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ABSTRACT (100-200 WORDS): In my paper I discuss the Ethnic conflict among the Siamese majority and the minority. Due to the amount of ethnic diversity I limited my research to three groups: The Mon, Hmong and the Malays of southern Thailand. Within these groups my parameters were religion, language and ethnic rank. These groups also illustrate various degrees of ethnic conflict. I comment that religion and the use of Thai language is very important in being Thai by Thai standards. Ethnic rank also relates to the awareness of being Thai. Because of the lack of information of these subjects, I comment that more research and study must be done in order to fully understand the problem.
The population of Thailand (see appendix 1) consists of many different kinds of people, but this diversity is not readily apparent in Thai government publications. Charles Keyes (1987:14-15) states:

"From Thai censuses, one gains the impression that the population of Thailand is largely culturally homogeneous. This appearance of cultural homogeneity is, however, deceptive. The people who have constructed Thai censuses have been led by political guidelines to avoid asking the kinds of ethnic self-identification questions raised in censuses in other countries, such as the United States. If a survey were made in which ethnic self-identification were taken into account, the population of Thailand would appear to be much more ethnically diverse."

In a country with many different kinds of people, one might speculate that there would be conflict. The main purpose of this paper is to look at how much of the ethnic conflict between minorities and the Siamese majority is due to differences in religion, language and ethnic rank.

Because of the large number of minority ethnic groups in Thailand, I will compare only a small number of groups with the Siamese.¹ These groups will be: the Mons, the Hmong and the Malay-Muslims. Before looking at these three minority ethnic groups, I will describe the Siamese briefly.

The Thai's achieved a state society early in their history and Thai states were fairly large in scale (Provencher 1992). Monarchy and religion are important aspects of Thai
nationalism.

"Thai nationalism, it is explained, is bound up with the notion of a Thai identity based on loyalty to the Monarchy, adherence to Buddhism and a sense of a common ancestry" (de Silva, et al. 1988:7).

de Silva et al. (1988:2) says, "...One way in which ethnic groups are defined - and define themselves - is by religious affiliation." The majority of the Thai people practice Theravada Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism's main emphasis is on the Buddha and his teachings.

"The Buddha does not merely symbolize the overcoming of attachment, ignorance, and grasping, and the attainment of binary ideals of dispassion and compassion. He is that truth and that reality. He represents the occasion whereby those who follow his example may discover this truth for themselves, or, by relying on his power at least to improve their lot in this life or a future one" (Swearer 1981:8).

Theravada Buddhism is also important for the Thai King. Theravada Buddhism incorporates the notion of god-king (devaraja) from Hinduism (Swearer 1981:39).

"...the ruler was considered to be either an incarnation of a god or a descendant from a god or both, and in the case of Theravada Buddhism the king became a representative of god..." (Swearer 1981:39).

Thus, to the Siamese the king is virtually god. The Siamese show their respect towards the king and also believe in spirits. "These spirits are credited with controlling events within their domains and with guarding local custom" (Keyes 1977:151).

Standard Thai language (see appendix 2) is the national language which is taught in schools, used on all official documents and used in almost all printed materials (Keyes 1987:15). The Thai language has a large literature (Provencher
1992). Thai religion and language plays an important role in being Thai.

There are more groups of Thai than just the Siamese. There is ethnic rank among the Thai. The highest, of course, is the Siamese, which developed a state of great scale. The next in rank and scale were the Lanna Thai states in north Thailand (Provencher 1992). The least in rank and scale of state were the Isan in the Northeast and the Pak Thai in southern Thailand (Provencher). Thus, it has been normal for the Siamese to rank different Thai groups. These other groups of Thai also speak different dialects of the Thai language that are not easily comprehensible to the Siamese.

**Mon**

The Mon and the Thai have a long history of relations which may be one reason why the Thai accepted the Mon so easily. Charles Keyes (1987:18) comments, "Tai-speaking peoples are not the original inhabitants of what is now Thailand." Before the eleventh century, when Tai became historically significant, the dominate groups of people spoke languages that are included in the Austroasiatic or Mon-Khmer language family (Keyes 1987:18) (see appendix 3). For instance, Keyes (1987:18-19) notes that the Mon had kingdoms in central and northern Thailand as well as Burma from around the third century A.D. to the thirteenth century. Michael Smithies et al. (1986:59) enforces Keyes analysis: "Major Mon civilizations existed in Southern Burma and
Thailand long before the rise of Thai and Burmese states." The Mon also had large state societies early in their History (Provencher 1992). Though the Mons have long lived in Thailand, much of the written documentation of the Mon-Thai relationship deals with the Mon coming over to Thailand from Burma. For example, Brian Foster (1982:5-6) states:

"The Mons who came from Burma were welcomed by Thai monarchs and were considered desirable subjects. In some cases they were met at the border by representatives of the crown and were given government lands to farm."

Their lifestyles were similar in some ways: (Foster 1982:6) both are Theravada Buddhists; both have social organization similar to that of other lowland Southeast Asian peasants (Smithies 1986:62); and both are wet rice farmers. Because the Mons had so much in common with their Thai welcomer, the Thais found them rather easy to assimilate (Smithies 1986:62). Though the Mon situation seemed quite positive, they were separated from the Thai both economically and socially (Foster 1982:6). If the Mon have been in Thailand before the Tai, then where did the Siamese come from and how did they become so powerful?

To explain the emergence of the Siamese let us begin with the collapse of the Mon Kingdom of Haripunjaya. In the late thirteenth century some Tai chiefs expanded their rule when they defeated the Mons who ruled the kingdom of Haripunjaya; which was centered in what is now the town of Lamphun (Keyes 1977:75). Charles Keyes (1977:75) argues that when the Tai defeated the Mon at Haripunjaya it was not a defeat of one people over another but the manifestation of a new tradition, the Yuan, which developed
from both Mon (civilization) and Thai (barbarian) traditions. Keyes (1977:76) states that in 1350 a Tai lord became ruler of all the Mons and Tai in the lower Cao Phraya basin. Though the Tai conquered several Mon states, it seems to be the case that they did not have any deliberate intention to obliterate the Mon group. Keyes (1977:75) elaborates, "The chronicles of northern Thailand do not indicate that the Tai conquerors embarked on any genocidal campaign against the Mons." In fact, the interrelationship between the northern Tai principalities and the Mon states of lower Burma remained friendly after the Tai domination of northern Thailand, and the Mon monks were still important in teaching Buddhism to the Tai rulers of Chaing Mai (Keyes 1977:75).

The Mon and the Tai had complementing and compatible cultures. This is further exemplified in the emergence of one of the most important kingdoms of Siamese history, Ayutthaya, which emerged as the successor to the Mon state of Lavo and had Tai-speaking rulers (Keyes 1977:76). Keyes (1977:77) states:

"In the following century, the two states of Ayutthaya and Sukhothai struggled for supremacy in the region that is today central Thailand. Ayutthaya ultimately triumphed and absorbed the kingdom of SukhoThai. It was in the area now dominated by Ayutthaya that the culture we know as Siamese developed. The Siamese culture that emerged in central Thailand resulted from the adaption of barbarian immigrant people to a context long dominated by the Indianized Mon and Khmer. The Mon made this adaption peacefully; indeed, after the fourteenth century, the Siamese and the Mon of central Thailand differed in little else than language."

This was the beginning of Siamese culture, but it was not the end of Mon culture. The Siamese and the Mon of Burma still had
frequent encounters. In fact, the relations between the Mon and Siamese is quite different than between the Siamese and the other minority groups.²

The Mons are the most assimilated ethnic group in Thailand. In fact, it is hard to tell if they are Mon or Siamese (Smithies 1986:60). Sometimes they are not sure. All Mons are citizens of Thailand, are part of the Thai national Buddhist hierarchy, and are culturally Thai in almost every way (Foster 1977:115). According to Smithies (1986:60):

"No one knows how many Mons live in Thailand today, since they are all Thai citizens and are not distinguished legally from the Thais in any way."

There are a few scattered Mon settlements in Lamphun/Chaingmai province, along the river Ping, also in Lopburi including Bangkok, from Pathumthari to Samut Sakhorn and in Rajburi and Kanchanaburi provinces along the rivers Maeklong and Kwae Noi (Bauer 1984:5).

Even their differences are of little significance. In military service the Mons were separated from the Thais, until recently (Smithies 1986:67). Except for this the government did not treat the Mons differently from the Thais and the Mons are considered as genuine Thai citizens (Smithies 1986:67). In fact, marriage among Mon and Thai causes no difficulties (Smithies 1986:65). For purposes of marriage they do not think of each other as distinctly different ethnic groups (Smithies 1986:73).

One reason for peaceful integration was that they are both Buddhist (Pholwaddhana 1986:32). In fact, it is historically
known that Mon monks educated the Thai in Buddhism, which inspired Thammayut reforms (Foster 1977:85). Yet, in areas where there are a great number of both Thais and Mons; separate wats were built (Smithies 1986:66). In some cases one can find Mon and Thai wats built next to each other or even touching each other (Smithies 1986:66).

Thais regard Theravada Buddhism as being very important.

"...Mon Buddhism has long held a position of high esteem in Theravada Southeast Asia and is characterized primarily by strict adherence to ordination rules and strict monastic discipline" (Quoted in Foster 1982:7).

Smithies (1986:68) points out that the substance of Mon Buddhism differs little from that of the Thais. Smithies (1986:75) also notes "there is no longer an official distinction between Mon and Thai wats, and, in fact, in most cases there is no practical distinction either."

There are some religious differences and likenesses between the Mons and the Thais. Though like the Thais, Buddhism, Brahminism and animism co-exist, the Mons do appear to place considerably more emphasis on non-Buddhist supernatural forces (Smithies 1986:44). Smithies (1986:44) says "from birth on, the Mon child is reared in a world of ghosts and taboos which limit his freedom and require special rites." Another main cultural difference is that the Mons believe in the spirit cult (Smithies 1986:68). The Mons have a system of totemic-like house spirits which are inherited in the male line (Smithies 1986:64). But the house spirit cult has pretty much died out (Smithies 1986:76). Smithies (1986:69) notes "in times of stress - especially when
one of the spirit group was sick - a spirit dance was held."

Songkram along with the Buddhist lent are the most important ceremonies of the year for the Mons (Smithies 1986:69).

The Mons still acknowledge their ethnic identity. The Mons list language, religion, spirit cult and Songkram as the most important traits distinguishing them from the Thais (Smithies 1986:69).

One of the main differences between the two is language. In Mon wats, the monks chant in the Mon style and preach in the Mon language, thus making it difficult for Thais to participate (Smithies 1986:68). Yet Foster (1982:35) notes that in many wats they rarely chant in the Mon style. "The change to Thai chanting usually occurs when an old abbot dies and is replaced by a younger one" (Foster 1982:35). Also, preaching is rarely done in Mon (Foster 1982:35). Smithies (1986:70) notes:

"we know from Halliday and Graham that by the early twentieth century most Mons were bilingual in Thai and Mon; we also know from Halliday that by the early twentieth century they built their houses like the Thais, and that their language had experienced strong lexical influence from the Thai language."

During Halliday's time the Mon language had already borrowed a large amount of Thai vocabulary, this probably involved a long period of bilingualism (Quoted in Foster 1982:7). If both parents speak Mon the children may speak Mon (Foster 1977:123 & 126) But recently, though parents may speak Mon, once children go to school they refuse to continue speaking in Mon and speak only in Thai (Foster 1977:130). "Mons...for the most part show an utter lack of appreciation for the tone in Siamese. They
simply speak Siamese without tones..." (Quoted in Foster 1982:7). Though the Mon language is fading out fast, it remains a valued ethnic criterion next to genealogy (Foster 1982:34). The Mon language has some written material but not on a scale equivalent to the written material in Thai language (Provencher 1992).

Rapid change, loss of Mon language and culture, did not begin until after World War II (Smithies 1986:70). The people that grew up during this time are more like Thai rather than Mon (Smithies 1986:70). The factors behind the change are: (1) population grew, forcing Mon and Thai villages to come in contact with one another, resulting in labor exchange and other forms of social and economic interaction; (2) transportation improved; (3) economy assumed a stronger market orientation; and (4) wat schools were being replaced by the government's own schools (Smithies 1986:70-71). In the new Thai schools, both Thais and Mons learned new loyalties to the state (Smithies 1986:71). The University of Rangoon did offer a course in Mon (Bauer 1984:7). According to Smithies (1986:75) "Old people still can read and write; but as a written language Mon is virtually dead in Thailand." Today, the Mon language is only taught in monasteries (Bauer 1984:7). Most of the Mon studies have been confined to archaeology (Bauer 1984:16).

Some of the common identifiers of Mon people are Mon ancestry, awareness of Mon historical tradition, and knowledge of a few words in Mon (Smithies 1986:77). Parents are finding it harder to get their children to speak Mon; there is probably
great social pressure for them to speak Thai in all occasions (Smithies 1986:78). When considering friendship, the ability to speak Mon only applies to people with high occupations (Foster 1977:423). There is no indication that the loss of the Mon language causes any kind of conflict between the Mon and the Thai.

**Hmong**

Where did the Hmong come from? The Hmong (Miao) migrated into northern Thailand from southern China by way of Laos (Keyes 1987:21) (see appendix 4 and 5) during the first world war (Bhikkhu 1974:1).

The Hmong are a tribal group. They have never had state societies. The Hmong are considered a hill tribe by the Thai. This term "hill tribe" in itself has negative connotations. Used in reference to a group in Thailand it automatically classifies the group as a minority (Technical 1986:1). "The Miao-Yao peoples have had to give way geographically to the Chinese throughout history, gradually moving to the south and west, and eventually into Burma, Thailand, and Laos" (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:73). According to Srisavasdi (1962:89) the Hmong are separated into three different tribes: White Hmong, Black Hmong and the Gua M'ba Hmong, (see appendix 6) but there are more tribes today. Many of the Hmong are classified, by the Thai, by the way they dress (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:73). "The majority of them are located on mountains along the border areas
of Nan province close to the Laotian Territory." (Srisavasdi 1962:89) (see appendix 5 and 7) "Also in scattered groups they are to be found in the provinces of Chiengrai, Chiengmai, Lampang, Prae, Mae, Hongsawn, Tak, Pitsanuloke, Petchaboon and Loey" (Srisavasdi 1962:90).

Their main farming occupation is opium which many of the men have become addicted to (Srisavasdi 1962:91). They also grow rice, corn, sorghum, taro and vegetables (Srisavasdi 1962:98 & 102). But opium is the backbone of the Hmong economy (Srisavasdi 1962:98). In a year, during the 1960's, the Hmong family could earn Baht 3,000 to Baht 3,500, equivalent to $150 to $175 US dollars, from opium production (Srisavasdi 1962:98). The amount of income from opium production has increased, during the 1980's, to 4,000 to 6,000 Baht a year which is about $200 to $300 US dollars (Chaturabhwad 1980:79). It is probably even higher today. Thus, we can see why the Hmong may be reluctant to change from opium crops to less productive cash crops.

The Hmong are animists and practice ancestor worship (Srisavasdi 1962:110-112) (see appendix 8). "The Hmong believe in many supernatural beings: gods, spirits of places, household spirits, malicious spirits, and spirits of the dead" (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:187). Srisavasdi (1962:110) mentions, "With fear in their hearts, they worship the household god, the spirits of the jungle, fields, etc." "They also believe that men and all living things have souls which return to an afterworld when they die, and await reincarnation" (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:187).
McKinnon & Bhruksasri (1983:187) say that these beliefs affect the Hmong their whole life. The Hmongs also believe in the magic power of their amulets (Srisavasdi 1962:101). Shamans are important to Hmong's ritual activities. Thus, "The religion of the Meo is a combination of pantheism and shamanism with the emphasis on ancestor-worship" (Technical 1986:12).

Hmong shamanism is being affected by Thai assimilation and religious missions (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:193). Missionary activity may draw the Hmong out of their traditional beliefs (de Silva et al. 1988:132). "They feel that Dhammacarik bhikkhus' teachings provide an opportunity rather than an exclusive alternative like Christianity" (de Silva et al. 1988:132). Some have even converted to Buddhism (Keyes 1987:129). One reason that some Hmong have converted to Theravada Buddhism might be because Theravada Buddhists also believe in spirits. This folk religion might make the transition into the new religion more agreeable.

"The present policy of the Thai Government towards the hill tribes is based on the declaration of July 6, 1976, in which is stated the intention to integrate these people into the Thai state and give them full rights to practice their religions and maintain their cultures" (Technical 1986:1). This declaration also states that the government wants the hill tribes to become first class, self-reliant Thai citizen (Technical 1986:1). This declaration indicates that the Thai government has no problems with the hill tribes' different religions or cultures."
Language makes communication difficult because tribal dialects are different and cannot be understood by other tribes as well as the Thai language (Fremming 1975:7). The Hmong language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language group (Technical 1986:2) (see appendix 9). Some people argue that it belong to the same language family as the Thai (see appendix 2). The Hmong speak a tonal language with some Chinese influence (Young 1962:39). The Hmong have no written language but it has been written in a missionary phonetic script (Military 1969:9).

"The Meo are illiterate on the whole; however, some of their young people are learning to read and write Thai through the Border Police school systems and missionary efforts" (Young 1962:39).

Tribal autonomy is highly valued and they are willing to fight for it (Fremming 1975:7). Within the Hmong tribe there are no social classes (Technical 1986:6). Yet, they have strong bonds of solidarity and tight clans (Young 1962:46). "There are certainly no signs of the Meo becoming absorbed in any way by the Thai people or other tribes" (Young 1962:46). The Hmong identity has been unaffected by Thai culture and will probably remain as it is (McKinnon & Bhrusasri 1983:53).

Relations between Hmong and lowland Thais have been described through the centuries as being isolated, indifferent and ignorant (Fremming 1975:5). Because the Hmong live in relative isolation they do not have a sense of national identity (Technical 1986:2). Thai attitudes toward the Hmong are that they are uncivilized, exotic and, when provoked, dangerous (Fremming 1975:5). Fremming (1975:57) notes, "If the lowland
stereotypes depict the hill people as savages, upland tradition pictures the valley people as enemies unworthy of trust."

Local governments have taken notice of the Hmong only recently (Fremming 1975:5). Contact between the two groups has increased because of increasing economic interdependence, expanding population, and greater influence of the Thai government in Hmong daily life (Fremming 1975:21). Yet, they are treated badly by the government and the Hmong are quite aware of their inequality (Girling 1981:259-260).

The government sponsors schools for Hmong children and fill the teacher positions with border police (Bhikkhu 1974:3). Young (1962:44) mentions that the Hmong are accepting the schooling quite well and are learning Thai successfully. The Hmong seem to want to be educated and see many of the advantages of education (Young 1962:44). They also sponsor road construction to the Hmong villages for better communication (Bhikkhu 1974:3). According to Bhikkhu (1974:3) the King gives money for the founding of schools and will visit each village at least once a year donating needed supplies. This may be one of the Thai government's ways to assimilate the Hmong. A few of the disadvantages of the Hmong are that they "...receive less educational service, suffer poorer health and earn lower incomes when compared with other sectors of the national population" (Technical 1986:2). This may be because they are not fully Thai, that is, they are not Buddhist and do not speak the Thai language. "The consequence for non-Thai or non-Buddhist groups
tends to be their exclusion from the Thai political system" (Fremming 1975:118).

**Malay-Muslims**

Around 191 A.D., the four southern provinces were one state and known as "Patani State" (Pholwaddhana 1986:45). The Malays also have large scale state societies in their history. "They began to have contact with the Thai from Sukhothai (then the capital city of Thailand) about 1280" (Pholwaddhana 1986:45). "The four southern provinces were taken over by Thailand in 1550" (Quoted in Pholwaddhana 1986:45). "Muslim Malays--the largest indigenous minority in Thailand--number some half a million and form about 85 percent of the population in the southernmost provinces of Patani, Satul, Yala, and Naradhis" (Thompson and Adloff 1955:158).

The history of the Malay-Muslims' encounter with Thailand's rulers created some tensions. After Pibul became premier, Malay-Muslims were pressured to adopt the Thai language, customs and dress (Thompson and Adloff 1955:159). In 1941, the exemption the Malays had from the Buddhist laws on marriage and inheritance was revoked (Thompson and Adloff 1955:159). In 1946, after the replacement of Pibul, the government gave the Malay-Muslims their religious freedom (Thompson and Adloff 1955:159). "Pibul symbolized for the Malay-Muslims the Thai drive for cultural hegemony" (Tugby & Tugby 1989:83). Pibul returned to power in 1948 (Tugby & Tugby 1989:83). There were many political
conflicts between Malay-Muslims and the Thai Buddhist during this time (Tugby & Tugby 1989:83). Pibul reinforced promises of religious freedom and educational opportunities, but there was still resentment towards the Thai (Tugby & Tugby 1989:83). Malay-Muslims want to preserve their linguistic differences and religious freedom (Thomas and Adloff 1955:284).

The Malay-Muslims had some very serious religious conflicts with the Thai. Some complaints made by Muslim-Malays are that they were forced to worship idols, were sent mosque officials that they did not choose and that they are being ruled by Buddhist and not Koranic law (Thompson and Adloff 1955:160). Malays living in Buddhist areas are in fear of what Buddhist law will do to their everyday institutions (Thomas and Adloff 1955:284). Religious differences between the Malay-Muslims and the Thai Buddhist have resulted in the lack of communication between the two groups (McVey 1989:36).

An obstacle for Malay-Muslims to be accepted as Thai citizens also is related to religion. McVey (1989:36) points out that "...Thai officials find it almost impossible to conceive of a proper Thai citizen who is not a Buddhist: Buddhist is to their minds a central feature of Thai-ness, and only one who has imbibed Buddhist values can be relied on." Malay-Muslims feel that they do not belong to the Thai nation-state and one reason for this is Islam (McVey 1989:50). According to de Silva et al. (1988:188):

"It is not an oversimplification to state that much of the problem, violent or otherwise, between the Thai state
officials and the Malay Muslims of southern Thailand today has its deeper cosmological roots in this Islamic absolute demand for allegiance to Allah alone."

Buddhism and Islam are different in many ways:

"Islam is theism or monotheism while Buddhism is atheism. Buddhist people practice idolatry while the same thing is strictly eschewed by Muslim. Furthermore, at least in practice, Islam is more intensive and extensive in terms of religious proscription than Buddhism is" (Suthasasna 1989:91).

Men cannot be classified as having god-like qualities. Malay-Muslims will not give respect to Thailand's king because he is just a man. Malay-Muslims think it is improper to attend functions that do not have Muslim aspects to them (Thomas 1982:156). Also, they do not marry any one who is not Islamic (Thomas 1982:156). When they try to keep their own language and religion, the government thinks that they connected to separatist movements (Provencher 1982:140).

Malay-Muslim schools are important in teaching Islamic religious ideals. Provencher (1982:150) describes the purpose of pondok schools:

"When children are five or six years of age, they usually begin to receive formal training in reciting prayers and Qur'anic verses at the local pondok school. The school meets during hours that are convenient for the students, their parents, and the bilal, who is usually a haji but who may have no other special qualifications except a reputation as a religious person. In addition to learning proper oral recitation of the most commonly used Qur'anic verses, some children begin to learn to read the Qur'an and also to read and write Malay in jawi script, which is derived from Arabic script."

There has been pressure by the Thai government since the 1960's to push secular education in the southern provinces of Thailand (Thomas 1982:170). The government tried to convince pondoks to
become private schools so they could also teach secular subjects (Thomas 1982:172). Because of the resistance to conversion very few pondoks became private schools (Thomas 1982:172). Malay-Muslims feel that dealing with the Thai will destroy their faith and spiritual purity (de Silva et al. 1988:189).

The Malay and Thai languages are not mutually intelligible; thus presenting conflict of communication between the two groups (Suthasasna 1989:92). In fact, many Thais have protested that when they are down in the southern provinces they feel like they are in a Malay country (Suthasasna 1989:92). The Thai language and the Malay language come from two different families of language. The Malay language also has extensive written material; more so than the Thai (Provencher 1992). Malay language is also considered a world language spoken by many people (Provencher 1992). This might be part of the Malay-Muslim's reluctance to give up their language for the Thai language.

"The Malay language is not taught in government schools in the border provinces, not even as a secondary language, and the local officials strongly discourage the distribution of Malay-language newspapers from Malaysia" (Suhrke 1989:6). Yet, the Malay language is still preferred by Malay-Muslims who can speak the Thai language (Suhrke 1989:16). In fact, Malay-Muslims think the Malay language and Islamic practices should be taught in secular schools by Muslim teachers (Suhrke 1989:16). A response to the pressure of learning the Thai language and losing some of their ethnic identity by going to secular schools is withdrawing from Thai contact (Suhrke 1989:17).
Their ethnic rank seems to be low according to Thais. Malay-Muslims say that one conflict manifests from ethnic prejudice (Suhrke 1989:8). The government official will typically view Malay-Muslims as being both stubborn and unresponsive along with being hostile, shiftless, undeveloped and their loyalty to the Thai government is often questionable (Suhrke 1989:8). Thomas (1982:157) mentions that the Thai regard the Malay-Muslims as socially and culturally inferior and talk to them in a patronizing manner. Thomas (1985:6) says, "Some of this dysfunctional behavior is deliberate, but much of it can be attributed to a lack of cultural awareness (that is, awareness of Islamic beliefs and practices and local Malay customs) on the part of Thai Buddhist officials." Thomas (1982:157) mentions the Malay-Muslims fear of assimilation and losing their heritage.

Conclusion

There are many determinants for ethnic conflict. I argue that the main determinants for conflict would be religion and language. The Mon are the closest in resembling the Siamese in respect of religion. They are both Theravada Buddhists. In fact, the Mon's taught the Siamese Buddhism. Therefore, the Mon's did not have to give up their religion. The Mons probably adopted the Thai language easily because their language does not have a lot of written material. Plus, there is not a lot of people that speak the Mon language in relation to the number of people who speak the Thai language.
I argue that for the Hmong's case religion and language are important but it is the Hmong's societal scale that causes problems. The Hmong can adopt Theravada Buddhism, more easily than Christianity, because the Siamese also have a folk religion which involves beliefs in spirits. Language is more of a problem. The Hmong and Siamese cannot understand each other. The Hmong people are beginning to speak Thai. The Hmong language has no written material and only a small number of people speak the Hmong language. Since this may tend to weaken ties to their language, they may be willing to learn the Thai language. The real problem is that the Hmong are a tribal community. In this respect, the Siamese already classify them as being a minority.

The conflict that arises with the Malay-Muslims also stems from religion and language. Malay-Muslims are Islamic. They believe in one god. Men are equal and cannot be gods. They do not show respect for the Thai king because they see him as just a man; while the Siamese see the king as having god-like qualities. The Siamese are insulted when respect for their king is not shown. The Malay-Muslims believe they should not be governed by non-Islamic law. And they are aware that Islam is a world religion of greater scale than Theravada Buddhism. The Malay-Muslims also have an extensive written language. There is more material written in the Malay language than there is in the Thai language. The Malay language is considered a world language. Thus, there are many speakers. Because of these strong ties to their language the Malay-Muslims cannot give up their language.
and literature for one they may consider inferior.

These three different ethnic groups represent different levels of assimilation. The Mon are fully assimilated where they are indistinguishable from the Siamese. The Hmong are being assimilated by the introduction of Thai language and Theravada Buddhism. They still have retained some of their own identity but have also accepted much of the Siamese culture. The Malay-Muslims have rejected all of the Siamese efforts of assimilation. They do not accept any of the Siamese culture and consider it inferior to their own culture and customs. The degree to which they have been assimilated seems to depend on religion and the extent of written language and number of speakers.

Notes

1. Pholwaddhana (1986:15) argues, "The term 'ethnic group' in Thailand is applied to groups whose behaviors and beliefs are distinct from those of the Thai. If these groups have not caused problems in the society, they are not called minorities."

2. Determinants of status within the Thai culture are age, sex and one's life-style (Foster 1977:79-80). One's life-style could relate to how close one's culture is Thai like. The closer it is the more respect one will receive. Remember this is only a speculation.

3. "In the Northeast the 'basic causes of insurgency,' according to one specialist, 'revolve primarily around poor economic and social conditions—i.e. low wages, land alienation, high land rentals, administrative inefficiency and corruption, and inadequate educational services.'" (Girling 1981:259)

4. Problems occurred because they were immigrating into Thailand from other countries—i.e. a threat to Thailand's internal security and those who were or supposedly were sympathetic to
communism (Keyes 1987:127-129).

5. Opium farming creates conflict because it results in deforestation and the destruction of watersheds which are both important to lowland Thai farmers (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:6). It is also illegal to cultivate opium in Thailand (Fremming 1975:40). This has led the Thai government to encourage the production of new crops (Fremming 1975:40-41). The outcome of this program is uncertain, but right now it has created conflict and hostility towards the Thai government (Fremming 1975:44).

6. Other pressures affecting shamanism include: future of opium growing, shortage of new land, population growth of all ethnic groups, secular education and improvement of medical facilities (McKinnon & Bhruksasri 1983:193).

7. The government does have a problem with swidden agriculture that is practiced by the Hmong (Technical 1986:2). This causes deforestation and destruction of highland watersheds (Technical 1986:2).

8. Another conflict Malay-Muslims will point out is the fact that very few Malay-Muslims are allowed to enter administrative positions within the civil service (Suhrke 1989:6). Politics is another source of ethnic conflict, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, it is still worth mentioning.

9. Many Thais characterize Malay-Muslims as being outsiders (Suthasasna 1989:104). This also causes ethnic tensions. Historically this is untrue since the Malays have inhabited that area of Thailand before the Thais were even in the area.
AUSTRO-THAI (polysyllabic; atonal)

Austronesian (=Malayo-Polynesian)

Tai-Kadai

Miao-Yao

(mono syllabization; tonogenesis)

Homeland: Very close geographically to the Sino-Tibetan homeland.
Appendix 3

HIGHLANDERS OF THAILAND

AUSTRO-ASIATIC (sesquisyllabic; registral)

- Munda (India)
- Nicobarese (Nicobar Islands)
- *Aslian (Malaya)

Mon-Khmer

- Khasi (Assam)
- *Monic (Burma)
- *Palaungic (Burma) *Khmucic (Laos)
- *Katuic (Vietnam)
- *Pearic (Cambodia)
- *Khmer (Cambodia)

Viet-Muong (Vietnam)
Bahnaric (Vietnam)

Homeland: Mainland South-East Asia.

A description of some established patterns of hill tribes immigration into Northern Thailand and the general regions of Laos and Burma from whence they have come.
ORIGINS OF THE HILL TRIBES OF NORTHERN THAILAND

SINO-TIBETAN STOCK (Mongoloids)

Southern Migration

Lo Lo/Nosu

Tibeto-Burman

Karen Group

Akha

Lahu Na

P'wo

Skaw

Taungthu

B'ghwe

Lahu Nyi

Lisu

Lahu Shi

Lahu Shehleh

Main Chinese

Yao-Meo-Pateng

Haw

Blue Meo

White Meo

Guam B'wa

Northern Migration

Wa Group

Lawa

Kha Mu

Kha Haw

Phi-Tong-Luang or Khon Pa

## Appendix 8

### RELIGION OF HIGHLANDERS BY ETHNIC GROUP
(TRIBAL RESEARCH CENTRE DATA, 1977 SURVEY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnolinguistic Group</th>
<th>Animism</th>
<th>Buddhism</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Islam</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunnanese</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Meo–Yao</strong></td>
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<td>Hmong</td>
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<td>Blue Meo</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White Meo</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yao</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td><strong>Mon–Khmer</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Htin</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khmu</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<td><strong>Tai</strong></td>
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<td>Thai, Northern</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akha (Ikaw)</td>
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<td>30.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lahu Nyi</td>
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<td>81.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen, Pwo</td>
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<td>61.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen, Skaw</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 9

SINO-TIBETAN (monosyllabic; tone-prone)

Sinitic (= Chinese)
  |  |
  |  |
  Mandarin

Hakka

Fukienese

Karenic
  |  |
  |  |
  Pwo

Kuki-Chin-Naga

Himalayish

Kachin

Lolo-Burmese

Tibeto-Karen

Tibeto-Burman

Tibetan

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