular hiring first, after that forced recruitment is OK.'<sup>57</sup>

The Chamber of Commerce put Tia Lang Sing in charge of a worker employment committee that began recruitment activities on 12 April, and raised the 200,000 baht needed to cover costs by collecting funds from the Chinese community.<sup>58</sup> In Bangkok the Chinese assembly halls and business associations supplied substantial numbers of workers, as did coolie contractors, attracted by daily wage rates that were substantially higher than the prevailing market rate. However, the Chamber also carried on semi-forced recruiting as well.<sup>59</sup> By noon on the 14th, 1,080 recruits had signed up,<sup>60</sup> and a first contingent of 467 men left Bangkok three days later. By 26 May the Chamber of Commerce had supplied 11,577 coolies to the Japanese army, and another 1,500 coolies from outside of Bangkok had been placed under the Chamber's supervision and protection.<sup>61</sup> Many of the workers had been recruited against their will and quickly escaped, and even among those labourers who had not been coerced there was a high rate of desertion owing to abysmal living conditions at the work sites.

On 9 June 1943 the Japanese asked the Thai government to supply an additional 23,000 labourers (later reduced to 13,000), and the Thais again sought assistance from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In the outlying provinces where the chamber had no branches, the Interior Ministry ordered the provincial governors to send representatives of the Chinese merchants in their provinces to Bangkok for a conference. Delegates from 22 outlying provinces attended, and agreed to help the Interior Ministry enlist workers. Between 15 July and 31 August recruited around 13,000 labourers, but just 43 per cent of them arrived at the work sites, while the rest fled en route.<sup>62</sup> This second recruiting drive again concentrated on signing up Chinese rather than Thai labourers. According to the deputy governor of Chachnsao province in central Thailand,

Gathering up Chinese labourers is part of a policy of not having the Thais do hard labour. In the war now going on, we Thais are being worn out and exhausted from protecting the country's borders to maintain our independence. Meanwhile the foreigners are living comfortably on the home front, and they are exploiting us besides. However, if you get inquiries about why the Chinese are being taken, answer in some other way to avoid creating ill-feelings in the minds of the Chinese. . . . We can include Thai labourers, but make sure there is no mistake about them signing up voluntarily.<sup>63</sup>

For the second recruitment drive the Chinese Chamber of Commerce used the same methods as before.<sup>64</sup> Lt. Col. M. C. Phisit told a meeting of the public relations committee on 28 July 1943 that,

The Chinese are in a difficult position and are discontented. We have relied on the Chamber of Commerce for collecting labourers, but this is leading to such things as the Chinese coercing the Chinese, the Japanese coercing the Chinese, and the Japanese flattering the Chinese. By the Chinese coercing the Chinese I mean the mounting costs of the Chamber of Commerce's recruiting drives being forced onto well-known Chinese. By the Japanese coercing the Chinese I mean the Japanese threats to punish Chinese community leaders who are sympathetic to Chungking. The Chinese are very frightened of this. By the Japanese flattering the Chinese I mean the Japanese-controlled *Tong Guan Pao* posing as a mouthpiece working for the benefit of the Chinese. The purpose of that newspaper is to make the Chinese pro-Japanese while at the same time it has tended to incite the Chinese to hate the Thais.<sup>65</sup>

Some Chinese benefited from the construction of the Thai-Burma railroad. Tia Lang Sing, for example, supplied the Japanese army with gravel.<sup>66</sup> In general, however, the Chinese position was extremely difficult, for they were caught between the Phibun government and the Japanese army, with the former doing its best to exclude Thais and supply only Chinese to satisfy the Japanese demands for labour, and the latter threatening to punish the Chinese for being pro-Chungking if they did not cooperate.

#### The Chinese and worsening Thai-Japanese relations

From March 1943 Phibun's discontent with the Japanese grew apace, and the alliance with Japan deteriorated, as can be seen from the following examples. After the Japanese set up their garrison army command in Bangkok in January 1943, Phibun abolished the Thai-Japanese Coordination Committee Office responsible for military liaison with the Japanese army, and replaced it with an 'Allied Liaison Office' (Krom Prasangan



Phanthamit), a name that omitted any reference to Japan.<sup>67</sup> Phibun explained, 'The name Thai-Japanese Liaison Office makes it appear that the Japanese will be remaining in Thailand permanently and that it has been set up specifically for the Japanese. As such it's just too narrow.'<sup>68</sup> After the war he would point to the choice of name as evidence of his anti-Japanese proclivities, but he gave the Japanese a different explanation at the time, claiming that the new arrangement provided a more powerful organization for the smooth and speedy execution of joint military operations.<sup>69</sup> The Japanese referred to the body as the Thai-Japanese Allied Liaison Affairs Office until 1945, when Hamada Hitoshi, then military attaché in Bangkok, adopted the usage Allied Countries Liaison Affairs Office.

In early May, Thailand's Ambassador in Tokyo, Direk, reported that, 'Some officials in the Greater East Asia Ministry and the newspapers are saying that if the Thai people do not cooperate resolutely with Japan for victory in the war, it is questionable whether Thailand can maintain its independence and sovereignty.' Phibun responded to this threat by saying that Thailand was already cooperating to its utmost. On 5 May the Thai cabinet did discuss the need to strengthen public relations efforts in Japan, but six days later, the deputy director of the Allied Liaison Office, M. C. Phisit, stated at a meeting chaired by the foreign minister:

There's a great difference in the positions of Thailand and Japan. They never defer to us at all, but we defer to them. Our best policy is neutrality, not taking sides with either Japan or the other side.<sup>70</sup>

Phisit had openly suggested a policy that ran directly counter to the principles of the Thai-Japanese alliance, and none of the high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials or military officers at the meeting raised any objections.

For their part the Japanese launched an effort to improve relations with Thailand, entrusting the task to Lt. Gen. Nakamura Aketo, commander of the Thailand Garrison Army. Nakamura resolved the problem of enemy assets, and worked out a settlement for the Ban Pong incident that called for condolence money the Thais had paid for the deaths of Japanese soldiers in the country to be returned in the form of condolence money for the families of Thais killed at the time of the Japanese invasion at the start of the war.<sup>71</sup> In July, Prime Minister Tojo visited Bangkok, and presented a memorandum to the Thai prime minister which read in part:

What the Empire expects of Thailand is Your Excellency's understanding of the Empire's true intentions, and assured of its full support, will vigorously execute all measures necessary for heightening the nation's fighting spirit, strengthening its wartime structure, and for prosecuting the common war.

Critically for the Thais, Tojo's memorandum recognized the incorporation of four Malay states and two Shan states into Thailand.<sup>72</sup> The retrocession of

lost territory had long been one of Phibun's aspirations and Japan's acceptance of the change presumably pleased him, but as a measure to draw out greater cooperation from the Thai leader it had come too late. The war was going badly for Japan, and on 12 May 1943 the Thai cabinet called on the Foreign Ministry to examine the war situation. In June Phibun ordered that civilians be given military training, and that a resistance organization be formed.<sup>73</sup> The fall of Mussolini in July followed by the accession to power of the Badoglio government and Italy's break with the Axis reinforced the point that the Allied Powers were winning.

As part of his new approach, Phibun began making efforts to establish contacts with the Chungking government and eased his severe policies toward the Chinese. On 15 October 1943, he went so far as to ask Prince Wan whether there was any way to give all Chinese in the country Thai nationality *en masse*.<sup>74</sup> At the same time he sought to reduce his cooperation with the Japanese to the lowest level possible without inviting Japanese retaliation. Relations with the Chinese improved as a result of these changes, while relations between the Japanese and both the Thais and the Chinese grew increasingly strained.

In January 1944 Phibun ordered the expeditionary army in the Shan states to make contact with the Chungking army in Yunnan (the 93rd Division), and in mid-March he instructed Maj. Gen. Luang Hansongkham, commander of the expeditionary army's Third Division, to negotiate an arrangement for joint military operations with the Chungking army against the Japanese. He also initiated discussions with General Lu, the Chinese 93rd Division Commander at Da Luo (Thai name: Cheng Lo), to seek Chinese assistance in building up the Thai air force, and asked that the Chinese act as intermediaries with the British and Americans on Thailand's behalf. Lu promised to deliver the Thai requests directly to Chiang Kai-shek, and in late April the Chinese told the Thais to prepare to send a delegation to Chungking. Phibun appointed Adun to lead the group, but was still awaiting further instructions from Chiang Kai-shek when his government was forced from power at the end of July.<sup>75</sup>

The launching of a new Chinese-language newspaper symbolized the improving relationship between the Thai government and the Chinese. Preparatory talks began in March 1943 between Li Chek Sin (Ari Livira) and Phraya Prichanusat,<sup>76</sup> owner of numerous other newspapers, and Phibun eventually approved publication of the *Thai Hua Siang Po* ('Thai-Chinese Commercial Newspaper') under the supervision of the Publicity Department director, Phairot Jayanama. Phairot, a Phibun confidant who was also in charge of espionage operations against the Japanese, appointed Li Chek Sin to take charge of the newspaper and see that it adhered to government policies.<sup>77</sup> Management was in Thai hands, but editorial control rested with Li Chek Sin, Lian Yin Xiao and Meng Xiong, whose sympathies lay with Chungking. As reported in one of its post-war issues, the

newspaper served as an 'anti-Japanese element', by arousing the patriotism of the Chinese and providing a corrective for distorted information that appeared in the 'deceiving *Tong Guan Pao*'.<sup>78</sup> However, the *Thai Hua Siang Po* carried its share of the flattering, sycophantic articles and commentaries that characterized wartime journals in general. For example, at the time of the signing of the China-Japan alliance on 30 October 1943, it joined with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the six Chinese assembly halls and the *Tong Guan Pao* in transmitting a message of congratulations to Wang Ching-wei:

The conclusion of the alliance between China and Japan has further deepened the amicable relations between the two countries, has further promoted the building of the new order in Asia, and our country (China) has now acquired complete independence and freedom. These are the products of Chairman Wang Ching-wei's hard-fought struggle for the nation. As representatives of all the Chinese in Thailand, we wish to express to the Chairman our greatest homage.<sup>79</sup>

After the war Lian Yin Xiao recalled feeling concerned that members of the Chinese community might misunderstand the newspaper's intention to resist the Japanese, and regard joining hands with the Thai government in publishing a Chinese-language newspaper as a traitorous act. Given the ill-feeling in the Chinese community against the Phibun regime, collaboration with the government could easily have been seen in that light.

The Japanese complained that the *Thai Hua Siang Po* published material suggesting that the Allied Powers would triumph and that confrontation existed between Thailand and Japan. The Kempeitai took strong exception to these articles, and at their request the Thai military police on 14 October 1943 took Li Chek Sin into custody. However, before he could be turned over to the Japanese, he managed with Thai help to escape.<sup>80</sup> After receiving a report of this incident, Phibun instructed his Publicity Department director on 28 November to 'Talk with the police and have them guard *our* newspaper. Say the reason is to protect intelligence information. That way the Japanese can't interfere either. Because we're protecting *our* sovereignty. Report back to me how you took care of it.'<sup>81</sup> The Japanese continued to make frequent complaints about articles in the *Thai Hua Siang Po*, both through diplomatic channels and at regular meetings between the public relations officers of both armies. For example, on 5 April 1944 Tsubokami protested to Foreign Minister Direk that,

Since the startup of the *Thai Hua Siang Po*, we have frequently noticed editing deviating from accepted standards and a nonsensical way of featuring photos; and the way the Domei Wire Service story on Prime Minister Churchill's speech was carried on page one of the 28

March issue, especially the large printing of the headline 'More Self-Confident Britain Sure to Gain Victory', there can be no other inference than that such editing advantageous to the enemy is the result of the infiltration of Chungking and other reactionary elements into this newspaper. If this is true, it is a grave problem to be existing at this stage of decisive warfare. Therefore we want you to take strict disciplinary action against this newspaper and this sort of behaviour that benefits the enemy.

In response Direk simply informed the ambassador that an investigation by the Director of the Publicity Department showed that the newspaper had no ulterior motives. In reality, however, the Director had made it known at an internal meeting of the department that 80 per cent of the workers at the *Thai Hua Siang Po* were Chungking sympathizers.<sup>82</sup>

A further example of Phibun's changing attitude toward the Chinese was his practice of conferring decorations on local Chinese leaders. Ung Tek Lim (Chulin Lamsam), the general manager of the Thai Niyom Company, received the King's Crown Decoration Third Class on 10 December 1943, as did Tan Siew Meng on 26 January 1944.<sup>83</sup> A third-class decoration in Thailand is an honour given to people at the level of lieutenant colonel or colonel in the military, provincial governors, or government ministry department directors. While Chinese routinely received extremely high decorations after the war, at the time it was an epochal event, and the *Tong Guan Pao* commented ebulliently: 'The glory at this time with the conferral of these decorations is a brilliant record and historic first for the Chinese living in Thailand. It is an honour conferred on the whole of the Chinese society.'<sup>84</sup>

On 19 December 1943 the Allies carried out their first air raid on Bangkok, signalling the start of concerted attacks against the capital. Two days later, on the 21st, a ceremony celebrating the second anniversary of the Thai-Japanese alliance took place, and Phibun took the bold step of absenting himself from this important occasion.<sup>85</sup> Thai-Japanese relations continued on a downward path, and the studied uncooperativeness of Phibun's closest cohorts grew more pronounced. On 5 February 1944, Nakamura Aketo, Supreme Commander of the Imperial Japanese Army in Thailand, demanded that Phibun, in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces, ensure Thai cooperation with Japan.<sup>86</sup> Phibun's government procrastinated over meeting Japanese requests, which would have entailed enormous military expenditures, and finally the situation reached the point where Phibun was ready to issue a temporary recall of his ambassador in Tokyo, Wichitwathakan (the previous foreign minister, who had switched posts with Direk).<sup>87</sup> However, before Wichit could be recalled, the political situation in Bangkok changed. Through his dictatorial political methods, Phibun had lost the confidence of the majority of the parliament, and a succession of bills his government submitted for passage

was voted down. During this confrontation the Japanese army took a neutral position, which worked in favour of the anti-Phibun side by restricting the movement of military forces under Phibun's command. At the end of July 1944, the Phibun cabinet was forced to resign.

### The Khuang Aphaiwong government and the Chinese

Uneasiness in Thai-Japanese relations made the new Thai leaders all the more cautious in their dealings with the Japanese. The challenge facing the new Khuang Aphaiwong government was to protect Thailand's independence and minimize war damage. The Japanese found the Khuang cabinet a marked improvement over the departed Phibun regime. The new policy toward Japan was summed up in a comment by M. C. Phisit: 'We will perform our duty to Japan faithfully and completely which is also to our honour; what we cannot do is speak our mind candidly and seek Japan's sympathy.'<sup>88</sup> In line with this new approach, the Khuang government quickly completed negotiations for an agreement on Japanese military expenditure, an issue upon which the two sides had come to an impasse during the last stage of Phibun's rule.

Along with adopting a conciliatory approach toward the Japanese, the Khuang government further relaxed restrictions on the Chinese. On 11 September 1941 Phibun had promulgated a law reserving certain jobs exclusively for Thais, and on 9 June 1942 the government had announced 27 categories of reserved occupations.<sup>89</sup> This measure together with the order expelling Chinese residents from certain restricted zones and the conscription of Chinese labour for the Thai-Burma railroad epitomized the anti-Chinese policy of the Phibun government. Immediately after coming to power, the Khuang government set up a Committee to Examine National Economic Problems, headed by Thongpleo Chonphumi, which advised that occupational restrictions should 'be abolished in accordance with circumstances that could arise in the future, and the antagonism caused to the Chinese should be reduced'.<sup>90</sup> On 18 October 1944 the cabinet decided to rescind the order reserving certain occupations for Thais with a few minor exceptions such as lawyers, and artisans making statues of the Buddha. The changes took effect on 24 November.

Thongpleo's committee left the expulsion order in effect. The chairman announced on 21 February 1945, 'Given the tense circumstances, Thai residents are afraid of foreigners', and said that 'some quarters' (a clear reference to the Japanese) might see abolition of the regulation as a sign of Thai and Chinese uncooperativeness. However, the cabinet increased the exemptions that allowed foreigners to reside in restricted zones on an individual basis.<sup>91</sup>

There remained the issue of labour for the Thai-Burma railway. In April 1944, the Japanese army asked the Thai government to facilitate recruitment

of an additional 5,000 workers for the railway.<sup>92</sup> The Japanese wanted to pay a daily wage of one baht plus rations, but labourers already working on the line were getting three baht a day (without rations), and with the cost of living rising the proposed wage was much too low. Under these circumstances recruitment proved so difficult that the Thais could not fulfil the Japanese request. At the end of July the Japanese Army asked for another 6,800 labourers. On 2 August Tan Siew Meng, chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, agreed to the request, but said the chamber wanted labourers to be paid a daily wage of 6.5 baht, with no rations.

After protracted negotiations the two sides agreed on a daily wage of 6 baht, from which the Japanese army would deduct 1.5 baht for rations and other expenses. According to Thai figures, recruitment exercises in Bangkok netted 2,032 workers (Japanese figures showed 2,001), but after receiving a ten baht advance intended to cover departure arrangements, most of the recruits ran away. Only 61 of the 718 workers recruited for the third delivery reached Kanchanaburi, and the 405 in the fourth delivery all disappeared while still in Bangkok. As of 19 January 1945 only 170 new recruits were actually at the work sites. Thus the chamber's 'Third Drive on Behalf of the Thai Government to Employ Workers' supplied almost no labour at all. As a result, the Japanese abandoned recruitment through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce altogether.<sup>93</sup>

In the meantime, the KMT and the communist party had launched underground operations against the Japanese. On 6 March 1944, five Thailand-born Chinese army officers parachuted from a British aircraft into the Nakhon Pathom area near Bangkok, marking the start of operations using Allied aircraft to infiltrate agents into Thailand. The previously mentioned spy organization run by Lan Dong Hai, which operated out of the office of Chiang Kai-shek's aide-de-camp, General Tai Li, had been active in Bangkok since before the war. On 26 August 1944 the Kempeitai, after giving notice to the Thais, raided the group's radio communications centre in Thonburi and captured the radio operator, Li Shen. On the morning of 27 August, another four members of the group were caught. Perhaps because of confessions extracted from these people, the Kempeitai arrested 45 Chinese agents during the next 10 days, but Lan Dong Hai managed to evade capture and returned for a time to Chungking.<sup>94</sup> He later slipped back into Thailand, and immediately after the Japanese surrender appeared in public as the Director of Mission (or Director of Party Affairs) in Thailand for the Kuomintang.

In the latter part of the Occupation, the Military Statistics Office in Chungking sent a number of small groups into Thailand, each unknown to the others. One group was commanded by Major Tan Yi, a Thailand Chinese and a graduate of the Huang Pu Military Academy. Tan's five-man party slipped into Bangkok in 1944, and for the duration of the war radioed information on the Japanese army back to the Military Statistics Office. Tan

sent agents into military bases disguised as coolie labourers, and these people talked to cooperative Koreans and Taiwanese in the Japanese army. The Tan Yi group was strictly a secret espionage organization; its job did not include organizing the masses or publishing newspapers; and the Japanese never uncovered its operations.<sup>95</sup>

Another secret organization was the Huang Lu Feng group, which received its orders from the headquarters of the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People in Chungking. It entered Thailand along with soldiers under Zhuo Xian Shu, chief of the Thailand Military Affairs Special Missions Office, and set up a Thailand branch of the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People; it also conducted propaganda activities through its newspaper, *Jing Pao*, and organized and trained combat units.<sup>96</sup>

The communist party under the leadership of Li Qi Xin, with Qiu Ji, Li Hua,<sup>97</sup> and a few others, began publishing an underground newspaper called *Zhen Hua Bao (The Truth)* on 25 July 1942.<sup>98</sup> On 23 December 1944 the party held the First All-Thailand Congress of Representatives of the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance (Saha Samakhom Totan Yipun). Preparations for this Alliance had taken place on 25 November at a gathering of seven Chinese and Thai groups (the *Zhen Hua Bao*, the *Ren Min Bao*, the Thai-language newspaper *Mahachon*, the Thai Ekarat group, the Southern Thai Anti-Japanese Alliance General Union, the Bangkok League of Workers from Differing Walks of Life, and the Study Group for the Masses). The membership included both organizations and individuals, and it claimed to have enrolled as many as 11,000 people.<sup>99</sup> At the Second All-Thailand Congress of the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance that began on 31 October 1945, 142 members attended representing 53 groups.<sup>100</sup>

On 12 September 1945, soon after the war ended, Qiu Ji gave Chinese, Thai and British journalists an extravagant account of the communist party's anti-Japanese activities during the war.

After the Japanese army's advance into the south, the Chinese and Thai peoples cooperated in anti-Japanese activities, and these were carried out in various parts of Thailand. The Chinese and Thais both carried on these anti-Japanese activities for the homeland's independence and freedom, and to liberate it from the shackles of slavery. . . . In southern Thailand the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance and the Anti-Japanese Volunteer Army carried on an anti-Japanese war, and they always had the cooperation of the Thai army and police. The anti-Japanese Thai and Chinese workers rose up in various places and destroyed Japanese military warehouses and other things.<sup>101</sup>

Such rhetoric notwithstanding, it seems that apart from publishing the *Zhen Hua Bao*, communist party initiatives were limited to thefts from Japanese military warehouses and acts of sabotage at Japanese-run factories. In view of the way the communist party (composed largely of overseas Chinese) and

the Thai Communist Party (established and made independent of the former on 1 December 1942) cooperated in the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance (the Chairman, Qiu Ji was from the Overseas Chinese communist party, and the Secretary General, Wirot Amphai, from the Thai Communist Party) and other undertakings, they can be considered as essentially the same body.

Both the communist party and the KMT energetically pursued people they considered traitors. These activities dampened the willingness of the local Chinese leadership to cooperate with the Japanese during the last stage of the war, and helped draw funds to the anti-Japanese movement. On 17 April 1944 the *Zhen Hua Bao* carried an editorial headlined: 'Beware of Treacherous Chinese Profiteers Who Help Bandits'. Written by Li Qi Xin, the editorial attacked big Chinese merchants such as Jip In Soi, whom it mentioned by name, and said in part:

Thailand is Japan's follower, and so there is no denying that Japan can plunder Thailand's goods and resources in great quantities. However, if unscrupulous Chinese merchants didn't do the purchasing and manufacturing for the Japanese, they could never get the large quantities they do, and this would do much to obstruct and delay them. For this reason we call on all labourers and company workers to stop cooperating and helping to produce the fortunes of these profiteering merchants who are working against the good of the nation, and to attack and prevent their traitorous dealings in every possible way.<sup>102</sup>

On 5 September 1944 the *Zhen Hua Bao* carried another critical article reading:

The two traitors, Tan Siew Meng and Tia Lang Sing, have always disregarded the nation's laws and been contemptuous of their fellow Chinese; and at a recent meeting of the Japanese puppet of a Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the two called for recruiting 5,000 workers for the Japanese.

The article noted that despite a 12 July warning broadcast by the Chungking central radio station directed at Tan Siew Meng, Tia Lang Sing, Ung Tek Lim, Hun Kim Huat and three others, when the Japanese again asked for more workers for the Thai-Burma railroad, 'the traitor Tan Siew Meng immediately called a meeting [of the Chamber of Commerce]; the majority of the chamber opposed the request, and only the two traitors Tan Siew Meng and Tia Lang Sing insisted that the chamber had to accept'. The paper reported that Tan Siew Meng told the other members, 'If the central government [Chungking] sends out a warning, let it send out a warning; if our fellow Chinese criticize us, let them go ahead and criticize; but it is impossible not to obey the Japanese demands.'<sup>103</sup> This comment gives an indication of the stress the chairman was feeling due to the pressure from

the Japanese army; it also indicates the close links the communist party had to the leadership of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

In June 1945, *Tong Kok Nang*, the underground newspaper of the KMT's Lan Dong Hai group, reported in grandiose prose an attack on Lio Chia Hong, a leader in a Japanese-run counter-espionage organization<sup>104</sup> whose job was to break up anti-Japanese groups. In an article headlined 'Big traitorous slave, Lio Chia Hong, punished; severely wounded in unprecedented attack that has reverberated throughout Thailand', the paper declared, 'On the 5th of this month [June] at one o'clock in the afternoon at the intersection in front of the Lam Thong Restaurant, a traitor was punished in a sacred attack. After fulfilling his heroic duty, the noble patriot calmly left the scene.'<sup>105</sup>

### Conclusion

Phibun actively supported Japan until mid-1942, and expected to reap substantial rewards for his loyalty. He then grew disenchanted with the alliance, which provided few benefits for Thailand and entailed an alarming degree of Japanese influence in the country, and his government began to distance itself from Japan, ultimately trying to position Thailand as a neutral power. By the time Phibun was forced out of office, he had begun preparing to resist Japan. His successor, Khuang Aphaiwong, created an anti-Phibun civilian cabinet that attempted to improve relations with the Japanese while allowing the Free Thai movement to operate behind the scenes.

The changing state of Thai-Japanese relations during the war years had a great effect on the Chinese in Thailand. During the first stage, when Phibun had visions of Thailand becoming a major power within Japan's new order for East Asia, he proclaimed his backing for the principle of 'Asia for the Asians'. Thailand's Chinese, who backed the Chungking government, found themselves compelled to show support for the Wang Ching-wei government in Nanking. The Chinese in Thailand had by and large submitted to the severe policies of the Phibun government before the war began, and most of the community's leaders obediently followed its pro-Japanese line, particularly when confronted by the presence of the Japanese army in Thailand. Having obtained the cooperation of the Thai government, the Japanese army had few difficulties putting its Chinese policy into place, and in the absence of strong resistance from the Chinese, there was no need for any large-scale Japanese suppression of the Chinese community. The Japanese made some small alterations to organizations like the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and took control of the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, but for the most part simply used existing Chinese organizations. The Thais continually worried about the possibility that the Japanese would gain influence over the Chinese to the detriment of the Thai government; they never liked the Japanese dealing on their own directly

with the Chinese, and regarded with suspicion any relations between the Japanese and Chinese.

Phibun subsequently came to see the Japanese and the Chinese in the same light: both were irksome, unwelcome foreigners. The Prime Minister declared wide areas of the country off limits to foreigners – a measure that affected both Chinese and Japanese – and expelled Chinese from certain occupations that were henceforth reserved for Thais. Asked by the Japanese to supply Thai labour for constructing the Thai-Burma railroad, Phibun recruited Chinese workers instead, using the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and employing semi-coercive methods. The Chamber of Commerce ultimately supplied more than 20,000 labourers – the great majority of them Chinese – to Japanese military construction projects. In effect Phibun shifted onto the Chinese the burden of the Thai-Japanese Alliance, which obliged the Thais to meet the labour requirements of the Japanese army. Phibun's policies left a deep bitterness in the minds and hearts of Thailand's Chinese.

During the latter part of Phibun's time in office, relations with Japan deteriorated badly, but this did not seem to concern Phibun. Meanwhile he became more flexible and conciliatory toward the local Chinese. As Japan's deteriorating war situation became increasingly apparent, the Japanese began reinforcing their Thailand Garrison Army, and there was growing danger of a Japanese *coup de force*. After Phibun's resignation in July 1944, the Khuang Aphaiwong government adopted a more conciliatory attitude toward Japan and worked to improve Thai-Japanese relations. It also continued to pull back from Phibun's earlier harsh anti-Chinese policy, and built contacts with Chinese underground operations, along with the Free Thai movement. By the spring of 1945, the cooperation of the Chinese community with the Japanese was little more than a hollow pretence. During this period, the overseas Chinese involved in both the KMT and the communist party increased their anti-Japanese underground activities, albeit still on a small scale. For the Chinese in Thailand, however, terrorist attacks by these two groups against people they regarded as traitors caused considerable distress.

### Notes

An earlier version of this article was published in Japanese in the *Review of Asian and Pacific Studies*, Seikei University, No. 13, Jan. 1996. I would like to thank Dr. William Swan for preparing the English translation. Most Chinese names have been transliterated in accordance with their Thai pronunciation, but in cases where this pronunciation is unknown the Mandarin transliteration is provided.

The activities of the Chinese in Thailand from the time Japanese forces entered the country until the end of the war have received little scholarly attention, apart from an article by E. Bruce Reynolds entitled 'International Orphans – the Chinese in Thailand During World War II', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 28, 2, Sept. 1997, pp. 365–88. In recent years a number of supporters of both the KMT and communist party who participated in the political movements during this period have published memoirs and reminiscences, while documents relating to the subject preserved in the

Documents Section of the Thai Foreign Ministry, and also materials from the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Armed Forces held in the National Archives of Thailand (henceforth NAT), are open to the public. In addition, primary documents originating with the Japanese military forces remain largely unused in research on Thailand, and are a useful source for information on the Chinese. I have supplemented these official documents with articles from newspapers and magazines, and have drawn on my own research into political movements among Thailand's Chinese before 1941.

- 1 W. D. Reeve, *Public Administration in Siam*, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1951, pp. 8-9.
- 2 For a detailed account of the political activities of the Chinese in Thailand and the reaction of the Thai government before the advance of the Japanese army into Thailand, see Murashima Eiji, 'Tai kakyo no seiji katsudo - 5/30 undo kara nitchu senso made' [Political Activities of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand - From the May 30th Movement until the Sino-Japanese War], in *Tonan Ajia kakyo to Chugoku - Chugoku kizoku ishiki kara kajin ishiki e* [China and the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia - From Attachment to China to a Consciousness of Being Local Residents], ed. Hara Fujio, Tokyo, Ajia keizai kenkyujo, 1993, pp. 263-364. A revised and expanded Thai-language version of this article entitled *Kanmuang Chin Sayam* was published in 1996 as a monograph of the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- 3 These duties were set forth in Order/Shin saku mei kou no. 308, issued in Bangkok by the Imperial Guard Division at 1900 hours on 9 Dec. 1942.
- 4 'Showa 16.12.8-12.15, Konoe yahouhei rentai Taikoku shinnyu sakusen sentou shouhou' [Battle Report on Thailand Invasion Operations for the Field Artillery Regiment of the Imperial Guard Division], Nansei/Mare-Jawa/291, in the library of the Research Center of the Japanese Self-Defense Agency (henceforth JSDA).
- 5 Diplomatic documents in the Documents Section of the Thai Foreign Ministry (henceforth FMT DD), WW2/2:16/5.
- 6 WW2/1:2/3, WW2/1:8/4, FMT DD.
- 7 The Tripartite Alliance, concluded by Germany, Italy and Japan on 27 September 1940, was joined in November of that year by Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. From 1943 as Thai-Japanese relations worsened, Phibun returned to the explanation of his 12 December 1941 declaration that the alliance had been the only possible choice for preserving Thailand's independence (see, for example, NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.6/31); after the war he repeated the same argument. However, this explanation intentionally ignores Phibun's voluntary cooperation with Japan at the start of the war.
- 8 *Prachachat*, 29 Dec. 1941.
- 9 WW2/2:2/2, FMT DD.
- 10 'Tanaka Shin'ichi chuujou gyomu nisshi hachi bun satsu no hachi' [Lt. General Tanaka Shin'ichi daily operations log, 8/8], Chuuou/Sakusen shidou nikki/16, JSDA.
- 11 The Hainan Naval Special Services Bureau, Political Affairs Section, First Research Office, 'Kohatsu gonsi' [Operations Group for Thailand Chinese], Aug. 1942.
- 12 'Taikoku kankei, Tamura Bukan memo sono ichi' [Concerning Thailand, Military Attaché Tamura Memorandum No. 1], Chuuou/Senssou shidou juuyou kokusaku bunsho/829, JSDA.
- 13 Message dated 9 Jan. 1942 sent via Tamura, 'Taikoku kankei, Tamura Bukan memo sono san' [Concerning Thailand, Military Attaché Tamura Memorandum No. 3], Chuuou/Senssou shidou juuyou kokusaku bunsho/831, JSDA.
- 14 *Tong Guan Pao*, 20 Jan. 1942.

- 15 For information about relations between Wanit Pananon and the Japanese, see Benjamin A. Batson and Shimuzu Hajime, *The Tragedy of Wanit: A Japanese Account of Wartime Thai Politics*, Singapore, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* Special Publications Series No. 1, 1990.
- 16 *Prachachat*, 27 Dec. 1941; also NAT, SoBo.9.2.3/4.
- 17 *Tai Mai*, 30 Dec. 1941; *Tong Guan Pao*, 5 and 26 Feb. 1942. By 25 Feb. this drive had raised 131,128.50 baht.
- 18 *Prachachat*, 5 Jan. 1941.
- 19 *Tong Guan Pao*, 18 Feb. 1942.
- 20 Fujishima Ken'ichi, *Gekidou suru sensou no urabanashi (waga kaikoroku)* [Exciting Inside Story of the War (My Reminiscences)], Bangkok, Kokusai Insatsu, 1977, pp. 126-7.
- 21 Inamine Ichiro, *Inamine Ichiro kaisouroku, sekai wo butai ni* [Inamine Ichiro Memoirs: the World as My Stage], Okinawa Times, 1988, pp. 189-191. Hia Mui Kao personally asked Inamine, who headed the Mantetsu (Southern Manchuria Railway Co.) office in Bangkok, for protection to escape the pursuit of the Kempeitai after Japanese forces entered Thailand, and Inamine hid him at his official residence for about a month. After the war Hia Mui Kao returned to Communist China and held various posts, including that of vice-chairman of the All-China League of Overseas Chinese.
- 22 Lim Chen's short article in *Cong zhongyuanpao dao xinzhongyuanpao 1938-1988* [From *Tong Guan Pao* to *New Tong Guan Pao* 1938-1988], Bangkok, Xinzhongyuanpao, 1988.
- 23 The holdings of the reorganized *Tong Guan Pao* in the Thai National Library begin with 19 Jan. 1942, and the newspaper seems to have resumed publication around this time.
- 24 Initially a detachment of the Kempeitai attached to the 15th Army was stationed in Thailand, but from the middle of March 1942 the Kempeitai under Southern Army command became responsible for the whole of Thailand.
- 25 WW2/2:11/20, WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.
- 26 WW2/2:4/4, FMT DD.
- 27 One example was when 60 Kempeitai soldiers unilaterally arrested ten members of the anti-Japanese faction in the Indian Independence League as espionage agents (three of the arrested being Sivaram, Ramachan and Amar Singh). WW2/2:2/6, FMT DD.
- 28 WW2/2:11/20, WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.
- 29 The head of this organization was Seow Song Khim, the son of Seow Hoot Seng, the former chief of the Siam general office of the KMT. Seow Song Khim's wife, Chiu Siu Lang, and an operative named Lan Dong Hai were key members. The Kempeitai learned of this group through its wireless transmissions, and on 28 September 1942 rounded up most of those involved.
- 30 Nakamura's account in *Buddha's Commander* was modified following a check of Thai document NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/86.
- 31 On 9 and 17 Oct. 1945, local Chinese led by Chiu Siu Lang, a leader in the KMT's anti-Japanese movement, carried out an inspection of 800 Kempeitai and other people suspected of war crimes, and identified 11 people as having maltreated Chinese detainees. *Tong Guan Pao*, 10 Oct., 16 Oct., 18 Oct. 1945.
- 32 *Tong Guan Pao*, 15 Feb. 1946.
- 33 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.2/2, 2.10/10. Message No. 1173, dated 11 June 1942, from the Japanese ambassador in Thailand to the Foreign Minister, and decoded by the U.S., confirms that the Japanese did not know the reason for these arrests. (US National Archives, SRDJ Box 28, p. 23868). As noted in this article, Tan



- Keng Chuang, seen as representative of those who were non-cooperative *vis-à-vis* the Japanese, did comply with Japanese demands; after the war when heated argument took place in the Chinese community over the issue of punishing traitors, the example of Tan Keng Chuang was brought up. The 12 Oct. 1945 issue of *Thai Hua Siang Po* pointed out that 'The day after the Japanese army invaded Thailand, Tan Keng Chuang, chairman of the Teochew Assembly Hall, was responsible for sending the first telegram to the Nanking government.' Like so many others in the Chinese community, he was far from innocent, and the debate showed that it was difficult to find anyone within the local Chinese leadership who was blameless.
- 34 One target of the roundup was Li Khi Yong (Yong Lertbannaphong), a former editor-in-chief of the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, but he evaded arrest and went underground. He was accused of rebellion, and the Thai police announced a reward for his arrest. *Prachachat*, 12 Apr. 1942. After the war he and Chiu Siu Lang became leading activists pursuing traitors in the Chinese community. For example, both of them criticized the six assembly halls, the central organizations of the local Chinese community, for being 'deceitful, puppet-like organizations for the Japanese'. *Quan Min Bao*, 17 Oct. 1945. The *Thai Hua Siang Po* declared that the number of community leaders who went into hiding after the war was a hundred times greater than at the time Japan invaded Thailand. *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 12 Oct. 1945.
- 35 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.77/2.  
 36 WW2/2:2/2, FMT DD.  
 37 A report to the governor from the district chief of Samphanthawong, where many Chinese lived, said in essence that from 21 April, when the government devalued the baht at the demand of the Japanese to make it equal to the yen, the Chinese merchants were saying among themselves that the Thai government was under the control of the Japanese government and from now on they had to rely on Japan. Accordingly, they adopted a scornful attitude toward the Thai government. NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/143.  
 38 WW2/2:4/1, FMT DD.  
 39 Note dated 11 June 1942, NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/1.  
 40 Note dated 31 July 1942, NAT, (2) SoRo.0201/.98/9.  
 41 NAT, (2) So.Ro.0201.82/20.  
 42 Arao Okikatsu, 'Nampou sougun no tousui (shinkou sakusenki)' [Southern Army High Command: the Period of Offensive Operations], Nansei/Zenpan/33, JSDA.  
 43 Sambouhonbu, *Sugiyama memo: ge*, Hara Shyobou, 1967, p. 122.  
 44 'Summary of Instructions from the Army Minister to the Chief of General Staff of the Southern Army', 'Senryouchi gyousei kankei tsuzuri' [Documents of the Administration of the Occupied Territories], Chuou/Gunji gyousei sonota/133, JSDA.  
 45 Tsubokami to Foreign Minister Togo, No. 1657 in 'Kanchō fugou raiden tsuzuri' [Arriving ambassadorial messages folder], A700, 9-63 in the Diplomatic Archives of the Japanese Foreign Ministry.  
 46 WW2/1:21/1, FMT DD.  
 47 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/303.  
 48 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/309.  
 49 WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.  
 50 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/339, 341.  
 51 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.16/84.  
 52 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/14.  
 53 Tai Riku Bu no. 37. NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.  
 54 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.1/121 and WW2/1:21/15, FMT DD.  
 55 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.  
 56 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.  
 57 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.1/121.  
 58 *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Aug. 1943.  
 59 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD, provides information on a meeting of the provincial foreign relations committee in the province of Yala on 5 May 1943, which discussed the problem of forcible recruiting in that province.  
 60 *Tong Guan Pao*, 14 Apr. 1943.  
 61 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.  
 62 Ibid. Japanese figures show 12,968 labourers; the highest Thai figure is 13,097, with 5,320 coming from Bangkok and Thonburi.  
 63 WW2/1:21/13, FMT DD.  
 64 *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Aug. 1943.  
 65 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD.  
 66 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/7; also Boko Sungsut 2.9/8. This is but one example of the profiteering by local Chinese leaders who cooperated with the Japanese. After the war Tia Lang Sing feared assassination and long remained in hiding. He was later reinstated as chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and developed major contacts with Taiwan.  
 67 WW2/2:2/13, FMT DD. The new office began functioning on 18 Mar. 1943.  
 68 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.9/98.  
 69 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2/67. See message (Tai Riku Bu No. 60) dated 25 March 1943 from Yamada Lunitaro, the Japanese military attaché in Bangkok, to the director of the new liaison office. Yamada's message quoted and acknowledged Phibun's explanation.  
 70 WW2/2:2/4, FMT DD.  
 71 WW2/2:11/45, FMT DD.  
 72 WW2/2:17/1, FMT DD.  
 73 NAT, Sungsut 1.16/94.  
 74 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/15.  
 75 *Chiwaprawat Phon ek Luang Hansongkehrum* [Autobiography of General Luang Hansongkhram], Bangkok, Hanghunsuanchamkat Siwaphon, 1969, pp. 122-7.  
 76 Phraya Prichanusat's son later married Phibun's eldest daughter.  
 77 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/24.  
 78 *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 10 Oct. 1945.  
 79 Ibid., 2 Nov. 1943.  
 80 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/24.  
 81 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.98.1/14. Emphasis added.  
 82 Gai no. 38, WW2/2:12/4, FMT DD.  
 83 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.46.3/31.  
 84 *Tong Guan Pao*, 27 Jan. 1944.  
 85 NAT, KoTo73.6/24; *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 22 Dec. 1943.  
 86 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.12/265.  
 87 WW2/2:4/25, FMT DD.  
 88 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD.  
 89 *Prachachat*, 11 Jun. 1942.  
 90 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.22.4/7,13.  
 91 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/14.  
 92 Tai Riku Bu no. 159.  
 93 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.9/28; Boko Sungsut 2.6.8/1. See also NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12, and *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Jan. 1945.

- 94 WW(Bettalet) 18.5 FMT DD; NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/34,44,60,67,68,75; interview with Lan Dong Hai, 19 July 1992. On 7 July 1944 Lan began an underground newspaper, *Tong Kok Nang* (The Chinese), but it stopped publication at the end of August during the Kempeitai's wave of arrests. He restarted the paper on 20 May 1945, and it appeared three more times before the war ended. Lan has a copy of every issue of *Tong Kok Nang*.
- 95 Interview with Tan Yi, 29 Dec. 1993.
- 96 Thailand Huang Pu Military Academy Alumni Association - Editing Committee, *Tie xue xiong feng* [Iron, Blood, Heroic Wind: Anti-Japanese Activities of the Thailand Chinese], Bangkok, Thailand Huang Pu Military Academy Alumni Association, 1991, pp. 323-4. According to Ung Lip Ming, who helped publish it, the *Jing Pao* was printed twice a week in a forest in Nakhon Pathom, on the outskirts of Bangkok. Interview with Ung Lip Ming, 6 Jan. 1994.
- 97 *Taiguo guiqiao yinghunlu* [Heroic Record of Chinese Returned from Thailand], vol. 1, ed. Editorial Committee of the Friendship Association of Chinese Returned from Thailand, Beijing, Zhongguo huaqiao chuban gongsi, 1989, p. 411.
- 98 Du Ying, 'Recollections of Thailand Chinese who participated in anti-Japanese national salvation movements', *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* [Selected Historical Documents], vol. 5, Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1986, p. 90.
- 99 Li Qi Xin, *Mei jiang liu yan* [Newspaper articles once written near the Mænam River], Beijing, 1990, pp. 107-'8; *Mahachon*, 26 Dec. 1944.
- 100 *Quan Min Bao*, 2 Nov. 1945.
- 101 *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 13 Sept. 1945.
- 102 *Zhen Hua Bao*, 17 Apr. 1944.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1944.
- 104 The leader was Oh Kyo Shu, a Taiwanese doctor assassinated on 11 Aug. 1945.
- 105 *Tong Kok Nang*, 20 June 1945.

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