

ขนมปังบาเกต์ในฐานะสัญลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมฝรั่งเศสในอินโดจีน



นายสมเกียรติศักดิ์ กิ่งสะดา

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)

บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2551

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

BAGUETTE AS A SYMBOL OF FRENCH CULTURE IN INDOCHINA



Mr. Somkiethisack Kingsada

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies

(Interdisciplinary Program)

Graduate School

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2008

Copyright of Chulalongkorn University

สมเกียรติศักดิ์ กิ่งสะอาด : ขนมปังบาแกตในฐานะสัญลักษณ์ของวัฒนธรรมฝรั่งเศสในอินโดจีน (BAGUETTE AS A SYMBOL OF FRENCH CULTURE IN INDOCHINA) อ.ที่ปรึกษา
วิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร. วีระ นุชเปี่ยม, 80 หน้า.

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้มุ่งศึกษาเกี่ยวกับ บทบาทและอิทธิพลของวัฒนธรรมฝรั่งเศส โดยผ่านเรื่องของอาหาร โดยเฉพาะ ขนมปังบาแกต (Baguette) ซึ่งเป็นเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะของวัฒนธรรมการกินในประเทศแถบลุ่มแม่น้ำโขงตอนใต้ ซึ่งมีประเทศ ลาว เวียดนาม และกัมพูชา ซึ่งเดิมเรียกว่าอินโดจีน การศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้ดำเนินการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยวิธีที่ใช้ในการศึกษาค้นคว้าวิจัยได้แก่การศึกษาจากเอกสาร การสัมภาษณ์ และการสังเกตการณ์ การลงพื้นที่ภาคสนามจำกัดอยู่ใน 3 เมืองใหญ่ ของประเทศดังกล่าว ส่วนใหญ่จะลงพื้นที่ในตัวเมืองเวียงจันทน์ ของประเทศลาว และอีกสองเมืองใหญ่คือ นครโฮจิมินห์ และกรุงพนมเปญ ซึ่งอยู่ภายใต้การปกครองของฝรั่งเศสในอดีต ในพื้นที่นี้มีการบริโภคขนมปังบาแกตอย่างแพร่หลาย ซึ่งทำให้เอื้ออำนวยในการศึกษาข้อมูลที่เกี่ยวข้องได้มากขึ้น

การวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่า ขนมปังบาแกต หรือที่ลาวเรียกว่า "ข้าวจี" กำเนิดขึ้นในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 โดยมีกรกล่าวกันว่าพ่อครัวชาวเวียดนามเป็นผู้ริเริ่มทำขนมปังประเภทนี้ขึ้นมา บาแกตเป็นขนมปังที่ทำจากแป้ง น้ำ เกลือ และยีสต์ บางคนเรียกว่าขนมปังขาไก่ แต่ดูเหมือนคำว่าบาแกต จะหมายถึง แท่ง หรือ Stick ในภาษาอังกฤษปัจจุบัน ขนมปังประเภทนี้ได้ถูกเผยแพร่สู่ภูมิภาคแถบลุ่มแม่น้ำโขงตอนใต้ โดยชนชั้นผู้ปกครองของชาวฝรั่งเศสและผู้รับใช้ในระบอบการปกครองอาณานิคม การรับอิทธิพลของกลุ่มชนชั้นสูงในพื้นที่ในเมืองใหญ่เพิ่มขึ้นในช่วงสมัยการปกครองของฝรั่งเศสในลาวระหว่าง ค.ศ. 1893-1954 ต่อมาการบริโภคขนมปังบาแกตได้แพร่หลายมากขึ้นในหมูชนชั้นกลางระดับทั่วไปในชนบท ภายหลังจากการปกครองของฝรั่งเศสในปี ค.ศ. 1954 ด้วยวิธีการผลิตและองค์ประกอบการทำข้าวจี ที่ไม่ซับซ้อน บวกกับลักษณะนิยมของการบริโภคอาหารที่มีเอกลักษณ์ของเดิมในภูมิภาคนี้ จึงได้มีการประยุกต์และดัดแปลงวิธีการทำ และนำมาประกอบใส่กับอาหารของท้องถิ่นตนเอง จึงกลายมาเป็นอาหารที่ได้รับความนิยมชมชอบและใช้บริโภคในชีวิตประจำวันของคนทุกชนชั้น โดยมีการวางขาย และมีหลากหลายรูปแบบ สามารถเห็นได้ทั่วตามถนนริมทางทั้งในเมืองและชนบท

การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้ได้ส่งผลเกิดความเข้าใจอันดีต่อพื้นฐานและกระบวนการรับมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมที่ฝรั่งเศสได้ทิ้งเอาไว้ จนกลายมาเป็นวิถีการกินของผู้คนชาวลาวมาจนถึงทุกวันนี้ ซึ่งจะพบเห็นได้ทั่วไปตามเมืองใหญ่ๆ ของประเทศลาว นั่นก็คือ ขนมปังบาแกต หรือ ที่ชาวลาวเรียกว่า "ข้าวจีป่าเต้" นั่นเอง

สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา 2551

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก

4889569420: MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

KEYWORD: FRENCH COLONIAL/BAGUETTE

SOMKIETHISACK KINGSADA: BAGUETTE AS A SYMBOL OF FRENCH
CULTURE IN INDOCHINA. THESIS PRINCIPAL ADVISOR: ASST. PROF.
THEERA NUCHPIAM, Ph.D., 80 pp.

The aim of this thesis is to study the role and influence of French culture through food, especially the baguette. This kind of French food has become a unique characteristic of food culture in the lower Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries, namely, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, which formerly constituted French Indochina. The method for this study is qualitative in nature, consisting of documentary research, interviews, and direct observations. The field study was restricted to the large cities in the three countries. The main field-research areas are Vientiane in Lao PDR, and Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh in Vietnam and Cambodia, respectively. All three countries were once under French rule; they are thus areas where there exists widespread consumption of baguette – a factor which was favorable to field-data collection by the researcher.

The research has found that the baguette, or “khao chi” in Lao, originated in the 19th century. It is believed that a cook from Vienna was the originator of this kind of bread. Baguette is made from flour, water, salt, and yeast. It is sometimes known, in Thai and Lao as “chicken-leg bread”, or sticks in English. This kind of bread was introduced into the lower GMS countries by French ruling elite and their servants under the colonial regime. The influence of the ruling elite was also felt among the local people in high society in large urban areas under French rule in Laos during 1893-1954. The consumption of baguette was later spread to the middle-class people in the countryside following the end of French rule in 1954. Consisting of simple ingredients, together with simple production process, khao chi could easily be fused with the culinary traditions of the local populations, who, in adopting it, have adapted it to their traditional foods. The baguette has thus become popular among people of all social classes and can be found on sale in various forms and sizes in both urban and rural areas.

This study has contributed to an understanding of the nature and process of adopting French culture, whose legacy is still present and has become an eating habit, especially of the Lao people, today. This legacy can be seen in all large cities in Laos, where it is generally known as “khao chi pate”.

Field of Studies Southeast Asian Studies

Student's signature.....

Academic year 2008

Principal Advisor's signature.....

ACKOWLEGEEMENTS

This thesis could not have been achieved without assistance and contribution of these following people

Firstly my sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Theera Nuchpiam . Assistant Professor . Ph.D. who supervised thesis , without his insightful advised and encouragement , I could not get my thesis fruitfully today. My special thanks must be made to Dr. Sunait Chutinaranond, Director of Southeast Asia, Choulalongkorn University, who is so kind and considerable in giving me the opportunities to keep on my life study under the Rockefeller scholarship till the end . I hardly to forget him in my life.

I am also grateful in debt to Professor Dr. Klairung Amratisha, Head of thesis examination Committee, Professor Dr. Soupang Chantavanich, and Dr. Saikeo, the Committee members for very much constructive , helpful comments and correction my thesis to be more academic way. I truly thank for very active officers of SEA Program Centre , Ms Duangamon, Mr Panya and Ms. Spa, for their very warm hostilities, with their friendly coordinating and assistance, makes me studying in Bangkok very pleasant like in home .I do hope to have chance to return them when they visit Laos.

Furthermore my attitudes thanks for all my classmates both Thai studies and SEA studies students program who share the difficulties and happiness with me during studying at Chulalongkone for two years. My thanks also to all scholars and government senior officers and others professional bakers who gave me information and data during my field work and in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Lastly I am immensely for my beloved mother and all brothers for their endless love support and good wishes always .

CONTENTS

	page
Abstract (Thai).....	iv
Abstract (English).....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Contents.....	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives.....	2
1.3 Main Argument	3
1.4 Scope of Research	3
1.5 Conceptual Framework.....	3
1.6 Methodology.....	5
CHAPTER II FRENCH PRESENCE IN INDOCHINA.....	7
2.1 Western power Competition in Southeast Asia.....	7
2.2 The Factors explaining the arrival of French in the GMS countries... 8	
2.2.1 <i>French Colonization of Vietnam</i>	8
2.2.2 <i>French colonization of Cambodia</i>	9
2.2.3 <i>French Colonization of Laos</i>	10
2.3 French Rules and Policies in the lower GMS countries	11
2.4 French colonial Theory and practice in the lower GMS countries.....	14
2.5 Impact of French Rules on Economic, Culture and Social life.....	15
2.5.1 <i>Laos</i>	16
2.5.2. <i>Vietnam</i>	19
2.5.3 <i>Cambodia</i>	21

CHAPTER III THE BREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF BAGUETTE IN FRANCE.....	23
3.1 History of bread in General.....	23
3.2 The French bread	24
3.3 Baguette presence and its techniques Development.....	25
3.4 The Fall and the Rise of French bread's Popularity.....	29
CHAPTER IV CHAPTER IVLOCAL EATING HABITS AND FRENCH FOOD IN THE LOWER GMS COUNTRIES.....	32
4.1 Introduction.....	32
4.2 Eating Habit in Laos.....	32
4.3 Eating Habit in Vietnam.....	34
4.4 Eating Habit in Cambodia.....	35
4.5 Baguette : French Food Influence In the GMS countries	37
CHAPTER V FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	39
5.1 The introduction of baguette into the lower GMS countries.....	39
5.2 Responses of people to baguette.....	43
5.2.1 <i>The 1975 Revolution and Its Impact</i>	43
5.2.2 <i>Baguette in the Lower GMS Today</i>	46
5.3 The Characteristics of baguette and The eating style in the lower GMS countries.....	49
5.4 The Traditional French Baguette.....	50
5.5 Baguette Making process in the Lower GMS countries.....	56
CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION.....	61
References.....	65
Biography.....	72

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

French colonialism made an exit from the countries of the Lower Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries namely Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in 1954, but some traces of French cultural influence remain. Apart from a number of buildings and paintings produced during the colonial period, we may include the French language itself. Though France considers the language part of French culture in this part of the world, few people there speak it now. However, one trace of French culture, perhaps the most unlikely one, can still be found, and that is the culture of eating baguette. People in the Lower GMS countries or known as former French Indochina, which consists of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, still eat baguette.

During the period of French colonial rule, which, in case of Laos, lasted from 1893 to 1954 the French baguette was introduced into these countries, including Laos¹. During that time, particularly in Laos, the eating baguette was found only in main cities among upper class people, but not in the countryside and poor people. People who ate baguette mostly worked with the colonial government and this represented a respected status in society. Nowadays it has become popular among Lao, Vietnamese and Cambodian people throughout this region.

Why is it that this culture has been adopted, and how has it been adapted to the way of life of the people in this region? This is a puzzle that should be explored in depth.

The significance of this research lies in the expectation that it could provide a fundamental knowledge on French cultural influence on the Indochinese countries through the adoption of French food. Its findings will serve as a crucial basis for further study on other aspects of cultural colonialism in the Lower of GMS countries and elsewhere.

¹ France incorporated Laos as one of the five associated regions of French Indochina countries in 1893, along with Cambodia and Tonkin, Anam and Cochinchina in Vietnam until these countries formally gained their independence from France in 1954. (Grant. 2002:45)



Cambodian woman selling French baguette at a Gas station near the Thai-Cambodian boarder



A baguette stall along an urban road in Vientiane leading to the provinces

1.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the extent of French cultural influence through food in the Lower GMS countries: Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam in the post-colonial period.
- 2) To explore the extent and patterns of popular consumption of French baguette in this region
- 3) To examine how this kind of French food has been adopted and adapted to suit local taste and eating habits.

1.3 MAIN ARGUMENT

The main argument or working hypothesis for this study is that the baguette is a cultural artifact that can explain the process of adaptation and localization of French culture in the Lower GMS countries.

1.4 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This study focuses on the extent and patterns of baguette consumption in the countries of former French Indochina. The field research was restricted mainly to Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. Surveys were also undertaken in Hanoi and Phnom Penh, with a view to comparing Lao ways of eating baguette with those in Vietnam and Cambodia.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical underpinning of this research is related to the concept of French food culture.² French food actually signifies a lifestyle of the French people. Eating for the French is not just a matter of seeking to survive or maintaining a good health but rather one of surviving in French style. The uniqueness of this culture is rivaled only by that of the Chinese; that is, only the Chinese have a similar variety in their food.

French food culture is not only characterized by such a variety but is also supported by the French passion for good food in all its forms. The variety of French food is related to the extraordinary range of different geographies and climates which support the local production of all types of ingredients, as well as France's long and varied history. Hence, in many ways, we can say that an understanding of the culture of

² All most the famous French food are regional specialties, some have become popular throughout France while others are mainly enjoyed in the region in which they originate. Food have provided fascinating insights into cultural patterns in consumer societies. There is an intimate relationship between food and identity. French bread and Algerian Wine: Conflicting Identities in French Algeria. Willy Jasen.(2001:195-218)

French food is an understanding of France itself.



Selling baguette in Front of Hotel , Phnom Penh

French foods range from the very simple or basic items, such as the traditional baguette and cheese plus inexpensive wine, to those very elaborate dishes involving a dozen courses and different wines consumed over several hours. Interestingly, the French carry with them this unique passion for food everywhere they go. This partly explains the presence of "French restaurants" outside France all over the world. Moreover, given also their passion for the "civilizing mission", the influence of French food culture has been felt especially in the lands under French rule during the colonial period.³

French bread is of course the most basic item of French food. But the French consume even this basic food *in style*: as a kind of bread, the French baguette is unique. Hence, it is intriguing how this unique French food has been adopted by the Indochinese people. Has this adoption of French food by the local people given rise to conflicting identities – French and Indochinese? How this conflict has been resolved, such that the local people have consumed French baguette as part of their daily meals.

We will see later in this study that the French baguette has actually lived its own unique life in Lower GMS countries. Beginning with a life confined mainly to the French those local people in "high society" who adopted French lifestyle, the French baguette

³ Many French people still take a two-hour break for lunch, with many working parents (particularly in villages and smaller towns) returning home for this purpose. In some areas, mainly in the south of France, lunch breaks may take even longer hours. Given such a long lunch break, businesses which close during this period typically reopen around 2 PM or so and then stay open until about 7 PM.

has now become the food of all common people. This happened through a significant period of adaptation in which the French baguette was fused with local food cultures. Many factors have been involved in this process of adoption and adaptation. It is the purpose of this study to identify at least some of those factors.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study has relied on both documentary and field research. Its documentary part consists mainly of books and other publications on the historical background of French colonialism, the formation of French Indochina, and the cultural policy of the colonial regime adopted for the Indochinese countries. The publications used for this research are both in Thai and English. The books on historical backgrounds include:

Virginia THOMSON (1937), *French Indochina*.

Sud CHONEJEUTSINH (2003), *Vietnam since the French colonial to present*

Grant Evans (2002), *A Short History of Laos: the Land in Between*

Milton Osborne (1997), *Southeast Asia: An Introductory History*

Milton Osborne, *The French Presence in Cochinchina and Cabodia: Rule and Response* (1859-1905), (1969)

Also the study draws on the working papers and some research monographs, including: *The Lao Elite: A study of Tradition and Innovation*, by J.M Halpern (1960). In addition, with reference to the concept, history and development of French baguette influence, the study draws on following:

Amy B. Trubek (2000), *Haute Cuisine: How the French invented the Culinary Profession*

Linda CIVITELLO (1999), *Cuisine and Culture, A history of Food and People*

Michael HEASMAN and Judith WRIHT (1996), *The World of Food: The Consumption in the Age of Affluence by Ben Fine*, and

Theodore ZELDIN (1977), *A history of French Passions (1848-1945)*

The field work part of this study consists of in-depth interviews taken as the main source of data. A total of 35 key informants were interviewed approached, of whom 8 are

former retired government senior officials and served under the French during colonial period, 10 scholars and researchers (7 Lao and 3 foreigners), 19 bakeries owners or baguette producers (12 in Laos, 4 in Vietnam and 3 in Cambodia), 6 local bread sellers, 12 bread customers this field work was carried out in the capital cities of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The field study also included a survey of the influence of baguette as shown in various types of media, including magazines, newspapers, fictions, cartoons, TV commercials, and advertisements in newspapers (in English, French, Lao and other languages). The purpose is to trace the history of baguette in this region - when and how it was introduced to this part of the world, and how and where the local people still continue eating it?

Besides documentary research and field work, the researcher spent several days of observations at the bread or bakery houses in main cities such as Vientiane, Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh to see the whole process of bread and baguette production in these countries.



Baguette with variety of local ingredient Vegetable, pork, chili and pate

CHAPTER II

FRENCH PRESENCE IN THE LOWER MEKONG SUB-REGION COUNTRIES (GMS)

2.1 WESTERN POWER COMPETITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Industrial Revolution had transformed the West European countries and the United States into modern industrialized powers. Hence, whereas in the preceding centuries European overseas expansion had mainly restricted to the purely mercantile trading practices, now competition became increasingly intense for both markets and raw materials¹. Raw materials were needed for expanding industries in the West, markets were demanded for Western manufactured goods, and opportunities were sought for western investment. Mistrusting each other's intentions and fearing competition, the Western powers no longer limited themselves to taking possession of a few enclaves, but rather set out in a determined way to bring Southeast Asia completely under their control.

Although the European merchants, missionaries, and adventurers had been in the area since the sixteenth century, it was until the mid-nineteenth century that activities of the western powers led to the establishment of the French colonial regime in this region. During the process of Western expansion indigenous states had been either liquidated and placed under direct colonial rule or deprived of sovereign rights and subordinated to supreme authority of colonial empires. Thus Great Britain was responsible for Burma, Malaya and the three territories which made up her path of Borneo, France controlled Vietnam, the Lao province and Cambodia, administratively united into the Indochinese Union, the huge Indonesian archipelago, known in those days as the Indies, was ruled by Netherlands, and the Philippines were dependent on the United states. Lastly Portugal possessed half of Timor.

¹ The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain during the 1700s. It started spreading to other parts of Europe and to North America in the early 1800s. By the mid-1800s, industrialization had become widespread in Western Europe and the northeastern United States. (Pluvier, 1974: 65)

2.2 THE FACTORS EXPLAINING THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

According to Jan Pluvier (1990:110), many factors accounted for the arrival of French colonialists². One factor was closely associated with its power competition with Britain. In particular, following French expulsion from other parts of Asia by the British, Southeast Asia increasingly attracted French interest. France was increasingly concerned about the growth of British influence in this region. Having already gained a foothold in Burma and growing influence in Siam, the British were well on the way to China, especially through the Burma Road. Another one was the upsurge of French capitalism, which generated the need for overseas markets, unmistakably accounted for a desire for a larger French share of the Asian territories conquered by the West. Together with incoming stories of both possible wealth and ancient heritage in the Lower GMS countries, the possibility using the Mekong as a direct route to southern China provided further incentive to the French move in the Lower GMS countries.

2.2.1 FRENCH COLONISATION OF VIETNAM

The decision to invade Vietnam was made by Napoleon III in July 1857. The immediate cause of this decision was the missionary propaganda³ (Cady, 1967: 87-102). The naval commander in East Asia, Rigault de Genouilly, long an advocate of French military action against Vietnam, was ordered to attack the harbor and city of Tourane (Da Nang) and to turn it into a French military base. Genouilly arrived at Tourane in August 1858 with 14 vessels and 2,500 men; the French stormed the harbor defenses on

² Jan Pluvier. 1974. *The Western Regimes in Southeast Asia: Southeast Asian From Colonialism to Independence*.

³The French sent Catholic missionaries to the Vietnam region beginning in the mid 17th century. When many of them were killed by Vietnamese emperors in the 1800s, the French government used their repression as a pretext for invasion and colonial. Source: Britannica Concise.com

September 1 and occupied the town a day later. Genouilly soon recognized, however, that he could make no further progress around Tourane and decided to attack Saigon. Leaving a small garrison behind to hold Tourane, he sailed Southward in February 1859 and seized Saigon two weeks later.

Vietnamese resistance prevented the French from advancing beyond Saigon, and it was not until 1861 that French troops, under new command, succeeded in occupying the three adjacent provinces. Unable to mount an effective resistance to the invaders and their advanced weapons, the Vietnamese concluded a peace treaty in June 1862, which ceded the conquered territories to France. Five years later additional territories in the south were placed under French rule. The entire colony was named Cochinchina.

Even before France succeeded in taking control of the whole southern provinces of Vietnam, it had turned Cambodia into a protectorate in 1863. Then it made gradual attempts to extend its control over the rest of Vietnam. It made the first attempt to enter the Red River delta in 1873. The incentive was provided by a French naval officer and explorer named Francis Garnier, who had shown, in a hazardous expedition in 1866-68, that the Mekong River could not serve as a trade route into southwestern China. Garnier had some support from the French governor of Cochin-china, but when he was killed in a battle with Chinese Black Flags near Hanoi, the attempt to conquer the north collapsed.

Within a decade, France returned to the challenge. In April 1882, with the blessing of Paris, the administration in Saigon sent a force of 250 men to Hanoi under Captain Henri Rivière. When Rivière was killed in a skirmish, Paris moved to impose its rule by force over the entire Red River delta. In August 1883 the Vietnamese court signed a treaty that turned northern Vietnam, which the French named Tonkin, and central Vietnam, which they named Annam, following an early Chinese name for the region, into French protectorates.

2.2.2 FRENCH COLONISATION OF CAMBODIA

Cambodia became a French protectorate in 1863, one year after France had established a colony in Cochinchina, or southern Vietnam (Osborne, 1969). Cambodia's King Norodom agreed to French protection as a means of escaping a subordinate

relationship with Thailand, but soon found himself struggling to limit French involvement in Cambodian affairs. Throughout the 19th century, Norodom parried with the French, slowing but not stopping the establishment of French residences throughout the country and the assumption by residents of control over Cambodia's administration. In fact, it was only after Norodom's death in 1904 and the ascent to the throne of his brother Sisowath, a "fawning collaborator" (Chandler, 1993: 149), that the French truly gained control in Cambodia.

In the 19th century, the French were less interested economically in Cambodia than in Vietnam, and the country was valued primarily as a buffer for Vietnam against English colonial interests in Thailand. Perhaps for these reasons, or perhaps because the French found most Cambodians to be as uncooperative as their king, the French did little to "develop" or otherwise change Cambodia during the first half of their colonial tenure (Chandler, 1993; Evans & Rowley, 1990; Osborne, 1969). In one departure from this laissez-faire approach to colonialism, the French encouraged the immigration to Cambodia of Vietnamese settlers and colonial civil servants, whom they found to be "better workers more dynamic" (Chanda, 1986: 56), and more easily controlled than Cambodians.

2.2.3 FRENCH COLONISATION OF LAOS

In 1883 Laos was incorporated as one of five associated regions of the Lower GMS countries, along with Cambodia and Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina in Vietnam. In the north of Laos the kingdom of Luangprabang was incorporated as a protectorate. This meant a form of indirect rule in the north while the centre and the south were ruled together directly as a colony until 1899, when Laos became a single administrative unit. Auguste Pavie was the first French governor of Laos (1893-95). In 1899 Laos, now seen as a single administrative unit of the lower GMS, was headed by Resident Superieur based in Savanakheth. According to a treaty signed by Siam with France on October 1893 all of Laos east of the Mekong was to be ceded to France while that along the west bank remained with Siam. Subsequently certain regions west of the river in the South and on the North were also transferred to France giving Laos its present shape and size. The

French established the new colony's administrative center in Vientiane maintaining Luang Prabang as the royal capital with King Sisavang Vong on the throne and as the Head of all Laos. The French controlled all the Lao principalities and kingdoms of Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Vientiane and Champassak by 1905.

Because Laos was believed to offer little short-term economic gains, the French did not attempt to introduce economic changes to the country. They relied on existing systems of local government and avoided upsetting Lao traditions by manifesting their presence mainly in fiscal control judicial organization and education. French became the accepted language in administration and among the middle and upper classes in Lao society. Most of today's older generation Lao elite received their education in France. By the late 1930s about 600 French officials were looking after the welfare of more than one million natives in Laos (Dommen, 1997: 12-13).

2.3 FRENCH RULES AND POLICIES IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

The French now moved to impose a Western-style administration on their colonial territories and to open them to economic exploitation. Under Governor-General Paul Doumer (1897-1902), French rule was imposed directly at all levels of administration, leaving the indigenous courts and bureaucracies without any real power. All important positions within the bureaucracy were staffed with officials imported from France; even in the 1930s, after several periods of reforms and concessions to local nationalist sentiments, indigenous officials were employed only in minor positions and at very low salaries (a normal practice was the employment of many Vietnamese functionaries in the colonial administration of Laos and Cambodia), and the whole of Lower GMS countries was still administered along the lines laid down by Doumer.

Doumer's economic and social policies also determined, for the entire period of French rule, the development of French Lower GMS countries, as the colony became known in the 20th century. The railroads, highways, harbors, bridges, canals, and other public works built by the French were almost all started under Doumer, whose aim was a

rapid and systematic exploitation of the Lower GMS countries' potential wealth for the benefit of France.

The Lower GMS countries under French were a federation of four protectorates and one directly ruled colony in Southeast Asia, which formed part of the French colonial empire. The federation consisted of Cochin-china (the directly-ruled colony), Tonkin and Annam (the protectorates that now form part of Vietnam), Laos, and Cambodia (which were governed as protectorates). France had gained control of Cochin-china as a colony in 1862 before it assumed sovereignty over Annam and Tonkin after the Franco-Chinese War which lasted from 1884 to 1885. The Lower GMS countries under French rule were formed into French Indochina in October 1887. The federation lasted until 1954. The capital of this federation was Hanoi. The federation represented a centralized system of government without even a semblance of any local autonomy⁴. The territory was composed of five regions, and the heads of the administration of each were responsible to the Governor-General, a common practice in any administrative structure. But under the system as introduced by Doumer almost all services were placed under direct control of the central government, thus leaving hardly any power in the hands of the individual regional governments. This situation also existed in the provinces and smaller territorial sub-divisions down to the lowest level of the village administration: local authorities, whether French or indigenous, whether appointed or elected, were not genuine local administrators but executive officers of central government in the local sphere.

French indirect rule over the Lower GMS countries was hardly different from direct control. The traditional rulers and the indigenous administrative hierarchies were preserved in two regions of Vietnam, in Cambodia and in three provinces of Laos which constituted the kingdom of Luang Prabang. But by wiping out every vestige of autonomy in Tonkin the French did not even make the pretense of treating this region differently from the directly ruled colony of Cochin-china. In Annam they did, but no real native authority was left after the colonial government established a completely French

⁴For more details see Ennis, Thomas E. (1936).

administrative hierarchy along side the traditional Vietnamese bureaucracy. The Vietnamese kings were no more than ornamental puppets and whenever they showed any kind of independent behavior they were most unceremoniously deposed. The same conditions existed in Cambodia, which had been compelled to give French total control over the internal administration of the country: the king's prerogatives were confined to religious ceremony, and the Cambodian administrative officials were mere intermediaries through which the French imposed their policies (Pluvier, 1974: 14-15). The French formally left the local rulers in power, who were the emperors of Vietnam, kings of Cambodia and kings of Luang Prabang, but in fact gathered all powers in their hands, the local rulers acting only as figures heads.

According to Khamphao,⁵ criticized French policy, with its stress on cultural rather than economic development, and it was different from that of the British. To preserve local culture, a number of high-ranking officials and members of the royal family were sent to study in France. So this educational experience in France had a profound influence on the outlooks and way of life of these people. He said, "When I was studying in France, I felt like French. When I came back to work and met with local people, I learned that something was not the same as what I had thought it was".



Mr. Khamphao Phonekeo

⁵ **Mr. Khamphao Phonekeo**, a retired senior government officer of Laos posted as cultural counselor in France for 5 years in Paris . He was one of early Lao French teachers to teach at upper Primary School in Vientiane during the colonial Period.

Generally, French policy was to encourage local people to preserve their own way of life with its traditional beliefs and practices. With the arrival of French culture including the eating of bread, its influence was found mainly among the upper-class groups those educated in France or working closely with the French, as well as the merchants and businessmen in the capital city. The poor local people including rice farmers in the countryside hardly knew anything about bread.

2.4 FRENCH COLONIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

France controlled Vietnam, the Lao provinces and Cambodia, administratively united into the Indochinese Union. France followed a policy which was the most inflexible of those adopted by any colonial nation in Southeast Asia. In the four decades since Governor-General Paul Doumer (1897-1902) established a definite system of colonial administration, this system was applied without a single change. This does not mean that the French failed to formulate any colonial theory which, once put into effect, might have produced some variations in the methods or general orientation of their colonial rule.

There were, in fact, two such theories⁶ which figured prominently in French literature on the subject. One of these aimed at preserving the traditional institutions and customs of indigenous society in order to create a partnership between a native elite and the colonial authority and to bring about a close association of the Indochinese peoples and the French (Bett, 1961). As opposed to this theory was the idea that emphasized assimilations. It was intended to subject the colony to a policy which was to be almost exclusively guided by French concepts and norms, cultural, political and economic.

⁶ For more details, see Betts, Raymond F (1961). Assimilation and association in French Colonial Theory :1890-1914.

Both theories were experimented with, but as each contained elements which might have proved detrimental to French control over the Lower GMS countries, neither was really carried out in practice. What really happened was that the French made use only of those parts of each theory which served to reinforce their rule. The principle of partnership, which was at the root of the association theory, was entirely absent in French colonial practice: whatever element of the indigenous society still existed was stripped of its essential function.

As the policy of assimilation better suited the French purposes in general than that of association, it was more strongly emphasized as an essential part of the colonial policy; and particularly after Doumer adopted it the assimilative program was put into effect quite rigidly. But it was no genuine assimilation, because France never applied those of her own political concepts which were related, even in a remote way, to such revolutionary ideals as liberty, democracy and equality. No matter what the niceties of both theories were, French policy was primarily characterized by the principle that the Lower GMS countries formed an integral part of closely knit empire which was to be completely dominated by France. This basic doctrine was in no way modified during the period of French colonialism in Southeast Asia (Bett, 1961: 7-8). It is against this backdrop of French rule in the Lower GMS countries that this study will examine the introduction of French culture aspects into the region.

2.5 IMPACT OF FRENCH RULES ON ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

France placed a great emphasis on colonial expansion for the purposes of national prestige as well as economic aggrandizement. The most important aspect of the impact of French presence upon the Lower GMS countries was the change it brought to the traditional social and economic life in this region. The French presence was felt ultimately in all phases of life in the Lower GMS countries. Though the extent of the impact on some traditional ways of life probably cannot yet be fully judged, the general context of living was changed by the French rulers (Butwell, 1964: 12-15). Though this study covers the whole of the Lower GMS countries, the main focus is on Laos. We will

here trace certain relevant aspects of the impact of French presence in the Lower GMS countries Lao, Vietnam and Cambodia.

2.5.1 LAOS

From one point of view, we may say that French rule made little impact on the traditional life of the Laotian people. Most notably, the French did not provide widespread educational facilities in Laos. They mainly sent certain selected members of the royal family and high nobility to study in France. During that time many members of this small group occupied key governmental positions. Among those who studied in France were the late kings, the late viceroy Prince Phetsarath,⁷ his brother, the former Prime Minister Prince Souvannahphouma, and their half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, the leader of the communist Pathet Lao movement.

The small size of this group is emphasized by the fact that until the Second World War less than a dozen Lao had received the equivalent of a full college education, although a somewhat larger number had studied in France for briefer periods. Without question, any Lao who had spent time studying in France before the Second World War would definitely be classified as a member of the elite, even though there were a number of important members of the elite who did not have this opportunity. Despite this, they had all been strongly influenced by French culture. The ability to speak and write French fluently was one of the marks of membership in the elite group (Halpern, 1961: 12).

Under the French educational system the pupils began studying French in the first grade. After completing six years of elementary school, their education was continued in the college (junior high school) and finally in the Lycée.⁸ In addition to formal training in administrative practices, French cultural values were stressed among this Lao group. For

⁷ **Prince Phetsarath Rattanaovongsa** was prime minister of Laos from 1942 to 1945, and was the first and last vice-king of the Kingdom of Laos. One of his younger brothers was Souvanna Phouma. He was known as a colonial modernizer and anti colonial nationalist; several Western writers acknowledge him as the 'father of Lao nationalism' and as 'the seminal figure in the development of Lao nationalism (M.L Manich Jumsai, 1971)

⁸ *Lycée* (li'se) in France, an upper-level secondary school, providing a three-year course of further secondary education for children between the ages of 15 and 18.

example, the French established social and sports clubs in towns that have been continued and even expanded by the Lao elite.

During the colonial period Laos did not even encourage national language and culture let alone local education. Many Lao preferred going to Phnom Penh or Hanoi for education: in Hanoi, a University had been set up. Members of the elite who were better off opted for the furtherance of their education in France. All the more so France tried to make Lao people forget their own national script and prescribed a system of Romanization so that the Lao will not be able to read Thai Lao books from the other side of the Mekong River, since the languages and scripts on both sides of the river are so similar. Under colonial regime there was also a shift of real responsibility from indigenous Lao control and its placement in the hands of French-speaking, French-trained Vietnamese. Except for such formal nominal rulers as the king of Luang Prabang and a few royal heirs who were granted provincial governorship, the top officials were all French. Some members of old elite that is, the royalty, nobility, and families long associated with the nobility were the only indigenous Laotians wealthy enough to be able to make the transition necessary to become members of modern political and social elite. The chief criteria for modern elite status were fluency in spoken and written French and a secular, western-style education. To receive a western-style education at the university level or beyond, it was necessary to go abroad (Burton, 2005: 22-23).

The French presence was, of course, resented by the Lao people. However, they recognized at the same time that the French presence in Laos had prevented the latter from being further truncated, especially in its northern and western parts. After independence, a number of French officials remained as technical advisors to various ministries. A French economic and cultural mission was established, and a military training group undertook the training of the new Lao army. Moreover, all education beyond the elementary school level remained almost exclusively in the hands of French teachers. Remnants of French culture are ubiquitous in Laos, which was formally ruled a French protectorate from 1893 to 1954, before it was dragged into the Vietnam War and eventually became communist along with the other two Indochinese countries in 1975.

Superb French restaurants have sprouted up in the capital Vientiane, after reforms opened up the economy to private investment in 1989. Signposts outside many government ministries are written in Lao and French, immigration cards are in French and even Lao birth certificates are translated into French. With many of the elderly communist leaders schooled in France, where they picked up both the language and Marxism, few suspected that the country would ever willingly leave its Francophone⁹ fondness behind. There are also diplomatic advantages to being a member of the Francophone grouping, which gives Laos, with only 30 embassies abroad, a direct link to 56 countries worldwide. Of course, according to the French Ambassador to Laos, Maurice Portiche's¹⁰ private survey, at least 40 per cent of the 100,000 civil servants in Laos still speak French.

Other aspects of French cultural influence also remain. French Indochinese architecture has become widely appreciated. There are numerous good examples of it remaining in Vientiane, such as the National Library and the newly restored Asian Development Bank, as well as in other major towns. The French trees along Khouvieng Road with their bases whitewashed during a beatification campaign and those growing outside Mahosot Hospital were indeed planted by the French but are actually Swietenia.



An old French Catholic building in Vientiane

⁹ **Francophone** means French-speaking, comprised of more than forty countries on five continents where French is commonly used in one of several ways: As maternal language used in the home ,as daily means of public communication, as the official language used in government and business ,and as the principal language of education. Source : Webmaster Ken Fleurant University of Wisconsin-Green bay

¹⁰ Maurich Portiche is the French Ambassador to Laos (2005-2008) he give interview on Vientiane times news on occasion of Francophonie conference in Laos, issued on 20 October 2007

2.5.2. VIETNAM

Vietnam, in particular, was to become a source of raw materials and a market for tariff-protected goods produced by French industries. The exploitation of natural resources for direct export was the chief purpose of all French investments, with rice, coal, rare minerals, and later also rubber as the main products. Doumer and his successors up to the eve of World War II were not interested in promoting any local industry, the development of which was limited to the production of goods for immediate local consumption. Among these enterprises, which were located chiefly in Saigon, Hanoi, and Haiphong (the out port for Hanoi), were breweries, distilleries, small sugar refineries, rice and paper mills, and glass and cement factories. The greatest industrial establishment was a textile factory in Nam Dinh, which employed more than 5,000 workers. The total number of workers employed by all industries and mines in Vietnam was some 100,000 in 1930 (Nguyen Vinh, 1973: 94). Through the construction of irrigation works, chiefly in the Mekong delta, the area of land devoted to rice cultivation quadrupled between 1880 and 1930. During the same period, however, the average peasant's rice consumption decreased without the substitution of other foods. The new lands were not distributed among the landless and the peasants but were sold to the highest bidder or given away at nominal prices to Vietnamese collaborators and French speculators. These policies created a new class of Vietnamese landlords and a class of landless tenants who worked the fields of the landlords for rents of up to 60 percent of the crop, which was sold by the landlords at the Saigon export market. The mounting export figures for rice resulted not only from the increase in cultivable land but also from the growing exploitation of the peasantry.

The peasants who owned their land were rarely better off than the landless tenants. The peasants' share of the price of rice sold at the Saigon export market was less than 25 percent. Peasants continually lost their land to the large owners because they were unable to repay loans given them by the landlords and other moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates. As a result, the large landowners of Cochin-china (less than 3

percent of the total number of landowners) owned 45 percent of the land, while the small peasants (who accounted for about 70 percent of the owners) owned only about 15 percent of the land. The number of landless families in Vietnam before World War II was estimated at half of the population.

The peasants' share of the crop after the landlords, the moneylenders, and the middlemen (mostly Chinese) between producer and exporter had taken their share was still more drastically reduced by the direct and indirect taxes the French had imposed to finance their ambitious program of public works. Other ways of making the Vietnamese pay for the projects undertaken for the benefit of the French were the recruitment of forced labor for public works and the absence of any protection against exploitation in the mines and rubber plantations, although the scandalous working conditions, the low salaries, and the lack of medical care were frequently attacked in the French Chamber of Deputies in Paris. The mild social legislation decreed in the late 1920s was never adequately enforced¹¹.

Other aspects of French colonial policy are significant when considering the attitude of the local people, especially their educated minority, toward the colonial regime (Bett, 1961). One was the absence of any kind of civil liberties for the native population, and the other was the exclusion of the local people from the modern sector of the economy, especially industry and trade. Not only were rubber plantations, mines, and industrial enterprises were in foreign hands French, where the business was substantial, and Chinese at the lower levels but also all other businesses, from local trade to the great export-import houses, were controlled by either French or Chinese.

The social consequence of this policy was that, apart from the landlords, no property-owning indigenous middle class developed in French Indochina countries. This state of affairs was most strongly felt in Vietnam, where nationalist sentiment developed quietly early. Thus, capitalism appeared to the Vietnamese to be a part of foreign rule; this view, together with the lack of any Vietnamese participation in government,

¹¹ Ibid . 10-16.

profoundly influenced the nature and orientation of the national resistance movements. Apologists for the colonial regime claimed that French rule led to vast improvements in medical care, education, transport, and communications. The statistics kept by the French, however, appear to cast doubts on such assertions. In 1939, for example, no more than 15 percent of all school-age children received any kind of schooling, and about 80 percent of the population was illiterate, in contrast to pre-colonial times when the majority of the people possessed some degree of literacy. With its more than 20 million inhabitants in 1939, Vietnam had but one university (in Laos and Cambodia no university was established by the French), with fewer than 700 students. Only a small number of Vietnamese children were admitted to the Lycées (secondary schools) for the children of the French. Medical care was well organized for the French in the cities, but in 1939 there were only 2 physicians for every 100,000 Vietnamese.

2.5.3 CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, a number of reforms were initiated by the French in the late 1880s, including the abolition of slavery. Some attempts were also made to develop agriculture, especially rice farming and rubber plantations, but the purpose of these attempts was to increase the country's export of agricultural products. The railroad linking Phnom Penh and Battambang, the rice bowl of Cambodia, was constructed chiefly for the transport of rice to the country's capital city for export.

Because the aim of all investment was not the systematic economic development of French Indochina countries but the attainment of immediate high returns for investors, only a small fraction of the profits was reinvested. Certain important areas, such as education, were almost totally neglected (Osborne, 1969).



Young Generation in Laos enjoy French baguette “Khao Jee” for break fast.



The famous selling baguette shop in Vietnam

CHAPTER III

THE BREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF BAGUETTE IN FRANCE

3.1 HISTORY OF BREAD IN GENERAL

Bread really first appeared in ancient Egypt¹. Used in the beginning as an offering for the gods, it soon became a staple food, it was also used as hard currency. According to the legend, we are indebted to the Egyptians for the invention of fermentation: an absent-minded slave, it is told, left his dough (without being leavened) outside in the rain. It fermented and bloated. To avoid punishment, the slave went ahead and cooked it any way, obtaining bread as we know it today. But if one is to believe the Bible, it was the Hebrews who discovered and popularized bread. It is said that they distinguished between leavened bread, considered to be impure (because it had been putrefied) and unleavened bread, which they ate for their daily meals (which was also used as offering to the divinities – hence Passover bread).

Between the 5th and the 15th centuries, the gap between the rich and poor in Europe, grew steadily. Poor people's bread was generally a mixture of rye, barley and rather crude, barley sifted wheat. "famine breads" even started appearing – that is, bread made from flour mixed with straw, clay, crushed tree bark, acorn flour, roots or crushed herbs. As a reminder of social class, bread often carried the name of the caste whose members ate it: "court bread", "knight's bread", "horsemen's bread", and so forth. Big slices of brown bread known as "cutting boards" were even used as plates by nobility.

¹ Sometime around 800 BC, archaeologist discovered the piece of ancient bread with the dead body in Egypt. For more detail see. The Cambridge World History of Food. Kenneth F. Kiple (2002)

3.2 THE FRENCH BREAD

Food historian told that the bread was invented in 10.000BC. Techniques spread through the world and evolved according to the custom, cuisine, and local grain. French bread (Generally defined as bread made in France) is Thousands of years old.

French bread with the crust crisp and sweet with its characteristic leaf shaped surface cuts , the crumb with and pitted with irregular holes for French bread , the holes are a part of the proper character for this kind of bread “ baguette “. The French people do use a good deal of soft flour , because that is what produce from wheat grown in France. So they have long ago adapted their bread technique to their flour or rather, what they adapted was the Vienna’ technique, and this did not happen until some time in the nineteenth century, it was the Viennese oven, with its steam injectors and its sloping floor, or sole, which was mainly responsible for creating the tradition of French bread as we know today².

There are many different types of French bread called “Pain” is the French word for bread or loaf of bread . Various types include:

Boule	: Around loaf sold in various sizes
Ficelle	: A very thin version of baguette . Ficelle means string in French
Fougasse	: A flat rectangular bread often filled with bacon, onion or herbs
Gros pain	: A large family size version of baguette
Pain de Campagne	: This is usually a big rustic loaf (Campagne means country) with a thick crust
Pain complet	: Loaf made from whole wheat flour
Pain de mie	: Mie means the interior. Sliced, packaged white bread, this is a soft sweet loaf mainly used for sandwiches
Pain aux noix	: Bread filled with nuts
Pain aux raisins	: A light bread filled with raisins. A breakfast treat
Pain de siegle	: Loaf with two thirds rye flour, one third wheat flour

² Source: An A-Z of Food and Drink. John Ayto. Oxford University Press. (2002:15-16)

Pain Viennois	: A baguette shape but softer and sweeter
Pain d'épices	: Spiced or gingerbread
Pain grille	: Toasted bread
Pain ordinaire	: Peasant bread
Pain perdu	: French toast
Pain petit	: Roll

French bread is a lean bread as it contains no fat, lasting about a day at most. This is why people visit the local bakery or ("Boulangeries" in French word) and buy it daily in France. French bread is eaten at all meals, and forms the most important part of breakfast.

3.3 BAGUETTE PRESENCE AND ITS TECHNIQUES DEVELOPMENT

From the 16th century on, during the long famines, the importance of bread cannot be overestimated. In 1570, there was a police force charged with determining the maximum price for bread and supervising the quality of grains and wheat. Each baker was obliged to put his initials on his balls of bread before baking. Laws and subsequent punishment were extremely severe: a child who was caught stealing bread risked being condemned to galley.

Though the use of brewer's yeast had become widespread during the previous century, after a Parisian baker used it for his enormously successful light bread, it was condemned by the Faculty of medicine in 1665. The ban was lifted in 1670, the price of bread was more than ever out of reach for the majority of the poor. In 1774, food riots broke out all over France. People began talking about the "flour war". Some people even claimed that the French Revolution began because of a lack of bread. In fact, when the Bastille was stormed on 14 July 1789, it was to pillage the wheat stocks that were supposedly kept there. On 17 July 1891, the newly founded Constituent Assembly imposed obligatory prices and permitted the fabrication of only one type of bread "Equality Bread" made with wheat and rye and mixed with bran. At the end of the 18th century, with the abolition of the "Gabelle" (the salt tax), the use of salt in bread quickly spread. In the 19th century, a Polish baker discovered a way to make bread without a

starter. His method, known as “polished”, allowed bakers to obtain a less acidic bread, known as “Pain viennois” (Viennese bread), which was highly successful until the 1920s, when a new type of bread, called the “baguette”, the “Batard” (a kind of big baguette, weight about 350 gram) and the “Ficelle” (a kind of thin baguette , weigh about 150 gram) appeared.

At the turn of the 20th century, bread making made considerable progress. Pressed yeast (today’s bread making techniques) appeared in 1867. After much trial and error, bakers progressively started using indirect heating. Following the invention of the mechanical mixer at the beginning of the 19th century, all kinds of new bread appliances were invented: the pedal-crank mixer, the horse –drawn mixers, hydraulic mixers etc. By the beginning of the 1920s, kneading with the arms had become a thing of the past. And in 1920 , a law of France was passed preventing bakers from working before 4 a.m. This made it impossible to make the traditional loaf in time for customers' breakfasts. The longer, thinner baguette solved the problem because it could be prepared and baked much more rapidly.



Flour kneading machine using electricity



The baguette after baking from oven in Laos

According to John Ayto (2002:15-16) a baguette is a long thin loaf of French bread of the type more commonly known in English as French stick, or more vaguely still, as French loaf. The term has become increasingly familiar in English since the 1960s. It means literally little rod, and is a diminutive form derived ultimately from Latin “baculum”, stick staff.. It is a loaf of bread, up to a meter long but only about 4-5 centimeters in diameter. A loaf the same length as a baguette but thicker (about 8-10 centimeters in diameter) is known as a '*pain*' and a thin version of the baguette is known as a '*Ficelle*'. In 1920 a law was passed preventing bakers from working before 4 a.m. This made it impossible to make the traditional loaf in time for customers' breakfasts. The longer, thinner baguette solved the problem because it could be prepared and baked much more rapidly.

The baguette (or bread in general) is a main food in daily meal for French people as well as people of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, who eat rice for their meal everyday. French people like to buy bread or baguette just one hour before their meal, because it is fresher and crust, and it makes it more appraised when eating. It will be more enjoyable if they will have it together with butter. People who live in Paris consider baguette as part

of Parisian everyday life as the Eiffel Tower. No matter when, at six o'clock in the morning, at noon, or at 4 p.m., we will see people carrying baguette fresh from bakeries, many people tearing a piece off and eating as they rush to their meal. In France bread or baguette is more than a neutral vehicle to spread with butter and jam or accompany one of difference types of the cheese and the nice glass of *vin rouge*. Most European people eat baguette separately on plate with eggs, champagne, or tomatoes, cheese or hot tea.



Mr. Mark from Germany eating baguette with omelet

Within France there is a very big difference between a traditional baguette and a 'supermarket' baguette. It is hard to describe the difference visually, but the traditional loaf will smell much more strongly of bread, the crust will tend to be darker, the interior is cream color rather than white, and the interior texture is much less consistent. The baguette is a staple food, and a veritable symbol of France.

Kaplan's³ obsession with bread has involved decades of research on bakeries, libraries and archives in France. He has investigated the history, significance and

³ Steven L. Kaplan, a Cornell University professor of European history and the author of a pile of well-regarded books on the history and appreciation of French bread. In France, he is a television personality, a member of the French Ministry of Culture's Order of Arts and Letters. See also *Judith*

symbolism of French bread.. In his opinion, "About 65 to 70 percent of French bakers are producing bread that is tasteless". In his view, there are two primary culprits: the historical circumstances that led to the decline of bread in France during the 20th century and the current practice of "par baking,"

In any case, Kaplan says, the deterioration of French bread started long before par baking, a result of the food shortages in France during the two world wars. "Both wars were tremendous jolts to the quality of bread," . French bakers had to work with very lousy flour. There was a loss of competence and capacity for ancestral skills, and the French forgot what bread should taste like. There was a real amnesia. In his view, the nadir was from about 1955 to 1975, when industrial baking came on the scene in France, pushing aside more time-consuming artisan recipes. And a method that relied on fast mechanical kneading— a truncated approach to traditional methods of fermentation – and additives resulted in speedily made white bread that took over the market. "It looked lush, but it was tasteless," he says.

3.4 THE FALL AND RISE OF FRENCH BREAD 'S POPULARITY⁴

The 1950s marked a real turning point in the history of bread, with the advent of a new technique of kneading known as "intensified kneading." Because of excessive oxidation of the dough, one was now able to buy bread that reached the consumer's expectations, instead of the gray, lifeless bread found during the war. The result, though, was bread that was tasteless and stale after severe hours. This general decrease in quality of bread, inevitably led to the drop in consumption (which reached an all time low in 1990 with 160 grams per person, per day) and the spread of industrial type bakeries. The latter consequently led to the disappearance of a great many traditional bakeries and pastry makers. The public image of bread had never been worse. Nutritionists started accusing bread of being indigestible or too high in calories.

⁴ Cited from <http://wasingtonpost.com/liveonline> on August 2007

Over the last number of years, an impassioned reaction from the bakery profession, consumer taste returned to traditional bread kneaded more slowly, left to rest longer, often made from natural starter, polished or fermented dough, “rustic” breads have made a come back. For the first time in over a century, the consumption of bread was on the rise. But this was France—the country whose pride in its culinary artistry was unsurpassed, the country that invented haute cuisine. Who would rescue its national symbol? In 1980, French millers rose to the challenge. Concerned about the inferior quality of the bread, they offered bakers not only better flour but also the marketing backup that would help them retain or reclaim artisan recipes.

Then in 1993, the French legal system stepped in with a decree that created the designation: the bread of French tradition. To claim that status, the bread had to be made without any freezing during the fermentation process and without additives, ameliorative, improvers or technological help. Once you remove all those crutches, says Kaplan, "the good baker knows that the only way to produce dough that will stand up is by restoring the first three hours of fermentation that give the bread its aromas and taste". These days bakeries all over Paris proudly proclaim their allegiance to the bread of French tradition. Buying it is chic, especially among the approximately 28- to 48-year-old bourgeois bohemians known as "bo-bos". But it costs more 85 to 95 cents for an ordinary baguette, and about 40 cents more for one of French tradition. For ordinary working people, that can be a burden, Kaplan says.

Despite all this, French bread has lost considerable ground over the past century, both in terms of consumption and in quality. In 1900, the daily quota of bread for every Frenchman hovered around 900 grams . Today the average Parisian consumes a mere 160 grams per day. It's a feeble figure, even in comparison to some of France's neighbors. In Germany the current daily per capita bread consumption is around 200 grams and in Ireland, about 185 grams⁵ . The dip in consumption is in large part due to changes in diet and lifestyle over the past century. A distressing decline in quality has been blamed on

⁵ Ibid.,pp. 4-6

the industrialization of bread making. Since the 1950's, the time-honored methods and tools for making French bread have been, in many cases, supplanted by new equipment, techniques and ingredients designed to make more bread faster and more profitably. The result is bread that looks, tastes, and feels much like cotton. The lovers of real old-fashioned French bread, the pendulum seems to be swinging back toward more traditional methods. Professionals such as Lionel Poilane, France's famous baker, have devised methods of reconciling quantity and quality.

To boost this trend, the French government recently introduced legislation designed to prevent any bakery from calling itself a "*boulangerie*" if it does not make, knead and cook entirely from scratch on the premises. According to one government official's estimate, about 3,000-5,000 shops in France will be forced to remove their "*boulangerie*" signs in the coming years. It is now acknowledged that bread is an important part of balanced diet, with its complex carbohydrate, vegetable proteins and fiber.



Painting about baguette in countryside of France photo from Book collection



Woman with French baguette in Journal

CHAPTER IV

LOCAL EATING HABITS AND FRENCH FOOD IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Lower GMS countries had their own food cultures and eating habits that were not only different from, but also actually incompatible with, western culinary traditions, especially those of the French that were part of their lifestyle. We could say that there must have been at least initially a “clash of food cultures” during French rule over this part of the world. How then was French baguette adopted by the local populations? We will begin with the eating habits of the peoples in these countries.

4.2 EATING HABIT IN LAOS

Lao people have kept the habit of eating at home. Lao thus give the impression of being completely relaxed, hospitable, informal, and free of any feeling of rush and hurry, anxiety or ostentation. In fact, however, the relaxed atmosphere invests a procedure which is surprisingly formal.

The Lao cuisine is based on fresh foods, with meats and fish grilled or steamed. Being low in fat and high in greens, vegetables and herbs is an integral element of any major meal. The fresh flavors in true Lao cuisine are galangal, lime juice, lemongrass, kaffir lime, local basil varieties, coriander, garlic, ginger and surprisingly, mint and dill. Visiting any food market demonstrates the range and importance of these vital ingredients. As the water levels in the rivers drop, cultivation of vegetables in the rich riverbank soil begins.

The integrity of Lao cuisine is demonstrated by the fact that despite over a hundred years of French rule, French cuisine never took hold in Laos. There are a few exceptions, of course. The baguette has certainly come to stay and an emulsion-style

sauce similar to mayonnaise features in Luang Prabang's famous watercress salad. Rich Lao coffee, so successfully grown in Laos' Boloven Plateau, has also become a staple, though its manner of serving has been adapted to local taste.

There is a practical reason why traditional Lao cuisine does not centre on liquid or oily dishes: the staple sticky or glutinous rice. Sticky rice is eaten with the fingers; the consistency makes it difficult to eat any other way. So to keep hands clean and dry, to avoid dropping rice into communal dishes, the style of cooking has adapted to suit. Rice is rolled into balls, there is much wrapping of ingredients in fresh leaves, and the drier grilled or steamed meats are enhanced by the delicious range of sauces into which the rice is dipped. Foods are often served at room temperature, perhaps also to suit eating with the fingers.

Lao meals are served communally, with a range of dishes spread to share. Most commonly there will be a soup, grilled or steamed meat or fish, the ubiquitous sticky rice served in a bamboo basket and always a large plate of herbs and the many and varied green leafy vegetables that abound. Dipping sauces, usually a spicy chili paste, accompany the meal.

One will undoubtedly encounter *Laap*, the national dish made from finely chopped meat, fish or poultry, flavored with lemongrass and herbs. Traditionally made with raw meats, it is now readily served cooked to accommodate Western tastes, but the distinctive taste of mint is a reminder that this herb was widely used to impart freshness to uncooked foods in the past.

The Lao are famed for their amiable characteristic and their tolerant, easy going attitudes. The dominant religion is Buddhism, mixed up with elements of spirit worship or animism in various forms. Until very recently one of the most noticeable features of daily life was the morning procession of Buddhist monks around the towns, accepting offerings of food from the willing population. In this respect, food had an important role in the religious practices of the Lao as well.

4.3 EATING HABIT IN VIETNAM

Neighbors have influenced the Vietnamese people in regards to what they eat and how they cook. The Mongols who invaded Vietnam from the north in the 13th century brought beef with them. This is how beef became part of the Vietnamese diet. Common Vietnamese beef dishes are *pho bo* (Beef Noodle Soup) and *bo bay mon* (Beef Cooked Seven Ways).

Beginning in the 16th century, explorers and traders introduced foods such as potatoes, tomatoes, and snow peas. When the French colonized Vietnam (1858-1954), they introduced foods such as baguettes (French bread), coffee with cream, milk, butter, custards, and cakes. In the 1960s and 1970s (Vietnam War era), the U.S. military introduced ice cream to Vietnam when it contracted with two U.S. dairies to build dozens of ice cream factories. Plain rice (*com trang*) is at the center of the Vietnamese diet. Steamed rice is part of almost every meal. The Vietnamese prefer long-grain white rice, as opposed to the short-grain rice more common in Chinese cooking. Rice is also transformed into other common ingredients such as rice wine, rice vinegar, rice noodles, and rice paper wrappers for spring rolls.

Of the many influences that China has had on Vietnam, the most profound is probably the introduction of Buddhism. The widespread practice of Buddhism in Vietnam has led to the development of one of the world's most sophisticated style of vegetarian cooking (*an chay*), particularly in the coastal city of Hue, which is home to many Buddhists.

Vietnamese meals are rarely divided into separate courses. Rather, all the food is served at once and shared from common dishes set out on a low table. The family sits on mats on the floor, and each person has a rice bowl, chopsticks, and soup spoon. Family members use the narrow end of the chopsticks to bring food to the mouth and the wide end to serve from the common dishes. Certain foods, such as spring rolls, are picked up and eaten out of the hand. Most meals include soup, a stir-fry or other main dish, a light salad, and a variety of side dishes.

Snacks are often purchased from street vendors. Popular handheld snacks include spring rolls or pork meatballs on a stick. These foods and *pho* (beef noodle soup) are the equivalent of fast food in Vietnamese cities. Also common between meals are sweet fruits and ice cream, introduced during the Vietnam War era (1960s and 1970s). Another "imported" snack food is a baguette of Vietnamese style a holdover from the years when Vietnam was a colony of France.

4.4 EATING HABIT IN CAMBODIA¹

Cambodian cuisine, though uniquely Khmer, draws heavily on the traditions of both its Thai neighbors and Chinese residents. An oft-repeated generalization, which is nevertheless more or less accurate, likens Cambodian food to Thai food but without the spiciness. The main national staple is of course rice, but French colonial influence has dictated that the Cambodians eat more bread generally French-style baguettes than any other Southeast Asian country.

Because of the country's ample richness in waterways including the Mekong, Sap and Bassac Rivers, not to mention the Tonlé Sap, freshwater fish and prawns are especially popular, in addition to which plenty of fresh seafood is available from the Gulf of Thailand. Beef, pork, chicken, duck and other poultry are widely available but generally more expensive than fish dishes, whilst other less well known Cambodian delicacies include locusts, field rats, snakes and land crabs.

Soup is served as an accompaniment to almost all Cambodian meals, though it is always served with the main dishes, not before as in the West. Some of the better-known soup dishes include *somlar machou banle* (sour fish soup), *somlar machou bangkang* (sour and spicy prawn soup, akin to Thai tom yam gung), *somlar chapek* (pork soup with ginger) and *mon sngor* (chicken and coriander soup). *Num banh choc* (rice noodle and fish soup) is a common and popular Cambodian breakfast.

¹ "Cambodia: Food and Drink", *CPAmedia: The Asia Experts* <http://www.cpamedia.com/food/>

Other common dishes include *khao poun* (rice noodles in a coconut-based sauce), *hamok* (fish with coconut milk steamed in a banana leaf), *sach mon chha khnhei* (stir-fried chicken with ginger), *somlar machou sachko* (sour beef stew) and *choeeng chomni chrouc chean* (fried pork spareribs). *An sam chruk* (pork & soybeans marinated in ginger and chili) can be delicious, but packs a fairly hefty punch. Similarly watch out for pong tea *kon* (fertilized duck egg containing an embryo, like the Filipino *balut*) which is not to everybody's taste. Many dishes are served *trey*, or grilled. Thus *trey aing* (grilled fish) is available just about everywhere, as is *trey chean neung spey* (fried fish with vegetables). By extension, *trey mon* is grilled chicken, *trey sachko* is grilled beef, and so on. Fish and meat dishes not served with noodles are generally accompanied by rice. Indispensable condiments – certainly as far as the Cambodians are concerned--are *prahoc* (fish sauce just like Thai *nam pla* and Vietnamese *nuoc mam*) and *tuk Trey* (fish sauce with ground, roasted peanuts added).

There is an abundance of fruit in Cambodia. In the appropriate seasons, especially towards the end of the hot season in May, the markets overflow with a wide variety of exotic fruits. There are fruits to be had the year round, though, and they are generally both reasonably priced and (if carefully washed) healthy and safe. Amongst the most popular and widespread fruits are mango, coconut, rambutan, durian, mangosteen, star fruit, pineapple, watermelon and a wide variety of bananas.



The local ingredients to go with baguette in the Lower GMS countries style.

4.5 BAGUETTE: FRENCH FOOD INFLUENCE IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES



Selling baguette near a bus station in Vientiane

The French had a great influence in the food culture of the countries they colonized, particularly in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. This is because France takes great pride in their cuisine and the French are great eaters and inventors of food. During the colonial period they considered it important to introduce their favorite dishes to the local populace. This could be proved by the number of French restaurants in Vientiane during colonial period: there were more French restaurants than those serving local food in this city.

According to the French article written by (Translated by a researcher) French baguette was introduced to Asia and became a symbol of this region, so people called “baguettes of Asia”. It developed in many forms and shapes. In Vientiane, we find a postcard with a vendor selling baguette, with words displayed on it: “The delicious French baguette”. published in *Revue de Paris* in 1900. In this article the explorer name Auguste Pavie told about his journey in the Lower GMS countries. He could not get the baguette with pate; so he asked his companions to make baguette for him. He liked it

very much: “the rice becomes a loaf with whiteness. It made them forget their habitual food supply, and “Asia People”

In Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, the baguette did not actually take hold in the food culture of the people of these countries. They generally regard bread as a kind of snack or fast food; it is usually eaten as a breakfast or lunch item, snuffed with locally made pastes and sausages and Asian versions of pickles made from papaya or cucumbers. Sometimes it is eaten with jam or butter; some people just eat it plain with coffee or tea in the morning. Parents can also serve it as a snack for their kids when they are back home from school and have it with milk. In Laos the plain baguette is not so expensive: it costs about 2000-500 Kip (0.5 US dollar). But when you buy with pastes and vegetable, it costs double the price.

This difference in eating style is simply indicative of the influences of the national characteristics of each nation. To gain some idea about this influence, let us only briefly look at Lao eating habit and see how this is related to Lao culture.

Vietnamese baguette also has its own style. Vietnamese-style baguette is the light, airy, crispy roll used for making *banh mi* (the national sandwich of Vietnam) or for mopping a saucy spicy Vietnamese *bo kho* (beef stew with star anise and lemongrass). Most Vietnamese people DO NOT bake their own baguette, however, for these simple reasons:

- (1) It is cheap and more convenient to buy baguette;
- (2) Yeasted dough is hard to master; and
- (3) Home ovens are scarce in Vietnam.²

Those points are hard to argue since in Corinne Trang's *Authentic Vietnamese Cooking*,³ there is a Saigon baguette recipe in which a 1:1 ratio of rice flour to wheat flour is used. She argues that the rice flour lightens the dough. A number of people have tried that recipe and it has not worked for them. Given the number of hours involved in baking bread, it is an awful disappointment when things do not come out as well as one expected.

² Interview conducted with Mr . Tinh , 70 , a baguette seller at Hochiminh market

³ By DANIEL YOUNG Daily News Restaurant Critic Wednesday, September 25th 1996

CHAPTER V

FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 THE INTRODUCTION OF BAGUETTE INTO THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

Each part of the Lower GMS countries as we have seen, has its own culinary traditions. It also had its own unique experience of encountering and adopting French food. It is thus important that we understand this particular experience. The best way to do so from the researcher's point of view is to let the people in the Indochinese countries, especially in Laos, tell their own stories. In this chapter, therefore, we turn to the results from field research, which consisted mainly of interviews with many people. Since evidence on the introduction of baguette into this part of the world is hard to come by, we must learn from these people, especially those of the older generations.



A baguette sign of Mr Doung Ngo Huu in Vientiane.

For Laos, we begin with **Doung**,¹ 80 years old baker in Vientiane. He told the research of Laos under French rule and how he learned the art of French bakery. According to key informant, there were many Vietnamese in Vientiane, working everywhere, mostly as teachers, servants, chefs, construction contractors, and workers. It is notable that not many Lao lived in Vientiane, which was mostly inhabited by the French and Vietnamese. These people ate baguette as part of their food, so more baguette was produced and consumed here than in other places of Laos.

In Vietnam, the researcher interviewed **Ms Mounphan Souphanouvong**, owner of a Lao restaurant-café in Ho Chi Minh City. Mounphan is a half Lao-half Vietnamese living here for more than 30 years.² She was the first Lao business woman who runs a Lao restaurant in this city; the restaurant is called “Windows’s Garden”.

In her opinion, French baguette may have been first brought to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) by French missionaries or soldiers before it was later spread to other parts of the Lower GMS. She believed that French bread and baguette were first brought to Ho Chi Minh City.

According to **General Tham Sayasithsena**, 94 years old,³ “At the beginning, the French taught Vietnamese to make bread and other kinds of food for them. Then the French took these people to Laos after France took control of this country in 1893”. The researcher learned also a lot from **Somphavanh Inthavong**, an advisor to the Lane Xang Mineral Company.⁴ He finished his upper secondary school in France in 1956. “The National characteristics are reflected in culture. Baguette belongs to French culture, which has its own characteristics. French baguette is thus unique: it is different from baguettes in other countries. This might be because the French make baguette in their own country or probably because they make it in their own way”. According to Somphavanh, Vietnamese ate more baguette than the people in Laos and Cambodia. The Vietnamese often ate it with their local *mouyot* (preserved pork) and pickles. The eating of baguette can thus be said to have started in Vietnam before it later spread to the

¹ Mr. Doung Ngo Huu of Ban Wattayno, born in 1928, Vietnamese. He came to Laos in 1960 from Hanoi.

² Interview conducted on February 1st, 2007

³ Interview conducted on January 23rd 2008

⁴ Interview conducted on November 7th 2007

neighboring countries like Laos and Cambodia. During the colonial period hardly any Lao could communicate in French. The French thus found it necessary to bring with them some professionals and servants from Vietnam: these included translators, teachers, chefs, and clerks. Somphavanh believed that apart from French influence international assistance at the time of hardships contributed to bread consumption. FAO and UN assistance to Laos consisted of, among other things, flour to alleviate the people's hunger. Flour was thus sent to factories to make bread and noodles and then distributed to the people. The people in Laos came to adopt baguette in this way.

Also another resourceful senior officer is **Mr. Khamphan Simmalavong**, former vice-Minister of foreign affairs, and former Ambassador to Thailand (1977-1990), and former ambassador to France.⁵ Khamphan told of his experience of French culture during his stay in France. All receptions and official functions he attended usually included baguette as a necessary and most important item in meals. During his mission in France, he was most familiar with baguette and it became something very usual when one had absorbed it culturally. He also gave three reasons why people of Indochina ate baguette as one of their own food items:

- 1) A new food
- 2) Social value, and
- 3) Reception protocol.

Eating baguette became popular in Laos in only the 1980s. The baguette in Laos is different from those in Vietnam and Cambodia, because Lao baguette is made mostly by the people in the city, and the people in the city are mostly French. That is also why Lao baguette has better quality and taste than its counterparts in, say, Ho Chi Minh City or Phnom Penh.

Dr. Bernard Gay, a researcher and expert at the Ministry of Information and Culture of Laos⁶ from the Institut de Recherché sur le Sud-East Asiatique (France) IRSEA-CNRS/ Universite de Provence, "Before only the upper class and educated people, not those of lower social echelons, ate bread in Laos. In France, at a big restaurant when you order the meal they will provide you with some bread together with

⁵ Interview conducted on December 12th 2007

⁶ Interview conducted on October 25th 2007

other food without charge, but in Germany and Italy and some other countries you have to pay for this supply of bread”.

According to **Mr. Houmphan Rattavong**,⁷ a Former Director of Cultural Research Institute of Laos, “The baguette was at first served only for soldiers and people in the military, but its consumption expanded step by step to members of the general public. It might have come to Laos with missionaries in 17th century and then spread throughout Indochina after the colonization of this area by the French”. Houmphan also offered his speculation about the advantage and disadvantage for health of eating rice and baguette. Are people in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia short because of eating rice? Why are people in the West taller – some of them more than two meters tall? Is this because they eat different kind of cereals? Of course we to do more study to understand this difference.

From this we assumed further that it was the Vietnamese who brought bread and baguette to Laos and Cambodia during the colonial period. The Vietnamese who were employed as servants or cooks in French households and restaurants in these countries learned the art of French cuisine, including French bakery. When the French left Indochina, or when these Vietnamese quit their employment in French households or restaurants, they took the art of French cooking with them and helped to further propagate it in this region. Hence, not only in Vietnam, but throughout the Lower GMS, French baguette has been incorporated into the Indochinese food culture.

In the 1960s there were a few professional bread bakers⁸ in Vientiane, including Mr. Khai who lived at Samsenthai Road, and Mr. Hue lived near the Lao Praza Hotel (today). All of them were Vietnamese, who worked with the French and learned the art of bakery directly from the latter in Vietnam before they came to Laos.⁹

According to **Ueng**¹⁰, actually baguette was the food of soldiers; it has been modified by Vietnamese people who eat it with pate, pickle, and other ingredients, because some of the ingredients, such as ham and pate from France, are expensive.

⁷ Interview conducted on October 6th 2007

⁸ All were Vietnamese chief cooks, working at the French restaurants in Vientiane. After Lao Revolution in 1975, they migrated to third countries.

⁹ According to interviews conducted on March 10th 2008 in Vientiane.

¹⁰ First son of the oldest Vietnamese bakers in Vientiane

In this region, as has been indicated, we do not know exactly when this baguette was introduced. We only know that it was part of French culture that came with French rule over this territory. However, from the information provided by those interviewees, we can presume that it is a product of French colonialism that was adopted by the local populations. This testifies to the French cultural influence that still lingers on in this part of the world. Now we look at the response of the local people to the baguette and how this has resulted in their adoption and adaptation of it.

5.2 RESPONSES OF PEOPLE TO BAGUETTE

During colonial period, there were a number of places or shops selling good baguette around Vientiane. One of them was called *Maison Swiss*, and another was *Freeyearound*. Most of these shops were run by Vietnamese. *Maison Swiss and Freeyearound* were well-known among the middle class people in this city. Now all these shops were pulled down, after their owners had migrated to France and USA following the communist takeover of Laotian government in 1975. However, one can still see small traders selling baguette on bikes with horns to local people in a village. This is a typical style of selling baguette that still exists today.

Baguette as a legacy of French colonialism still lingers on in the Lower GMS countries. The people in this region, as we have seen, have their own food culture, which includes specific eating habits. Now let us see, from a field study, how baguette has been adopted and adapted to such specific eating habits of these people.

5.2.1 THE 1975 REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT

It should be stressed that when it comes to the question how the general population has come to adopt baguette as part of their daily food, not only French but also other influences are important. The Soviet involvement in Laos in the post-1975 period, among other influences, is relevant here.

When Laos came under communist rule in 1975, a large number of foreigners left the country. It was a difficult time for Lao people. In particular, there were no foreign

experts in Vientiane; so many shops, restaurants and companies were closed. Lao economic and commercial structures were being rearranged and reorganized by new government that implemented a new policy affecting all business sectors including bread production. All companies and enterprises had to be placed under the control of the government. Most business owners in Vientiane were run by Chinese, who had to leave their businesses and properties here and fled to a third country.

There was some significant change in bread producing in Vientiane after 1975 as well. Flour import from France was prohibited. In the 1970s throughout Vientiane there were only 3-4 local baguette factories producing bread for the market. Located mostly in the central part of the city, most of the baguette factories were run by Chinese and Vietnamese. It was not until 1990 that the government announced regulations on fire and environmental security; so some factories had to move out of the city, while others had to close down because they found no new area where they could build ovens. Still others were destroyed and replaced by other businesses.

As has been indicated, the Soviet Union became influential in this country following the important change to communism. The Soviet influence was felt even in matters relating to food. The Soviets provided all assistance to Laos, particularly in the area of agriculture, in order to build the young and poor nation as a strong communist country. Among the items in the assistance provided by the Soviet Union was flour. Each year the Soviets sent a big amount of flour 3000 tons to Laos.

According to **Mr Ki**,¹¹ this flour was donated to Laos for the production of food for the people. At first the flour was unknowingly kept in a warehouse for so long that its quality was adversely affected. The government did not know how to properly do with flour, because Laos did not have yet high technology and experiences; that is, it lacked proper knowledge in using the resource in specific industrial food production. One way to solve this problem was to sell this flour to baguette houses to produce bread; so one official came to discuss with Mr ki on how to turn this flour into use rather left it be spoiled or throw it away.

¹¹ Interview conducted on May 31st 2007 Mr. Ki is also the cousin of the oldest Vietnamese baker in Vientiane



Flour Type use in making bread “*Balloon Brand*” (Made in Thailand)

Mr Ki checked at the flour, which was brown flour, and it was possible to make baguette from it. Therefore, he agreed to buy the Russian flour from the government but at a lower price than it might have cost. This kind of flour is normally brown in color. The Russians liked to use it in making bread for soldiers and students in Russia. At first the Lao government tried to distribute bread for the soldiers and students and introduce it to the public to consume.

In fact, the working class people, especially after the revolutionary period, at first did not know the baguette and they did not like it much. Some threw it away, and others fed their pig fish and other pets at home with it rather than ate it themselves. A few years later, they began to get familiar with it and it became tasty to the baguette. The brown flour lasted until 1980.

According to Mr. Ki, it should be noted here that the consumption of bread and baguette in Laos was also part of the people’s life experience under communist rule. It was not just a colonial legacy. In the latter half of the 1970s, as has been indicated, the growth of Soviet influence came with assistance from the Soviet Union, particularly in the agricultural sector, and part of this assistance was a large amount of flour – more than 3,000 ton of it. The flour donated to the Lao government was meant to replace rice as food for the people.

At first, as we have seen, the donated flour was kept in a warehouse. Lao officials did not know how to do with the flour, because Laos under the new government had not yet established industrial factories or food manufacturing facilities; nor did the officials realize that the flour kept in improper conditions could be badly affected. One possible way to deal with the flour was to sell it to bread baking factories to make bread and sell it to local people.

The government came to this solution through cooperation with the owners of bread baking factories in Vientiane who were to produce bread for the public and society. The government tried to distribute all bread to local people, soldiers and students living in the city. Laos was at that time experiencing a severe shortage of rice resulting from bad harvests throughout the whole country.

After the revolution in 1975 the Lao people in Vientiane were mostly from the countryside; they were rice farmers who did not know about the baguette and they did not want to eat anything except their sticky rice. So, at first, these local people refused to eat bread; they either threw it away or fed their pig fish and other pets at home with it. Only after some years did they begin to get familiar bread and start to eat the baguette more in their own way.

Only a few of former elite or educated people still live in Vientiane. Some of the new elite or new Lao people were educated in the Soviet Union and some East European countries. They introduced a new European way to the local people. It was not until 1980 that the donation flour by the Soviet bloc countries to Laos was terminated.

Most of the elite and upper-class people left Laos after 1975. There were no more upper-class people in major urban areas. However, when the economy recovered, so did gastronomy and culinary expertise. Interestingly, as in the colonial period, a large number of Vietnamese came to Laos to work mostly as artisans, including bakers. This had an important effect on the bakery business as well as the eating habit and taste of the Lao people. Even people in the countryside or poor people learned to eat bread because of their new social relationships. Depending on their social networks, the poor in Laos accepted baguette as their food

5.2.2 BAGUETTE IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES TODAY

The researcher interviewed a hotel manager, **Ms Knok**, 48, at Lane Xang Hotel in Vientiane¹² (one of the famous hotels and restaurants for the French people during the colonial period). It is the place where the statue of Auguste Pavie, the most powerful and highly respected French in Laos, is located. According to Knok, the hotel orders bread from local bakeries everyday about 20-30 loaves for the main breakfast menu. The guests, especially Europeans, like to eat bread with coffee and fried eggs. On important occasions, particularly when high-ranking government officials visit the hotel, she serves them with expensive bread from foreign bakeries such as Bannetong, Le Croissant, and the Scandinavian bakery.

Since the government adopted the policy of opening Laos to the outside world for investment, cultural exchanges and transmittances have taken place. Local Lao people are now more or less adapting themselves to the modern way of life and the western style has been adopted in their daily life to show off their status. For example, organizing a wedding party at a big hotel instead of at home, and serving bread with ragout along side local dishes at such party have become part of life now. The hotel has to order 200-400 loaves of bread for one such wedding party.

Apart from Lane Xang, other big hotels include Sethatpalace and Lao Plaza Hotel, which are owned by foreigners. These hotels, which are well known among Europeans and businessmen, have their own baking facilities as well as bakers and chefs from foreign countries like France and Germany.

The researcher also interviewed **Mr. Bernard Prisco**, 40 half Lao-French owner of French bakery and pastry business in Vientiane. Prisco has told his own story as follows: “After graduation from France in 1995 there were not yet many French restaurants in Vientiane, while the number of tourists coming to visit Laos was increasing everyday”. It would be better if any restaurant could make real French bread of greater variety and better quality to offer the guests who were from different countries, not just Lao bread. He produced 14 types of bread; the most popular one is baguette. He said: “60 percent of his customers are Lao who have been to Europe before and the rest are foreigners who have been working with international organizations in Laos.

¹² Interview conducted on April 22nd 2008

In Cambodia, **Mr. Xayveth**, 55, an official working at the Lao embassy in Phnom Penh,¹³ explained how baguette has spread to rural areas. People in the countryside as well as in a big city like Phnom Penh buy bread for their families to eat and for their cousins as a gift, because they still retain the social value associated with eating baguette. That is, they still think that baguette is a special present from the city.

It is thus not surprising that we see the lasting influence of French eating culture in Laos and other Indochinese countries. In the bread production sector in Laos we still see local bakeries producing large amounts of baguettes in some main cities around the country, especially in Vientiane, the capital city.

Based on the 2006-2008 statistical data of the Department of Industry-Commerce of Vientiane Municipality, Lao PDR they classified the bread oven making into two types, the first one is local bread oven using fire wood to bake and second is the machine oven using electricity, at present in Lao there are about 22 local bread ovens still using fire wood which is mostly run by Lao, for modern machine bread oven can be found at the big hotel, restaurant and cafés shop run by European people, in Vientiane there are only one and two famous bakeries shop, one is Scandinavian sandwich shop and other one is Le Bannetong Bakeries that is so well known among European people.

According to Mouphan, if compare Lao baguette with other, we will see that the baguette made in Laos is more tasty, because Lao bakeries still preserve the original French of making baguette, that is, Lao bakers still use the original French receipt. She reported that when Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn from the Royal Thai Kingdom paid an official visit to Laos for the first time she asked for baguette, milk, and fruits; she preferred baguette made in Laos, because Lao bakers follow the old ingredients of the real French receipt.

¹³ Interview conducted on January 6th, 2007

5.3 THE CARATERISTICS OF BAGUETTE AND THE EATING SYLE IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

The people of the Lower GMS countries-Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia-eat baguette with pate, *mouyor* (a pork lunch meat), chili sauce and vegetables such as: cucumber, onion and etc. Their baguette eating style is thus more complex than that of the French. Sometimes baguette is also dunked into coffee for breakfast or just cut the butter on it and put it in milk. Some times ago children liked to eat only the soft part of baguette by putting their hand inside the baguette and throw its outside part away: this is the opposite way from French people, who mostly eat the outside part and throw the soft part away. Baguette has become children's everyday life; mothers often buy baguette or bread for their children to put in the milk as snack food almost everyday.

Mouphan also confirmed that in her experiences Laos is the only one country of Indochina that has kept and preserved the original French baguette recipe for a long time. The Vietnamese, on the other hand, have changed some ingredients and mixed the flour with other components; therefore, the taste has changed a little bit.



Selling baguette in Hochiminh City

The Vietnamese have developed their own way of eating baguette. Vietnam's *banh mi* (or *banh my*) has already been referred to earlier. This kind of food, *banh mi* sandwich, originated from the French countryside "salad sandwich" which consists of

lettuces, tomatoes and sometimes vegetables as well as dressing served on a baguette. The *banh mi* sandwich is thus a product of French colonialism in Indochina. It combines the French ingredients of baguettes, pate and mayonnaise with native Vietnamese ingredients like coriander, hot peppers, fish sauce and pickled carrots.

For Vietnam today, in particular, we can see, most notably, *banh mi* or Vietnamese sandwich that is served in a French baguette and often containing pork filling, usually together with pickled carrots, daikon, onions, cilantro, and mayonnaise. Favorite *banh mi* fillings include pork, paté, chicken, and head cheese. The contrasting flavors and textures of the sandwich, as well as its relatively low cost, make it a popular dish.¹⁴ In Lao people call it “ Khao Jee “ means grilled rice but in Cambodia people call it “Nouam paing”

5.4 THE TRADITIONAL FRENCH BAGUETTE

The bread and baguette that are now available in department stores or some shops no longer offer the same taste as the original French products because different kinds of flour are used in producing them, according to Ms Souphanouvong.

Mr. Cerlic, 35, a French baguette professional, working at La Terrace Restaurant and Le Bannetong Bakery at Mixay village,¹⁵ also explained: “The difference between French baguette and Lao one lies in flour and salt used in producing this kind of food. In Paris the production of baguette does not require a lot of ingredients and components. The result is that French baguette is more intense in color (brown) and that it is not as salty as Lao baguette. The shapes of the French and Lao baguette are also different”.

¹⁴ “Banh Mi”, *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki...>

¹⁵ Interview conducted on March 10th 2008. Cerlic received a certificate on bread bakery in Paris; after that he was employed at this restaurant in Laos since 2006



a Vietnamese woman selling baguette in Ho Chi Minh City



a bread factory house at Ban Sibounheug, Vientiane

According to Mr. **Bounthanong Somsaipol**, a freelance writer and journalist,¹⁶ the French adapted themselves to the local traditions of the countries they had conquered quite well. At the same time, they brought Ragou stake, Café bread and butter to these countries. In Laos they applied their building and construction techniques to Lao style, as was evident in the temples as well as residential buildings. France chose Pakse as the location of its administrative office, whereas Pakxong in the south was chosen as a recreational area for French people. The marks and characteristics of French tradition

¹⁶ Interview conducted on March 19th 2008

could also be seen in the “Latanier tree” (mahogany in English) they planted along the roads, such as in Pakxou, Markxou and Karam.

Additional opinion made also by **Mr. Gillbert Dubus**, an 80 year-old French man born in Hanoi.¹⁷ He moved to Laos when he was only 8 years old. Now he lived in Pakse, Champasak Province. Dubus confirmed that Lao people learned to make bread from the Vietnamese. “Bread definitely came with the French military. When they came to the city, and saw the children, they gave bread to the children, who liked it very much”.

Apart from those resource persons interviewed by the researcher, many other people contributed their own stories about the baguette. One of them was a consumer. He was a customer waiting for the bus at a bus station.¹⁸ He said that he started eating baguette when he knew how to eat glutinous rice. He remembered that when he was young many Lao people suffered from flooding from the Mekong River. Also during the civil war a lot of people migrated from Xiengkhuong Province to Vientiane. At such times of hardships and sufferings the government distributed bread to the local people who were in trouble. Bread was also distributed to children who came for health checks and vaccine injection from international health agencies.

Furthermore, the researcher interviewed Miss **Souk**, 35, a trader at Km 6,¹⁹ said that Lao bread is popular among Thai tourists who come to visit Khaysone Phomvihane Museum. Sometimes around 5-6 buses come to stop at Km 6 to buy bread from the traders there. In addition, Lao people who go to other provinces buy bread to eat on their way or as a gift for their relatives. In fact, bread is not the main food of Lao people. Most people eat it as a snack; some eat it as their breakfast in a rush to work in the morning.

¹⁷ Interview conducted on August 24th 2007

¹⁸ Interview conducted on January 4th 2008

¹⁹ Interview conducted on February 8th 2008



The traditional oven made of brick in Vientiane.

According to interviewee Ms **Chieng Phet**, 48, half Chinese-half Cambodian, owner of Heng Cheng Bakery, Cambodia, now there are about 4-5 bakery factories producing baguette in Phnom Penh. She said that she has made baguette almost 20 years. She learned the art of making baguette from her uncle, who had worked in Chinese restaurants during the colonial period. She told that ten years ago they used stoves to make bread. Now having changed to machine, she can produce as much as to meet the market demand which is around 10,000 loaves a day.



Ms. Chienphet 'sister selling baguette for 20 years old.



Ms Chieng Phet , one of biggest baguette producer in Phnompen
In Cambodia, a baguette costs around 500-1000 real.



Japanese man take baguette as breakfast in Cambodia ready to travel to province



Fresh baguette taken out from Oven after baking for 2 hours



Dough is ready to bake in the oven, Laos.

5.5 BAGUETTE MAKING PROCESS IN THE LOWER (GMS) COUNTRIES

This recipe yield nice, tasty baguettes that one will be proud of. The crumb is soft and chewy but not light and airy like the super cheap ones that quickly go stale. The top crust is light and crisp, while the bottom and sides are just a tad soft. Perfect for making *banh mi* sandwiches or dipping in *bo kho* beef stew or a chicken curry. Yes, it takes a good 4 hours but consider it a time and culinary splurge. To make two 15-inch loaves, each about 14 ounces, one needs the following ingredients:

- 1 (1/4 ounce) package active dry yeast, Fleishman brand preferred, or fast-rise yeast, SAF brand preferred
- 1/2 plus 1 cup warm water (105-115°F)
- 3 1/2 cups low-protein, unbleached all-purpose flour, Gold Medal or Pillsbury brand preferred, plus extra for shaping the loaves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar.

One also needs special equipment including large capacity food processor; a double (15-inch long) dark, nonstick French bread pan; a razor blade or very sharp knife; plastic dough scraper; plastic spray bottle. Then, the process of making a Vietnamese-style baguette is as follows:

1. Put the yeast in a small bowl and add the 1/2 cup water. Set aside for 2 to 3 minutes to soften the yeast. (It will look kind of blotchy as the granules break down. It may also get a bit foamy too.)

2. Meanwhile, outfit the food processor with the regular chopping blade to make the dough. Put the flour, salt and sugar into the food processor.

3. Return your attention to the yeast. Use a whisk or spoon to gently combine the yeast and water well. Pour in the 1 cup of water and gently whisk or stir again to combine. With the feed tube removed, start the food processor. Slowly pour the yeast mixture into the flour mixture in processor, blending just until the dough forms a ball and pulls away from side of processor bowl, about 1 minute.

4. Replace the feed tube and let the dough rise until it nearly fills the bowl, about 1 hour. Then try once or twice to slightly deflate the dough. Let the dough rise again and deflate. Let the dough rise one more time.

5. Flour your work surface and hands with about 1 tablespoon of flour. Detach the processor bowl from the machine. Holding the bowl upside down above your work surface, turn the very soft and sticky dough out onto your work surface, taking care to notice where the blade is in the blob of dough. (The dough scraper is handy for removing the dough from the walls of the processor bowl.) Remove the blade from the dough. Gently rotate the dough on your work surface so it is lightly covered by flour and does not stick. Use the dough scraper to divide the dough in half, setting one half off to the side.

6. To shape each baguette, use lightly floured hands to gently press one half of dough into an 8- by 5-inch rectangle or football shape. It should feel lofty and soft. The dough should naturally stretch lengthwise in one particular direction. Think of that as the grain of the dough. You want to shape the loaf along the grain of the dough to promote a big rise. Fold the top third down and the bottom third up as if you were folding a very wide and narrow business letter. Gently seal the edges by pressing with your fingers or the palm of your hand. The result should look like a fat log. (If you have a rectangle of sorts, you can repeat the folding and pinch the edges to seal to create a log.) Your aim is to coil the dough so that when it's baking, it will spring and burst open beautifully. Try to keep as much of the air in the dough as possible without breaking the skin.

Turn the log over (seam side down), then start rolling the log back and forth (have your hands flat facing downward) to elongate and stretch it into a 15-inch-long thick rope that is 2 to 2 1/2 inches wide. Try not to stop for long lest the dough sticks to your work surface. The dough should be very soft and easily yield to your motions. Pick up the dough with both hands and place seam side down in the cradle of one of the bread pans. Repeat with the remaining half of dough.

7. Loosely cover the loaves with a dish towel to prevent the dough from drying and inhibiting rising in the oven. Set aside in a warm draft-free place for 30 minutes, or until just shy of double the original size.

8. Meanwhile, put a large roasting pan with 1 inch of hot water in it on bottom of gas oven or on lowest rack of electric oven. Position the oven rack in upper third of oven. Preheat the oven to 450°F.

9. When the loaves have risen enough, they're ready for baking. Fill the spray bottle part way with water. Use a razor or sharp knife to make 4 or 5 shallow diagonal slashes down length of each log. The cuts should run the length of the log, be about 4 inches long each, and ¼ to 1/2 inch deep. Angle the razor or knife at about 30 degrees. Mist the loaves with 4 to 6 sprays of water.

10. Slide the pan into the oven onto the upper 3rd rack and bake for 20 minutes. After baking for 3 minutes, mist the loaves. Repeat the misting after baking for another 3 minutes. Then, let the loaves bake. At the 15-minute mark, you may rotate the pan for even browning. At the 20-minute mark, gently turn (you may have to pry it free just a tad) the loaves bottom side up in the pan to promote even crisping and browning. Bake for about 5 minutes, during which you can rotate the loaves so that the sides brown and crisp too, or until the loaves are crisp all over. The browning happens quickly at this stage so carefully monitor the loaves to prevent burning.

Transfer each loaf to a rack to cool. The bread is wonderfully warm after having cooled for about 30 minutes. They will remain at their best for about 6 hours after baking and can be reheated in the oven. It can be stored overnight in a thick paper bag. To freeze for up to 2 months, wrap in a double layer of plastic wrap; defrost at room temperature and reheat in a 350F oven for about 10 minutes to refresh and crisp.²⁰

According to Ueng, bread before 1975 was better. Its good quality was due to the good quality of flour. During that time flour was directly brought from France, which is the best bread-producing country. Its particular type of flour that is the main material for making bread is T 45 (Type 45). Ueng said that after 1975 Laos had to use flour imported from Thailand which was not the particular flour for producing or making bread. His father thus needed to try new technique own way by mixing one type of flour with others in order to produce tasty and good bread, or at least as good as possible. and it was quite satisfied for general consumers . This new technique baking style was transmitted to

²⁰ see more detail on The bread baking process by Marion (1998)

another bread baking store in Vientiane. At present it has become a common way of making bread in the capital city. He added that at the time of the revolution in 1975 there were only 4-5 bread factories in Vientiane. One of these was his father bread factory. At present there are two types of bread produced in Laos: industrially produced bread and home-made bread. Traditionally, the people of Laos do not like to buy bread or baguette at a bakery shop. Therefore, more than half of the baguette he produces is delivered to the main supermarket in the city or to the canteens and shops of vocational schools. He has noted that in all the food that people eat should be of really good quality and satisfactory to them.

Another person who was the best baguette producer is **Mr. Viengkham Somsavath**, an owner of a bread factory at Ban Sivilay.²¹ He graduated from the Soviet Union in 2000 and now works at the National Statistics Centre. He was married to a Russian woman and they have a son.

Viengkham set up a bakery in 2004, as he wanted to spend his time in the evening to earn extra income. He produces bread in response to the demand of the market and he sends the bread he produces to his regular customers in Km 6 and in Dong Doke village. According to this interviewee, there are many bread procedures now; they all need a lot of attention to avoid the risk of losing benefits from running this business. Producing bread takes many hours and some bakeries produce it all night; so some mistakes may occur during the process of bread production. Moreover, producing bread requires a lot of fire wood to heat the natural stove in order to make it delicious.

Lao bread is free from any chemical substance so that it can be kept for only one day. Some bakeries have lost profits from running this business and some have faced bankruptcy largely owing to the quality of the products. That is, the bread is not beautiful and burnt and some bakery owners need to sell their products at a lower price.

Lao bread is anyway unique in comparison with bread of other countries, because it is soft when eating and that is why Lao bakery still remains in business. "I would like to have a patent for Lao bread registered because its shape and taste are different from the bread of other countries," Viengkham added.

²¹ Interview conducted on January 25th 2008

This process of making baguette in Indochina is very important, because it is part of the adaptation process whereby this kind of French food has been incorporated into the daily life of the local people. Indeed, not only has baguette been consumed in a way different from that of the French, it has also assumed other social meanings and implications.



Baguette can find every where in city and countryside



Baguette is available in the big supermarket in Ho chi Minh city

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The baguette began life in the Lower GMS countries as a French import. However, with subsequent adaptations and refinements in the local Indochinese style, it became a truly local food. Now most people in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia even deny that the baguette was ever a French import. Though historically the baguette had a French origin, in the mind of the local people, the baguette today no longer represents French culture. The Lao people, for example, have their own local name for this kind of bread *khao jee*.

All kinds of food have undergone developments. According to an EFEO anthropologist, M. Olivier,¹ 200-300 years ago we did not have seasoning powder. In former times the Indochinese people cooked and ate food with no such seasoning ingredient. In Laos, this ingredient was known only about 80 years ago but now it has become a necessity. The Europeans experienced the taste of chili only in the 17th century, when it was brought from South Africa. Today the whole world is experiencing a new kind of food development – the so-called fusion food.

The French, of course, had great influence in the development of modern food culture in the lands they occupied and colonized, including the Indochinese countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. We can say that this was partly due to the French “civilizing mission”. The French are both great eaters and inventors of food; they take great pride in their cuisines.

Therefore, during the colonial period, they were more enthusiastic than any other colonial power to introduce their favorite dishes to the local populace. In the three

¹ Research on anthropology in Laos about food habits in charge of Publishing Department for French Research Institute of Far East Asia (EFEO)

Indochinese countries during this time, the number of French restaurants, where all menus consisted of exclusively French foods, in the main cities of these countries was greater than that of local-food restaurants. It is thus not surprising to see this trace of French cultural influence still existing in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and other former French colonies.

However, in the Lower GMS countries, we have also seen that there were also other factors influencing the development of French bread. After 1975, for instance, the USSR donated flour to the Lao government, and this contributed to the change in the way bread was produced in Laos. Moreover, people began to eat bread more because of the economic and political problems. This significantly contributed to the change in the eating behaviour of the local people. They accepted bread in not much the same manner as when they were under colonial rule but rather as required by the political and economic imperatives of the situation following the revolution in 1975.

Hence, Lao bread no longer exclusively represents a French colonial legacy. Local people have indeed taken bread as part of their daily life, and its connection with French culture seems distant. They do not eat it the way the French people do. In particular, they do not only eat bread for breakfast like French do but also use bread at the wedding party or on other special occasions like a birthday party to signify their rich and high-class status. In short, the baguette does not mean only food.

This clearly indicates that food has its cultural aspects. For the French people, particularly those who are Christian, bread is closely associated with their religious belief: when they eat bread, that means they eat body; and when they drink wine, that means they drink blood.

In the Indochinese countries, moreover, in old times eating bread was found only among the rich and high-class people. After the revolution in 1975, bread can be eaten by every body, not simply by those in the upper echelon of society, because now people can buy it and find it easily in everywhere. In Laos, bread has become part of Lao food, especially bread produced by the new government that came to power in 1975. Bread has

changed its meaning from being “French” to being “Lao” by the adoption of a local name “*khao jee*” which means in English “grilled rice”.

As we have seen, this is not simply a change in name. It rather signifies both adoption and adaptation of French food. The way Lao and other Indochinese people adopted and changed it to their own ways of life is quite culturally important. For the Europeans, bread has symbolic religious meaning, but for the Indochinese people bread, as we have seen, has assumed some social-class implications.²

As part of their local tradition, the Lao people respect rice as life, while, as also has been indicated, the Europeans, especially those who are Christian, regard bread as “sacred”. The Christians would say that when you eat bread it is like we eat the body and soul Jesus Christ, whereas the Lao eat bread like eating biscuit and candy, much like when they eat other kinds of food that is, with no relation whatsoever with their religious belief.

It is interesting to note that in adopting French food, Lao people rejected not only the cultural and religious meanings associated with it but also changed it to their own way of life. Lao people eat bread just as other kinds of food. But this is not all: Lao also use bread in a wedding party it something as a symbol of wealth and social class. Even their way of making bread is different. Flour to be used in making bread and cake is not of the same type. Cake is part of pastry, while in making bread one needs some chemicals to make it bigger. There are differences in the way and process of making bread and cake, though we tend to consider them as belonging to the same process

In conclusion, it could not nevertheless be denied that baguette in the Lower GMS countries is originally part of French cultural influence. Unlike the British, in particular, the French tried to bring into this part of the world their culture – habits, food and philosophy. As part of their cultural doctrine, the “civilizing mission”, they tried to culturally assimilate the local people, while the British, on the other hand, mostly tried to leave the indigenous ways of life, including even political ways of life, the ways they were. Though other factors also shaped the way of life of the Indochinese people especially after 1975, one trace of French cultural influence is unmistakable – the French

² Interviewed Grant Evans on May 17th 2008

baguette. It is perhaps the most popular French colonial legacy in Laos today; and though its name has been changed from the original one of baguette to *khao jee* it is undeniably French baguette. French baguette is a widespread reminder of the French colonial presence in Laos as well as the whole of the Lower GMS countries.



Baguette put ready in baskets in Phnom penh to distribute to Province



Baguette woman trader count the number of baguette to send to market.

REFERENCES

- A Symposium *Food and Civilization*. 1976 . United States Information Agency:
Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Amy B. Trubek. 2000. *Haute Cuisine: How the French Invented the Culinary Profession*.
- Barber, Martin.1974..*An urban village in Vientiane*. In Sangkhom Khady san.
Vientiane: Pakpasack Press.
- Ben Fine, Michael Heasman and Judith Wright. 1996. *The World of Food : Consumption in the Age of Affluence*.
- Betts, Raymond F . 1961. *Assimilation and association in French colonial Theory :1890-1914*. NY
- Bounhueang Bouasisengpraseuth. 1995.Vol. 2. *History, Arts, and Architecture of Laos, Muang Luangprabang*.
- Brocheux, Pierre1965 .*Crise Economique et Societe en Indochine Francaise*. Revue Francaise d'Histoire d'Outre Mer. Tome lxxiii.
- Buttger, Joseph. 1967. 2 Vols .*The Smaller Dragon. : A Political History and Post colonial Vietnam*.,. N.Y
- Cady, John F . 1954. *The roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia*. Ithaca.
- Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. 1997. *Food and Culture*. Published by Routledge.
- Chagnon, Jackie and Roger Rump. 1982. *Education: The Prerequisite to Change in Laos*. In contemporary Laos, Edited by Martin Stuart-Fox . Lucia.Queensland: University of Queensland Press.
- Chandler, D.O., 1983. *A history of Cambodia*. Colorado : Boulder

- Chandler, David. 1996. *Facing the Cambodian past*. Chiangmai, Thailand :
Silkworm Books.
- Conrad Kottak. 1978 . '*McDonald's as Myth, Symbol, and Ritual*'. Anthropology: The
Study of Human Diversity. New York: Random House.
- David BELL and Gill VALENTINE. 1997. *Consuming Geographies: We are Where
We Eat*, Chapter 8: 'Global'. Routledge Publication.
- David E. Sutton. 2001. *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and
Memory* .
- Economique de l'Indochine. 1939 . *L'anne 1938 dans l'evolution Economique de
l'indochine*, extrait du Bulletin.
- Editions Vientiane Times. 1995. *Le Thatluang de Vientiane : Symbole de la Nation
Laotiane*. Editions du Vientiane times.
- Ennis, Thomas E. 1936. *French Policy and Development in Indochina* , Chicago,
- Eugen Weber. 1977. *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of rural France
1870-1914*.
- Evans, Grant and Kelvin Rowley. 1990. *Red Brotherhood at War: Vietnam,
Cambodia , and Laos since 1975*. London: Verso
- Ferro, Jennifer. 1999. *Vietnamese Foods and Culture*. Vero Beach, FL: Rourke Press.
- Grant Evans. 2002. *A short History of Laos the Land in between*. Chaingmai :
Silkworm Books.
- Grslier, B.P. 1962. *The Art of Indochina : Including Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and
Cambodia*. New York.

- Hammer, E.J. 1955. *The struggle for Indochina* , Stanford, Cal.
Investment. Lao State Printing
- Ira D. Garard, Ph.D. 1974. *The story of Food*. United States of America:
- J. M. Halpern. November 15, 1960. Research Memorandum Working paper. The Lao Elite: *A study of Tradition and Innovation*. The Rand Corporation. Santa Monica : Callifornia.
- J.M Schiller, M.B Chanphengxay, B Linqvist, and S. Appa Rao. 2006. *Rice in Laos* . International Rice Research Institutes.
- James L. WATSON. 1998. Introduction: *Tran nationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia*’, in *Golden Arches East: McDonald’s in East Asia*, Edited by James L. WATSON. Stanford University Press.
- Jan Pluvier. 1974. *The Western Regimes in Southeast Asia: Southeast Asian From Colonialism to Independence*. Kualalumper.
- Jean. 2006. *De La Gueriviere Indochine, L’Envoutement*, Pavi Le seuil.
- John F. Cady. 1967. *The Roots of French Imperialism in Southeast Asia*.
- John J. S. Burton. 2005 . *Laos Close Encounters* . Bangkok: Orchid Press.
- Katay D. Sasorith . 1959. Historical aspects of Laos . *In Kingdom of Laos: The Land of Million elephants and the white parasol*. edited by Rene de Broval. Saigon: France-Asie
- Katrinjka Cwiertka. 1995. Vol.24, No.3. *To What Extent is foreign food adoption culturally determined – an example of Japan in comparison with Europe*.
- Keyes, C.F. 1977. *The Golden Peninsula: Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia*. New York.

- Lanessan, Jean-M-A De. 1895. *La colonization francaise en Indochine* (French Colonization in Indochina). Paris.
- Le Boulager, Paul. 1931. *Histoire du Laos Francasie* (A history of French Laos) Paris.
- Linda Civittello. 1979. *Cuisine and Culture: A history of food and People*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- M.L. Manich Jumsai, C.B.E., M.A Second Edition. 1971. *A short History of Laos*. Chalermnit, Bangkok
- Marion Bennion. 1979. *Introductory Foods*. . New York : Macmillan Publishing.
- Marr .D. 1971. *Vietnamese Anti colonialism, 1885-1925*. California : Berkeley Publishing.
- Mary Frey Ray, Beda A. Dondi . 1980 . *Professional cooking and Baking*. Encino,California : Glencoe Publishing Company
- Michael HEASMAN and Judith WRIHT. 1996. *The World of Food: the Consumption in the Age of Affluence* .
- Miller, N.E. 1959. In: S Koch(ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science, study 1, Vol. 2. Liberalization of Basic S-R Concepts: Extensions to conflict Behavior, Motivation, and Social Learning*.. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Milton Osborne. 1969. *The French Presence in Cochinchina and Cambodia: Rule and Response (1859-1905)*. Ithaca: N.Y.
- Milton Osborne. 1998. *Southeast Asia an illustrated Introductory History*. Hongkong : Bern Convention.

- Ministry of Education and sport. Social Science Research Institute. Vol.3: *The History of Laos 1893 to the present*. Education Printing
- Mordant, General. 1950. *Au service de la France en Indochine 1941-1945*(Serving France in Indochina).Saigon.
- Ng Shui Meng. 1991. *Social Development in the People's Democratic Republic : Problems and Prospects* . In *Laos: Beyond the Revolution*, edited by Joseph J. Zasloff and Leonard Unger. London: Macmillan.
- Nguyen Van Long. 1973. *Before the Revolution: The Vietnamese Peasants under the French*. Cambridge : Mass Press.
- Paul Rozin, et al. 1997 . In *Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change ' The Cultural Evolution of a Food-based Emotion*. Edited by Helen Mac BETH. Berghahn Books.
- Paul Rozin. 2000. 'The Psychology of Food and Food Choice', in *The Cambridge world history of food*, Editors, Kenneth F. KIPLE and Kriemhild Conee Ornelas. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. 1994 . *Pleasant Journey to Laos.. Enjoyed Mouang Lao*. Princess Foundation.
- Raymond Fink. Bureau of Social Science Research. September 1959. *Information and Attitudes in Laos.*, Inc., N.W. Washington D.C.
- Richard Butwell. 1964. *Southeast Asia today and Tomorrow*. Publishing Frederick.
- Robequain, Chales. 1939. *L'Evolution economique de l'Indochine francaise* . paris
- Roberts , Stephen H. 1929. *History of French Colonial Policy 1870-1925*, 2 Vols.
- Statistical yearbook 2006. National Statistic Center Committee for Planning and

Stuart-Fox, M. 1986. *Laos: Politics and Society*. London: Frances Pinter Publishers.

Stuart-Fox, M. 1982. *Contemporary Laos*. ed., Lucia, Brisbane

Sud Chonejeutsinh. 2003. *Vietnam Since the French colonial to present*. Second Edited. Bangkok : Chulalongkon University Press.

Tanomnuan Olchalean and Satsouni Sinthousink. 2005. Project “ *Eating is the big Matter for Thai and Foreigners* “ Bread in European Culture. Choulalongkon Unoversity Press .

Tham Saiyasithsena. 1995. *Patou Xay: its construction, significance and uses*. The AVI Publishing Company, Inc.

Thee Marek. 1973. *Notes of a witness: Laos and the second Indochinese war*, New York: Random House.

Theodore Zeldin. 1977. *A history of French Passions (1848-1945)*. Oxford : Clarendon Press.

Thion, Serge. 1993. *Watching Cambodian: Ten paths to enter the Cambodian tangle*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Tran, Diana My. 2000. *The Vietnamese Cookbook*. Sterling. VA: Capital Books.

Internet Websites

<http://www.ambafrance-lao.org>

<http://www.breadmatters.org>

<http://www.britania.com>

<http://www.cpamedia.com>

<http://www.lao.efeo.fr>

<http://www.orchidbooks.com>

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

BIOGRAPHY

Somkiethisack KINGSADA was born in Vientiane City, Laos in 1973. He graduated at High school in Vientiane 1991 . Then he won scholarship to study at Dongdoke University, it is a Pedagogical University (National University of Laos, at present time) .He majored in English and German. After graduation, he applied to work at the Ministry of information and Culture in 1995 he was in charged of International Relations Division under the Permanent secretary office. He spent about 12 years working there, as soon he was selected to study MA on Southeast Asia at Chulalongkorn University , Thailand under supporting of Rockefeller Foundation in 2005.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย