

definite political boundaries, seem to have come into being only with the British annexation. Sir Charles Crossthwaite explains how it came about:

The grouping of the Shan States for administration purposes into North and South, which was not inherited from the Burman Government, and was not founded on any distinction recognised by the Shans, had its origin in these events. The States, the history of which is of most importance in this connection, are Hsenwi and Hsipaw, to the north of Mandalay; Yawnghwe and Mongnai further south; and, on the east of the Salween, the large State of Kengtung.<sup>1</sup>

"These events" refer to the turmoil in the Shan States which led the British to send three separate military-cum-political expeditions to deal with them as we shall see later. The first was the foremost British force sent to the South in the cold weather of 1887 which heralded the British conquest of the Shanland; the second took place to the North in the next cold weather; and the third, a handful of Indian sepoy's headed by three British Officers, one political, one military and the third medical, practically conquered the whole of 12,000 square-miles of Kengtung State. This division of the Shan States into North and South is most convenient and natural in many ways. The main road from Mandalay and Maymyo leads to Hsipaw and Hsenwi and opens up routes to all parts of the Northern Shan States. Another main road from Meiktila - Thazi area goes to Yawnghwe, Mongnai and further east to Kengtung, with roads from other Southern States joining this arterial road. Roads exist which connect the North and South at various points. The whole Central Plain of Burma is thus well connected with all parts of the Shan States.<sup>2</sup>

Of the chaos and revolts in the Northern and Southern Shan States prior to the British annexation, we may begin with the revolt in Kengtung, which had been considered part of the Southern Shan States.

Kengtung and Kenghung had been very close to each other in friendly relations from ancient times, as is borne out by the Chronicle of Kengtung. Kenghung had not had a stable government for some time prior to 1880 when ruling princes came and went, the ease and rapidity of these comings and goings depending upon the success or otherwise of the palace intrigues. Kengtung, on the other hand, had been stable since Sawbwa Maha Khanan admitted Ava's suzerainty in 1814. In the late eighteen-seventies relations between these two States seem to have been strained, and to heighten these differences, the Sawbwa of Kenghung, Sao Seng, received royal appointment or recognition from King Mindon, without reference to the Sawbwa of Kengtung and to the exclusion of the latter's nominee. This royal order was confirmed by King Thibaw and

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1. Crossthwaite, Sir C., The Pacification of Burma, p. 137.

2. A list of the States in the North and South will be found in the Appendix at the end of the book.

the Kenghung Sawbwa went to Mandalay to receive the honour personally. The shortest route from Kenghung to Mandalay passed through the Kengtung valley, and Sao Seng did not pay a courtesy call on its prince, but sent word that he would do so on return. On his way back from Mandalay and while passing through Kengtung for the second time, not only did Sao Seng not pay a visit to the Sawbwa of Kengtung, but he let it be known that as his appointment was senior to that of Kengtung in the Mandalay warrant of precedence he had no intention of making any call on a junior prince, who should have been the first to call. The Sawbwa of Kengtung, by this time Sao Kawngtai, never liked the idea of Kenghung taking precedence over Kengtung, and when he was informed of Sao Seng's remarks, thought the time had come to rid himself of the Burmese rule and to have Sao Seng's head. He began by putting to death the Burmese political agent in Kengtung and his body-guard numbering 30, and raising a force of several thousands to attack Kenghung. In due course, Kengtung forces overran Kenghung and installed their nominee on the throne of the principality, while Sao Seng's head was embalmed in honey and brought to Kengtung.<sup>1</sup>

This was in 1881 and King Thibaw and the Court at Mandalay, beset as they were with their own troubles and disorders, were unable to do anything about this revolt. The Burmese garrison in Kengtung was never large and the Burmese control and authority there were only nominal, quite different from those in the cis-Salween States which were nearer to the centre. It is doubtful if even a stronger king would have thought it worth-while to send an expedition to Kengtung on an occasion such as this, if his own representative on the spot had been in the wrong.

Soon after this event in Kengtung another revolt broke out in Mongnai, headquarters of the Burmese Resident and garrison in the Southern Shan States. This was caused by a string of events which had their beginning during King Mindon's time when the Thathameda tax which the Shans never liked was introduced. Before proceeding, however, it would be appropriate here to say a word about the tax itself.

It would seem that the Thathameda tax was levied for the first time in the Shan States in 1868 in Mongnai. It was originally fixed at Rs. 5/- per house to be levied on the basis of one thousand seven hundred houses, the same number of houses as was fixed for Kengtawng, a sub-state of Mongnai. From this it is clear that the number of assessable houses was not fixed on a scientific basis, for the number of houses in Mongnai must have been far greater than that of Kengtawng.

This is how the thathameda was collected: The Hluttaw Mingyis, and not the local political agents, issued the orders for collection. On receipt of this order the Sawbwa would summon his

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1. GUBSS, I.i:291. The story of Sao Seng and his head was told to the writer by Sao Kawnkiao Intaleng, Sawbwa of Kengtung 1896-1935.

council of ministers and officials and lay before them the Mandalay demand, and a discussion would then take place as to the amount each Circle in the State was liable for. When a decision had been reached, the Sawbwa's Office would issue letters to all circles showing the exact amount each was to pay. This letter would be the authority shown to the village headmen who would then collect the appropriate amount from his villagers<sup>1</sup>

At one time subsequently, on account of the increased expenditure at the Burmese capital, orders were issued for the tribute to be paid in kind, e.g. thitsi, oils - wood or sessamum, lac, catch and similar products<sup>1</sup>. Districts that did not produce these had to buy them from those that did; and the penalty for failure to produce them was increased revenue. The products were despatched from various States by bullock carts to Ava where they would be weighed by the Akunwun and accepted if correct. This system which was introduced in 1861<sup>1</sup> proved unsatisfactory and last only for some 2 or 3 years, and the former system of cash payment was resorted to<sup>2</sup>

This Thathameda tax would have made for good government if the matter had ended with the payment of it without the States having to feed members of the Burmese garrison quartered there. At Mongnai, where the normal strength of the Burmese garrison (also called "Ko-Yan" or body guard or personal retinue of the Burmese political agent) was about four or five hundred strong, the State around there took turns in feeding the garrison. Big States, such as Mongnai, would feed the soldiers for about fifteen days at a time, and smaller States would be allotted fewer feeding days according to their sizes, each taking its allotted turn until a full cycle was reached and a beginning made again. Such a system, feudal and irksome though it was, would constitute a tolerable hardship on the feeders if the soldiers obeyed their commanders and behaved themselves; but soldiers of those days were not soldiers in the modern sense - they were only levies and if they were not satisfied with the feeding and pay they received, they would infest the countryside and obtain by fair or foul means what they could from the villagers, who naturally were afraid to lay any complaint against the soldiers unless they could be sure of redress and immunity from victimisation<sup>1</sup>. During Sitke U Shwe Kyu's time, each of his four hundred soldiers in Mongnai received Rs. 10/- per month from Mandalay.<sup>3</sup>

To come back to the Thathameda tax, each State had an allotted amount to pay to the King at Mandalay. Failure or tardiness in payment was frowned upon by the Court as a serious omission. One year, early in Thibaw's reign, the Sawbwas of Mongnai, Lawksawk and Yawnghwe were restricted to Mandalay owing to their inability to pay the tribute

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1. This is the date quoted in the GUBSS. Was it meant to be 1871?
  2. GUBSS, II.2.420.
  3. GUBSS, II.2.418-419.

as ordered; but were soon released after their people in their States had collected sufficient money and paid up in full, and the Sawbwas returned to their States with some feeling of bitterness and shame at having been "restricted" to Mandalay.

It was about this time that an unfrocked monk of Kengtawng by the name of Twet Nga Lu attacked Mongnai, but he was easily repulsed and driven off by the Sawbwa. With this attack began the bitter animosity between the Sawbwa of Mongnai and Twet Nga Lu, and the latter tried his best to obtain favours from the Court at Mandalay to get the better of the former. Soon after the attack, and most probably as a result of manipulation at the Court by Twet Nga Lu, a nephew of the Sawbwa of Mongnai was appointed by Mandalay as the Myosa of Kengtawng, without any reference to the uncle. Kengtawng was (and still is) a sub-State of Mongnai. What made the appointment more unpalatable to the Sawbwa, Khun Kyi, was the fact that Twet Nga Lu, was by now a step-father to the young Myosa, Sao Maung, whose widowed mother had married the unfrocked monk. Accordingly the Sawbwa made very strong representations against the appointment through his sister, known as the Mongnai Queen. The Sawbwa himself was summoned to Mandalay by the King, but having had a taste of confinement there previously he declined to go and after some conference with the Magwe Wundauk, the Burmese political agent at Mongnai at the time, decided to send his sister, Nang U, the Mongnai Queen, instead. Nang U went and stayed at Mandalay for about six months, but as no notice was taken of her at the palace, she left Mandalay to return to Mongnai. She was pursued, caught up and arrested at Kaukse and taken back to Mandalay to be confined there. This event caused no little resentment on the part of the Sawbwa who regarded the ignoring and subsequent arrest of his sister as a grave insult to her honour and to himself personally.

More summons came from Mandalay for the Sawbwa. At the same time the Bohmu, Magwe Wundauk, had been recalled to Mandalay, leaving the Sitke in charge of the Burmese post at Mongnai. The Sitke urged the Sawbwa to obey the summons, but the latter asked for forty to fifty days delay. Anticipating that the Sawbwa would take flight during this period of delay, the Sitke wrote to the Sawbwas of Kengtung and Mawknai asking them to arrest Mongnai Sawbwa should he attempt to enter their territories. At the same time, the Sitke alerted his men to be in readiness to seize the Sawbwa.

The Shans led by the Sawbwa struck first. The Sitke and his guards were invited by the Sawbwa to the Haw to partake of a feast. Suddenly all the gates and entrances of the Haw were closed and the Sitke himself and nearly all the soldiers were put to death. This was in 1882.<sup>1</sup>

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1. GUBSS, II.2.421.

On the news of this massacre reaching Mandalay a large force was at once despatched as a punitive expedition. Besides this force from Central Burma, contingents from the Shan States of Myelat, Samka, Yawnghwe, Hopong, Mongpaw, Laikha and Kesi were ordered to proceed to Mongnai. Unable to oppose such a large force, Khun Kyi, the Sawbwa of Mongnai, fled across the Salween and took refuge in Kengtung. With Mongnai Sawbwa were his brother-in-law, Mongnawng Myosa, and Sao Weng, the Sawbwa of Lawksawk. Mongnawng Myosa's sister was the Mahadevi of Mongnai and the Myosa had every right to fear the wrath of the punitive force. It is not clear how Lawksawk Sawbwa came to be involved. He must have nursed some thoughts of rebellion when he was confined together with Mongnai Sawbwa in Mandalay for failure to pay up the Thathameda in time. With Sao Weng, also went the Myosa of Mongping, a small State close to Lawksawk.

The Annual Register of Events of the Hluttaw at Mandalay has the following entry about this rising in Mongnai:

Also in the same month (Tabaung 1244 - March 1882) the Myowun Shwelanbo Kawlin Myosa Mingyi, Maha Mingaung Nawrahta, who was placed in Mone on account of disloyalty of Nga Kyi Nga, ex-Sawbwa of Mongnai (Mone), and of Nga Htun, ex-Myosa of Mongnawng (Maingnaung); Nga Waing, ex-Sawbwa of Lawksawk (Yatsauk); and Nga Pe, ex-Myosa of Mongping (Maingpyin), having returned to the capital, his place was taken by the Wundauk Kutywa Myosa, Mingyi Mingaung Sithu Kyaw, who received the command of a force of 1000 men, and went to take charge of Mongnai and to restore peace in the Shan States.<sup>1</sup>

It may be assumed that the fugitive princes were received with open arms by the Sawbwa of Kengtung, who had already successfully thrown off allegiance to Thibaw as described, and his State was virtually independent.

Mr. Gould, the British Vice-Consul at Chiengmai in his letter No. 50, dated 22nd December 1882 to the Chief Commissioner of Burma at Rangoon, writes: "Chiengtung for the moment practically an independent State, is daily taking advantage of the present weakness of Mandalay to strengthen her own position". The Vice-Consul was of the opinion that the British Government in Lower Burma should take steps to negotiate with Mandalay to settle the boundary line between Kengtung and Chiengmai, as the fluid and uncertain frontier created much friction and distrust,<sup>2</sup> resulting in insecurity for smooth flow of trade. The Chief Commissioner of British Burma replied that it was not possible to take up the question with Mandalay at this time as "Local Government cannot hope to send an Embassy as far as Chiengtung for another year", and suggested that the delimitation of the boundary be settled between Chiengmai and Kengtung authorities.

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1. GUESS, I.1.94.

2. See also Colquhoun, A. R., Amongst the Shans, pp. 305-306.

At Kengtung, the fugitive princes and their chief ally, the Sawbwa of Kengtung (Sao Kaung-tai), naturally plotted ways and means of regaining their States and lost dignities, and as a result they conceived a plan whereby Thibaw would be dethroned and their own candidate, who would be more favourably disposed towards them and the Shan States generally, crowned king. The thought of declaring the Shan States independent with one of them as king was far from their minds. Nor did they ever think of placing themselves and their States under the protection of the Chinese, or the Siamese.

Most probably the Chinese grip on the Koshanpyi (Chinese Shan States) was too businesslike, too firm and too near for the exiled princes and their host to think seriously of turning towards the North; while the three Siamese attacks on Kengtung in the fifties were too recent to permit any illusion of brotherliness from the South. And they did not think of anyone else except a Burmese prince of the blood of the House of Alaungpaya as their candidate for the Burmese throne. What they needed was a candidate that would be acceptable to the Burmans of the Central Plains as well as to other Shan Rulers; this ruled out the possibility of any Shan prince as a candidate even if he were to be acceptable to his fellow Sawbwas. A Burmese prince with all the prestige and glories usually associated with him would command blind obedience among the normal Burmese populace and be accepted as suzerain by them and all Shans alike. By choosing a Burmese prince, half the battle would be won, and with the misrule of Thibaw and disorder in the country, the king's own soldiers could be expected to desert or fight only half-heartedly. The sentiments of the Sawbwas regarding the choice of a Burmese prince, were clearly expressed in a letter from the Sawbwa of Kengtung to the Sawbwa of Hsipaw, Hkun Seng: "Without a suzerain there will be continual struggle among the Sawbwas . . . . if there be a suzerain, the interests of the country, of the religion, of all of us, will be protected".<sup>1</sup> . . . if the Limbin prince becomes king, the Thathameda tax (an unprecedented thing in history) will be remitted, and the Sawbwas will be required to do obeisance to the King only once in three years".<sup>1</sup> The last sentence was all or practically all the conditions laid down by the allies in Kengtung in return for their submission to a king in Mandalay. The Sawbwas did not plan to abolish the monarchy - on the contrary they supported it; nor did they dream of an independent Shan States. All that they wanted was to be left alone, each independent in his own State, without any interference from the Court or its representatives and soldiers. And their choice fell on the Limbin prince.

The Limbin prince had escaped into British Burma on the accession of Thibaw.<sup>2</sup> This prince, on whom had fallen the shadow of the Burmese crown, was a son of the Einshemin, the Crown Prince, who had been murdered by his own nephews during the 1866 rebellion. It

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1. Burma Foreign Department No. 206, dated 14-10-1886.

2. GUBSS, I.1.292.

will not be out of place to give here an account of that rising. The Einshemin was the Khanaung Mintha, a loyal and devoted younger brother of Mindon, who had been largely responsible for placing the latter on the throne, following a plot fabricated by some palace ladies to implicate them (the two brothers) in a treason against the reigning king, Pagan Min. Two of Mindon's sons, the Myingun and Myingundaing Princes conceived the idea that they had been unjustly treated by their uncle, the Einshemin, and resolved to kill him, and their father and to seize the throne. They consulted an astrologer in the person of the famous U Ponnya who determined that August 2, 1866 was an auspicious day for their crime.<sup>1</sup> On that day the King, his queens and Court were having some religious celebration at the Maha Lawkamarazin Pagoda in a temporary Summer Palace outside the safety of Mandalay walls. The Einshemin, who had been informed of the conspiracy some time before, was deliberating with a number of ministers in an open building near the Hluttaw about this very plot, and they were debating whether the two principal conspirators should be arrested or not. At noon the fire signal was kindled in the Hawgon quarter and the Myingun and Myingundaing Princes with their followers, all armed with guns and drawn swords, rushed into the palace towards the Hluttaw. The younger brother, Myingundaing, was shouting, "Save me! Save me!" with Myingun hot on his heels. This was part of the plot to disarm any suspicion, so that their uncle the Einshemin might not take flight at the first sign of alarm. The party was met at the Hlut entrance by the Myadaung Wungyi who was alarmed at the sight of so many men with naked swords within the precincts of the palace - an unprecedented and treasonable act. He had advanced to enquire the cause of the uproar. His alarm was short-lived; for he was immediately cut down. The Einshemin saw this and made for safety, but he was killed by one of the Princes' followers named Hpadi. Myingundaing who was behind Hpadi, cut off his uncle's head and rushed with it to his elder brother, screaming "Aungdawmuyi". Mad with excitement and reeking of drinks, the rebels killed almost all ministers present at the Hlut meeting, including Laungshe Wungyi, the War Minister. King Mindon's eldest son, the Malon prince (a lad of "much promise"), and his brothers the Pyinsi and Sagu princes, had already been murdered at the Southern Gate of the palace. Myingun gave orders that everyone in wungyi garb was to be cut down on sight and the suddenness and ferocity of the attack took everybody by surprise.

The rebels then made for the temporary palace where King Mindon was having his religious festival. At that moment he was actually giving an audience to Major E. B. Sladen, the British Resident in Mandalay. They were met and resisted by the King's guards, who however were outnumbered and soon overpowered. But the short and violent struggle gave the King enough time to escape with his Queens, some princes and attendants, about 50 in all. Outside the Western Gate of the Summer Palace, the party came across the sword bearer, Shwedawle Bo called Maung Paik Ku who was posted there specially by the rebels

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1. In his trial subsequently U Ponnya stated he had given the wrong date and moment so that the plot would not be successful; but he was executed.

with orders to kill the King. On seeing him, the King ignorant of Paik Ku's errand, commanded; "Nga Paik Ku, carry me to the palace"1 The man came forward bending. Was Paik Ku spell bound by the King's command and by the sight of so many members of the royal family, or did he mean to kill the King when the latter was within his sword's reach? As he came forward the Mekkara and Chinbin Princes saw a naked sword in his hand and took it away1 A man of Paik Ku's station in those days must have been mesmerised by the sight of the King and the royal party; at the same time, Paik Ku himself must have been aware that failure in his mission would cost him his life (which was precisely what happened as the simple man later made his way to his master's camp and reported what had happened)1 King Mindon rode on Paik Ku's back, and the Chief Queen was carried by another man. Half way to the palace they came upon a pony which was commandeered for the King to mount and the whole party soon reached the safety of the palace walls.

The rising was eventually put down, but the two chief rebels escaped into British Lower Burma where they were interned in Rangoon. After some time there1 Myingun made his way to the Karenni States from whence he made constant raids on Mindon's territories until a force of 3600 men were sent and dislodged him1 He escaped again and again into the British territory where the authorities put him "under restraint" and subsequently sent him to India. From British India the Myingun prince escaped into French Pondicherry and later made his way to Saigon. He tried to return to Burma through some of the Shan princes but the British annexation of Upper Burma put an end to his intrigues1

Back in Mandalay, the Einshemin's own son, the Padeing Prince fled with his men from Mandalay to Shwebo, the usual rendezvous for princes aspiring the Burmese throne1 Despite assurances and appeals from Mindon, he refused to return, collected more men and marched on the Capital. They were successful at first, and Mindon was already thinking of surrendering his throne to save further bloodshed, but his Chief Queens and Ministers prevailed upon him to stand firm and resist1 Eventually the Padeing Prince was captured and put to death by the Hluttaw without, it is said, the knowledge of the King - an ironical and sad ending for the eldest son of the man who had done so much to make Mindon King. 1

So much for the violent background of the Limbin Prince, the man chosen by the Shan League in Kengtung for the Burmese throne at Mandalay.

The Limbin Prince was educated in Rangoon and later appointed for some time as a myo-ok or subordinate magistratel He was

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1. GUBSS, I.1.53-59; and Parliamentary Papers, C, Volume 50, 1867, p. 793 - Letter No. 30 dated 22-8-56 from Capt. E. B. Sladen, British Agent to Mandalay to Chief Commissioner, British Burma

subsequently removed from his appointment for incompetence and because he took advantage of his liberty to attempt to raise a rebellion in Upper Burma. During the year 1885, he was living in Moulmein under nominal surveillance of the British authorities, and it was here that the agents of the Allies in Kengtung found him and offered him the Burmese crown if he would only head their cause. He accepted the invitation, with, we may assume, some alacrity, and left Moulmein in October 1885, arriving in Kengtung on December 10, 1885.

Here we may be allowed to wonder whether the prince, having seen British power and organization in Lower Burma, was really convinced of the success of his cause, or whether he felt he was gambling with a lucky dip. To be fetched from obscurity and suddenly raised by a few Shan princes, each of whom had far more real power and reserves than he could himself muster, to a position in which those princes prostrated themselves before him, must have been a sensational and exciting experience. Such a thing was possible when parties believed in the divine right of the monarchy.

In a letter dated 7th Waning Tabaung 1247 (26th March 1886) from the Sawbwa of Kengtung to the Sawbwa of Hsipaw (a passage of which was quoted above), we see clearly the aims and objects of the Limbin League and the troops at their disposal. The letter is reproduced in full as it contains many important facts and dates, and sentiments prevailing at the time:

As King Thibaw did not rule his Empire justly, the Sawbwas of Kyaington, Kyaingchaing, Mingpyin, Yatsauk, Mone, Kyaingyon, Mainglin, Maingnaung and Maingseik invited Prince Limbin, then residing in the British territory to come and wrest the crown from King Thibaw. Prince Limbin reached Kyaington on the 4th waxing Nattaw 1247 (10th December 1885), and it was resolved to draw the chief portion of the royal troops from Kyaington and Kyaingchaing. Accordingly 20,000 or 30,000 men were collected at Kyaington. Meanwhile the Western Sawbwas informed the Prince of the British occupation of Mandalay, and the deportation of the King, Queen, their daughters and the Queen Dowager. The informants further reported that quarrels and struggles were going on in the States, west of the Salween. Military aid also came in from Maingshu, Maingsi, Kye-thi, Bansan, and Maington, and royal banners were distributed among the new allies.

Of the 20,000 or 30,000 troops collected 10,000 were selected, and the rest quartered, as a reserve, in Kyaington, Maingpyin and Maingpu, and along the banks of the Salween River.

As an advance guard, three detachments under the Sawbwas of Maingnaung, Mone and Yatsauk were sent forward. The Maingnaung and Mone Sawbwas entered their principalities on the 5th waxing Tabaung (9th March 1886) and 12th waxing

Tabauung (16th March 1886) respectively; and the Yatsauk Sawbwa reached Mone on the 2nd waning Tabauung (21st March 1886).

The royal army reached Mone on the 15th waxing Tabauung (3rd April 1886). When it was at Ban-Lawkunlin a letter from you (Thibaw Sawbwa) was received. You stated in your letter that it would be beneficial to the Shans to have their country welded into a congeries of independent States like Germany, and that you desired to know what were our wishes on the subject, and what steps we contemplated to take for securing the preservation of the religion. You also sent us an account of the deliberations you and your royal elder sister came to in the presence of the Ngwegunhmus; and you desired us to communicate to you our future intentions. These are the resolutions come to by the various Sawbwas and Myozas:-

- (i) that without a suzerain there will be continual struggles among the Sawbwas;
- (ii) that if there be a suzerain, the interest of the country, of the religion, and of all of us, will be protected and promoted;
- (iii) that if Prince Limbin becomes King, the thathameda tax (an unprecedented thing in history) will be remitted, and the Sawbwas will be required to do obeisance to the King only once in three years;
- (iv) that under the proposed circumstances general peace and security will be ensured to all;
- (v) that if there be no suzerain, the religion will be injured by the people of other creeds;
- (vi) that if there be a suzerain, a combination can be effected between him and the Sawbwas to withdraw any attempt to injure the religion.

We hope that the love hitherto existing between us still lasts, and would request that, as the rains are coming on, you will be good enough to come up to Mone to do your obeisance to our Prince.

This letter tells us much, but it leaves one question unanswered. Having learned that the British had occupied Mandalay, the League did not disband their forces but pushed on to various cis-Salween States in accordance with their original plan. Did the Allies mean to fight the British in Central Burma to regain the Burmese throne for the Limbin Prince, or did they mean to weld the Shan States "into a congeries of independent States like Germany" with "their prince" as suzerain? Subsequent official records and correspondence do not clarify these points.

Meanwhile what had been happening in Mongnai during the absence of its rightful Sawbwa?

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1. Burma Foreign Department No. 208, dated 14-10-1886.

The combined Shan and Burmese punitive forces sent by the order of the King at Mandalay restored some order at Mongnai, and Twet Nga Lu received a royal seal<sup>1</sup> to administer the States with the Burmese officials, the Myowun and the Shwelanbo.<sup>2</sup> But when Mandalay fell to the British, Twet Nga Lu was left to his own resources as all the Burmese troops were recalled to Burma. Having heard of the formation of the Limbin League in Kengtung and as a manoeuvre to maintain himself at Mongnai and his step-son at Kengtawng, he formed a League of his own, and his allies in this formation were those who had reason to fear for the security of their positions in various States, such as those who had taken part in the punitive expedition against Mongnai by orders from Mandalay or who had usurped the places of the Chiefs exiled in Kengtung. But this anti-Limbin League did not appear to have won much support, for the Limbin League, apart from the States mentioned in the Kengtung Sawbwa's letter, had also got these supporters: Mongpaw, Mawkmai, Mongsit, Hsantung, Wanyin, Nawngwawn, Namkhok, Hopong and many from the Myelat.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, Twet Nga Lu's League was so much smaller. Nevertheless, it was active and at once set about attacking its enemies.

Mongsit, whose Myosa, Khun Kyaw Zan, was a nephew of the Mongnai Sawbwa, was the nearest to the Anti-Limbin League and therefore the first to be attacked and burnt. Even before the main forces of the Limbin League crossed the Salween in March 1886, fighting had already broken out between the Anti-Limbin League and some cis-Salween members of the Limbin League. In February and March 1886, forces under the warrior Sawbwa Khun Ti of Mongpaw, took possession of Mongnai and handed it back to the followers of the rightful Sawbwa. In April, Laikha and Lawksawk staged a counter-attack on Mongnai but were repulsed by Mongpaw. Finally in May, Twet Nga Lu, Laikha, Mongkung and Mongpan were defeated by forces under the leadership of Mongpaw. Thus, everywhere the Limbin League was victorious and the exiled rulers found no difficulty in re-establishing themselves in their own States. Having settled with the Anti-Limbin League in the south-eastern States, the allies of the Limbin League began to move west and avenge themselves on Laikha, Mongkung and Kesi-Bansan, whose rulers, it will be recalled, had furnished contingents, by order from Mandalay, to help in the fight against the Mongnai rising in 1882. The Sawbwa of Laikha was obliged to flee to Mongkung. The State of Laikha itself was ravaged from end to end, and a considerable portion of Mongkung and Kesi-Bansan received the same treatment.<sup>4</sup> Laikha was

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1. Scott, J. G., Burma & Beyond, p. 245.

2. GUBSS, II.2.422.

3. GUBSS, I.i.293. See also letter from Sao On p. 114.

4. GUBSS, I.i.293. Scott comments on the fight: "probably it was as much to give the Kengtung troops payment and employment in the way of looting, as to enable the returned exiles to recover their plough cattle or to take those of other people".

so thoroughly mauled that the population of the State was, it is said, reduced to a hundred souls. When the British forces passed the State capital in 1887 only some half-dozen houses were seen standing in it, and majority of the town's population was still in hiding in the jungles.

In Mongnawng, during its Myosa's exile in Kengtung, one Maung Gan was appointed by Mandalay to administer the State. This Mandalay appointee was easily expelled and its old ruler, Khun Htun, installed.

The Limbin League forces then proceeded further west and installed without difficulty Sao Weng of Lawksawk and U Pe of Mongping in their respective States. But in order to understand the situation at Yawnghwe at this time, it is necessary to pause for a brief moment to describe the background of the two main personages there.

At the time of the British occupation of Mandalay, the Sawbwa of Yawnghwe, Sao Maung, was there.<sup>1</sup> He returned to the Shan States soon after the fall of Mandalay, with the Laikha Queen and her son, Kodawgyi. He was attacked almost immediately on his return to Yawnghwe by the Limbin League supporters from the east, namely forces from Hsahtung, Banyin, Namkhok, Nawngwawn, Hopong, Ponmu and In. In an engagement near Loi Htam, east of Yawnghwe town, Sao Maung was wounded in both legs, which forced him to retire to Yawnghwe and later on the same day to Kyawktap (Kyauktap). From here he sent for his elder half-brother, Sao On, who was the Myosa of Ang Teng (Indein) at the time, and gave him the task of recovering his State from the Limbin League, while he himself retired to Taw Gin, in Hlaingdet area, and later to Mandalay, to recover from his wounds. Sao On took this to mean voluntary abdication by Sao Maung in his favour, and refused to move out when the rightful ruler, having recovered from his wounds, demanded back the State. Yawnghwe was spared a minor civil war between the two brothers only because the British annexed the Shan States before that civil war had started, and it was the British policy to recognise and confirm all de facto rulers in order to save confusion and complications which would have ensued, if claims and counter-claims were entertained.

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1. It is said by several people, including U Nu, some time Prime Minister, that when King Thibaw was being led away by the British troops towards the Irrawaddy, Sao Maung, with a band of some three or four hundred armed men, was laying in wait in one of the streets of Mandalay to ambush the British and rescue the King. It seems that Sao Maung and his followers were waiting in a wrong by-alley and the royal prisoners did not come by their way. This story is unlikely. A whole brigade of British troops were guarding the King on the way from the palace to the jetty, and a rescue would have been an impossibility. There could have been no mistake about the route along which the King was taken. And, as Mr. G. E. Harvey told the writer, the people were too stunned to realise what was happening until the King was safely on the launch.

The Limbin League had already installed Sao Chit Su as Sawbwa of Yawnghwe when Sao Maung retreated. Sao On found allies in Samka and some of the Myelat States and had no difficulty in expelling Sao Chit Su, who was his own uncle. Sao On was thus thrown by fate into the opposite camp to that of the Limbin League. This was the position when the main forces of the Limbin League arrived on the scene with the Sawbwa of Lawksawk, Sao Weng at their head, and began attacking Yawnghwe from the north.

When Sao Weng was exiled to Kengtung in 1882, the administration of Lawksawk was given to Sao Maung, the Sawbwa of Yawnghwe. On receipt of orders from Mandalay, Sao Maung sent his uncle Le Bwin with the title of Myosa. Le Bwin remained in Lawksawk only for one year, after which the administration was carried on by two Amats appointed from Yawnghwe named Maung Po and Maung Nit. In 1884 (B.E. 1246), the Heng of Nawngtong, "Nga Laing" [Shan: Khun Leng ?] attacked Lawksawk and drove out the two Amats and took charge of the administration himself with the title of Myook. It was this "Nga Laing" who was one of the very active supporters of Anti-Limbin League and he was overthrown when Sao Weng the rightful ruler returned.

It would appear that the monsoon had already set in by the time Sao Weng was established in Lawksawk and began his attack on Yawnghwe, and since nothing much could be done during the monsoon, both sides maintained a sort of armed truce. Both sides spent their time in consolidating their positions, and Sao Weng established a strong stockade position at Kugyo, a few miles north-east of Bawrithat Pagoda, with every intention of attacking and capturing Yawnghwe as soon as he was able to do so. On the Yawnghwe side, Sao On was able to hold his own against his attackers, proclaimed himself Sawbwa of Yawnghwe and told his brother, Sao Maung, to forget about his claims to that State. But he knew that sooner or later he would be defeated by the Limbin League which had behind it an overwhelming force, supported as it was at the time by the majority of the States in the South. To save the situation, however, Sao On immediately tendered allegiance to the British and set urgent calls for help to them at Mandalay. His first letter to the British reached the Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukse by about the end of April. The letter itself bore no date but the Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukse reported to his superiors at Mandalay on May 3, 1886. It is reproduced in full below:

Sao Maung, formerly Sawbwa of Nyaung-ywe, brought up from Mandalay the Legya Queen and her son Kodawgyi, and began to issue orders and requisitions to all myosa, and Shwe Guns and Ngwe Guns, saying that he would fight the English and take Mandalay. Meanwhile he was attacked by forces from

|          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| Thaton   | Nankok        |
| Banyin   | Hopon         |
| Nawngmun | Ponmu and In. |

He was wounded and had to flee to Kyauktat. While he was there these forces, having set Saw Chit Su up as Chief of

Nyaung-ywe, again plotted against Saw Maung. I got to know this, and saved his life by taking him away to Hlaingdet district. The Ngwe Gun Min of In and other States mentioned above then invited the Legya Queen and her son Kodawgyi and again planned to fight the English and take Mandalay.

Meantime the Nyaung-ywe Sawbwa, Sao Maung, handed over Nyaung-ywe to me, bidding me take possession of it as best I could. Relying on your favour and by your goodwill I did so and I am now in possession of Nyaung-ywe and Inle Ywa (In). Various princes have tried to persuade me to join them, but I have declined and have obeyed no such summons, replying that we cannot fight the British. I now beg for a reply to say what you wish me to do, and so that the hereditary rights of the Chiefs may be upheld.

As for the present state of affairs in the Shan States, the Thibaw Chief has returned to Thibaw. The old Sawbwa of Mone has retaken his State, and with the old Myoza of Maingnaung, old Sawbwa of Yatsauk, old Myoza of Maingpyin, and the Limbin Prince has established himself in Monel. Thence he is sending letters to all Sawbwas and Myozas to say that he intends to conquer the English and take Mandalay and is demanding men and arms. He has demanded 100 muskets and Rs.20,000 of Legya, to guard the Prince, as he says. The Sawbwa of Mone-Kyaingtaung has left his own territory and taken refuge in Legya, and Mone demands his extradition also. So the old Sawbwa of Yatsauk and the old Myoza of Maingpyin are not received back by their people. Maung Shwe Gan, the old Sawbwa of Maingnaung, has left his State and taken refuge in Kyethi Bansen, and he too is demanded.

|               |            |   |   |
|---------------|------------|---|---|
| The Chiefs of | Mone       | ) |   |
|               | Maingnaung | ) |   |
|               | Maingseik  | ) |   |
|               | Maingpun   | ) | A |
|               | Maukme     | ) |   |
|               | Yatsauk    | ) |   |
|               | Maingpyin  | ) |   |

have made a firm resolve to oppress the rest of us, and seeing that we could not endure it,

|  |               |   |   |
|--|---------------|---|---|
|  | Legya         | ) |   |
|  | Yatsauk       | ) |   |
|  | Maingkaing    | ) | B |
|  | Kyethe        | ) |   |
|  | Bansen and I) | ) |   |

consulted together and joined forces and are now attacking the former, A.

The Ywangan Myoza and the Bawzaing Ngwegunhmu are the only people who are on the side of the Myinzaing Prince. The supporters of the Legya Queen's son are dispersed and the Prince himself, with the Yewun Sayadaw, has taken refuge and is living in Thamaing-gan.

Of the other States none dares to join in any other's plan. Each is severally keeping his own territory in order as well as he can.

Although there are many hereditary claimants to States, yet, unless the people consent and unless the hereditary Chiefs can agree with their neighbours, even they at the present time cannot keep their footing and hold possession of their States.

In consequence of the Mayangyaung pongyi's assembling of dacoits and raising disturbances in Toungoo, Shwegyin and Martaban districts, on one bad man's account the whole of the clergy, we hear, are in straits and are disturbed. The clergy in the Shan States are disturbed and alarmed in consequence.

How to come under the British flag and obtain British protection so that our hereditary claims may be respected? What policy we ought to adopt? Whether we ought to join the Chiefs of the 57 States of Siam and so obtain British protection? All these questions I have never faced before and cannot solve!

I look to no quarter for aid and protection but you, and I therefore beg for your instructions and guidance as to the course I am to adopt.<sup>1</sup>

The letter speaks for itself and reveals much of what was happening in the Shan States at the time and what was going on in Sao On's mind. Everybody was tainted with some pro-minlaung or anti-English leanings, and the only person worthy of unstinted British support and sympathy was the writer himself who had enough political acumen to recognise before other Shan princes the might of British power and to seek aid and protection from that quarter. And having ousted Sao Maung, Sao On asked the British to respect the hereditary rights of the Shan rulers!

Such then was the situation in the Southern Shan States before the British entry. Started by Kengtung and followed by Mongnai, almost all the States had successfully repudiated allegiance to King Thibaw. Even if the Burmese garrison in the Shan States had not been recalled as a result of the British invasion of Upper Burma, it would have been impossible for it to enforce its former control over the Shan States again, for the Shans had not repudiated the monarchy, but had put up

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1. Burma Foreign Department Proceeding No. 1, May 18868

their own candidate as King in the person of the Limbin Prince, who was bound by his supporters not to oppress or interfere in the internal affairs of the Shan States. The ease with which the British almost literally walked into Mandalay shows that few were willing to risk their lives to uphold a court under which life had become oppressive and not worth living. The same opportunity might have been offered to the Limbin League forces marching with a Burmese prince at their head on Mandalay. Districts in the Central Plains of Burma, tired of misrule and disorders under Thibaw, might well have thought a new king would be a welcome change. How long that change would have survived is a different question. Within the Shan States there is no doubt that if the British had not intervened, the Limbin League would have defeated all opposition. Even Sao On would have joined the winning side if he had not been aware of the existence of a stronger power. Once the Southern Shan States were united, a deputation from them would be all that was necessary to bring to their side the powerful and influential Khun Seng of Hsipaw and Khun Sang Ton Hung of Hsenwi, both of whom had already repudiated their allegiance to Thibaw. Letters from the Sawbwa of Kengtung to the Sawbwa of Hsipaw and from Sao On to the British, show unmistakably that the Shan princes were united in spirit and desire. What they could not agree upon was the means whereby that unity could be made into a reality. This is a crucial point and it has plagued the Shans throughout their history.

From Sao On's letter, Sao Maung was mustering forces to fight the British in Mandalay. This lends some credence to the story that Khun Seng, the Sawbwa of Hsipaw, and Sao Maung, the Sawbwa of Yawnghwe, had had an understanding with each other to resist the British entering the Shan States, which would be proclaimed independent. This story goes on to say that when Khun Seng learned that Sao Maung had only a few thousand men at his disposal he thought that his friend could not have been serious in his purpose; and when Sao Maung went to Mandalay to heal his wounds received from the Limbin forces, Khun Seng was certain that his friend had betrayed him and had gone there to tender allegiance to the British, and therefore decided to receive the British with open arms so as not to be outmanoeuvred by Yawnghwe.

Sao On's letter mentioned that the Limbin League meant to fight the British and recover Mandalay. This is the only source which gives a hint at such a course of action by the Shan League. If the League had any such intention it must have evaporated by the time the British captured Sao Weng the Lawksawk Sawbwa's stockade at Kugyo. But, before we proceed with the British entry, it is necessary to see what was happening in the Northern Shan States on the eve of the British conquest.

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1. Told to writer by U Swe of Kyaukme, who heard it from his father, Khun Kiu, who served under Hseng Nawpha of Hsenwi and who was a son of the Myosa of Mongyai. At the time of the British annexation Khun Kiu was about 40 years old. To my mind, the story is not impossible.

The most important States in the Northern Shan States are Hsipaw and Hsenwi, and what happens there affects the whole of the North. We shall begin with Hsipaw.

When Mongnai and allied States defected in 1882, the Sawbwa of Hsipaw Khun Seng, was suspected by the Court to have connections with the revolt, but before anything could be done to him, he fled from his State, wandered through Bangkok and Chantabun and found his way into British territory in Lower Burma in the capacity of a jewel merchant. Eventually he reached Rangoon, worshipped at the Shwedagon and settled down in Kemmeline with his family and retainers. While there in 1883, he suspected that some of his servants had received money from Thibaw's agents and were plotting to poison him. He shot two of them. Being in British territory he was arrested, tried for murder by the Recorder of Rangoon and sentenced to death. In consideration of the fact that in his own State the Sawbwa held the power of life and death over his subjects, the death sentence was reduced to one of imprisonment for life. In Rangoon jail he was treated like other convicts; his head was shaved and he had to wear the coarse canvas prison garb stamped with the black broad arrow, and he had to do his daily task of hard labour in husking rice with a mill worked by hand. A few days after his imprisonment, the then acting Chief Commissioner Mr. (later Sir) Charles Crossthwaite, saw Khun Seng during his jail inspection and found him taking his punishment like a man, uttering no complaint and working with a mill at the task imposed on him! The jail authorities were then instructed to treat him as a political prisoner. "After a sufficient time had elapsed to make it plain to the independent Chiefs that if they sought refuge in British territory they must submit themselves to British law", and also as the result of entreaties by the Sawbwa's faithful Mahadevi, the Chief Commissioner, using Government prerogative, released Khun Seng from jail on condition that he left the British jurisdiction.

Khun Seng made his way to Karenni and lived there under the protection of that war-like Karenni Chief, Sawlapaw, Myosa of Kantarawadi. This was in 1884. When the news of the fall of Mandalay reached him, Khun Seng, with aid in men and material from Sawlapaw, left Karenni and made his way to his own State. He met with some opposition but soon made himself master of all Hsipaw, only to find the place in ruins, the only structure standing intact being his own Haw, which had been spared, it is said, through fear of its guardian nats. That was in March 1886. The following letter, from Khun Seng to the Chief Commissioner, gives some details of how the Sawbwa regained his State.

The Burmese Government was unjust and tried to bring coercion to bear upon me, and in 1243 (1881) I had to flee to British territory to save my life. In 1246 (1884) I was permitted by the Deputy Commissioner and his officials to go to Gantarawady (Eastern Karenni).

In 1247 war broke out between the English and the Burmese. After the war, Nawmaing, the son of the Theinni

Sawbwa, with men from the central division of Maington came and attacked Thibaw, which he represented to the Myinzaing Prince as a rebel State on the side of the English, and the eastern division of the Thibaw principality was burnt down.

On the 10th waxing Tabaung 1247 (14th March 1886) I reached Thibaw. I defeated my enemy and fixed my camp at the central division of Maington. I had about 5000 men under me. The rains having fully set in, I thought that the work in the field should commence. So, on the 5th waxing Wazo 1248 (5th July 1886), I returned to Thibaw, where I am trying to establish peace and order.

In the Southern tracts the Sawbwas of Mone and Yatsauk, and the Myozas of Maingbyin and Mainghaung, returned to their respective principalities from Kyainton on the eastern side of the Salween; but they were resisted by the de facto Sawbwas and Myozas.

Intelligence reached me that the Chiefs of Maington, Thonzeleyachaukywa, Ywangan, Pwehla, and Pindaya are preparing to make a combined attack on Thibaw. I have therefore deemed it prudent to have the confines of my State guarded by 6000 armed men.

I regret that the trade route to Mandalay is not open as yet. This is perhaps owing to the existence of organised rebel bands headed by the several Princes, for whom no provision was made by the British Government on the capture of Mandalay and its King.

I am under great obligations to the British Government. I feel very thankful on this account, and I hope the British Government will continue to bestow its favours on me. 1

Before we go on to Hsenwi, the involvement of the Myinzaing Prince in the chaotic conditions of the Northern Shan States may be mentioned.

This Myinzaing Prince was in prison in Mandalay, and along with other political prisoners, was released by the British on the fall of that city. Encouraged probably by the Nawmong of Hsenwi, his jail mate, who was also released by the British at the same time, Myinzaing found his way to the Northern Shan States and raised his own standard against the British. One of his earliest supporters apart from Hsengnawpha of Hsenwi, was Hein Sai of Thonze or Hsumhsai, in whose State he had made his headquarters. The plan of campaign was to seize possession of the Northern Shan States as his base from which he would set out to reconquer Upper Burma; Hsipaw State, whose Sawbwa

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1. Burma Foreign Department Noe 208 dated 14-10-1886.

was friendly with the British, was to have been given to Nawmong, while Hsenwi, now largely under the effective control of Khungsang Tonhung, was to have been retaken and given to the old Sawbwa, Hsengnawpha, of the original House of Hsenwi.

To many of us living under modern conditions it may be puzzling how men and materials were mobilised to fight a war in those days.<sup>1</sup> What happened was not as difficult as might be imagined. Every able-bodied man was liable to be called up to serve as a soldier some time or other. All that was needed was an order from the Sawbwa calling upon certain villages or circles to furnish so many men according to their size, and men would come flocking under their own commanders who usually were the heads of the villages or circles.<sup>2</sup> The following letters showed how the Myinzaing Prince tried to mobilise:

(1) Letter received on the 5th waning of Nattaw 1247 (26th December 1885) from Mogyo Mintha to Thibaw Sawbwagyi:

Prince Thadominye Yanshein (Myinzaing) son of Mindon Min (full titles) thus addressed the Thibaw Sawbwagyi.

About 5000 British troops and 20 steamers, under Colonel Sladen, came up to fight the Burmese.

As there was no agreement between the King, Queens, and the Ministers, the Burmese troops were withdrawn, and the Burmese Government was going to resort to diplomacy, when the English broke their word and captured the Capital, and they have deported to a foreign country my aunt (Sinbyumashin), elder sister (Queen Supayalat), elder brother (Thibaw) and niece (Thibaw's daughter)<sup>3</sup>. In consequences of this downfall the people are as a child bereft of its mother, or a fish taken out of its watery home.

In former times, a Ceylonese monarch, Dutthagamani crushed the Tamil invaders to prevent the downfall of the religion. Taking this as my precedent, I too shall wage a ruthless war against the heretic English Kalas, so that I may be able to serve the Religion, preserve the integrity of the royal dynasty, and secure the happiness of the people.

For the above purpose, therefore, the Sawbwagyi is directed to bring his contingent of men and arms to the place where I am now encamping.

(2) Translation of a Royal Order of the Myinzaing Prince (without date) found in the house of Hein Nga Se when he ran away on the 2nd waxing Thadingyut (29th September 1886).

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1. See also Wales, Q., Ancient South-east Asian Warfare.

Royal Order by his Most Gracious Majesty King  
Myinzaing (titles):

I am the son and heir to his Most Glorious Majesty the first Founder of Mandalay and the Convenor of the Fifth Buddhist Synod (Mindon) in his dual capacity of Patron of the People! Being a Scion of the House of Alompra and the Representative of the Solar Race, I am wise, sagacious and powerful.

The heretic, savage, and lawless Kalas have now entered Burma, and are destroying religious edifices, such as pagodas, monasteries etc., held sacred by the people, the Buddhist Scriptures, and the Priesthood. They have destroyed the accounts and records of royal ceremonies which were generally referred to by the Kings of old. And these Kalas are using in the profane way the white umbrellas and the other insignia which belong only to royalty.

Under these circumstances certain wise priests and wise lay men have represented to me that the present time is opportune for me to capture and wipe off the rebel Kalas and to assume the reigns of sovereignty. In compliance, therefore, with this representation I have resolved to take the field with my fourfold army, consisting of Burmese, Shan, Karen and Palaung contingents.

Priests and lay men residing in Lower Burma which was part and parcel of the Burman Empire during the time of my forefathers, have come to me and promised that they will reconquer in my name the towns of Toungoo, Rangoon, and Bassein. I have accordingly given them my command and ordered them to plant my royal flag on the very sea shore!

I have likewise resolved to conquer Mandalay and regain the Burmese throne! For this purpose the following armies have been organised:-

On the northern side, 10,000 men armed with dahs, 15,000 men armed with muskets, and a reserve force of 20,000 men under the command of the Wuntho Sawbwa, the Kanti Sawbwa, the Momeik Myoza, the Kachin Chiefs, and a number of Bos, Wuns and Sitkes.

On the western side, in the districts of Alon and Sagaing, 10,500 men armed with dahs, 20,000 men armed with muskets, and a reserve force of 20,000 men under the command of Bohmu Mingyi Minhla Mahamingaunggyaw, and 35 captains!

On the southern side, 1,000 men armed with dahs, 1,500 men armed with muskets, and a reserve force of

6,000 men, under the command of the Anauk Windawhmu, the Taungdwinggyi Myowun, the Pindaletinbo, the Tazaungdaikthih-  
aing Bo, the Pindaletin Myowun, and 31 captains.

On the eastern side, 20,000 men armed with daws, 3,000 men armed with muskets, and a reserve force of 20,000 men commanded by my royal self, my royal uncle (titles), and 45 captains.

These forces will march simultaneously when a canon is fired as a signal.

When my royal army arrives to secure the safety of those people who are loyal to me, I would direct them to use a piece of white thread as a badge. Those people who have sided with the heretic Kalas will receive a free pardon though it may be politic to kill them so as to produce a deterrent effect on their descendants! 1

Hsumhsai where Myinzaing established his headquarters had been administered since 1846 by direct appointments from Mandalay. The cause of the dispossession of the last Sawbwa of Hsumhsai by the Court cannot now be ascertained, but most probably the Sawbwa had done some wrong and the hangers-on at the Court thought this was a chance for them to get rid of him so that they themselves could enjoy the revenues and tributes from Thonze! The appointment of heins was kept on and the last Burmese Wun of Hsumhsai was Maung Pwe. Hein Sai, mentioned above, and Hein Sa were two powerful Heins of Hsumhsai who were called down to Mandalay by Taingda Mingyi with their levies on the eve of the last Anglo-Burmese War. After the fall of Mandalay, while returning home with their men, the two Heins met Khun Meik, brother of the Sawbwa of Hsipaw, who was also returning home from the Capital! In their first flush of joy at seeing a Shan prince, the two Heins invited Khun Meik to come and "eat" Hsumhsai. Khun Meik accepted the invitation and went off to collect his men! In his absence, one Maung Gale, a representative of the former Hsumhsai lineage, appeared on the scene. Hein Sai joined Maung Gale, while Hein Sa sided with Khun Meik! In the fight that ensued, Khun Meik had to retreat and Maung Gale remained master of Hsumhsai! Later Hein Sai and Maung Gale fell out as they went down to join the Myinzaing force to fight the British at Ongyaw. After this Maung Gale was unable to return to Hsumhsai, and Khun Meik returned with more men and drove out Hein Sai in late August or early September 1886. Hein Sai returned again and this time drove out Khun Meik who had to retire to Gokteik! Myinzaing was believed to have appointed Hein Sai as Sitke of Hsumhsai. These see-saw skirmishes reduced that part of the country into a terrible state of desolation and effectively sealed the main trade route between the Northern Shan States and Mandalay, along which under normal conditions as many as 10,000 mules and ponies and 50,000 pack bullocks passed through annually. At this critical juncture, the Myinzaing Prince died in October 1886.

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1. Foreign and Political Proceedings, December 1886

In Hsenwi the biggest State of the North and site of the former Kingdom of Kawsampi, trouble began even before King Mindon's reign. It is necessary here to provide a summary of the events which had contributed to the chaotic conditions verging on complete anarchy. The last Sawbwa of Hsenwi who wielded undisputed authority over the whole State with its 49 "mongs" seems to have been Sao Khamleng Sokhanpha. The breakup of Hsenwi began when Hsengnawpha came to the throne in 1845 and put to death the influential Minister, Tao Sung Tunkham, and his family including his seven sons.<sup>1</sup> The murder roused another Minister, Tao Sung Khammawn, to rise against Hsengnawpha who was driven out of Hsenwi to Mandalay. This rising was put down with the help of Burmese troops from Mandalay and the chief perpetrator executed. But the trouble did not end there. Tao Hsanghai, who had successfully led the Hsenwi contingent to the aid of Kengtung when it was invaded by the Siamese in 1854, was the next man to rise against and drive out Hsengnawpha who was obliged to flee to Mandalay again. It must have been about this period that one of Hsengnawpha's daughters became one of the minor queens of Mindon. Hsengnawpha also gave a younger daughter in marriage to the Mekkhara Prince. In spite of this, and in spite of the fact that the King sent troops and officials, including Maung Po, Hsengnawpha's half brother, to help him recover his State, Hsengnawpha was unable to do so. And he always took refuge in Mandalay after each failure. According to Hsenwi's Chronicle, he was sent up from Mandalay five times to rule and was sent back every time to Mandalay by Hsang Hai. According to British sources, each time he returned to Mandalay he was put in jail for his failure. This is how Sir Charles Crossthwaite describes it: "Naw Hpa was summoned to Mandalay, and condemned to imprisonment for having failed to maintain his authority, while a cadet of Hsenwi House was appointed in his stead. This cadet, U Po by name, was driven away ignominiously by Hsang Hai, and was recalled to Mandalay and sent to join Naw Hpa in jail. Numerous Burmese officials of high rank with imposing titles were sent up one after another, and one after another was expelled by Hsang Hai, and they came back in order of their going, to join the company of failures in Mandalay prison."<sup>2</sup>

At last Mindon ordered eight States from Yawnghwe to Monglong to make a combined attack on Hsang Hai. This was too much for the usurper, and he was compelled to retreat to Kunlong. But before Hsang Hai retired from fighting he had nominated as his heir and successor in the person of his chief lieutenant and son-in-law, Khunsang Tonhng; and the unfortunate Hsengnawpha was driven out once more, but on this occasion, instead of going to Mandalay as was ordered, he sent his son Naw Mong to represent him, while he himself took refuge with the Kachins in Mongsai.

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1. The nats of the 12 members of the family are still being worshipped in Hsenwi.

2. Crossthwaite, C., op. cit., p. 139.

When King Thibaw came to the throne in 1879, Hsengnawpha's daughter, who had been one of his father's wives and known as the Hsenwi queen, was imprisoned, and her son killed along with other princes in the general massacre of the time. Nawmong himself was sent to prison too! Thus, Khunsang Tonhung was left undisputed master of the Northern and Eastern Divisions of Hsenwi! The Southern Division or Taunglet had been broken up about this time into the myosaships of Mongnawng, Mongsing, Mcnghsu, Kesi-Bansam and Kengton! as the myosas of these small States managed to get the good ear of the Burmese Resident at Mongnai and of the Court at Mandalay. It was common in those days to award a person a piece of territory for him to "eat" in recognition of some distinguished service, or simply because the person managed to get the hearing of the Court! The Middle Division of Hsenwi, Alelet in Burmese, or Kawnkang in Shan, was governed by one Sang Aw, commonly called by the term Pa-Ok-Chok, who had his headquarters at Mongyai. A small garrison of Burmese troops was also kept at Lashio to back the authority of the Burmese officials stationed there. But these were unable to support themselves against Khunsang Tonhung and withdrew as soon as they heard of the fall of Mandalay.

On the British occupation of Mandalay, the son of Hsengnawpha, Nawmong, who had been imprisoned apparently since 1879 by King Thibaw, was set free along with other political prisoners, including the Myinzaing prince, as stated. It has also been stated how the Myinzaing faction was planning to annex Hsipaw and Hsenwi whose Sawbwas either by fate or their own sagacity were placed together in opposition to the faction, and were thus driven to find in each other natural allies and comrades in arms. The two States, Hsipaw and Hsenwi, had the physical means to resist their enemies successfully. With the British firmly installed in Mandalay, Myinzaing, however valiant his personality might have been, could never have raised enough supporters in the Shan States to crush an influential Shan Sawbwa like Khun Seng, while the representatives of the original House of Hsenwi, Hsengnawpha and his son, had proved themselves, before this, quite incapable of maintaining themselves in Hsenwi without outside aid.

It seems to have been the plan of the Myinzaing faction that while Myinzaing himself was to attack Hsipaw from his headquarters in Hsumhsai, Nawmong was to oust Khunsang Tonhung in Hsenwi. The faction took time to gather strength! This is hardly surprising considering that the new masters of Burma, the British, took a whole year to prepare their first major expedition into the Shan States. By December 1886, however, the pressure on Hsipaw had slackened through the death of Myinzaing. Actually Hsipaw was never at any time seriously threatened;<sup>1</sup> the British knew about this and although they sent a quantity of fire arms to the Sawbwa to keep his enemies at bay they never felt the need to send a force to his rescue as they did in the South to Yawnghwe.

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1. See letter from the Sawbwa of Hsipaw to the British, pp. 118-119 above!

If the Sawbwa of Hsipaw was able to keep order within his State with 6000 armed men, the real trial of strength between the old and new representatives of the Hsenwi House was just beginning. From the fall of Mandalay to the cold season of 1886-87, Khunsang Tonhung was able to maintain himself as the new ruler of Hsenwi around Northern and Eastern Divisions; but to the extreme North, the Namkham Myosa did not recognize him, in the north-east, at Mongsi, Hsengnawpha was collecting followers to drive out his implacable opponent, while at Mongyai the Paokchoke, Sang Aw, also did not acknowledge Tonhung's supremacy. Nawmong made his way from Mandalay by slow degrees to the Kawn-Kang (Aielet) where he was recognized by the Tamong of Mongsang and began to collect his force, and as the British expedition was penetrating into the Southern Shan States and settling fights and political affairs there, Nawmong occupied Lashio with 1000 men. Khunsang Tonhung accepted the challenge and marched down from Myoma (by which name the capital of Hsenwi was then known), or Weng Hsenwi, with a force composed of 250 Shans, 200 Kachins and 50 Palaungs. Nawmong was defeated and forced to retire to Manse. In this action Nawmong lost 24 men killed with trifling loss to Tonhung. This was about the middle of February.

Khunsang Tonhung then left 200 men to hold Lashio and returned with 300 men to oppose the aged Hsengnawpha who was coming down from Mongsi and heading for Myoma with a levy of Shans and Kachins in what appears to have been a badly concerted anvil-and-hammer attack designed to synchronise with his son's earlier move at Lashio. The two opposing forces met at Taungkaw, 12 miles east of Myoma, where Hsengnawpha was worsted and forced to retire to Mongsi, pursued by Tonhung, who proceeded as far as Mongsi itself and there received the submission of its Chief. In this fight, Tonhung lost five men killed, and Hsengnawpha 37.

By this time Saw Yannaing or the Chaunggwa Prince, a son of the Mekkara Prince, who was fighting the British on the Irrawaddy plains, was driven not only from the Ava neighbourhood, but also from the Pyinulwin subdivision, and he found his way to Manse and joined Nawmong<sup>1</sup> who had been driven there by Tonhung.

A lull of four months followed during which both sides were busy collecting men and arms. Khunsang Tonhung ended the lull by marching down with 8000 men on Manse, where on the 8th waxing of the 7th month (about 7th June) he defeated Nawmong and Chaunggwa, killing 70 of their 7000 men with little loss to himself, and dispersing the rest. By the following month Tonhung's force had swollen to 15,000, and on the 2nd waxing of the 8th month (about 1st July), he fell upon his opponents at Mongkaeng, whose numbers by now were reduced to 3,000 and they were easily scattered with a loss of 30 killed. After this battle, Khunsang Tonhung was joined by 200 Las from Somu who came uninvited to his aid. Also with him were the

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1. The Mekkara Prince married one of Nawmong's sisters.

300 Hsipaw troops who were sent to his support by his ally, Sawbwa Khun Seng, Tonhung then pushed on with his men towards Mongyai which was occupied after a last action at Loi Pangpara on the 6th waxing of the 9th month (about 9th August), and thus brought hostilities to an end! The Paokchoke Sang Aw and Nawmong fled to Mongnai and, promptly placed themselves under British protection by correspondence with them at Fort Stedman in Yawnghwe.

Khunsang Tonhung's successive and rapid victories which would have been attained in any case by sheer weight of numbers, were helped not a little by "predatory raids of bands" from Hsipaw at the instigation or orders of his ally. These guerrillas burnt out the whole of the Central Division (Kawnkang), and ruined the greater part of that tract! This was the type of warfare most familiar to and understood by the people at the time - the kind that had caused so much loss of life and property not only in the Shan States and Burma but throughout the whole of South East Asia.

Khunsang Tonhung was in effect master of all Hsenwi with the occupation of Mongyai, whereupon, with magnanimity reminiscent of the classical Princes or Kings of old, he issued proclamations pardoning all who had taken part against him and inviting all officials to return to their posts! The majority accepted the invitation and the promise was faithfully kept. Only in four Circles, where the runaway officials did not or dared not return, were new appointments made, and these were Mongyai, Monkseng, Nanang Lantau and Manpyaen. Nanang was restored to Mongyaw, of which it had formed a subdivision for 20 years and from which it had been separated only in 1247 (1885). Monkseng was placed under Khun Ton of the original family which had ruled that circle for generations! but which had been supplanted by a Royal Order from Mandalay 40 years previously.

Upon hearing from Nawmong at Mongnai, the British Superintendent and Political Officer at Fort Stedman, under whom all Shan States, both North and South, had now been placed, started corresponding with Khunsang Tonhung at Mongyai. The Hsipaw bands were withdrawn, and for the first time for over a generation there was peace in Hsenwi. The incessant fighting which had been going on had prevented the sufficient sowing of crops, and everywhere the spectre of famine was staring people in the face. In Laikha conditions were so bad that a considerable number of people died from actual starvation!

Such was the state of insecurity that people of those days always slept with their belongings packed into pairs of baskets ready to be carried away (with carrying poles) at the slightest sign of trouble. Many eye witnesses of that period or their children are still alive today to tell the gruesome tales of the unsettled conditions of the time.

Of the two remaining but smaller States in the North, Mongmit and Tawngpeng, the former was much torn asunder by the usual jealousies

of rival claimants," while the latter was comparatively quiet, on the eve of British occupation.

Mongmit and Mongleng (Momeik and Mohlaing) formerly constituted a single State until 1840 when on the death of the Sawbwa Maung Hlaing it was divided between his two sons, Maung Pu taking Mongmit and Kya U, taking Mongleng. From now there was not much security in the two States and a succession of Wuns were sent up from Mandalay including a Kengtung prince called Shwe-nanshin (1840-43), son of Maha Khanan, to either administer or put down disorders! Details of this period will be found under its proper heading! Just before the British conquest, a sawwalaung (pretender) appeared in Mongmit in the person of Kan Hlaing, a scion of the Mongleng branch of the ruling family. But the rightful heir of Mongmit, Kin Maung, at the time a minor 3 years of age, found loyal protectors in the four State Amats, Maung Chu, Maung Kan, Maung Saung and Maung U, who successfully resisted and drove off Kan Hlaing. It was also reported that the opposing forces were informed by some of the Shan States lying further East that if the warfare continued during the rains and cultivation was thus hindered, those States would join against whichever side persisted in the warfare.<sup>1</sup>

In the fastness of his tea mountains, the Sawbwa of Tawngpeng, Khun Khammong, had been living peacefully since his appointment by King Mindon in 1877, and was little affected by internecine strife around his State. King Mindon gave him as advisers a Burmese joint-administrator named Sitke Nga Hpe, and a Palaung Pongyi who was related to the Sawbwa's family! These two men were reported to be the real rulers of Tawngpeng, though the Sawbwa's own subjects merely said that their Sawbwa was a very pious man. On the fall of Mandalay he managed to maintain order and peace in his own State, and although factions in the North tried to involve him, the Sawbwa seems to have been diplomatic enough to ward off any real commitments; as illustrated by the following letter which he wrote to Hein Sai of Hsumhsai on the 13th waning Nayon 1248 (29th June 1886):

In the waning part of Nayon 1248 (June 1886) I was glad to hear that as the Prince (Myinzaing) would really become King, the Sawbwas, Myozas, Shwegunhmus and Ngwegunhmus on the Southern side (Southern Shan States) had taken the oath of allegiance to His Royal Highness. I too have been summoned with my contingent of troops to drink the oath-water of allegiance like others, but I cannot obey this order just at present because the rains have set in and the people need my protection while working in the fields, and also because it appears to me that the plan is not yet ripe for execution.

I am trying to maintain peace and order in my State, and I hope Hein Sai would kindly lend me his co-operation. This

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1. Burma Foreign and Political Department Proceeding No. 7, August 1886.

letter is sent by the hand of the Thangedawbo, Nga Baw Paung, who has been ordered to make a note of the political affairs not going on.

The State of Thibaw has sided with the English and its Sawbwa has sent me many letters, but as the Sawbwa is not a man to be trusted, I have not allowed myself to be talked over by him; and I hope Hein Sai would also follow my example.

In order that we two may be able to secure peace and happiness in such evil times as we are now living in, I shall feel much obliged if the orders of His Royal Highness the Prince are communicated to me.<sup>1</sup>

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1. GUBSS, II.3.254. Burma Foreign Department Proceeding No. 313, December 18868