

**MYANMAR POLITY (1819-1885)**

**PhD DISSERTATION**

**SOE AUNG**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation is an attempt to re-examine the situation of Myanmar during the second half of Konbaung Dynasty. Since the Sagaing *Min* (1819-1837) ascended the throne of Amarapura, the strength and the power of the kingdom of Myanmar seemed to have reached at its height of apex. The size of the kingdom, comprising the vassal states, was slightly larger than that of present day. The territorial expansion of the predecessors of Sagaing *Min* brought about serious frontier issues leading to the First Anglo-Myanmar War with the British- India in 1824. The War devastated the socio-economic life of the kingdom. Such chaotic conditions stirred up the court rebellions. Throughout the period up to 1885 the questions how the later Konbaung kings made efforts to secure their thrones in the midst of political and economic chaos and how the crown servicemen and common people staggered for their survival, are investigated and discussed in this dissertation. In a word, the attempt is made to access socio-economic life of the royalty, officials and people in a broader sense and in detail.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Catalogue, 1901	<i>Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records</i> , Two Volumes, Yangon, Government Press, 1901
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## GLOSSARY

<i>A-hmu-dan</i>	Crown serviceman
<i>A-la</i>	Descendent of marriages between <i>A-thi</i> and <i>Kappa</i>
<i>A-saung-kaing</i>	Keeper of royal regalia
<i>A-si-yin</i>	Administrative officer of certain grade
<i>A-su-sayin</i>	List of servicemen
<i>A-thi</i>	Tax Paying People (or) Commoners
<i>A-thi-sayei</i>	Clerk who is concerned with the affairs of Commoners
<i>A-twin-wun</i>	Privy Councillor or Minister of Privy Council
<i>A-ya-daw-mye</i>	Royal Land
<i>Bo-ba-paing-mye</i>	Ancestral Land
<i>Daing-gaung</i>	Officer in charge of shield bearers
<i>Gaing-dauk</i>	Assistant Leader of Local monk
<i>Gaing-ôk</i>	Local monk leader
<i>Hlut-yone Nga-yat</i>	The Five Courts of <i>Hlut-taw</i>
<i>Kataw-sayeis</i>	Clerk who handle the affairs of the wives of court officials and queens
<i>Kala-byo</i>	Mohamedan Musketeers
<i>Khon-taw</i>	Court of Justice
<i>Ko-yan</i>	Bodyguard
<i>Kun-yei-taw-min</i>	Betel server
<i>Kyei-htans</i>	Chief of tax paying people

<i>Kyi-wun</i>	Granary Officer
<i>Lei-sè, Nga-sè A-twin Thwei-thauk-su</i>	The royal forty and fifty interior and exterior bloodbond brotherhood group
<i>Ma-ha-dan-wun</i>	Minister in charge of religious affairs
<i>Myin-si</i>	Cavalryman
<i>Myo-thu-gyi</i>	Town Headman
<i>Myo-wun</i>	Town Governor
<i>Natsu Letwè Thenastu</i>	<i>Nat-su</i> left-wing Musketeers
<i>Ngwe-khun-hmu</i>	Chief in charge of the Royal Revenue of Silver
<i>Parabaik</i>	Black folded book
<i>Pei</i>	Palm leaf manuscript
<i>Pyi-soes</i>	Chief of Town
<i>Saw-bwa</i>	Shan hereditary chief
<i>Shwe Khun-hmu</i>	Chief in charge of the Royal Revenue of Gold
<i>Su-gya</i>	Foreign servicemen
<i>Tat-hmu</i>	Officer commanding one hundred troops
<i>Tat-kaung-han</i>	Guards having quarters in the palace stockade and escorted the king on all trips outside the palace
<i>Ta-zeik-ôk -min</i>	Officer of royal seal
<i>Thathanabaing</i>	Primate
<i>Thei-nat-wun-min</i>	Commandant of musketeers
<i>Thone Myo-wun</i>	Governor of the Three Towns
<i>Thwei-thauk-gyi</i>	Chief of blood bond elite serviceman
<i>Wungyi</i>	Minister
<i>Wut-mye sayei</i>	Clerk of Glebe lands

<i>Wut-mye Wun</i>	Officer of Glebe lands
<i>Ya</i>	Dry cultivation
<i>Yun-su</i>	A service group organized with the Ayuthia people
<i>Ywa-kaing</i>	Village elder
<i>Ywe Letwè-bo</i>	Captain of <i>Ywe</i> left musketeers

## INTRODUCTION

History of Konbaung Polity (1752-1885) is a very wide and complicated area which scholars could not thoroughly explore. Many researchers and scholars had written dissertations and papers on the different aspects of the history of Konbaung Dynasty. Even the title of this dissertation should be “Myanmar Polity (1819-1885): Revisited”. As it’s known, among the four dynasties of Myanmar, Konbaung Dynasty was significant in many ways. This period saw the extensive political and economic contacts with the outside world, the expansion of the Kingdom, military conquests, remarkable patronage and propagation of Buddhism. Like previous dynasties, there emerged court rebellions, military disasters, natural calamities and social and economic sufferings of the people. These kaleidoscopic aspects became one of the aspirations in writing of this dissertation. Another reason is the ample availability of primary source materials. As the dynasty was ended just about a century ago, primary source materials are still available in many regions of Upper Myanmar. Some of them are come across by the researchers. Some sources waiting to be exploited. In this arduous work, the researcher made his efforts to use the archival materials and primary materials collected from works and from my fellow colleagues. Finally, since the researcher joined the university as under-graduate students, majoring history, he learned a lot about the history of Konbaung Dynasty under the teachings of notable mentors. As a post-graduate student to pursue M.A degree, the researcher had an opportunity to study under the instructions of teachers who specialized in the history of Konbaung Dynasty. As a result, the researcher made a research on the Westerners in Myanmar (1752-1852) as M.A Thesis. In August 2002, the researcher had a

splendid opportunity to work with Victor B. Lieberman at the University of Michigan as a visiting scholar to submit a research paper. The paper submitted to the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, was elaborated in this dissertation as the Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Since then, the researcher have been preconceived with an ambition to do a research on the socio-economic and political history of Konbaung Dynasty.

As regard to the choosing of the period between 1819 and 1885, the researcher have a reason, i.e. the primary source materials are more available than the first half of Konbaung Dynasty. The researcher believe that the political and socio-economic dimensions of the late Konbaung Period can be more visible through the harmonic combination of primary source materials and reliable secondary documents. Most important reason of all, notable scholars like William J.Koenig completed his thesis on the early Konbaung Polity (1752-1819) which elaborately discussed with remarkable interpretations on the kingship, social order, succession problem and economy of early Konbaung Period. Even this study is said to be done under his inspiration. This study also gave priority on the areas where the authority of late Konbaung kings effectively spread. Therefore Shan States and all other hilly regions were excluded from this study.

This dissertation is divided into six main chapters, viz, Political Setting, The Royalty at the top of the Social Echelon, The Nobility the Privileged, The *A-hmu-dans* backbone of Monarchical Administration, The Commoners at the Grass Root Level and Myanmar in Transitional Period. Chapter One, Political Setting deals with the kingship, succession problems and outbreaks of court rebellions in Konbaung Period. As this chapter gave priority to the polities, the relations with the British, outbreaks of Anglo-Myanmar Wars and diplomatic relations are also discussed. Chapter II, III, IV and V examines the social organizations of Myanmar. In doing so, the exalted position of the royalty, role of privileged officials in the society and socio-economic life of crown servicemen and

commoners are discussed in detail with the evidence provided by the contemporary documents collected from various regions which are ever untapped before. In these chapters, the involvement of monastic order in the secular affairs to restore space and deal with the fact that how did the people of late Konbaung Period stagger for their survival under the frequent occurrence of natural calamities, misrule of local authorities, internal strife and warfare. In Chapter VI, the continuities and changes of Myanmar socio-economy during the transition from the quasi-feudal society to colonial society are widely discussed.

Although the researcher has made his utmost efforts to complete this dissertation, applying the first-account evidence and other reliable sources materials, there might be flaws and weakness. The researcher has alone responsible for any defect.

## CHAPTER ONE

### POLITICAL SETTING

**L**ate in the afternoon, on 5 June 1819, Badon *Min* (1782-1819), the last son of Alaungmintaya (1752-1860) passed away. Two days later Sagaing *Min* appeared on the palanquin to preside the cremation ceremony of his grandfather. After the ceremony, Sagaing *Min* ascended the throne by assuming the title of Thiri Pavara Mahadhammaraja. The king rewarded lavishly to the officials, servicemen and household servants, reorganized the crown service groups and sent detachments to administer the oath of allegiance to vassal states.<sup>1</sup> The accession of Sagaing *Min* was said to be the one of four peaceful transitions of throne. In the Konbaung Period (1752-1885) eleven kings had reign the kingdom for 133 years. Of these kings, Dipèyin *Min* (1760-63), Singu *Min* (1776-82), Sagaing *Min* (1819-37) and Bagan *Min* (1846-1853) ascended the throne orderly and peacefully. Although the accession of Hsinbyushin (*Myedu Min* 1763-1776) and Thibaw *Min* (1878-1885) were said to be the peaceful transitions, they succeeded the throne under very doubtful situations. Unclarified sources<sup>2</sup> mention that *Myedu Min* ascended the throne after the assassination of his brother Dipèyin *Min*. King

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<sup>1</sup>U (Maung Maung) Tin, *Konbaungzet Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi* (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty), Universities' Historical Research Centre (ed) , Yangon, Yabyei Press, 2004, Fourth Impression) p.162 (Henceforth: ( Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b)

<sup>2</sup>(a) Alexander Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory 1791-7, of Portions Relating to Burma*, Vol.II, Yangon, Government Printing, 1926, p 387 (Henceforth: Dalrymple, 1926)

(b) William J. Koenig, *The Burmese Polity, 1752-1819 : Politics, Administration, and Social Organization in the Early Konbaung Period*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan, The Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1990, p.198 (Henceforth: Koenig, 1990)

Thibaw, the last King of Myanmar, ascended the throne after the imprisonment of more deserved claimants to the throne. Soon, they were executed even though the king repeatedly refused it was done without his knowledge.<sup>3</sup> During the long course of monarchical rule, from the accession of Aniruddha to the throne of Bagan in 1044 up to the deposition of King Thibaw by the British in 1885, there were sixty seven kings who ruled the kingdom throughout the 841 years. And out of the sixty-seven kings, eighteen were usurpers and seven were dethroned by outside intervention. It can say that during over 840 years, there broke out thirty five court rebellion, averaging one in every twenty-four year. Although Myanmar has faced with external threats, the real threats to the stability of throne emerged from within itself.

### **Kingship and Succession Problems of the Early Konbaung Polity**

In customary society , the society of Myanmar was theoretically divided into eight social strata, namely *ya-han-* the clergy, *Min-myo-* the royalty , *ponna-*the Brahman, *Min-thu-gaung-phyu-khan-ya-thu-* the privileged officials, *thu-kywe-* crown recognized well-off persons, *lu-tha-man* the commoner, *thu-sin-yè* – the destitute and *kyun* the bondsman.<sup>4</sup> In practice, there were four main classes, viz, the royalty, the privileged officials, the crown recognized wealthy persons and the commoners comprising *a-hmu-dans* – crowns servicemen and *a-this* – tax -paying commoners.<sup>5</sup> Although *kyun*-literally meaning slave as the lowest social class,

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<sup>3</sup>Thant Myint U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, Cambridge , (U.K) Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.158 (Henceforth: Thant Myint U, 2001)

<sup>4</sup>U Tin, *Myan-mar-min Ôk-chôk-pôn Sa-dan hnint Bodawphaya'e Ya-za-that-khaw-thaw A-mein-daw-dan-gyi* (The Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Orders of King Bodawpaya called *Yazathat*), Vol.I, Yangon, Baho Press, 1963, pp.31-32 (Henceforth: Tin, 1963)

<sup>5</sup>Koenig, 1990, 46



they differed from western slavery. We can see only debt bondsmen and religious bondsmen in the society. Precisely speaking, everyone, from the privileged court official down to the commoner was the slave of the king-the one and only master.

At the top of the social pyramid under quasi-feudalism, for above the people, the king stood as an “arbiter of existence”. He was the lord of life, head and hairs of all subject, sold owner of all lands<sup>6</sup> His power was unchallengeable. Nevertheless, as they regarded themselves as the defenders of Buddhist faith, numerous kingly virtues stemmed from Buddhism and the moral instructions of *Sanghas* could’ check the power of the king. In addition, since Myanmar kings claimed their lineage from *Mahathamada*, they were also bound by a contract in the form of coronation oath to rule over his people humanely in accord with the Law. Most important of coronation was known as *mudha-abhiseka*-or *mudha* consecration ceremony which took the form of making mutual contract between the ruler and the subject,<sup>7</sup> However, it is interesting to note that of the eleven Konbaung Kings, only Hsinbyushin, Badon *Min*, Sagaing *Min* and Mindon *Min* observed *mudha-abhiseka* ceremony while others observing only *raja-abhiseka*-the coronation to claim the ascending of throne, Myanmar Kingship in theory seems to be systematic to some extent. However the problems and defects lie in the very royal household. First of all, Myanmar kings had many queens, concubines and consorts. These queens gave birth by many sons who became rival claimants to the throne. Since the rule of succession was based was based on the hereditary system but not necessarily on primogeniture, seeds of rebellion was mostly sown in the Palace Precincts by the princes or close relatives.

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<sup>6</sup>Maungdawung Sayadaw, *A-mei-daw-phyei* (The Primate’s Answers on the Crown Questions) Mandalay, Padeitha Press, 1961, pp.124-128 (Henceforth: Maungdaung, 1961)

<sup>7</sup>Yi Yi, “Life at the Burmese Court under Konbaung Kings”, *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol. VIIIV, part .1 , 1966, pp.85-129 passim (Henceforth: Yi Yi, 1966)

Before the demise of Alaungmintaya, the king reminded his sons to succeed the throne by order of seniority like his fingers.<sup>8</sup> It was the one and only principle of succession throughout the Konbaung Period. And the Alaungmintaya's order was neglected by his second son Hsinbyushin who installed his son on the throne. As have mentioned even Hsinbyushin ascended the throne under very doubtful situations. When Singu *Min* ascended the throne, Amyint Prince and Badon Prince Pakhan Prince all were sons of Alaungmintaya and more eligible to the throne, were sent into exile. In addition, Maung Maung, son of late Naungdawgyi, who were also in exile in his fief Hpaung-ga. Soon after his rise of power, Singu *Min* sought reasons to take some actions against his deported uncles. He did not wait for long time and on 16 June 1776 he summarily executed his half brother Salin Prince for making unsuitable plot.<sup>9</sup> Salin Prince was followed by his Amyint Prince on 1 October 1777.<sup>10</sup> As they saw the fate of Salin and Amyint Prince, remaining uncles and Maung Maung watched the Maung Maung took the lead, on the evening of February 1872; Singu *Min* made a pilgrimage to Anya-thiha-daw Pagoda together with his queen mother, sister, queens, household servants and officials. Three days later Maung Maung and his followers from Hpaung-ga raided the palace, wiped out some resistance and exacted the oath of allegiance under swords. Maung Maung invited his three deported uncles to join him. However, as they sensed the danger they all refused. Desperate Singu *Min* took refuge in his fief town Singu thence to Moksobo to organize arms and followers. When he set fief town to Kyauk-myaung, his forces melted away. In this situation Badon Prince

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<sup>8</sup>U (Maung Maung) Tin, *Konbaungzet Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi* (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty), Vol. I, Yangon, UHRC (ed), Yabyei Press, 2004 (Fourth Impression), p.379 (Henceforth: (Maung Maung ) Tin, 2004a)

<sup>9</sup>(Maung Maung ) Tin, 2004a , 368

<sup>10</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004a , 372

was able to carry out a plot to depose Maung Maung. The chaotic situations of Inwa were depicted by Michael Symes as follows;

Shembuan Mia Shean minderagee Praw,<sup>11</sup> the fourth son of the deceased Alompra,<sup>12</sup> had ever carefully concealed under an humble exterior... ambition that aspired to the throne, his influence, though less prominent than that of other confederates, yet contributed above all to the successful accomplishment of the late revolution...on the first notice that Chagaing<sup>13</sup> was abandoned by Chenguza,<sup>14</sup> he left Monchaboo ... a deputation from the principle personages in Ava, treating him to come and reins of government, which Moeein<sup>15</sup> was found unworthy to hold.<sup>16</sup>

After the situations was restored both Singu *Min*, Maung Maung were executed by Badon *Min*. When Badon *Min* ascended the throne, his claimant to the throne was consisted of two sons, Shwedaung Prince and Pyay Prince, and two brothers, Pakhan Prince and Pindalè Prince. As for succession of his throne, he chose his eldest son Shwedaung Prince as heir apparent. When Shwedaung prince bore a son the hope of Pindalè to take the throne was deteriorated. So he organized a few conspirators to depose Badon. When the plot was discovered, the king spared the life of Pindale yet the followers were executed. However as the prince continued to harbored his plot, he was drowned on 19 June 1785. Thereafter Pakhan Prince

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<sup>11</sup>Bodawphaya

<sup>12</sup>Alaungmintaya

<sup>13</sup>Sagaing

<sup>14</sup>Singu *Min*

<sup>15</sup>Maung Maung

<sup>16</sup>Michael Symes, *Account of An Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava Sent by the Governor General of India in the Year 1795*, Westmead, Greagg Int'l Publishers, 1969 (Reprint) , pp.96-97 (Henceforth: Symes, 1969)

was forced to live under house arrest until 11 December 1802 when he died of sickness.<sup>17</sup> During the first half of Konbaung Dynasty, usurpation and attempt to usurp the throne has began since Hsinbyushin's reign. When traced, there were seven out in Konbaung Period of these rebellions, two rebellions in which royal uncles rose against their elder brothers,<sup>18</sup> one uprising of royal son against their father-king<sup>19</sup> and one uprising of royal nephew against reigning uncle.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Konbaung Dynasty was infested with intrigues, conspiracy, plots and uprising. In the Konbaung Period, there took place seven revolts of which two were found against the royal uncles. In addition to these rebellions there were also natural calamities. These chaotic situations can be seen not only in the central Myanmar, but in the peripheral areas.

### **Expansion of Territories and Consequences**

Sagaing *Min* ascended the throne in the wake of oncoming political tensions with the British. As have known, the occupation of Rakhine by his grandfather Badon *Min* brought about the unexpected frontier disputes and the uprising of Rakhines even though some Rakhines invited him to depose their King Maha Thamadaraja (1782-1784).<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, Warren Hastings (1774-1785), the Viceroy of the East India Company of India, began to establish Bengal, neighboring state of Rakhine, as the British protectorate. When Sir John Shore (1793-1798) succeeded Hastings,

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<sup>17</sup>(Maung Maung ) Tin, 2004b, 104

<sup>18</sup>Rebellions of Taung U *Min* against his nephew Di-pè-yin *Min*, Badon against Phaungaza Maung Maung and Singu, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004a, 256, 378

<sup>19</sup>Phaungga Prince rose against his cousin Singu , Thayawaddy revolted against Sagaing *Min*, and Mindon and Kanaung revolted against Bagan *Min*, (Maung Maung) Tin , 2004a ,375, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004b, 332-343, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 90-100

<sup>20</sup>Myingun and Myin-khondaing princes revolted against King Mindon, (Maung Maung)Tin, 2004c, 230-244

<sup>21</sup>Uprising of Badein Prince against Mindon *Min*, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 235-241

Bengal was incorporated into the British Empire.<sup>22</sup> Now the two expanding empires, the Kingdom of Inwa from the East and the British-India from the west, were about to collide each other on the boundary which had never been demarcated properly.

The flash point was created by the Rakhine fugitives who did not accept the administration of Myanmar. They attacked Myanmar forces frequently. When Myanmar officials, governors of Rammawaddy, Megawaddy, and Danyawaddy pursued them they refuge into the British territory of Bengal. The frontier disputes, created by Nga Paw Lon in 1793-94<sup>23</sup> and Nga Chin Byan in 1811,<sup>24</sup> forced to resume the Anglo-Myanmar relations in Badon *Min*'s reign. The British Government in India sent Michael Symes, Hiram Cox and John Canning to the court of Amarapura to settle the frontier problem. Of these missions, only Michael Symes was able to negotiate to reach some agreements on the commercial relations in his first embassy.<sup>25</sup> After Symes' first embassy, Hiram Cox's mission 1796, Symes' second embassy and three missions of John Canning could not settle the frontier problem even though the British surrendered Nga Paw Lon and other two fugitives to the King of Myanmar. According to Cox, Badon *Min* even thought that the surrender of Nga Paw Lon was the sign of the weakness of the

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<sup>22</sup>“*Pan-wa Myo-tho Chi-tet Laik-lan Lok-kyan-ya-thi A-kyauk-ahtet Sagago Ahmywet-hmya So-ohn-un*” (A Brief Account of Expedition to Pan-wa), *Parabaik*, M.S, Yangon, National Library Collection, No.756 (Henceforth: *Parabaik* M.S, NLC, No.756)

<sup>23</sup>Percival Spear, *History of India*, Two Volumes, Vol.II, London, Perguin Press, 1968, p.98 (Henceforth: Spear, 1968)

<sup>24</sup>Hla Tun Phyu, “*Mijjima Desa A-ye-daw-bon-kyan*” (The Treatise on the affairs of Mijjama Desa and Myanmar Mission to India), M.A Thesis, Department of History, University of Yangon, 1994, pp.4-7 (Henceforth: Hla Tun Phyu, 1994)

<sup>25</sup>For Nga Chin Byan Uprising, See B.R Pearn, “King Bering”, *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol. XXIII, part. ii, 1933, pp.56-79 (Henceforth: Pearn,1933)

Company and overestimated his military strength.<sup>26</sup> John Canning, from his three embassies, had the chance to watch the situations of Myanmar and Badon *Min*'s eagerness to invade Chittagong and Decca. In his first embassy, he visited the royal capital, met with Sagaing *Min*, newly installed Crown Prince, and saw the Prince's private apartment was filled with maps and plans of Chittagong and Decca.<sup>27</sup> The authorities of Calcutta did not take further action on the frontier issues for they were busy with the quelling of Indian rajas and princes.

In the wake of such diplomatic impasse, another serious problem was created by Nga Chinbyan.<sup>28</sup> As he was able to organize large brigand and to obtain some recognition and protection from the British government Nga Chin Byan's uprising lasted for nearly a decade. Before his death of sickness, Nga Chin Byan inspired the misunderstanding in Anglo-Myanmar relations.<sup>29</sup> The Governor General even stated that 'this government felt it to be its duty to decline surrendering the persons of those of the rebel Mug Chief (Nga Chin Byan) who were in the custody of the British government'.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes, the Calcutta authorities likely to show their good will to cooperate with Myanmar authorities. Nevertheless the frontier problems remained unsettled.

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<sup>26</sup>Symes, 1969, No II , 483-486

<sup>27</sup>Captain Hiram Cox, *Journal of a Residence in the Burmah Empire*, London, John Warren, 1821, pp.209-300 (Henceforth: Cox, 1821)

<sup>28</sup>D.G.E Hall, *Europe and Burma*, London, Oxford University Press, 1945, pp.97-99 (Henceforth: Hall, 1945)

<sup>29</sup>Papers Relating to East India Affairs : Viz Discussions with the Burmese Government, 1825 London, House of Common, Par 2 (23 January 1812) (Henceforth: Papers, 1825)

<sup>30</sup>Letter from the Governor General to the Bago *Myo-wun*, dated October 1813, Papers 1825, par 2-3

### **Renewal of Defiance from the Northwest Vassal States**

By 1819, Badon *Min* passed away after bequeathing both throne and unsettled frontier issues to his most beloved grandson. When the coronation ceremony was held by the new king on 1 December 1819, Manipuri Raja Marjit Singh failed to present the ceremony. The king sent a punitive military expedition to Manipur the vassal state of Myanmar since the mighty Taungoo Dynasty.<sup>31</sup> Although they could not withstand the fierce assault of Myanmar forces Chaurjit Singh, Marjit Singh and Gambhir Singh Manipuri rajas, were able to overrun neighboring state of Cachar. Govindra Chandra, raja of Cachar, fled to Sylhet where he met with British authorities and asking for help.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile Cachari Raja sent his agent to the Court of Inwa asking assistance from Sagaing *Min* to reinstate him. As Myanmar forces had already stationed in Manipur, Cachar was within touching length, and even eastern Bengal was put under serious threat of Myanmar. The British finally put Cachar and Jaintia, just to the north of Cachar which was likewise threatened by Myanmar, under their protection. Meanwhile the succession problem broke out in the Myanmar protected state of Assam even though it was once settled by Badon *Min* since 1816 by reinstating Chandraganda Singh on the throne.<sup>33</sup> However he was threatened by another Assamese pretender Puranar Singh by taking assistance of a British adventurer who attempted to depose Chandraganda Singh. During this time Assamese Raja sought more secure protection from the British. When the news reached to the Court of Inwa, Sagaing *Min* sent an expedition to Assam under renowned commander Maha Bandula. In

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<sup>31</sup>(a) (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004b , 185

(b) For the relations between Myanmar and Manipur, see Yi Yi, *Myan-mar Naing-gan A-chei-a-nei: 1714-1752* (The Situations of Myanmar) Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1975, passim , also see Jyotirmoy Roy, *History of Manipur*, Calcutta, K-L Mukhopadhyay, 1958, passim (Henceforth: Roy, 1958)

<sup>32</sup>Roy, 1958, 66

<sup>33</sup>“*Ar-than-taing-pyi A-htok-patti-phaya*” (A History of Assam), *Parabaik M.S*, NLC, No.955 (Henceforth: *Parabaik M.S*, No.955)

January 1822 Maha Bandula was able to wipe out both Chandraganda Singh and the British army and became the real ruler of Assam.<sup>34</sup> Maha Bandula sent an ultimatum through the surrender of Chandraganda Singh and followers.<sup>35</sup> Although the authorities of Calcutta rejected the demand, Maha Bandula's forces had successfully seized the refugee-Raja.<sup>36</sup> These situation forced Calcutta authorities to set up precautionary measures.

The period during early 1820 accordingly saw the possibilities of hostility with the British. Meanwhile Sagaing *Min* was manipulated by the war party of the Court headed by Chief Queen Nu, her brother Minthagyi Maung O and commander Maha Bandula. Sagaing *Min* himself was seemed to be inclined to follow suit of his predecessors by waging a war. Meanwhile the frontier problems in Rakhine remained to be settled. Both sides had to overcome diplomatic impasse and to seek any agreements on the affairs of north-west principalities. However they failed to do so. In these situations, a flashpoint was created by the dispute of Shinmaphyu Island situated at the estuary of the Naaf River. Since 1821 Myanmar officials of Rakhine claimed the island as Myanmar's territory.<sup>37</sup> The attitude of the Governor General, in his letter to Danyawaddy *Myo-wun*, firmly mentioned the island was put under the jurisdiction of the Magistrate of Chittagong. His letter reads:

The communication addressed to you by the Magistrate of Chittagong on the subject of the island, was entirely in confronted with the views and sentiments of the Supreme Government... The island Shapuree has

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<sup>34</sup>Sir Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, Cactus, Thacker Spinck, 1963 (Third Edition), p.235 (Henceforth: Gait, 1963)

<sup>35</sup>Sheihaungsape Thuteti-ta-u, *Konbaung-khit Sit-yei Than-da-man-yei Sai-ya Sa-mya* (The Letters Relating to the Military and Diplomatic Affairs of Myanmar), Yangon, New-ya-mon Sarpei, n.d., pp.39-40 (Henceforth: Thuteti, n.d.)

<sup>36</sup>Hall, 1945, 111

<sup>37</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004b , 254



always appertained to the British territory of Chittagong, and is the undoubted right of the Honourable Company: it lines on the British said of the main channel of the Naaf River, which is the admitted boundary between the two States.... The occupation of the Shapurea by the British Government for a length of years, is also proved by the records of the Chittagong Collectorship, which skew that it has invariably comprehend in the revenue settlement.<sup>38</sup>

Although Mr.Scott and Danyawaddy *Myo-wun* made their utmost efforts to settle the problem by peaceful means, exchange of shootings and invasions took place between the frontier guards of Myanmar and the British. When Sagaing *Min* heard the news of hostility of frontier clashes, he recalled Maha Banula from Assam and sent an army of 20,000 men under his command and Myawaddy *Myo-za* Mingyi to Rakhine on 15 December 1823. <sup>39</sup>At first a naval boat of Myanmar pulled alongside of the *Sophia*, Pilot Schooner of the Company and detained its captain.<sup>40</sup> Final countdown had been reached by the lord Amherst's official declaration of war on Myanmar on 5 March 1824.

### **Myanmar between the two Wars (1826-1852)**

The first Anglo-Myanmar War was ended with the Yandabo Treaty, concluded on 24 February 1826, which brought about the drastic changes for the kingdom of Myanmar. The treaty forced to relinquish Myanmar's claim on Rakhine and Taninthayi and to renounce all claims upon, and abstain from all interference with Assam, Cachar, Jaintia and Manipur. In addition the government of Myanmar had

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<sup>38</sup>*Papers Relating to the Burmese War, Presented to both House of Parliament by his Majesty's Command*, London, R.G Clerks, February 1825, Part.A, 21 November 1823, Appendix H, pp 40-41 (Henceforth: *Papers-Burmese War, 1825*)

<sup>39</sup>“*Panwa Myo-tha Chi-tet Leik-Lan Lok-kyan-ya-thi A-kyauung-ko Ahmywet-mya So-ohn-un*” (A Brief Account of Myanmar Expedition to Panwa), *Parabaik*, M.S., NLC, No.756

<sup>40</sup>*Paper – Burmese Wars , 1825*, par H, 42

to pay Rs.10,000,000 or 75,000 viss of silver as war compensation.<sup>41</sup> The treaty awakened the kingdom of Myanmar to carry out some reform measures. The first and foremost change was the establishment of the British Residency at the royal capital Inwa. So in September 1826, John Crawfurd arrived Inwa as the envoy of the British East India Company to restore friendship and concluded a commercial treaty with Myanmar.<sup>42</sup> Although he could not make effort for the negotiation of frontier disputes, John Crawfurd was able to conclude a commercial treaty with the government on 23 November 1826.<sup>43</sup> However, many problems remained unsettled, particularly the frontier dispute between Myanmar and Manipur.

In order to materialize the Article seven of the Yandabo Treaty and to erase the misunderstanding between the two governments Governor- General Lord William Bentick and Council decided to send Major Henry Burney as the plenipotentiary resident envoy to the court of Inwa in 1830.<sup>44</sup> Burney was said to be the first British envoy who deeply involved in the affairs of Myanmar Soon after his arrival, Burney was able to win the intimacy with Sagaing *Min* and influential court officials and princes. He held a series of discussions with Myanmar authorities on the issues of war indemnity, Kabaw Valley problems, and issue of war compensation. Myanmar embassy, led by Mingyi Maha Sithu U Shwè and assistant Minhla Nanda Kyawhtin, was accompanied by George Burney was

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<sup>41</sup>For the English and Myanmar version of the treaty, see Anna Allott, *The End of The first Anglo-Burmese War: The Burmese Chronicle account how the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo was negotiated*, Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Press, 1994, pp.15-22 (Henceforth: Allott, 1994)

<sup>42</sup>John Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor – General of Inida to the Court iof Ava in theyear 1827*, London, Henry Calburn, 1829, pp. 87, 128-138 (Henceforth: Crawfurd, 1829)

<sup>43</sup>(a) Crawfurd, 1829, Appendix 8-9

(b) Allott, 1994, 73-74

<sup>44</sup>W.S Desai, *History of the British Residency in Burma: 1826-1840*, Yangon, University of Yangon, 1939, p.45 (Henceforth: Desai,1939)

sent to Calcutta to settle the said problems. Although Myanmar embassy suffered the insult of the Calcutta authorities, they were able to postpone the third and fourth installments of war compensation and to clarify Kabaw Valley was Myanmar property.<sup>45</sup> For these achievements, George Burney was rewarded the title of Thiriyaza Nawrahta, Similarly Henry Burney was rewarded the title of Mahazeyaraja Nawrahta with a shoulder sash of nine golden strings. The most interesting incident during the Burney's tenure was the rebellion of Thayawaddy Prince against Bagyidaw. It was the rebellion of Thayawaddy Prince against his brother Bagyidaw. The rebellion broke out after Burney's return from Calcutta in 1837. When the rebellion broke out, Burney acted as a mediator between the king and the Prince to avoid bloodshed even though he was instructed to remain in strict neutrality by the government of India. However he could not defend Sagaing *Min* from deposing by his brother. When Thayawaddy *Min* ascended the throne on 30 April 1837, the relations between the Myanmar government and the British residency grew worse. As the new King waged the war against the British in the battle field, he had intense dislike against the British. When Burney was granted royal audience on 17 May 1837, the king said he had nothing to say about the treaty concluded by his brother. The King even repeated the attitude to say about the treaty concluded by his brother. The king even repeated the attitude of his great-grandfather Alaung-mintaya that the Governor-General in Calcutta was merely an official appointed by the British Crown. Therefore the king said Burney on 7 June 1837 that the diplomatic procedure should make through the governor of Yangon whose states and capability was equal with that of the Governor-General

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<sup>45</sup>Ma Kyan, "Bingalathwa Myan-mar-Than-daw-a-phwe (AD 1830)," *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol. XIIIV, part.ii, Dec 1961, pp.143-146 (Henceforth: Kyan, 1961). This document mentions Major Burney some trickery encouragement to the Calcutta authorities to one the meeting of Myanmar envoys with the Governor-General.

of India.<sup>46</sup> Burney now convinced that the relations could not be improved even though he continued to reside at the capital. Finally he handed over his duties to G.T, Bayfield and withdrew from Inwa.

The British government in Calcutta reconsidered the relations with King Thayawaddy government and decided to prevent any undesirable situations between the two governments. They appointed Richard Benson as the resident. When Benson arrived at Yangon on 16 July 1838; he was welcomed with sound treatment by the governor of Yangon. But Myanmar officials told Benson to reside his office at Yangon. When he was ordered by Thayawaddy *Min*, on 17 July 1838, to proceed to the royal capital, Benson left Yangon. While Benson serving his duties as resident for five months at the capital he was not even noticed by the King. It was partly because of his attitude to take the upper hand position and arrogance in dealing with the Myanmar authorities. Thayawaddy *Min* was also eager to seek the way to drive out the residency without any conflict. When he discussed with the Myanmar Ministers on 30 November 1838 to maintain status quo, Benson found fruitlessness in dealing with the government of Myanmar and finally handed over the resident office to his assistant Mc Leod and quitted Inwa.<sup>47</sup> The rumor has spread among the people on the possibility of a new war with the British. Myanmar court circle got the news of British's distress in Afghanistan. Some thought that Thayawaddy *Min* underestimated the strength of the British. Meanwhile early rain of 1839 sought the desirable answer for Thayawaddy *Min*, i.e. the torrential rain of July swollen the Ayeyawaddy River and put the floor of the Resident apartment under flood. Although Mc Leod informed the *Hlut-taw* to get required assistance, the Ministers gave no reply as if the rain had never come to their capital. In July 1839, helpless Mc Leod presented his difficulties to the

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<sup>46</sup>Oliver B.Pollak, *Empires in Collision*, Connecticut, Greenwood Press,1979, pp.17-18 (Henceforth: Pollak, 1979)

<sup>47</sup>Desai, 1939, 378-385

king. This time the king showed his generosity on Mc Leod by giving necessary assistance to quit Inwa.<sup>48</sup> Between the years 1826 and 1840, plenipotentiary assistant officials took charge the British Residency of Inwa.

Because of the absence of diplomatic relations, the hostility was unavoidable. The usual border disputes, illegal logging of British traders along the Thanlwin River,<sup>49</sup> trade disputes and misrule of some Myanmar officials in Yangon became the source of tensions in Anglo-Myanmar Relations. Anyway, the maritime trade which centered at Yangon still thriving. Miscellaneous merchants, adventurers, fortune seekers of various nationalities like English, French, Scotch, Armenians, Madrasis, Bengali etc chose Yangon as the safe heaven. Even the Chinese junks arrived regularly for commercial purposes. In this situation the British firms in Yangon who repeatedly made complaint against the Myanmar's on trade.<sup>50</sup> The grievances of traders in Yangon were partly their own fault. Even Henry Gouger, a British merchant who arrived at the court of Inwa in 1822 and was imprisoned during the first Anglo-Myanmar War, noted that "unruly conduct of some of them tended to invite oppression rather than inspire respect."<sup>51</sup> Actually the complaints of the British merchants had no foundation. They also wanted to give more pressure on Myanmar Government for trade concessions without restrictions. The British Government in India, Mindful of the great cost of the first war which resulted less desirable effect, was reluctant to set up a firm policy against Myanmar.<sup>52</sup> Anyway, the disputes between the British merchants which

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<sup>48</sup>Desai, 1939 , 388

<sup>49</sup>Pollak, 1979, 46-50

<sup>50</sup>Henry Gouger, *A Personal Narrative of Two Years Imprisonment in Burmah, 1824-26*, London, John Murray, 1860, p.76 (Henceforth: Gouger, 1860)

<sup>51</sup>Pollak, 1979, 151

<sup>52</sup>Nyo Mya, *Konbaung Sha-bon-daw* (In Search of Konbaung Dynasty), Yangon, Yabyei Press, December 2003, seventh Impression, pp.232-238 (Henceforth: Nyo Mya, 2003)

could be settled in friendly manner, became aggravated and magnified which diplomacy was unfortunately faded away.

Thayawaddy *Min* passed away in 1846 in the midst of diplomatic impasse with the British. He was succeeded by his son Bagan *Min* (1846-1853) who was likely to be a most negligent monarch in the affairs of the state among the Konbaung Kings. He was fond of amusement and merit makings. The administrative affairs were left in the hands of incompetent and corrupted officials. The kingdom was crumbling, while, in contrast, Lord Dalhousie was appointed as the Governor-General of India. After subduing the rebellions Sikh, he could turn the Myanmar problems. His official minute, wrote to the government of India, reveal his concept that the Government of India could never, consistently with its own safety, permit itself to stand for a single day in an attitude of inferiority towards a native power, and least of all towards the Court of Ava".<sup>53</sup>

### **Renewal of Hostility**

On 2 June, 1851, Sheppard, Captain of a British merchant ship "monarch", committed murder in Myanmar territory. Similar problem was created by Lewis, also a Captain of another British merchant ship "Champion". For these crimes, Yangon *Myo-wun* U Ok detained them and imposed fines. When they made complaint against the Myanmar Government, Dalhousie sent a fleet to demand reparation. When Lambert's fleet stranded at Yangon, he received the letters of complaints from the British subjects in Yangon. Almost all of these complaints had no firm reason; nevertheless, these complaints became the enough concrete evidence to accelerate the arrogant manner of "combustible commodore".<sup>54</sup> After

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<sup>53</sup>Hall, 1945, 139

<sup>54</sup>Aung Than (Mandalay), *Yandabo Hma-thi Myei-dè Si-tho* (From Yandabo to Myei-dè : causes and the Outbreak of the Second Anglo-Myanmar War), Yangon, Than-Lwin Press, 1974 , pp. 69-80 (Henceforth: Aung Than, 1974). This book is translated Work. As the Original work "Richard Cobden, *How wars are Got Up in India:The Origins of the Burma War* , London; W.& F.G Gash, 1853", is extremely rare in Myanmar , the author is regretfully cited the translated work of U Aung Than.

hearing some complaints, Lambert dispatched a letter of complaint directly to the King. Myanmar Government's response was remarkably corporative and friendly one.<sup>55</sup> They dismissed U Ok and appointed a new Governor. However Lambert decided to force the problem and carried out the naval blockade of the port of Yangon. There followed the exchange of fire. Dalhousie later defended himself from further possible blames. His letter reads:-

The Commodore and the new Governor have not hit it off. The Burmese continued their insolence and hostile tone, and finally the Commodore left Rangoon and established the blockade. This would have been all right, but before he went he thought proper, in disobedience of his orders, to make reprisals. He seized a ship belonging to the King which lay in the river. The Burmese manned the stockades and fired upon him. He anchored; sent the Fox's broadside into the stockade, where were 3000 men, who disappeared to a man, and then destroyed their war boats and spiked and sank their guns.<sup>56</sup>

Dalhousie sent an ultimatum to the Myanmar Government, demanding compensation, while he made preparations for the war. It can be said that the ultimatum was only a formal gesture. On expiry of the period allowed by the ultimatum, troops mobilized to Myanmar.

Dalhousie probably took enough lessons from the results of the First Anglo-Myanmar War. Overland and by sea the troops poured in and soon, at little

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<sup>55</sup>“*Myan-mar-min hnint Ingaleik-min-do A-kyauung*” (Relations between the British Government and the King of Myanmar) *Parabaik*, M.S, 15 Waning Moon of *Tazaungbon* – 3 Waxing *Natdaw*, 1221 M.E, NLC, No.1070. (Henceforth: *Parabaik* M.S, NLC, No,1070)

<sup>56</sup>*Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence : 1852-1856* , D.G.E Hall (Edited with Introduction and Notes), London, Oxford University Press, 1932, P2 XVIII (Henceforth: *D.P.C*, 1932)

cost, Yangon, Mottama, and Patheingyi were occupied.<sup>57</sup> The supply lines were uninterrupted from Madras and Calcutta, though Yangon and the posts up to the front line. Even troops were protected from infectious disease. On the contrary, Myanmar resistance was feeble and said to be unorganized one. The British could have marched on to the capital and annexed the whole country if they wished.<sup>58</sup> However Dalhousie decided the annexation of Bago and the busy seaports of Yangon, Patheingyi, and Mottama was sufficient.

### **Interregnum of Peace**

In the midst of facing with the superior enemy, Bagan *Min* was deposed by his two brothers Prince Mindon and Kanaung. Meanwhile the British were marching on Pyaw, and beyond to Myeik and the road to the royal capital was opened for them. After securing the throne, King Mindon dispatched *Kalawun* Maha Mingaung Thihathu, *A-myauk-wun* Minhla Thiri Minhtin to the British expeditionary forces to offer peace. When they returned from Pyaw, bringing the message from General Godwin that the British would seize the Bago Province,<sup>59</sup> the king sent another mission, on 6 April 1853, led by Kyaukamw *Myo-za Wungyi* Thadomingyi Maha Minhla Thihathu.<sup>60</sup> Myanmar envoy was able to show the good will of king Mindon yet they could not bargain the British wishes to seize Lower Myanmar up to Myeik. Dalhousie issued a notification, dated 30 December 1852, declaring the Province of Bago had been declared to be a portion of the British Territories.<sup>61</sup> The notification of Dalhousie faded the king's

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<sup>57</sup>For the strength of the British forces, see William F.B Laurie, *The Second Burmese War: From August 1852 to its conclusion in June 1853, with a Succinct continuation down to February 1854*, London, Smith, Elder, and Co, 1853, pp.33-41 (Henceforth: Laurie, 1853)

<sup>58</sup>Laurie, 1853, 114-139

<sup>59</sup>(Maung Maung )Tin, 2004c, 114

<sup>60</sup>(Maung Maung)Tin, 2004c , 115

<sup>61</sup>Laurie ,1853, 142



expectation to return the Bago Province to the Kingdom of Myanmar away. Dalhousie appointed the administrative body, comprising civil commissioners and military officers. Some of them were assigned to take charge the general administration of the Lower Myanmar. In order to legitimate their occupation, the British authorities dispatched envoys to persuade the King to sign a peace treaty Dalhousie even drafted the treaty. It reads;

TREATY of Peace between the Honorable East India Company, on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava, on the other: settled by his Excellency Commodore G R. Lamberz, Commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's Naval Force in the East Indies, Major-General Henry Godwin, C.B., commanding the British Forces in Ava, and Captain Arthur Purves Phayre, Commissioner of Pegu, on the part of the Honorable Company; and by on the part of the King of Ava; who have each communicated to the other their full powers.

#### ARTICLES I.

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honorable East Inida Company, on the one part, and His Majesty the King of Ava, on the other.

#### ARTICLES II.

His Majesty the King of Ava cedes to the Honorable East India Company in perpetual sovereignty, the Province of Pegu, being the territories to the southward of the boundary hereinafter described: namely:

#### ARTICLES III

The Honorable East India Company, and His Majesty the King of Ava, will each permit the subject of the other to carry on trade within their respective dominions, and they will give to such traders' full protection and security.

## ARTICLE IV.

This Treaty shall be ratified by His Majesty the King of Ava, within one month; the British Commissioners engaging that it shall be ratified by the Governor-General in Council, and delivered to the Burmese Commissioners, with one month, at Prome.<sup>62</sup>

The British Government's pressure on the King Mindon to sign a treaty which forced to relinquish the territory of Myanmar was the biggest challenge for the king. The king did not sign the treaty nor he explicitly object the occupation of Lower Myanmar by the British as a victor. In addition, the king worried about the reason that his name would be recorded in history as the king who gave away the territory of the Kingdom.<sup>63</sup> However the king expressed his good will, upright and peaceful attitudes to the British at my opportune moment. For example, he sold from 150,000 to 200,000 baskets of wheat and about 10,000 baskets of grams to the British armies in Lower Myanmar.<sup>64</sup> However he did not give up his expectation to retain Lower Myanmar. In 1854 King Mindon sent a delegation led by Nammadawwun Mingyi Maha Mingaung Yaza to Calcutta. The mission was warmly received by Dalhousie. On the eve of their return, Myanmar Mission discussed with Dalhousie on the restoration of the Bago Province to the Kingdom of Myanmar. Dalhousie firmly replied that "as long as the sun shines ... those territories will never be restored to the Kingdom of Ava".<sup>65</sup> As time went on, the

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<sup>62</sup>*Further Papers Relating to Hostilities with Burma, Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty's Command, March 15, 1853*, London, Harrison and son, 1853, p.162 (Henceforth: *Further Papers, 1853*)

<sup>63</sup>Myo Myint, "The Politics of Survival in Burma : Diplomacy and Statecraft in the Reign of King Mindon, 1853-1878", Ph.D Dissertation, The Faculty of Graduate School, Cornell University, 1987, p. 32 (Henceforth: Myo Myint, 1987)

<sup>64</sup>*D.P.C, 1932,1*

<sup>65</sup>*D.P.C, 1932,269*

king convinced the attitude of the British Government and set about to hold together what remained of the Kingdom.

By the year of 1855, Lord Dalhousie dispatched a good will mission led by Sir Arthur Phayre to Amarapura. The British delegation consisted of more than four hundred men including a geologist, a botanist, a photographer, a painter, cartographer and a fort construction expert. The main objective of the mission was to persuade the king to sign a treaty of friendship which would legally cede the Lower Myanmar to the British and to negotiate a commercial treaty. Phayre was treated with highest distinction and with the utmost hospitality and liberality.<sup>66</sup> Dalhousie was so pleased with the friendly tone of King Mindon that noted that “I desire to record my conviction that peace with Myanmar is to the full as secure as any written treaty could have made it.”<sup>67</sup> However Phayre could not persuade the king to sign a treaty, not even a formal treaty of friendship, partly because king had not entirely given up hope of getting back Bago.

When Phayre was dispatched as a second mission to Mandalay in 1862, a commercial treaty was signed with the King Mindon’s Government. It assured friendship, allowed for the freedom of passage and mutual protection of traders and other British subjects.<sup>68</sup> However as it is known, as the king relinquished the province of Bago, one of the most important resources of agricultural revenue, and lost revenues from maritime trade, there was a great requirement to exploit the internal trade of the kingdom of Myanmar and the trade with foreign countries. The king therefore established a royal monopoly on earth oil, timber, cotton and precious stones. It was the system of the giving royal concessions to the highest bidders and the system of tax-farming. On the contrary the British firms who put forward the Laissez faire economic policy collided with the royal monopoly of King Mindon. Finally the king issued an order on 16 April 1867 to abolish royal monopoly for ten years with the exception of earth oil, timber and precious stones

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<sup>66</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, *2004c* , 160-61

<sup>67</sup>*D.P.C, 1932, 392*

<sup>68</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 55

and to reduce the king's effort in practising royal monopoly was to protect the financial stability of the Kingdom. The establishment of the new capital, industrialization projects, dispatching of Myanmar diplomatic mission, cost of running his government and massive merit-makings forced the king to continue his firm control on trade.

When Sir Albert Fytche concluded a second Commercial Treaty of 1867,<sup>69</sup> the king gave further concessions to the British. The treaty provided for the reduction of customs duties by both sides, establishment of a British Resident or Political Agent in the Kingdom of Myanmar, establishment of a mixed Court with full and final jurisdiction in all civil suits arising between the British and Myanmar subjects at the royal capital of Myanmar. Civil case between the subjects of the British Government and the Kingdom of Myanmar would be heard and finally decided by the Mixed Court composed of the British Political Agent and a Myanmar official of high rank.<sup>70</sup> Although the treaty was concluded under the category of “commercial”, the real intention of the British to put the Kingdom of Myanmar under their influence could not be concealed. They were already seeking extraterritorial rights some means of control over the foreign relations of the king Mindon's government. The attitude of the British Government was revealed by Fytche as follows:

In 1826 and again in 1853, it would have been an easy task to have reduced the king of Burma to the condition of a feudatory prince, maintained by a subsidiary alliance, like the Princes of India. Of late years the British Government seems to have awakened to a sense of their

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<sup>69</sup>Lieut-gen. Albert Fytche, C.S.I, *Burma Past and Present with Personal Reminiscences of the Country*, Two Volumes, Vol.II, London, Kegan Paul & Co, 1878, Appendix C, pp. 282-285 (Henceforth: Fytche, 1878b)

<sup>70</sup>Daw Ohn Kyi II, *Twè-bet-yon Hmu-gin-mya* (The cases and the Trials of Mixed Court), *Let-ywei-zin Sadanmya* (Selected Papers on Myanmar History by Daw Ohn Kyi), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2004, p.46 (Henceforth: Ohn Kyi II, 2004)

omission. They have striven to obtain by diplomacy in time of peace, the commanding attitude to a paramount power in Upper Burma, which could only have been legitimately obtained by force by arms.<sup>71</sup>

King Mindon, as a wise king and skilled in statesmanship and diplomacy, made his efforts to retaliate the British attitude by dispatching a mission to Europe under the leadership of his able Minister Kinwun Mingyi, to explore the possibilities of opening trade and diplomatic relations direct, instead of through India, with the British Crown, and other European countries.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile the British Residency was reopened under Dr. Willams in 1862. Throughout the reign of king Mindon the Political Agents like Dr. William and E.B Sladen played an extraordinary role of promoting friendly relations with the Kingdom of Myanmar and accelerating the commercial interests of the British Government and private firms.

### **The Renewal of British Interest on the Sino-Myanmar Overland Route**

During that time the British Government's interest to open the trade route to China through Bamaw. It was not a new idea for the British. The missions of Michael Symes and Cox had studied the border trade between Myanmar and China. During the king Mindon's reign, the old interest was revived by the Chambers of Commerce. For example, Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent a memorial to Viscount Palmerston for direct trade with the West of China through Yangon. Other Chambers of Commerce sent similar memorials to the Viceroy of India and Chief Commissioner of British-Myanmar.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile King Mindon convinced the importance of modern communication to control the commercial interests of

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<sup>71</sup>Fytche, 1878a , 205

<sup>72</sup>Myo Myint,1987, 286-290

<sup>73</sup>*Correspondence Respecting Direct Commerce with the West of China from Rangoon; Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty, in Pursuance of their Address of May 23,1865*, London, Harrison and sons, 1865, pp.2-3(Henceforth :*Correspondence, 1865*)

Myanmar-Yunnan trade. He even made a grant in favour of Messrs. Haliday, Fox and Co, and Dr. Marfels, a German physician of the king, for the construction of railway line and telegraphic line from the royal city to the frontier of China.<sup>74</sup> Although the plan had never been materialized the king issued an order dated 13 May, 1864 as follows,

If railways are constructed in the Royal Kingdom to reach the eastern frontier of the Indian Empire, and the conveyance of merchandize from the western countries to the eastern frontier of Chinese Empire. With the view of promoting the advancement of commerce and the benefits arising there from to the merchants in the royal kingdom...it is proposed that a railway be constructed ...eastern frontier towards the Empire of China<sup>75</sup>

The British, on the other hand, made their separate expedition and survey to construct railway line by sending Captain J.M Williams, H.M Indian Army and Executive Engineer to Bamaw.<sup>76</sup> Fytche also negotiated with Myanmar officials to send an expedition to Bamaw. He wrote the 1867 Treaty would facilitate the dispatch of the expedition team. King Mindon even allowed the British expedition team to use his steamer. However Chinese community in Mandalay disliked the British's plan. They worried the future domination of British on the Sino-Myanmar frontier trade. The Chinese eventually thought that the Kingdom of Myanmar might lost its independence through the increasing appeasement policy of the king.<sup>77</sup> Anyway Fytche was able to manage the expedition led by Major

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<sup>74</sup>*Correspondence, 1865, 4*

<sup>75</sup>Royal order ,dated 14, May,1864, as translated and quoted in *Correspondence, 1865,8*

<sup>76</sup>Copy of memorandum by Captain Williams, Inspector of Public Works, Rangoon Division, British Burmah, upon Railway Communication between Rangoon and Western China, to be printed 15,June 1865

<sup>77</sup>Fytche, *1878 b,98-99*

Sladen, British political agent of Mandalay. However Sladen's expedition was molested by the chaotic situations of border area. Even Bamaw *Myo-wun* was killed by Kachin and Shan dacoits. When Sladen arrived Momein on 28 May 1868, Talifu the administrative center of Yunnan Province was fell under the rule of Panthay authorities. With the exception of making friendship with the Panthay authorities, Sladen could not carry out his plan to proceed into the Yunnan Province. When Captain Strover succeeded Sladen, the Panthay rebellion was quelled down. The border trade was accordingly revived.<sup>78</sup> The promising situations of border trade was noticed by another British political agent Mac Mahon, successor of Strover, who discussed with King Mindon on 20 May 1870 on the frontier affairs. In this meeting King Mindon said that,

I look forward to an extensive traffic at Bhamo, which will be of immense advantage to the subjects of Burmah, English and China; but what I chiefly fear in an isolated place like Bhamo is that misunderstanding may possibly arise between our Government owing to strangers, from ignorance or willfulness, neglecting to conform to the customs of the country<sup>79</sup>

Owing to the generosity of the king, Mac Mahon was able to negotiate with Myanmar Government for further expedition to Bamaw. In the same year, C.H Atchison, the Secretary of the British Government of India, instructed Albret Fytche to dispatch another mission to Yunnan.<sup>80</sup> Owing to the efforts of Fytche and British authorities, Captain Strover became the head of the British station at

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<sup>78</sup>G.W Dawson, *Burma gazetteer: Bhamo District*, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing and Stationary, 1960(Reprint), p.20 (Henceforth: Dawson,1960)

<sup>79</sup>Diary by Major A.B Mac Mahon, Political Agent at Mandalay from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1870, Calcutta, Foreign Department, 1870, p. 418 (Henceforth: Diary, 1870)

<sup>80</sup>C.H Atchison ,Esq. C.S.I, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department to Major General Albert Fytche, C.S.I, Chief Commissioner of British-Burma, 18<sup>th</sup> August,1870, Calcutta, Foreign Department,1870 (Henceforth: Atchison to Fytche, 1870)

Bamaw. With the exception of some problems like decoities and misunderstanding between Myanmar regional officials at Bamaw, the British could dispatch expeditions and continue to open their station at Bamaw throughout king Mindon's reign.

While he practiced appeasement policy towards the British, King Mindon attempted to show the outside world that he was a sovereign monarch through the diplomatic missions to Europe. In 1871 the first Myanmar mission led by Kinwun Mingyi was sent to Europe. The most important objectives of the Mission were to establish direct ties between London and Mandalay and to seek the firm friendship with other European countries primarily France<sup>81</sup>. When Kinwun Mingyi was presented before the Queen at the Court of St. James, he was presented by the Secretary of India, instead of the Foreign Secretary. It was looked by some scholars as the British's unwillingness to recognize the Kingdom of Myanmar as sovereign country.<sup>82</sup> Therefore King Mindon's wish to deal with the British Crown in equal status was failed to materialize. In addition the king's expectation to establish amicable and equal friendship was terminated by the Kayinni issue which stemmed from the negotiations after Second Anglo-Myanmar War. Customarily Myanmar kings regarded Kayinni (Kayah State) as their sphere of influence and exercised their power through the hereditary *saw-bwas*. When the Second Anglo-Myanmar War was over, the British drew an arbitrary line which touched the Western Kayinni in the east. Besides they planned to expend their power and to expel the suzerainty from the Kayinni area. The plan of the British could be seen in the report of Chief Commissioner Phayre to Lord Dalhousie as follows:

In Mr.Spear letter of January 13<sup>th</sup> 1853, he mentions that the king says that Karrennee country lies within his boundary. This is a mistake. The

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<sup>81</sup>Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p.139 (Henceforth: Thant Myint-U, 2001)

<sup>82</sup>Myo Myint, 1987,275



Karrennee country lies on the Salween River about the latitude of Taungoo. Northern Extremity of it may possibly go beyond our Myeeday line. I have long been pursuing inquiries regarding what is going on Karrennee and what at Taungoo sent across a man to inquire whether the Burmese were ,as stated interfering in that country. The reply was not reached me. I shall address to the Government detailing the whole state of matters as regards Karennee, for it will be necessary to disabuse the king's mind of notion he has that the country is his. Perhaps it will be advisable for Major Allen to go up the Salween River from Maulmein and erect a pillar on the bank there, on the line of six miles North of Myeeday latitude, to show that we do not allow the Burmese to interfere with any tribes below that mark, we leave those tribes to themselves as much as possible.<sup>83</sup>

Myanmar Government made its utmost effort to protest against the possible British attempt to make spread their influence in the Western Kayinni Region. The British Government finally sent Sir Douglas Forsyth to Mandalay to settle the Kayinni Problem. Forsyth was instructed to take tougher stand in discussion with the Government of Myanmar. King Mindon had no choice but to recognize the independence of Western Kayinni in 1875. After his victory over Myanmar government, Forsyth wrote a report to the government of India to demand Myanmar Government to allow the British diplomats to wear their shoes in the royal audience. Government of India agreed with the suggestion of Forsyth and instructed the political agent at Mandalay to submit this demand to the Myanmar Government.<sup>84</sup> Eventually, ‘Shoes Question’ which began since the time of Myanmar diplomatic relations in Early Konbaung Period was renewed. The king's patience to the British was over. King Mindon did not grant the royal audience to

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<sup>83</sup>*D.P.C,1932, 291-292*

<sup>84</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 294

the British diplomats. Actually, the king showed his intimacy to the British Political Agents, while he dealing them with a great caution. King Mindon's utmost efforts in foreign relations were said to be the efforts to show he was the sovereign monarch of the Kingdom of Myanmar to the outside world.

### **Eclipse of Diplomacy**

When King Thibaw ascended the throne, the relation between the new king and the British residency has deteriorated. The massacre of royal siblings caused the chaotic conditions in Mandalay. The bitter protest of the British political agent at Mandalay and of the authorities of Lower Myanmar deteriorated the relation between the two countries. The turbulent situations at the beginning of King Thibaw was witnessed by James Alfred Colbeck, S.P.G mission Priest and Aiding Champlain to the forces, who was able to manage the escape of Nyaung-yan and Nyaung-ôk princes from the massacre, and noted in his diary dated 28 April 1879 which reads,

Things at the present time are very uncertain; none of us know what will happen. The British government has got 5,000 additional troops into Burmah, and is sending to India for more, while the Burmese Government is drilling and arming as many as possible .... It is odd that everything conspires to assure the king that his reign will be a short one ... The exodus from Mandalay still continues; to-day about twenty Armenians and their old priest leave ... The loss to all kinds of people, especially traders and merchants, is very great, and such is the uncertainty, that in some parts the people are unwilling to cultivate their land...<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>James Alfred Colbeck, *Letters from Mandaly*, George H.Colbeck (ed), London, Alfred M Lowe, 1892, pp.29-30 (Henceforth: Colbeck. 1892)

Since the strong protests of the Political Agent against the massacre,<sup>86</sup> King Thibaw's government irritated with the attitudes of the British Resident. Thus both the Resident and the government made efforts to restore the sound relations. In June 1879, R.B. Shaw, the last Political Agent, died of sickness. No successor was appointed. The Residency was put under a Charged' Affairs.<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile the British Resident at Kabul, in Afghanistan was murdered, and the British authorities in Lower Myanmar reconsidered the future of Residency in Mandalay,<sup>88</sup> thereby bringing to an end of the diplomatic relations between the British and the Kingdom of Myanmar.

Since the year 1880 onwards, King Thibaw's government devoted themselves to accelerate the military strength. According to an investigation, the military strength of the Kingdom was estimated only 15,650 men.<sup>89</sup> An effort was also made to establish the fortresses along the Ayeyawaddy River. A few Italian and French engineers were appointed to build the fortress and train Myanmar troops. The strength of royal navy under King Thibaw totaled 5466 men. On the contrary, King Thibaw attempted to follow suit of his father by dispatching Myanmar missions to France, Italy and India between the years 1878 and 1885.<sup>90</sup> The reciprocal missions were also arrived from these countries. However the

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<sup>86</sup>U Razak, *Shwe-nan-dwin A-yei-daw-bon* (The Political Affairs during the king Thibaw's Reign), Mandalay, Pyinsagan Press, July 2007 (Third Impression), p.76 (Henceforth: Razak, 2007)

<sup>87</sup>Colbeck, 1892, 44

<sup>88</sup>Colbeck, 1892, 51

<sup>89</sup>J.G Scott and J.P, Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan State*, Two Parts in Five volumes, Yangon, Government Printing and stationary, 1900-1901, Part. I, vol .ii, pp 408-9 (Henceforth: Scott and Hardiman, 1901b)

<sup>90</sup>Ma Kyan, *Hlei-tat-mha-thi Yei-tat-tho* (From the Fleet of War Canoes to the Royal Navy), *Thamaing Shabondaw Khayi* (In Search of Myanmar History), Myanmar Yadana Press, 2002, pp 139-142 (Henceforth: Kyan, 2002)

Anglo-French rivalry was re-emerged. In early 1885, the king dispatched Myanmar Embassy led by *Wun-dauk Thanchet-wun Mingyi Minhla Maha Sithu-Chief of Iron Metallurgy*, to France, Italy and Germany.<sup>91</sup> A treaty of friendship and commercial convention, which renewed the commercial convention of 1873 concluded since the King Mindon's reign, was concluded. The conclusion of such treaty aroused the Crown government in London and India as well as the British firms in Yangon.<sup>92</sup> The political problems were waiting for flashpoint. The issue of illegal logging by the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation became the immediate cause for the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Myanmar War.

The second half of the Konbaung Dynasty was began with the rare and peaceful succession of throne by Sagaing *Min*. He not only succeeded the throne from his grandfather but also inconclusive frontier problems on the west. There emerged two crucial problems in his reign. Firstly the western frontier problems created a disastrous war with the British. Secondly, his grandfather installed him as an heir apparent even though there were some princes who might become rival claimants to the throne. However this reign was concluded not by his uncles but by an unexpected younger brother who harbored a plot against him, his chief queen and brother-in-law for some years. The relation between the King and his younger Prince Thayawaddy was finally deteriorated. Eleven years after the conclusion of Yandabo Treaty, the king was deposed by his younger brother. The accession of Thayawaddy *Min* on the throne deteriorated the relations between the government and the British Residency which had established by the Yadabo Treaty. Although Major Henry Burney made his utmost effort to reconcile with the Thayawaddy *Min*, he gave up his expectation to prolong the residency. The

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<sup>91</sup>U (Maung Maung) Tin, *Konbaungzet Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi* (The Great Chronicle of Konbaung Dynasty), Vol. III, Yangon, UHRC (ed), Yabyei Press, 2004 (Fourth Impression), p.458 (Henceforth: (Maung Maung ) Tin, 2004c)

<sup>92</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c,458

withdrawal of the British Residency strengthened the misunderstandings, suspicions and tensions between the two government. Finally the Second Anglo-Myanmar War broke out in the Bagan *Min's* reign on the minor dispute between the two governments. In the midst of military disaster King Mindon ascended the throne. His accession to the throne ushered the kingdom to a new epoch. His reign saw the energetic efforts of reformations, friendly relations with the British in Lower Myanmar, extensive contacts with the outside world, and survival of the Kingdom. The king of least attempted to show the outside world that he was the sovereign monarch of the kingdom of Myanmar. Although his successor attempted to follow suit of his father, the negligence to the events of outside world, the re-emergence of Anglo-French Rivalry and the King's inclination to the France determined the fate of the Kingdom.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ROYALTY AT THE TOP OF SOCIAL ECHELON

**T**he traditional pattern of kingship in Myanmar was based on some political and religious ideas of India. Myanmar accepted the idea of the emergence of the first king *Maha Thamada* or first elected king who was the originator of government and the provider of the law. He also established the country, towns and villages, and appointed a crown prince, military and civil officers and envoys. He was also referred to as the lineal descendent of the sun who is the possessor of power, glory and authority.<sup>1</sup> Since the Myanmar kingship accepted the idea of *Maha Thanmada*, the king was regarded as a supreme being and was regarded as one who possessed unparallel power. He was also called lord and master of life, head and hair of his subjects and the lord of water and earth. When Alaungmintaya reunited Myanmar in 1752 ending the chaos following the Mon sack of Inwa, his lineage was traced subsequent to *Adhicavamsa* the solar king who possessed unparallel power.<sup>2</sup> The absolute power of the king was informed by Sangermano, and Italian Baranabite Priest who arrived Myanmar in July 1783, as follows;

“ I suppose that there is not in the whole world a monarch so despotic as the Burmese Emperor. He is considered, by himself and others, absolute lord of the lives, properties and personal services of his subjects; he exalts and depresses, confers and takes away honour and rank; and

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<sup>1</sup>*Hman-nan Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi* (Glass Palace Chronicles) , 3 Vols, Vol.I, Yangon, Ministry of Information, 2003 (Reprint), pp. 29-30 (Henceforth: *Hman-nan*, 2003a)

<sup>2</sup>Khin Khin Sein (ed), *Alaungmintaya A-mein-daw-mya* (Royal Order of Alaungmintaya), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1964, p.12 (Henceforth: Khin Khin Sein, 1964)

without any process of law, can put to death, not only criminal guilty of capital offences, but any individual who happens to incur his displeasure”<sup>3</sup>

Although the authority of the king was unlimited, the Kingship sometime took the form of “social contract” through the coronation or *bhisik*. For the benefit of his life and lives hereafter, Myanmar kings held the coronation ceremonies like all other future Buddhas had done. Of all *bhisik* ceremonies, *muddha bhisik* was the most elaborate one.<sup>4</sup>It was the solemn ceremony of consecration in the head of the king reminding that he would be in great sufferings unless he reigned the country justly.

On the ceremony, the petition was made on behalf of the people to the king to administer the subjects in accordance with the law by the princesses, *brahmins* and richmen respectively. Thus the significance of observation of the *Muddha Bhisik* ceremony was similar to “referendum held by the people that the king himself ask for the people at least once in his reign to affirm the capability and legality in his tenure of power. *Muddha Bhisik*, in other word, transforms *de facto* or factual ruler to *de jure* or legitimate one. However, it is interesting to note that of the eleven kings of Konbaung dynasty only a few kings like Myedu *Min*, Badon *Min*, Sagaing *Min* and Mindon *Min* observed the *Muddha Bhisik*. Several kingly virtues also checked the king’s absolute authority. But in practice most of the early Konbaung kings ruled the country with absolute authority. It is believed that only Singu *Min* provided the sound rule in the kingdom. In his reign, there was no taxation, no war, and as a matter of fact the kingdom was prospered.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Rev., Father Sangermano, *A Description of the Burmese Empire*, William Tandy (trans), Yangon, Government Press, 1924, (Reprint) p.60 (Henceforth: Sangermano, 1924)

<sup>4</sup>Tun Yi, n.d, 248

<sup>5</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 a,382

After the king, princes occupied an exalted position in the court. Among them, *Uparaja*-crown prince was preeminent. Accordingly, he had his own virtues as well as conducts to observe.<sup>6</sup> The installation ceremony of the crown prince was usually held on a grand at the *bye-daik*-privy council. When king Badon installed his eldest son Prince Shwe-daung as Crown Prince, the king conferred the title of Thiri Maha Dhamma Bizaya Thiha Thura, insignia of rank, riches, horses and elephant to the prince. He was also allowed to appoint his own *wun*-minister, *win-hmu*-guards, household servants, pages, attendants and fusiliers.<sup>7</sup> The main obligation of the Crown Prince was to follow his own virtues. He sometimes had to take the responsibilities of the administration at the time when the king was absent at the royal capital. For example, while king Alaungmintaya was waging the war against Ayuthia, his eldest son Thado Thiri Thudhamma Raza (Prince Depèyin) was entrusted to administer the royal capital.<sup>8</sup> However, owing to the lack of proper primogenitures for the throne, kings of Konbaung Dynasty rarely appointed Crown Prince. An important reason why some kings had failed to appoint the crown prince was that there was numerous claimants to the throne. All the royal men, with the exception of reigning monarch, including the king's brothers, sons became the rival claimants to the throne. Following table shows the sons by principal queens of the Konbaung Dynasty.

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<sup>6</sup>Maung Maung Tin, *Shwe-nan-thon Waw-ha-ra A-bhi-dan* (Catalogue of the Court Usuages), Yangon, Buddha Sasana Press, 1975 (Reprint), pp.5-6 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 1975)

<sup>7</sup>Yi Yi, "Life at the Burmese Court under Konbaung Kings," *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. XIIIV, part. i, 1961, pp .113-129 (Henceforth: Yi Yi, 1961)

<sup>8</sup>Khin Khin Sein, 1964, 115



**Table -I**  
**Sons by Principal Queens (1752-1885)**  
**(Excluded sons of Minor Queens, *Myo-za* Queens and Concubine)**

<b>King</b>	<b>Chief Queen</b>	<b>North Queen</b>	<b>Middle Queen</b>	<b>West Queen</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total Surviving In Fancy</b>
Alaungmintaya	6	1	-	-	7	7
Naungdawgyi	1	1	0	-	2	2
Hsinbyushin	4	0	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> 5	-	9	1
Singu	0	0	1	0	1	0
Badon Min	0	1 <sup>st</sup> 4; 2 <sup>nd</sup> 5	2	-	6	5
Crown Prince	1 <sup>st</sup> 4; 2 <sup>nd</sup> 5	-	-	-	9	7
Bagyidaw	2	-	-	-	7	1
Thayawaddy	3	2	2	3	10	5
Bagan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mindon	-	-	2	1	3	2
Crown Prince	1	-	-	-	-	1
Thibaw	1	-	-	-	-	0

Source: Koenig, 1990,77 Maung Maung Tin, 2004b, 153, 365, Maung Maung Tin, 2004c, 50,114, *passim*

If we consider the sons minor queens and concubines, the list of royal children in Konbaung Dynasty can be seen as follows;

**Table - II**  
**Royal Children**

King	Lifespan (years)	Period of Reign (years)	Sons	Dau- ghters	Total	Total Childr -en			
						Total Died	Total Died	Died % Mortali ty	
Alaung-mintaya	45.75	8.00	10	1	6	0	1	1	6.3
Naung-daw-gyi	29.25	3.50	5	3	2	1	7	4	57.1
Hsin-hpyu-shin	40.00	12.00	18	6	23	9	4	15	36.6
Sin-gu	25.75	5.66	5	1	6	3	1	4	36.4
Bo-daw-hpaya	75.00	38.00	62	22	58	25	1	47	39.2
Crown Prince	46.8	-	32	16	26	16	5	32	55.2
Bagyidaw	62	18.80	2	1	5	2	4	3	57.1
Tharawadi	60.75	9.50	20	12	17	10	1	22	68.8
Bagan	67.75	6.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mindon	65.16	25.50	52	17	56	14	7	31	28.7
Crown Prince	55.9	-	53	24	51	13	6	37	35.6
Thibaw	58.9	7.08	1	1	6	2	4	3	42.85

Source: Koenig, 1990 , 176 Maung Muang Tin, 2004b,153,365, Maung Maung Tin,  
2004c,50,114, *passim*

The existence of the numerous rival claimants to the throne was stemmed from the customary royal polygamy. Myanmar kings traditionally had eight queens. However the number of the queens was one of the few matters not governed by tradition.<sup>9</sup> A king was only “bound to have” a chief queen and the number of supplemental queens varied. Ten kings of Konbaung period<sup>10</sup> had about 170 queens and concubines.<sup>11</sup> In order of precedence the queens of Konbaung period were categorized as follows;

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| I. Queens of Palace                            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Queen of Southern Palace (Chief Queen)</li> <li>2. Queen of Northern Palace</li> <li>3. Queen of Central Palace</li> <li>4. Queen of Western Palace</li> </ol> |
| II. Queens of Apartment                        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Queen of Southern Apartment</li> <li>2. Queen of Northern Apartment</li> </ol>   |
| III. Queens of Apartment<br>with golden lining | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Queen of Southern Apartment</li> <li>2. Queen of Northern Apartment</li> </ol>   |

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<sup>9</sup>(a) U Tin, *Myan-ma-rmin Ôk-chôk-pôn San-dan* (Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Royal orders of Bodawphaya called Yazathat), Five Volumes, Vol.I, Yangon, Baho Press, 1963, p.167-68 (Henceforth: Tin, 1963 )

(b) James G.Scott and J.P Hardiman (camp), *Gazetter of Upper Burma and Shan States*, 5 Vols in 2 Parts, Part.I, vol. ii, Yangon, 1900-1901, p.39 (Henceforth: Scott & Hardiman, 1901b)

<sup>10</sup>Maung Maung was excluded

<sup>11</sup>U Tin, *Myan-mar-min Ôk-chôk-pôn San-dan* (Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Royal orders of Bodawphaya called Yazathat), Five Volmes, Vol.IV, Yangon, Baho Press, 1976, pp. 92-94 (Henceforth: Tin, 1976)

#### IV. Minor Queens or *Myo-za* Queens, and

#### V. Concubines

Most of the queens belonged to the royal blood line or the daughters of the former kings. It is understandable that the king sometime married to the daughter of his vassal, like *saw-bwas* in Shan States to establish matrimonial alliance.<sup>12</sup> In the kingdom where polygamy was religiously sanctioned, complex systems of tiered concubine were essential to the integration of the realm.

Of the queens, the Queen of the Southern Palace, or the Chief Queen, was the most preeminent. She was regarded as the mother of the kingdom. When king Mindon ascended the throne, his chief queen Set-kya Dewi had assumed the title of Thiri Pavara Maha Rajeinda Yadanadevi. An evidence reveals the royal merit of King Mindon mentions the chief queen as *pyi-gyi-mi*-mother of the kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Terms of address, Chief Queen was allotted towns and villages as appanage. She also possessed numerous cultivate lands in the kingdom. The estates given to the Chief Queen was known as *yun-baung-pa-myei*-the lands recorded in the lacquered framed book. *Nan-ma-daw-wun*-officer in charge of the chief Queen's Palace managed the cultivation and collection of taxation on the Queen's estate.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>This system of alliance was also practiced among the antique monarchical states of Europe Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York, Verson, 1991 (Revised Edition); p.20 (Henceforth: Anderson, 1991)

<sup>13</sup>"Mahahodhi Inscription" (dated 13<sup>th</sup> Waxing Tawthalin, 1241 M.E) At the eastern entrance of Bodhigou Pagoda, oberse, L 49

<sup>14</sup>(a) "*Min Sin-yè-tha-do Le-ya-mo-myei-mya-ko A-so-ya-paing-pon-mya A-kyauung Hnit Sat-ywei A-yat-yat Kyan-gan-do-hma Htok-hnok Set-thwin-thi Saga-chat Phaya*" (Report on the Government's Claim on the lands Worked by the Common People; Quotation from the Miscellaneous Treatises), *Parabaik*, M.S, National Libbraury Collection, No.990

(b) Tin, 1976, 91

During the reign of King Mindon, the chief Queen possessed 180*pe* in Aungpinle Lake and Nanda Lake.<sup>15</sup> Similarly other principal queens were also allotted estates under Aungpinle and Nanda Lakes. Myauk-nan-ma-daw *Mibaya*, the Queen of Northern Palace was allotted 226 *pe* of *ya*-dry cultivated land and *le*-wet rice land. The Queen of Western Palace also received 300*pe* in Aungpinle lake.<sup>16</sup> Next to these principal queens there were four queens in second rank who also held titles based on the names of the apartments and chambers they were allotted. Then came the lesser queens. They were called *myo-za mibayas*-town eater queens or *ywa-za mibayas*-village eater queens. As it is seen, the principal queens enjoyed many privileges including the taxation from their fiefs and estates. The lesser queens, however, enjoyed only taxation collected from their towns or villages given as fiefs. Therefore, some lesser queens had involved in the money-lending business to accumulate wealth.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the queens, the princes and princesses also enjoyed the privileges. After *Uparaja*, came the *minthagyi*-great princes who were the king's brothers and sons of senior queens. Then the *minthalat*-princes born of lesser queens. Then *mintha*-princes born of concubines. The titles of princes was dividing three grades which again subdivided into four.<sup>18</sup> *Minthagyi* could expect a share of the income of certain town as appanage and were granted sumptuary rights including the right to use elephant and have a golden umbrella and other

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<sup>15</sup>“*Aungpinle-Nanda Kan-twin Kan-auk Pe-sa-yin Phaya*”(List of the Cultivated Lands Inside and Below the Aungpinle and Nanda Lakes) *Parabaik* M.S, National Library Collection, No, 1266. (Henceforth: *Parabaik* MS, NLC 1266)

<sup>16</sup>*Parabaik* MS, NLC, 1266

<sup>17</sup>Toe Hla, "Money-lending and Contractual Thet-Kayits; A Socio-Economic Pattern of the Later Konbaung Period 1819-1885", Ph.D Thesis, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, 1987, pp. 25-26 (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 1987)

<sup>18</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 1975, 80-81

insignia.<sup>19</sup> The senior princes had to take part the government function. For example, Prince Mindon, during his father's and brother's reigns, had a chance to acquaint himself with the practical aspects of administration. He and his brother prince Kanaung became the senior princes who had the privilege of attending meetings of the *Hlut-taw* and taking part in its decision.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes, the senior princes were assigned the duty of *Bo-hmu Mintha* to take charge the military headquarters at Theinni, Mo-byè and Mo-nè in Shan State.<sup>21</sup>

Among the princesses, the *ta-bin-daing* princess was the most important one who had appanages and separate to any princess during her father's reign, but would become the Chief Queen of her father's successor. During the King Mindon's reign Salin Supaya was nominated as the *ta-bin-daing* princess. However, Prince Thibaw, would-be successor of Mindon *Min*, had already fallen in love with his half-sister-Mya-daung Princess, the daughter of most ambitious Middle Palace Queen. When he became King, Salin Supaya who could wisely predict her future with the rise of Thibaw and Suphayalat (Myadaung Princess) relinquished her mundane life to take refuge to the *sasana* as nun.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that some princesses and ladies of the court had the right to redeem the convicts who were facing death sentence. Similar privilege was given to the daughter of the Heir Apparent.<sup>23</sup> King Thayawaddy also granted *a-thet dana-su* to

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<sup>19</sup>Than Tun (ed), *The Royal Orders of Burma (AD 1598-1885)*, Part Five, (AD 1788-1806), Kyoto, The Center for the Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, pp. 880, 908-909(Henceforth: Than Tun, 1986)

<sup>20</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 57

<sup>21</sup>U Tin, *Myan-mar-min Ôk-chôk-pôn San-dan* (Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Royal orders of Bodawphaya called Yazathat), Five Volmes, Vol.II, Yangon, Baho Press, 1976, p.178 (Henceforth: Tin, 1965)

<sup>22</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin , 2004c, 317

<sup>23</sup> Than Tun, 1986, 406

his daughter born of the Chief Queen.<sup>24</sup> Other privileges of the princess, like that of the other members of royalty, were the towns and villages allotted as fiefs. In addition to the fief towns and villages the princesses received miscellaneous gifts and money from the members of the royalty, nobilities, courtiers and officials at the special occasions like ear-boring ceremony.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the king, queens and members of royal family and relatives were the most exalted persons in the customary society. However they would become ordinary persons at any time. The most important reason to lost their privileges and status was the occurrence of court rebellion. As mentioned earlier, traditional society lacking the strict observation of succession by primogeniture, all the princes might be claimants to the throne. The queens, on the other hand, naturally vied each other to get royal favour and vied each other in attempting their sons to become king. As a result, the palace became a shelter of the plotters. Since the King Aniruddha's accession to the throne in 1044 until the deposition of King Thibaw in 1885, Myanmar kings reigned for over 840 years.<sup>26</sup> During that period there broke out thirty five court rebellions. Fourteen kings out of sixty-five were dethroned and assassinated in this period.

In the long course of monarchical rule, there emerged *nga-da-pa-min*-literally the king who did not belonged to royal blood or out of lineage. They dethroned the reigning king. Some of them became empire builders. They were Hti-laing Min (1084-1112), Bayinnaung (1551-1581) and Alaungmintaya (1752-1760). Out of sixty-five kings who reigned in Myanmar from Bagan period down

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<sup>24</sup>Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma ,AD 1598-1885*, Part Eight (A.D 1819-1853), Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988, p.575 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1988)

<sup>25</sup>For the example of presents given to the princess see Appendix One.

<sup>26</sup>G.E Harvey, *History of Burma From the Earliest Times to 10 Mach 1824, The Beginning of The English Conquest*, London, Frank Cass and Co, 1967, p. 364-367 (Henceforth: Harvey , 1967)

to the deposition of King Thibaw, fifteen kings who even belonged to the royal lineage had seized the throne by dint of force.<sup>27</sup> Therefore it can say that the peaceful transfer of power or throne is very rare in the monarchical rule.

As mentioned earlier, the queens and the members of royal family would become ordinary persons or victimized in the coups and attempted coups because the dilemma of the royal succession was not restricted to the factional struggles, but extended to the surviving members of the royal family and the queens. The struggle tended not to end with the victory of one candidate because the defeated usually remained a continuing source of tension and challenge. Thus the most important task of the newly reigned king was to manage to wipe them out. If he left them live in the place, they will become potential enemy at any time. For example the biggest mistake of Depèyin *Min* was his underestimation on his ambitious younger brother Myei-du Prince. Although there was no concrete evidence, the mysterious death of Dipèyin *Min* left many questions to consider. Three years earlier, Captain Walter Alves, agent of the British East India Company, arrived Shwebo to discuss the matter of remaining property of the Company after the tragedy of Negaris with Dipèyin *Min*. When he arrived Shwebo in October 1760 he heard some rumor and recorded in his report as follows;

“ I also heard of a Conspiracy, to place the present king’s younger Brother on the Throne, which it was said was ripe for Execution, the first opportunity.<sup>28</sup>

At last Dipèyin *Min* passed away on 28 November 1763 unexpectedly at the age of twenty-nine.<sup>29</sup> Myedu *Min* (Hsinbyushin), in his reign, let Maung Maung, the most

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<sup>27</sup>Harvey, 1967 , 365-7

<sup>28</sup>Alexander Dalrympe, *Oriental Repartory of Portions Rleating to Burma*, 2 Vols, Vol.I, Yangon, Government Press, 1926, p.328 (Henceforth: Dalrymple, 1926a)

<sup>29</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004a, 368



eligible son of Dipèyin Min, to put under the custody. As it is known, Maung Maung became the usurper of Singu *Min's* throne. Therefore when Badon Prince prepared the ground to depose Maung Maung, he harbored a plan to wipe out all of his enemies including Maung Maung and ex-king Singu and his family members. According to Michael Symes,

“Shembuan Mia Shean Minderagee Praw (Prime Badon), the fourth son of the deceased Alompra, had ever carefully under an humble exterior, ... ambition that aspired to the possession of the throne; his influence, though less prominent than that of other confederates, yet contributed above all to the successful accomplishment of the late revolution... on the first notice that Chagaing (Sagaing) was abandoned by Chenguza (Singu Min), he left Monchaboo... a deputation from the principal parsonages in Ava, treating him to come and assume the reins of government, which Momein (Maung Maung) was found unworthy to hold”.<sup>30</sup>

However, when Singu *Min* his family and followers arrived Inwa, all of them including four principal queens were drowned. Maung Maung was also put to death.<sup>31</sup> Similarly after the rebellion of Thayawaddy Prince, Set-kya Prince, Myadaung Princess and their follows were slain for harbouring “unsuitable plot”.<sup>32</sup> Ex-Chief Queen Nu and her daughter were removed from their status and put under solitary confinement. Her brother Maung O and other eleven officers were detained and sent to the common jail at Inwa. Two years later, Queen Nu and Maung O were found to have secret connection with the uprising of Shweda

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<sup>30</sup>Michael Symes, *Account of An Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava Sent by Governor General of India in the Year 1875*, London, Westmead, 1969 (Reprint) pp. 96-97 (Henceforth: Symes, 1969)

<sup>31</sup>(Mang Maung) Tin, 2004a, 381

<sup>32</sup>(Maung Maung )Tin, 2004b , 390

Mintha from Madaya. Queen Nu was drowned on 12 May 1840. Maung O, his wife, two daughters and followers were also executed.<sup>33</sup>

After the demise of King Thayawaddy, Bagan Prince seized the throne. But his rule was not last long. Once secure in power he entrusted many of the day-to-day affairs of the state to his privy councilors. Initially, the king concentrated on his religious obligations and undertook numerous merit-making projects. Most of the domestic affairs were entrusted to his most reliable officers like U Kyauk Lon, *Kyiwun* and U Pwa-*Myo-wun* of Amarapura.<sup>34</sup> Some of the ministers of Bagan Min were of an even worse type than those of his father. Their policy was to enrich themselves by bringing about deaths of well-to-do subjects and confiscating their properties.<sup>35</sup> Many of the people were put to death during the first few years of Bagan *Min*'s succession. On the contrary, the role of two senior princes Mindon and Kanaung came to the forefront. Mindon's rise to power was due to his qualifications rather than to his position in the hierarchy of the sons of the King. Born from the Queen of the Southern Apartment, the rank next to the four chief queens, he was not even the Crown Prince in his father's reign. But as a senior prince with a good reputation for uprightness and honesty, he was given the privilege of attending the meetings of the *Hlut-taw*. When the Second Anglo-Myanmar War broke out Mindon was already in a position of considerable power and became one of the decision makers of *Hlut-taw*. But he opposed a continued prosecution of the war and his policy of appeasement angered the influential court grandees, as well as the king himself.<sup>36</sup> His most intimate ally was his full-brother,

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<sup>33</sup>Nyo Mya, *Konbaung Sha-bon-daw* (In Search Konbaung Dynasty), Yangon, Myawaddy Press, 1997, pp. 330-31 (Henceforth: Nyo Mya, 1997)

<sup>34</sup>Ko Pyinnya (Amarapura), *Places of Historical Interest Around the Taungthaman Lake*, Dr Than Tun (trans), Mandalay, Today Mandalay Publishing House, 1996, p. 31 (Henceforth: Ko Pyinnya, 1996)

<sup>35</sup>Nyo Mya, 1997, 386-387

<sup>36</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 104

Prince Kanaung who was also became one of the leaders of war party in the Court of Amarapura.

At the beginning of 1852, a series of robberies broke out in Amarapura. Thus the king ordered the Amarapura *Myo-wun* to investigate the case. *Myo-wun*, who had a personal grudge against Mindon and Kanaung, conspired with others to implicate the two brothers. Later members of the household of two princes were arrested while evidence was collected against the two princes. As the investigation closer, Mindon became convinced that the *Myo-wun's* actions were part of a plot to discredit him in the eyes of the king. Finally Mindon and Kanaung fled together with their immediate families and over 300 private retainers to Shwebo-heartland of the Konbaung powerhouse.<sup>37</sup> The occupation of Shwebo was psychologically and tactically important because Shwebo was not only the place of his father's successful revolt against King Bagyidaw, but also a good military stronghold where numerous military servicemen groups resided.

Bagan *Min* now foresaw his destiny and outcome of the rebellion. He therefore sent several famous *sayadaws* to negotiate with the commanders of Mindon's forces. The commanders rejected the negotiation because their destinies were tied up with the successful outcome. The balance of the forces in the struggle tilted in favour of Mindon and Kanaung because the eastern Shan States and many villages and towns along the Ayeyawaddy and south of the capital pledged their loyalty to the two brothers.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Myanmar forces of 20,000 soldiers were fighting an unequal battle against the better armed British forces in the Second Anglo-Myanmar War. Thus the conditions contributed to win Mindon's rebellion in two ways. First, King Bagan was short of troops to suppress Mindon's

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<sup>37</sup>For the rebellion of Mindon and Kanaung against Bagan *Min*, see Nemyo Yaza Sithu, *Yadana-theinga-myo-htwet Yè-din Maw-gun* (Record on the Expedition to Yadana-Theinga (Shwebo)), Ma Kyan (ed), Yangon, Baho Press, 1968 (Henceforth: Nemyo Yaza Sithu, 1968)

<sup>38</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 105

rebellion. Second, those who wanted to stop the war, both among the people and in the court switched their loyalty to the two rebel princes. The road to Amarapura was now open for Mindon. On 17 February 1853, Amarapura fell into the hands of Mindon. King Bagan surrendered himself to his brother on the same day.<sup>39</sup> Mindon spared his brother's life, and allowed the ex-king to retire comfortably and peacefully. It is interesting to note that although the household members, including queens, of the deposed king were slain, ex-king Bagan was allowed to retain some of his queens and followers.

King Mindon ascended the throne and faced the unprecedented challenges. Lower Myanmar, the sources of rice surpluses and the gate way to maritime trade, was occupied by the British. His thoughts on the reform of his kingdom, on the strategy shaping Myanmar foreign policy, and on the roles of Buddhism and of the king at this difficult time, all influenced the emergence of a modern Myanmar society. Unlike his predecessor, King Mindon was interested in every detail of the government functions and sentiment of his subjects. Unlike his predecessors, king Mindon placed the wooden chests in the royal capital to give access his people making direct petitions to be sent to him. The letter of Thomas Spears, British Correspondent and agent of Phayre, the letter reads;

“The king generally twice a month makes the round of the stockade outside of his Palace for purpose of allowing any person to petition him, who may think that justice has not been done him at the lootdaw or any of the other Courts. He has generally got a dozen petitions presented him every time he comes out.”<sup>40</sup>

As regard to the petitions, the king sometimes overturned the decisions of *Hlut-taw*. The British authorities in Lower Myanmar and observers were all full of

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<sup>39</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 111

<sup>40</sup>D.P.C, 1932,182

praise for the new king. Thomas Spears noted the “*wisdom and cunning*” and “*infinite superiority*” over the court and “*the art of managing people*” of the king Mindon.<sup>41</sup> Henry Yule, member of Phayre’s Mission, wrote of Mindon:

“the Sovereign of Burma is just and mild in temper, easy of access, hears or seeks to hear everything for himself, is heartily desirous that his subjects shall not be oppressed, and strives to secure their happiness. He is, in fact, as far as we can judge, a man of conscience and principle”.<sup>42</sup>

Although his predecessors, Bagyidaw, Thayawaddy *Min* and Bagan *Min* did not install the crown Prince, King Mindon chose Prince Kanaung as a Crown Prince. It was the Kanaung Prince who suggested the revolt against King Bagan in 1852, led the campaign and grabbed the throne for him. Therefore King Mindon owed a heavy debt of gratitude to his brother. During the early years, there was a joint government between him and Kanaung Prince. Crown Prince was given the responsibility for new technologies, military modernization and establishment of industries, while King Mindon devoted himself to diplomacy, administrative reform, economic affairs and patronage and propagation of *sasana*.<sup>43</sup> Prince Kanaung was granted considerable landed estates close to the royal city<sup>44</sup> and other privileges.<sup>45</sup> Sometime the difference of opinion arose between the two brothers,<sup>46</sup> however the collaboration worked very well until 1866, when the Crown Prince was assassinated by his nephews.

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<sup>41</sup>*D.P.C, 1932, 337-339*

<sup>42</sup>Henry Yule, *Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855*, London, Oxford University Press, 1968 (Reprint), p.193 (Henceforth: Yule, 1968)

<sup>43</sup>Pollak, 1979,114

<sup>44</sup>*Parabaik, MS, NIC 1266*

<sup>45</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 160

<sup>46</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 86

Indeed King Mindon was far in advance of Konbaung Kings and noted for his attempts to modernize the military, develop manufacturing industries, import new technologies and broaden access to the Western Learning and fiscal revolution.<sup>47</sup> However, he could not oppose the traditions in choosing the Chief Queen. Before the accession to the throne, King Mindon had first wife, named Me Thè. However she would never become a chief queen because she had no royal blood and was said to belong merely to an official family.<sup>48</sup> Having enough lessons from his royal uncle, King Bagyidaw who chose a woman of non-royal blood as Chief Queen, King Mindon made his half-sister Setkya Dewi Princess, daughter of King Bagyidaw and full-sister of Bagan *Min*, as Chief Queen. However, being a son of minor queen, Mindon's proposal was first delayed by the Princess. After some negotiations, the Princess accepted the offer of the King. His first wife became only the Queen of Northern Palace. The Chief Queen Setkya Dewi has a critical influence over Mindon *Min*. She was famous for her interest in modern science and for her dominance over the court ladies. Renowned as a skilled astrologer, she used English nautical almanac for her calculations. The British visitors regarded her in high esteem and brought her various gifts, telescopes and barometers, related to her scientific interests. Spear mentions that:

I have requested Mr.Dorin to obtain some scientific instruments such as you formerly mentioned, to be added as present for Her Majesty to the list you already have. My only fear is that if they be procured and presented this learned lady may stick up the members of the Mission by her questions as to their use... There are already jewels and ornaments enough for her; but if I could have procured a pair of Blue Stockings, I would certainly have sent them for Her Majesty in addition<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 115-125

<sup>48</sup>Nyo Mya, 1997, 259

<sup>49</sup>D.P.C, 1932, 341-42

The above mention letter did not conceal the admire of Spears to the Chief Queen, who liked to give a pair of blue stockings- the symbol of learned lady in the English society. The Chief Queen was also famous for her extraordinary kindness. Since the reign of Bagan *Min*, Set-kya Dewi Princess made her utmost effort to save the lives of victims of court rebellions. When Pyay prince was assassinated with his sons by Thayawaddy *Min*, Khe`-baung Princess, the wife of Pyay Prince was saved by Set-kya Dewi Princess. In addition, lives of ollowing royal household members were saved by the Princess.

1. Min Myat Soe, daughter of Myadaung Princess
2. Min Myat Hla, younger daughter of Myadaung Princess
3. Me Su, daughter of deceased QueenNu, laterbecame  
Hsinbyumashin
4. Hlaing Htaik-khaung Tin, Daughter of Ma Mya Lay
5. Kanni Htaik-khaung-tin, daughter of Set-kya Prince
6. Khin Ohn Pwint, son of Pakhan Prince
7. Myin-khon-daing Princess, daughter of Pakhan Prince
8. Pyay Htaik-hta
9. Pyay Htaik-khaung-tin<sup>50</sup>

The apartment of Set-kya Dewi Princess therefore became the safe heaven of the victims of successive court rebellions.

Apart from Chief Queen, King Mindon had other forty-eight principal queens, lesser queens, *myo-za* queens and concubines. As regard to the queens of King Mindon, Albert Fytche noted that,

The King's Principal Queen—and who must be of royal blood—is the daughter of the late King Tharawadi, and the King's half sister. She is called Nama-dau-phura, or divine Royal Mather. Her age (this year, 1876) is sixty-seven, and the king's sixty-two years. She is particularly

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<sup>50</sup>Nyo Mya, 2003, 285-286

plain and dark complexioned for a Burmese, and much pitted with small-pox. Beside the principal Queen, the king has four lesser queens, called Ashe`, Alay, Myouk, and Anouk Mie-phura-dau, ... There are, moreover, upwards of two hundred concubines. The king has no children by his principal Queen; but by the lesser queens and concubines, is said to be the father, of one hundred and twenty-six children, eighty-four of whom are living. On the death of a king, the whole of his female establishment is immured for the rest of their lives in a building set apart for the purpose within the palace of chastity!<sup>51</sup>

The statement of Fytche on the list of King Mindon's queens might base upon the hearsay because there are some exaggeration on the number of the lesser queens and concubines. Anyway the royal polygamy caused some problems in the royalty. Following list shows the number of Queens of King Mindon.

Queen	Nos
Chief Queen	1
North Palace Queen	1
Middle Palace Queen	1
West Palace Queen	1
Queen of the North Apartment	2
Queen of the South Apartment	2
Queen of the North Apartment with Golden Lining	2
Queen of the South Apartment with Golden Living	2
<i>Myo-za</i> Queens	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>
Concubines	2
	<b>51</b>

Source: Maung Maung Tin, 2004c, 306-311 *passim*

<sup>51</sup>Fytche, 1878a, 247-248



According to the above mentioned list, King Mindon had a second largest harem in the Konbaung Dynasty. There were all together seventy sons and daughters. Because of his large family King Mindon had to spend a large amount of money. To support his queens, sons and daughters in accordance with the appropriate standard, much money was needed to provide them with the appropriate standard with the houses, clothing, trapping for horses and elephants, palanquins, betel boxes, umbrellas, utensils and jewelry for ornamental and ceremonial purposes. Besides, appropriate salaries would be given to their large population of household servants and retainers. For the King Mindon alone, over 1000 personal attendants were kept in the palace and the king cost the royal treasury a considerable amount. The following retainers were continuously on duty in the palace.

**Table- III**  
**List of the King Mindon's Retainers**

<b>Retainers</b>	<b>Nos.</b>
1 <i>Let-thon-daw</i> (pages), who carried the Royal insignia on state occasions	35
2 Royal Tea Servers	40
3 Bearers of the Royal Betel-box and other personal utensils	60
4 Royal Slipper Bearers	100
5 Bearers of the Royal White Umbrellas	40
6 Lectors who religious scriptures	10
7 Grooms of the Chamber who acted as messengers	50
8 Gentleman-at-Arms	450
9 Chamberlains or Lectors, a company of men chosen for their height and whose duties also included the policing the palace	155
10 Bearers of the Royal Swords in state processions	220

Source: E.V.C, Foucar, *Mandalay the Golden*, London, Dennis Dobson, 1963, p.236

(Henceforth: Foucar, 1963)

As a good husband and a good father King Mindon did everything possible to the welfare of his big family. At the same time, he was aware of dangers of intrigues by the queens in power struggles and the ambitions of their sons to get the throne. At the beginning of his reign, King Mindon visited each queen once a month. After the Myin-gun rebellion in 1866 he gave up that schedule and visited them only when they were sick. He visited only to his four principal queens.<sup>52</sup>

Of forty-eight sons of King Mindon, twenty-four were not survived infancy and leaving twenty-four at the time of his death. In comparison, his sons formed the largest claimants in Konbaung Dynasty. Some sons, like Mekkhaya Prince, Thon-ze Prince and Nyaung-yan Prince were highly qualified and promising claimants to the throne. However some sons were not qualified for the throne and some were the princes of bad temper. At one time King Mindon had a idea of deporting some of his dangerous sons to Lower Myanmar to avoid tragic event.<sup>53</sup> He even discussed with the succession problem with Albert Fytche, a British Commissioner who visited Mandalay to conclude a commercial treaty in 1867. Fytche made his impression on the source of succession problem and King Mindon as follow;

“He seemed, or pretended to be, deeply impressed with the evils of polygamy and the Nemesis accompanying it. He stanced the fearful anarchy and civil war previously wrought in his own country by the children of former kings by different mothers scrambling for the inheritance. As I paused for my remarks on the subject of polygamy, I observed that in Europe, and whatever the Christian religion had been adopted, the system of monogamy was practiced, and old Semitic idea of women being a “vessel or mere utensil for men’s service”, had long been banished. He replied that he was aware of it, and was previously

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<sup>52</sup>Than Tun, *1986b*, 102

<sup>53</sup>Myo Myint ,1987, 82

acquainted with my ideas in the matter, from a circular which I had lately promulgated in British Burma on a some what similar subject".<sup>54</sup>

King Mindon, however, could not materialize his plan to deport some of his sons to Lower Myanmar. Meanwhile some of King Mindon's numerous sons were mature and resented their uncle's position. King Mindon was partly responsible for the growing tension between the Crown Prince and his sons. He was shrewd enough into place his sons under the guidance of the Crown Prince, who by nature had a strong will and temperament, and the princes complained of harsh treatment of Crown Prince.<sup>55</sup> In this situation two of the eldest sons Myin-gun and Myin-khon-daing harbored the personal grudge against their royal uncle and staged an abortive coup in 1866.

At noon on 2 August 1866, Myin-gun and Myin-khon-daing Princes torched the several apartments and halls within the royal city to signal the start of their rebellion. They were able to kill Prince Kanaung, six senior officials and three princes. After plundering the city, the princes looted the king's ship and headed down the river. When they arrived Ma-lun, Myin-gun and Myin-khon-daing princes regrouped their followers and plundered the several towns and villages in the area. After the final assault of the King's army led by Yenanchaung *Myo-za*, two rebel princes fled to the British territory where they surrendered themselves to the British authorities.<sup>56</sup> Soon after the Prince Kanaung assassination, his eldest son Badein Prince, fearing that he might be a next victim and therefore plotted an uprising against his royal uncle king Mindon. He was accompanied by his younger brother; Kyei-myint, Taingda, Tuang-zin and Ywa-tha Princes. By the late September 1866 a new force of 20,000 men cooperated with

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<sup>54</sup>Albert Fytche, *Burma Past and Present with Personal Reminiscences of the Country*. Two Volumes, Vol.1,London, Kegan Paul, 1878, p. 255 (Henceforth: Fytche, 1878a)

<sup>55</sup>*D.P.C*, 1932, 338

<sup>56</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 230-38

the king's army while a delegation of *Sanghas* was sent to reconcile between the King Mindon and rebel princes. When this attempt was failed King Mindon managed to crush the rebellion. On 2 November 1866, Badein Prince was arrested and sent back to Mandalay and executed for treason.<sup>57</sup> After the two rebellions, King Mindon did not dare to nominate next crown prince fearing that the prince would be the next target of assassination. This decision was to be of great consequence after his demise.

In October 1877, King Mindon's health rapidly deteriorated and was confined in his private apartment. His ministers and other court grandees were instructed to administer the oath of allegiance to him or to the prince whom he pointed to become his successor.<sup>58</sup> His queens and daughters for the throne were Mekkaya Prince, Nyaung-yan Prince and Thonze Prince. However, before the nomination of King Mindon, senior ministers of *Hlut-taw* began to make intrigue to put their favourite prince on the throne. For example Yenanchaung *Myo-wun*, one of the principal ministers father of Kyei-myin Queen of Mindon wanted Pyinmama Prince to be elected as the king. Another influential *a-twin-wun*, Bhamo *Myo-za*, wanted his nephew Thonze Prince to become king.<sup>59</sup> Finally Kinwun Mingyi and Hsinbyu Mashin, Queen of Middle Palace, suddenly arose as the decision makers. Kinwun Mingyi, who had enough exposure about the constitutional monarchy through his trips to Europe, wanted a young prince to whom he could control and wanted to overthrow the existing administration. On the other hand Queen Hsinbyumashin, the most influential queen after the demise of Chief Queen, intended to have one, or all, of her three young daughters married to the next king. Now Kinwun Mingyi has rallying support from the Middle Queen.

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<sup>57</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 241-46

<sup>58</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 293

<sup>59</sup>Thant Myin-U, 2001, 155

Finally, Hsinbyu Mashin nominated Thibaw Prince, a younger son of King Mindon by Laungshie Queen, who was merely twenty years old, a shy, somewhat unknown figure at the court. He had spent part of his early days at Dr. Mark's Anglican School.<sup>60</sup> In 1877 he passed the highest *padamabyan* religious examination and was honoured by his father King Mindon.<sup>61</sup> The first step of Kinwun Mingyi and Hsinbyumashin was to put princes and princesses under custody. The reason was to prevent undesirable tragedy like Myin-gun rebellion.<sup>62</sup> When King Mindon, during a brief discovery, heard of these intrigues, he ordered the imprisoned princes and princesses to release immediately. On 19 September 1878, Thibaw Prince was appointed as Crown Prince.<sup>63</sup> King Mindon also appointed his three eldest sons, Nyaung-yan, Mekkaya and Thonze princes as viceroy to the three different parts of the country and ordered to perform their duties urgently. However as the King's condition worsened, these orders were neglected and all these princes and their families were rearrested. Only Nyaung-yan and Nyaung-ok Princes, disguised as coolies, managed to escape into the British Residency, and thence with the assistance of Mr. Shaw, onto a waiting steamer.<sup>64</sup>

When King Mindon passed away on 1 October 1878, Thibaw ascended the throne. On 11 October 1878 he confiscated the regalia, jewelries, gold and other privileges of the queens.<sup>65</sup> In November, Kinwun Mingyi and other senior

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<sup>60</sup>Dr. Marks, *Forty Years in Burma*, London, Hutchinson and co-partnership, 1917, p.218 (Henceforth: Mark, 1917)

<sup>61</sup>Kanimyo sikkè Minhtin Yaza, *Mandalay Ya-ta-na-pôn Ma-ha Ya-za-win-daw-gyi* (The Great Chronicle of Mandalay), Mandalay, Tellelin Press, 1964, pp. 175-76 (Henceforth: Minhtin Yaza, 1964)

<sup>62</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 294

<sup>63</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 295

<sup>64</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 296

<sup>65</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 318

ministers discussed for the series of sweeping reforms which they believed were critical for the preserving the country's independence.<sup>66</sup> His plan was to establish a proper system of ministries along the Western line. As a result fourteen ministries covering the entire government, each with approximately fourteen officials, were established.<sup>67</sup> The old system whereby the *Hlut-taw* and *Bye-daik* met separately each day and then together with the king in afternoon audience was abolished and replaced by meetings of the full cabinet and several subordinate committee.<sup>68</sup> Kinwun Mingyi further suggested that King Thibaw should undertake a long trip abroad, to Britain and Europe. He hoped that through this trip the king would also become firmly convinced of the need for accelerated reforms.<sup>69</sup> These reforms were enacted in clear emulation of the Western government.

Soon the liberal thinkings of the Kinwun Mingyi and other ministers were confronted with the royalist reaction. It was the young Supayalat and her mother Hsinbyumashin emerged to undermine Kinwun Mingyi's plans. Supayalat was certainly a critical influence over King Thibaw and even in the coronation ceremony; she had pushed aside her sister to have herself proclaimed sole queen.<sup>70</sup> Finally the plans of modernization proposed by Kinwun Mingyi and his allies were rejected and King Thibaw decided not to take a long foreign trip despite his earlier enthusiasm.<sup>71</sup> Then on 13 February 1878, several ministers of the new government were dismissed and imprisoned by the units of the Household Guards, under Ya-naung's supervision.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Tin ,1965, 241-46

<sup>67</sup>U Tin, *Myan-mar-min Ôk-chôk-pôn San-dan* (Treatise on the Administration of Myanmar Kings and the Royal orders of Bodawphaya called Yazathat), Five Volmes, Vol.III, Yangon, Baho Press, 1976, p.210 (Henceforth: Tin, 1970)

<sup>68</sup>Tin, 1970, 252

<sup>69</sup>Tin, 1965, 252

<sup>70</sup>(Maung Maung )Tin, 2004c, 355

<sup>71</sup>Tin ,1965, 251

<sup>72</sup>(Maung Maung )Tin, 2004c, 338

Between 14 and 16 February, the governing circle has managed to carry out the execution of detained princes and princesses. A number of elite military units participated in the executions and they were supervised by Ya-naung prince. Thirty-one of King Mindon's forty-eight sons and nine of sixty-two daughters were executed.<sup>73</sup> The British Residency in Mandalay was shocked with news of the assination of royal siblings and sent a letter of protest to Kingwun Mingyi.<sup>74</sup> Myanmar sources insist the King Thibaw's innocence in the murder of royal siblings.<sup>75</sup> Whatever the truth, the assassination shifted the power towards the young royal couple and their allies. In this game, even the King Thibaw and his Chief Queen themselves were the symbol of the weakness of traditional kingship. Anyhow, they reigned in Mandalay for seven years, regardless of everything, passed their days through the making of amusement and meritorious works.

### **The Inter-relations between the royalty and the monastic order**

As the kings of Myanmar assumed themselves as the defenders and promoters of the faith, they generally supported the monastic order in every respect. The monastic order, on the other hand, required the recognition and support from the ruler to integrate its role in the social and cultural life of the country. Since the early days of monarchical rule, an aspect of mutual dependency between the state and monastic order has developed.<sup>76</sup> During the late Konbaung period, the losses of two wars with the British, occurrence of court rebellions and subsequent socio-economic sufferings greatly threatened the stability of the kingdom. In the midst of such deteriorated situations, the kings had to depend more on the monastic

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<sup>73</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, *2004c*, 339-40

<sup>74</sup>Razak, *2007*, 64-68

<sup>75</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, *2004c*, 340

<sup>76</sup>Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma*, Princeton (N.J), Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.7-18 (Henceforth: Smith, *1965*)

order. Even the members of *Thudhamma* Council, the supreme organ of the monastic order appointed by King Mindon, were entrusted to supervise the local officials in collecting taxes.<sup>77</sup>

According to the *vinaya*-rules of disciplines, the monks had to eschew themselves from secular affairs. However they made their efforts to restore the peace and order in turbulent periods. When Thayawaddy Prince rebelled against his brother Sagaing *Min*, *Thathanabyu Sayadaw* and other senior monks played an important role to avoid the bloodshed between the followers of two brothers. On 15 March 1837, *Thathanabyu Sayadaw*, *Thè-Inn Sayadaw*, *Sayadaw Shin Neya Dhamma* and *Maha Thiri Sayadaw* wrote an epistle to reconcile between the two brothers. After ratification of *Sayadaw Shin Neya Dhamma*, *Sayadaws* and Major Henry went to Shwebo to negotiate with rebel Prince Thayawaddy.<sup>78</sup> At first Thayawaddy did not accept the request of *Sayadaws*. After the second attempt was made on 30 March 1837, Thayawaddy *Min* accepted to negotiate with his brother.<sup>79</sup> After ascending the throne, Thayawaddy *Min* offered *Thè-Inn Sayadaw* and other *Sayadaws* with titles and made lavish donations.<sup>80</sup> Similarly when Prince Mindon and Kanaung rebelled against his brother *Bagan Min* in December 1852, the skirmishes between the levies of rebel princes and king forces devastated the regions around Madaya, and villages around Shwebo.<sup>81</sup> In order to avoid further bloodshed, *Bagan Min* invited *Thathanabyu Sayadaw*, *Shwezedi Sayadaw*, *Thit-seint Sayadaw* to the Palace and appealed the *Sayadaws* to act as mediators.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 194

<sup>78</sup>(Maung Maung)Tin, 2004b , 353

<sup>79</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 355

<sup>80</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 372

<sup>81</sup>Nemyo Yaza Sithu, *Yadana Theinkha-myo-htwet Yè-tin Maw-gun* (Expedition to Yadana Thein-kha Written in Poetic Style), Ma Kyan (ed), Yangon, Baho Press, 1968, pp.3-4 (Henceforth: Yaza Sithu, 1968)

<sup>82</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 103-104



Although the rebellion was prolonged for some months, Prince Mindon spared the lives of his brother Bagan *Min* and some royal household members.

The role of *Sangha* order was enhanced by the Myingun Rebellion because the socio-economic of the many regions of Ayeyawaddy and Mu Valley were utterly devastated. In this situations, the members of *Thudhamma* Council made instructions to the local monk leaders to restore the peace and stability of the war-torn regions. Senior monk leaders of *Thudhamma* Council made instructions to the local monk leaders to restore the peace and stability of the war-torn regions. Senior monk leader of *Thudhamma* Council took charge the interrogations of disputes over the *thu-gyi* offices,<sup>83</sup> thefts and decoities and managed to call back the people who took refuge into the British-Myanmar. *Sayadaw* even acted as a medium between the authorities and the followers of rebel princes. They also admonished the local authorities not to molest and extort the returnees and ex-rebels.<sup>84</sup> And therefore the *Sanghas* were greatly relied upon by the king for their valuable assistance in his administration and judiciary.

Although the financial deterioration of the government was greatly apparent in King Mindon's reign, the efforts of the king to create the welfare of the monastic order has never weakened. From the year of his accession to the throne to the year 1857, the king spent 91264 *Kyats* for the building of the monasteries and rest houses offering of robes in other requisites and the donation to the poor.<sup>85</sup> Between 1864 and 1873 the king donated each month 20,452 baskets of rice to 15,364 monks and novices in 217 monastery complexes comprising 1442 monasteries.<sup>86</sup> For the perpetuation and purification of monastic order, the king

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<sup>83</sup>"Appeal of Nga Shwe Ei, Ex-thugyi of Popa on 30 November 1372", *Parabaik*, M.S (Handwriting Copy of Dr.Toe Hla)

<sup>84</sup>"Instructions of the Supreme Head and Members of the Thudhamma Council", Palm Leaf Manuscript (Handwriting Copy of Dr.Toe Hla)

(Maung Maung) Tin , 2004 c , 103-104

<sup>85</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 162

<sup>86</sup>Tin , 1970 , 132

attempted to impose strict *vinaya* through *Thudhamma* Council and held Tipitaka examinations annually.<sup>87</sup> As the saying goes, Buddhism during the King Mindon's reign "flourished like the sun and the moon". The relations between the state and monastic order also amicably developed.

To sum up, in the customary society, the king and the royalties occupied the top of social pyramid. The king was regarded as a supreme human being who had glorious status and unparalleled power. The authority of the king involved legal ownership of all lands within the Kingdom as well as plenary claims on the persons and service of all subjects. He was also a lord and master of life as well as lord of the head and hair of all subjects. However, Myanmar kings was obliged to look after the welfare of all his subjects and to defend *sasana*. Theoretically, he was bound by the code of conducts, kingly virtues and contract in the form of coronation oath to rule over his subject humanely. But in practice almost all of the kings of Konbaung Dynasty ruled the kingdom as despots. However, there were many problems which undermined the image of royalty and which lies in the royal household. Myanmar kings had many queens, concubines and consorts. Such a polygamous system was then thought to be state policy to cope with by a reigning king. These queens gave birth too many sons who became rival claimants to the throne. If the king was weak in administration or in controlling them, the seeds of rebellion were mostly sown in the palace precincts because there was no definite and concrete law of succession to the throne. Fief-granting system prescribed for the members of royalties seemed to be one of the major causes that led to revolts. Although the fieftees did not reside in their respective towns or districts, they have been sanctioned to govern the people in their fief-towns or districts. They

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<sup>87</sup>For the detail account of King Mindon's efforts on purification of monastic order, see, Myo Myint, 1987, pp.167-172 and also see Win Maung, "*Mandalay-khit Ya-han-hnint Pyi-thu*" (The Monastic Order and People in Mandalay (Yandalabon) period 1859-1885) *Sha-sha-phwei-pwei Myanmar Thamaing*, (Collection of Papers on Myanmar History in Commemoration of Dr.Than Tun's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary), Yangon, Inwa, 2003

were overlords in their fief-towns or districts. Therefore whenever the rebellion broke out, the rebel princes took the stronghold in their fief and organized arms and men. Therefore the traditional kingship, their appanage system privileges of the royalties and their struggle for power become one of the causes which undermined the kingship.

When King Mindon ascended the throne, he gave priority to the modernization of the Kingdom and to maintain amicable relations with the British. His ideas on the reform of his kingdom, on the strategy shaping Myanmar foreign policy, and on the role of Buddhism, all influenced the emergence of a modern Myanmar society. Unlike his predecessors, the king was interested in every detail of government functions. However as a king of the Western Palace, King Mindon could not revolutionize the tradition and possessed the second biggest harem in the Konbaung Dynasty. The succession problems, court intrigues and struggle for power arose again. Flash point had been reached with the Myin-gun Rebellion which killed the Crown Prince, able Ministers and princes. After the rebellion, King Mindon was not dare to appoint another Crown Prince. This decision was to be of critical consequence after his demise. When King Thibaw ascended the throne he probably planned to follow the policy of his father to make drastic reformation of the administration. Early days of his reign saw the reorganization of ministries in Western Line. However his Chief Queen and her mother opposed to any plan to undermine the power and status of royalty. The confrontation between the royalists and reformers took place. As it is seen, Chief Queen and her conspirators were able to show who was the winner in this confrontation after the assassination of royal siblings. For next seven years, Kingdom of Myanmar at least continued to stagger under the old tradition which placed the royalty at the top of social echelon.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE NOBILITY THE PRIVILEGED

**I**n the long course of world history, any community required a ruler to regulate the affairs of the people. The ruler also needed to appoint some trustworthy and intelligent persons to assist him in administration or to arbitrate or settle disputes of all kinds taking place in the society. Sometimes these nobility or officials had to take charge the warfare as military commanders. Since the structure of Myanmar social thought was mainly hierarchical or merit-graded pyramid, the king, royalty and nobility included in the upper part of hierarchy. As the Myanmar kingship and political thought were more or less influenced by the Indian kingships, the appointment of nobility in Myanmar could be traced far back to the *Mahathamada* who was recognized as originator of government and revealer of law.<sup>1</sup> To maintain social order, state functions, and to control economic activities *Mahathamada* appointed a crown prince, judges, military and civil officials.<sup>2</sup> Here, we can see the main difference between the appointment of nobilities of Myanmar and that of West. In the Western countries, the feudal nobilities who possessed their own administrative domains could expand this power for the chance to secure fiefs for their heirs.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, in almost all

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<sup>1</sup>U Kala, *Ma-ha Ya-za-win-gyi* (The Great Chronicle) Vol. I, Yangon, Yabyei Publishing House, July 2006, 48 (Henceforth: Kala, 2006a)

<sup>2</sup>Kala, 2006 a, 49-50

<sup>3</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (ed), University of California Press, 1978, pp.1070-1140 (Henceforth: Weber, 1978). In this Work the author elaborately explains the nature, rights, and responsibilities of feudal Lord, nobilities and their interrelation with supreme rulers of the Eastern and Western countries from the earliest times.

of the kingdoms in Southeast Asia, the social pyramid, with the power flowing from top down and resources from bottom up, was conceived to facilitate the fulfillment of the king's commands and requirements. For instance in Thailand, the king given the position, insignia of ranks to the nobles who acted as king's agents and collected taxes and labour services on behalf of the king.<sup>4</sup> Similarly in Myanmar, the ranks from nobilities and officials down to crown service group were the creation of the king even though there was a class of hereditary officials had existed in the provincial administration.<sup>5</sup> Therefore the nobilities and officials were appointed and dismissed at king's will. The life of officials was depicted by a scholar as follows,

It may be repeated here that both general literature and court manuals under the Burmese kings urged complete and unquestioning obedience to His Majesty. Historical episodes further strengthened such admonitions to the royal servants. Minister Yazathingyan, who was banished to Dalla, learnt a moral on his way toward the palace of exile that in serving the king one should act like waterplants swaying according to the blow of the wind not like big tree...A courtier's life is uncertain and unsafe like a tree which grows on the edge of a river bank...the ministers could be nothing but mere "puppets, here to-day and gone to-morrow". One either remained aloof from the service of his majesty and was unconcerned about governmental affairs, for field of government was the domain of the king, or took the service of His Majesty and was entirely at his command and disposal. There is a figurative saying in Burmese that if a person undertakes to serve the king he should serve till his shocks decay and disintegrate...and unquestioningly and without turning back<sup>6</sup>...

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<sup>4</sup>Hong Lysa, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century: Evolution of the Economy and Society*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1948, p.12 (Henceforth: Lysa, 1948)

<sup>5</sup>Tin, 1963, 149-50

<sup>6</sup>Maung Maung Gyi, "An Analysis of the Social and Political Foundations of the Burmese Executive (1948-1976)", PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1958, pp.35-36 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Gyi, 1958)

## System of Appointment

The origins of Myanmar traditional administration deeply lay in the local administration or provincial administration. When a strong person of a region could have unified all regions around him, then he became a big ruler among the conquered. The place where the victor lived is known as the capital or royal city. He had his own administration run by his appointees. Generally speaking, the appointment of nobilities under Myanmar customary rule was likely to be a merit-orientated system.<sup>7</sup>

The customary rule of Myanmar was of two main segments; viz, central administration and provincial administration. As the central administration controlled all of the affairs of the kingdom, the most supreme authority, in other word, arbiter of all existence was the king. He organized five Courts to assist him. These Courts or main administrative organs were *Hlut-taw*- the central administrative organs, *Byedaik*-privy council, *Shei-yon (ya-za-wit-yon)*- the criminal court, *A-nauk-yon*-the women's court and *Taya-yon*-the civil court. For provincial administration *khayaing-wun* and *myowun* were appointed to rule with the hereditary officials like *thugyis*. With the exception of hereditary officials, all nobilities and officials were appointed by the king. In central administration, four *wungyis*-ministers, one *myin-zu-gyi-wun*-cavalry minister, four *wundauks* assistantministers, were appointed in *Hlut-taw*, four *atwinwuns*-interior ministers or privy councilors were appointed in *Bye-daik* and four magistrates were appointed in *Taya-yon*. The number of nobilities would be varied from the reign of one king from another. The numerous of four nobilities and officials and clerks were also appointed in five courts.<sup>8</sup> The appointment system was closely

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<sup>7</sup>Tin, 1963 ,32

<sup>8</sup>(a) Tin, 1963, 171-72

(b) Tin, 1970, 17-50

connected with the concept of Indian cosmology.<sup>9</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, the number of nobilities was varied. Particularly in the transition period from one king to another or after the interregnum, the appointment of *wungyis* would not be fulfilled to prescribed number. For instance, when king Thayawadi ascended the throne in 1837, the corps of court grandees was comprised of three *wungyis*, three *a-twin-wun*, four *wun-dauks*, one *si-daw-myin-wun* one *taya-thu-gyi* and other officials and clerks. Wungyi Maha Minhla Minkyawkhaung who was appointed since the time of Sagain *Min* was dismissed by Thaywadi *Min*.<sup>10</sup>

All of the court nobilities and officials were of two classes; viz, officers appointed ordinarily and officers appointed by issuing royal order in *Hlut-taw*. The latter were known as *pyan-dan-khan* because while his appointed order or *pyan-dan* was reading by the *na-khan-daw-liaison* officers, the appointee has listened carefully in most humble position. *Pyan-dan-khan* officials were sub-divided into *Pyan-dan-yo-khan* officers of junior service and *pyan-dan-gyi-kan* - officers of senior service<sup>11</sup> *Wungyis* –ministers, *wun-dauks* assistant and *a-twin-wun*-privy councilors were comprised in the *pyan-dan-gyi-gan* group. The nature of their rank, power and office may be similar to those officials appointed by the State Gazette of present day to some aspects.

The appointment order was called *hnit-kyaung sa-chun*-two lines written on a plam-leaf which was tapering both ends. In this order, exalted position of king's power and duties and the reason of appointment were usually mentioned. For example in 1637, king Thalun issued an order to appoint Nandayawda as *wun-dauk*-assistant minister.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Koenig, 1990,68-70

<sup>10</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b,370-371

<sup>11</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 116

<sup>12</sup>"Nandayawda Wun-dauk-khant A-mein-daw-pyan-dan, 1637 A.D"(The appointment of Nandayawda as the Assistant minister), *Pei* M.S, Myanmar Historical Library Collection, No.0410 (Henceforth: *Pei* M.S 0410)

Actually, the system of appointment of court officials has begun in the Nyaung-yan period. It was king Thalun who organized the sound administrative system through the organization of the five courts for central administration and provincial administration in his realm. Konbaung kings follow suit of King Thalun in organizing state functionaries, the power of administrative centre and appointment of nobilities and officials. However, the fall of Taungoo Dynasty brought with it the complete collapse of administrative structures above the local level. The system was carefully rebuilt during the reign of king Alaungmintaya (1752-1761). He recruited the *wuns* and other official who served under the previous reign. In addition, Alaungmintaya recruited sixty-eight elite cavalry commanders to wipe out the Mon's suzerainty from Upper Myanmar. Some of these commanders or the comrades-in-arms of Alaungmintaya became nobilities in the court.<sup>13</sup> However after the demise of King Alaungmintaya, the court rebellions and attempted coup took place in the political life of the administrative center. Therefore successors of Alaungmintaya carefully chose to appoint nobilities and officials. They did not rely on the service of nobilities from previous reign. When Sagaing *Min* (1819-1837) ascended the throne, a grand ceremony was held to reward the nobilities, courtiers, crown servicemen, and officials with gold, silver, jewelry and etc.<sup>14</sup> Former household members were allotted dignitaries and insignias of rank. In other word, the "loyalty" was the most important requirement to become nobility under native rule.

After King Mindon's (1853-1878) successful coup against his brother Bagan *Min*, he reorganized the corps of nobilities and officials. In his reign, his royal household members comprising U Yan Way, Wungyi Thado Mingyi Maha Minhla Situ, U Kaung- Legaing *Myo-za* Wungyi Thado Mingyi Maha

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<sup>13</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, , 2004 a, 56

<sup>14</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 166



Sithu,<sup>15</sup> U Bo, Bhamo *Myo-za A-twin-wun* Mingyi Maha Minhla Sithu became the most influential nobilities of the court.<sup>16</sup> As the King Mindon ascended the throne through a rebellion against his brother Bagan *Min*,<sup>17</sup> followers were also promoted to the rank of nobility and officials.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, King Mindon appointed two ministers, two *a-twin-wuns*, one *wun-dauk* one town officers from the members of royal household. Following table shows the list of nobilities and officials under King Mindon's reign.

**Table- IV**  
**List of Officials and Nobilities in King Mindon's reign**

Post	No	Appointed Number from Members of royal Household	Percent
<i>Wungyi</i>	8	2	25
<i>A-twin-wun</i>	4	2	50
<i>Wun-dauk</i>	6	1	16.7
<i>Shwemyodaw-wun</i>	4	1	35
Officials	27	3	11.3
Provincial Officials	14	2	14.3

Source: Khin Maung Nyunt, "*Kanbaung Khit-hnaung Myan-mar A-ya-shi-lo-ka (1853-1885)*" (Officialdom in Later Konbaung Period), M.A Thesis, Department of History, University of Mandalay 1991, p.6 (Henceforth: Khin Maung Nyunt, 1991)

<sup>15</sup>U Yan Way and U Kaung spent their early times by joining *sasana* and resided in Bagaya Monastery. U Yan Way (monk tilte U Visuddha) given sermon at the Peince Mindon's apartment regularly and became royal tutor. By the request of Prince Mindon to attain an able learned man for his household, U Visuddha allowed shin Asabha (U Kaung) to leave the order to serve under Mindon Min. Later U Visuddha himself left order and served as the royal tutor in Mindon's household.

Nyo Mya, 2003,306-307

<sup>16</sup>Than Tun (ed), *The Royal Orders of Burma. A.D 1598-1885*, Part Nine (AD 1953-1885), Kyoto, Center for the Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1989, p. 768 (Henceforth: Than Tun,1989)

<sup>17</sup>Yaza Sithu, 1966,3-6

<sup>18</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin , 2004b, 128-30

In addition to the members of royal household, the kinsmen of queens were also promoted to the rank of nobility and official. The outstanding example was the emergence of Maung O, Queen Nu's brother in Bagyidaw *Min*'s reign, as the most influential nobility in the Court of Inwa.<sup>19</sup> During the reign of King Mindon who possessed the second largest harem in Konbaung Dynasty, comprising Chief Queen, four principal queens of palace, five principal queens of chambers, 37 *myo-za* queens and two concubines in the palace.<sup>20</sup> Some fathers-in-law and brothers-in-law of King Mindon became nobilities, court officials and provincial officials. For example, Yeinanchaung *Myo-za Wungyi Thado Mingyi Maha Minhla Mingaung* (U Shwe So),<sup>21</sup> and Laungshei *Myo-za Wungyi Thado Mingyi Maha Sithu* (U Maung Gale) were fathers-in-law of the king. *Myothit Myo-za Wun-dauk* Mingyi Maha Minhla Mingaung (U Maung Ko) was the brother-in-law of the king.<sup>22</sup> King Mindon appointed two *wungyis*, one *wun-dauk* and two *Shwei-myaw-daw-wun* from the relatives of his queens. However in King Thibaw's reign such appointment can not be found because King Thibaw has only one Chief Queen who had no male kinsmen.

Myanmar nobilities and officials were the products of monastic education. However some nobilities of Konbaung period were easily adaptable to the knowledge of their time and became learned persons and scholars. For example, Twin Thin Taikwun Maha Sithu, royal tutor of King Badon, wrote fifteen treatises

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<sup>19</sup>Nyo Mya, 2003, 171-72

<sup>20</sup>Koenig, 1990, 168

<sup>21</sup>U Shwe So took part in the rebellion of Mindon *Min* against Bagan *Min*, Nemyo Yaza Sithu, 1966, 3-5

<sup>22</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 111

Mya Ke Tu, *Nan-da-le Mat-tan mya* (The Record, on the Palace Customs), Yangon, Hnalonghla Press, 1970, p.243 (Henceforth: Mya Ke Tu, 1970)

on laws, chronicles and literature.<sup>23</sup> Most of scholars who were promoted to nobilities were not the kinsmen of royalty. For example King Bagyidaw appointed U Maung, officers of royal seal, and awarded the title of Minhla Yaza Kyawhtin. *Ta-seik-wun* U Maung compiled eight treatises of *pyo*, *mawgun* and *jataka*, stories.<sup>24</sup> After the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, King Mindon ushered the kingdom into a new era of reformation including fiscal revolution, establishment of industries, introduction of western education, and expansion of diplomatic relations with the Western Countries. Although some of his grand reforms were said to be showpiece projects,<sup>25</sup> one can come across the evidence of the emergence of scholar officials in his reign. Among them, Myadaung *Myo-za Wungyi Thado-Mingyi* (U Hmon), wise administrator, *A-twin-wun* Saw *Myo-za Mingyi Maha Mingaung Thikhaya* (U Paik), a famous laureate and astrologer, *Wun-dauk Padein---wun* Maha Mihla Kyawhtin (U Shwe Bin) and *Wun-dauk Phanchetwun* Maha Minkyaw Yaza (U Shwe O), and *Than-chet-wun* Mingyi Maha Minhla Sithu (U Myu), the state scholars to France, Calcutta and England,<sup>26</sup> were renowned learned nobilities and officials of Later Konbaung period.<sup>27</sup> King Mindon appointed on *wungyi* one *a-twin-wun* and three *wun-dauk* for their expertise in literature and knowledge in science. King Thibaw also appointed U Tun Aung as *Panbe`wun* and U Ye` Tin as *Yun-su-wun* and *setwun*-the ministers-

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<sup>23</sup>Hmawbi Saya Thein, *Myan-mar Wun-gyi-hmu-gyi-mya Pyin-mya-shi-gyi-mya A-Kyaung*(The Myanmar Officialdoms and Scholars), Yangon, Yabeyi Press, 2009 (Reprint), pp.18-19 (Henceforth: Saya Thein, 2009)

<sup>24</sup>Saya Thein, 2009, 29-30

<sup>25</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 104-115

<sup>26</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 114

<sup>27</sup>(a) Ma Kyan "*Mindon Min Ei Mugyi Matkyimya*" (The Nobilities of King Mindon), *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol. 44, part. i, 1961,p. 68-71 (Henceforth: Kyan, 1961)

(b) Ma Kyan "*Pyin-nya-daw-thin Lu-sa-yin Pha-ya*" (List of State Scholars) , *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol .63, part. iii, 1979, p. 96 (Henceforth: Kyan, 1979)

in-charge of industries.<sup>28</sup> Both U Tun Aung and U Ye` Tin were state scholars who were sent to France and England, Although the member of royal household, kinsmen of the queens, followers who took part in a certain rebellion of the prince to become king were appointed as nobilities, the scholars and learned men were also promoted to the nobilities and officials.

### **Power and Obligations**

The nobilities were subordinate in rank only to the royalties. Next to the rank of Crown Prince and the king, *wungyis*-the bearers of great burden were the heads of central administration. The most important duties of *wungyi* was to attend *Hlut-taw* regularly, held daily public sessions extending from morning to three or four o'clock. Each *wungyi* or other member of *Hlut-taw* had his fixed seat, or rather his position, for of course they all sat on the floor.<sup>29</sup> During the time of emergency or whenever necessary, the number of *wungyis* might be increased to six or seven.

The *wungyis* had to perform the individual duty for administering various functional duties of government. These duties were comprised of military operation, foreign relations, legal administration, taxation, administration of garrisons, toll-stations, riverine regions, trade and so on. Although administrative departments were established by the King Mindon and Thibaw,<sup>30</sup> the governments

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<sup>28</sup>Kyan, 1979, 96-100

<sup>29</sup>(a) Ma Mya Sein, *Administration of Burma*, Yangon, Zebu Meikswe Press, 1938, p.6-14 (Henceforth: Mya Sein, 1938)

(b) Tin, 1965, 40-43

(c) Maung Maung Tin, 1975,20-21

<sup>30</sup>(a) Than Tun , 1989,912-15, 994

(b) J.G Scott, J, P Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, 5 Vols, , Part. I, vol. ii, Yangon, Government Printing, 1900, 65 (Henceforth: Scott & Hardiman, 1900)

(c) *Ko-hta-na Kwè-we Ôk-chôk-pôn Upadei daw-gyi* (Regulation on the Distribution of Department), Mandalay, Yadanabon Press, 1884, pp.1-22 (Henceforth: *Ko-hta-na Upadei*, 1884)

of former kings were not departmentalized. All state affairs were handled by the appointed officials under the supervision of those kings. Since obligations of *wungyis* were so immense, *wun-dauks* were appointed to assist them.<sup>31</sup> Usually a young man of ability and promise were appointed as *wun-dauk* with the approval of the *Hlut-taw*.<sup>32</sup> They had to supervise the daily agenda of *Hlut-taw*. When King Mindon established diplomatic relations with the British Myanmar some *wun-dauks* were sent to Europe on important diplomatic assignments.<sup>33</sup> Some *wun-dauks* were entrusted with administrative matters. Next in rank to the nobilities of *Hlut-taw* were *a-twin-wuns*. Their title means interior ministers or privy councilors. They took charge all of the affairs of the palace. They slept in turn, two at a time, in the Palace, as *Hlut-taw* officers. As they were well acquainted with the king, *a-twin-wuns* acted as a link between the king and territorial and department officials.<sup>34</sup>

Generally speaking not only the appointment of noblemen but also the allocation of functions has depended on the loyalty and acquaintance with the king. In some cases, the appointment and allocation of duties would be shifted from one official to another. At the beginning of King Mindon's reign, Magwe *Myo-za* U Kya U who took charge the foreign affairs and was deputed to Calcutta to return Bago Province of Myanmar King.<sup>35</sup> Some years later, as he could not win the trust of the king, U Kya U was removed from his capability and the office was handed over to U Yan Way.<sup>36</sup> In comparison U Kya U had been served under three successive reigns from King Thayawadi to Mindon *Min* as an able official.

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<sup>31</sup>Mya Ke Tu, 1970, 243

<sup>32</sup>Mya Sein, 1938, 25

<sup>33</sup>Thant Myit- U, 2001, 126-29

<sup>34</sup>Scott & Hardiman, 1901, 474-75

<sup>35</sup>Thant Myint -U, 2001, 126

<sup>36</sup>Pollak , 1979, 181

However, U Yan Way who was not only a tutor of King Mindon since his prince hood, but also a qualified noble was finally trusted by the king to appoint the chief of the foreign department.<sup>37</sup> It is understandable that the important obligation went to the most trustful official.

Sometimes, the rank of certain official or nobility did not determine the allocation of duties. All officials and nobilities from the Five Court of Central administration altogether performed the duties assigned to them by the king.<sup>38</sup> In doing so the duty of *wun-dauk* was sometime, more important than that of *wungyi*. In King Thibaw's reign, the head of the departments of foreign relations was *Wun-dauk* Myaung Hla *Myo-za* U Chein. When the departments were incorporated into nine, the department of foreign relation was handed over to U Shwe Maung.<sup>39</sup> In some cases, present office-holders were substituted with the king's favorite officials. Rise and fall of Kinwun Mingyi in the reign of King Mindon and Thibaw was the best example of such event. As have mentioned, Kinwun Mingyi served under King Mindon in various functions of the state.<sup>40</sup> As a well-qualified diplomatic, administrator, scholar and even military commander, the image of Kinwun Mingyi was immense not only in the court circle, but also among the British authorities in Lower Myanmar and diplomatic circle at Mandalay.<sup>41</sup> When King Mindon passed away, Kinwun Mingyi played in a most crucial role to place

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<sup>37</sup>Henry Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission to the Court of Ava in 1855*, Kualalumpur, Oxford University Press, 1968 (Reprint), p.245 (Henceforth: Yule, 1968)

<sup>38</sup>Tin, 1983, 1-7

<sup>39</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 912-15

<sup>40</sup>*Wunshindaw Kinwun Mingyi Ei A-htok-pat-ti: Sadan Kyauksa* (The Stone Inscription on the Profile of Kinwun Mingyi U Kaung), Kinwun Mingyi Monastery, Maha Aungmeyei Township, Mandalay

<sup>41</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 134-35

Prince Thibaw on the throne.<sup>42</sup> For this effort, Kinwun Mingyi was appointed as *thei-nat-wun*-minister-in-charge of musketeers – the office was likely to be the ministry of defense of present day. Later Kingwun Mingyi gradually lost royal favor because of his liberal idea against the monarchism and became merely a legislative officer of *Hlut-taw*.<sup>43</sup> His former office was handed over to Taingda *Myo-za* U Bo<sup>44</sup> through the personal intimacy with the young Royal couple.

As have known, the lost of Lower Myanmar forced King Mindon to set up an immediate reformation in the Kingdom. He attempted to modernize the military, develop manufacturing industries, import new technologies, especially, transportation and communications, and broaden access to Western learning. The princes and sons of noblemen had to learn under J.E Marks, S.P.G School.<sup>45</sup> A much more concerted attempt was made to send students abroad. For such massive reformations, the king recognized the role of scholars and assigned them in certain duties. Architect and metallurgist U Hmo, Myadaung *Myo-za*, was assigned to work in the weapon industry under prince Kanaung.<sup>46</sup> However, he had to work with Bhamo *Myo-za A-twin-wun* U Bo who was not a scholar, but a kinsman of the young royal couple. It is assumed that the capacity of U Hmo was checked by U Bo. Similarly, King Mindon appointed U

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<sup>42</sup>Kinwun Mingyi, an immediate ally of Queen Hsinbyumashin, intended to raise a prince on the throne who would be easily manipulated to establish a proper system of ministries along the Western line. Tin, 1965b, 241-46

<sup>43</sup>Tin, 1970, 177-78

<sup>44</sup>Tin, 1970, 181

<sup>45</sup>Maung Maung Tin (M.A) *Myan-mar-min Let-het-taw Sa-dan-mya* (The Treatises on the Administration and Society under Myanmar kings' Rule), Yangon, Sabei Oo Sarpei, 1982 (Reprint), pp.83-89 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 1982)

<sup>46</sup>Ma Kyan, "*Ya-ta-na-pôn Set-yon-mya*" (Factories of Yadanabon Royal Capital), *The Papers Published to Commemorate the Silver Jubilee, Myanmar Historical Bulletin*, 1982, 209-215 (Henceforth: Kyan, 1982)

Shwe Bin as the chief of copper works, and U Shwe O as the chief of glassware industry. Although both of them were qualified state scholars, they were dismissed by the king and reinstated to the inferior posts.<sup>47</sup> This action might to be the tactic of the king to manipulate the nobilities and officials.

Since the post of nobilities and officials were creation of the king, each nobleman had to perform their duties to fulfill the royal wishes. Their own innovation or giving opinion to the king was a very rare practice among the noblemen. Even in this situation some noblemen did not hesitate to criticize the king regardless of their post, wealth and lives. Among them, Pakhan *Wungyi* U Yan Way and U Po Hlaing, under King Mindon and Thibaw were the most notable noblemen of the time. As an ex-royal tutor and upright noblemen, Pakhan *Mingyi* has greatly influenced on King Mindon. One day, the King wished to increase the monthly donation to the *sanghas* or royal capital and consulted with U Po Hlaing to collect one *mat* per household in addition to *tha-tha-mei-da* tax. However the king could not make decision independently and sent U Po Hlaing to get the consent of U Yan Way. After hearing the case, U Yan Way made a remark that,

Maung Yin Hlaing, It is a long-lasting tradition of *thathemeida*, tax which was collected since the time of Maha Thamada. If any extra tax to be collected, I can do nothing because it is like a monkey who devastated the garden which he built.<sup>48</sup>

After hearing the U Yan Way's attitude, the King abolished his plan to collect new tax. U Yan Way made similar sharp criticism on the affairs of Kayinni,<sup>49</sup> coinage system,<sup>50</sup> on the royal polygamy,<sup>51</sup> on the appointment of

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<sup>47</sup>Khin Maung Nyunt, 1991, 135

<sup>48</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 134-35

<sup>49</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 135

<sup>50</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 137-38

<sup>51</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 140-41



provincial officials<sup>52</sup> and on the rebellion in Taungdwingyi Region.<sup>53</sup> Since the power of U Yan Way was so great that king Mindon referred him as "Pakan *Shinbayingyi*" or his majesty the king of Pakhan.<sup>54</sup>

Unlike the case of U Yan Way who had never been demoted by the king for his sharp criticism, U Po Hlaing- the most renowned learned noblemen of later Konbaung period was dismissed three times. U Po Hlaing, son of Yindaw *Myo-za Wun-gyi* who was killed by *Thayawadi Min*,<sup>55</sup> began to serve under *Thayawadi Min* and *Bagan Min*. In *Bagan Min*'s reign, U Po Hlaing became household member of Prince Mindon. When Prince Kanaung and Mindon revolted against *Bagan Min* U Po Hlaing accompanied with the Princes.<sup>56</sup> For his diligent service, King Mindon awarded U Po Hlaing the title of Mingyi Minhla Maha Sithu, promoted as *A-twin-wun* and allotted Yaw as appanage.<sup>57</sup> U Po Hlaing was a man of unlimited knowledge and upright. As a scholar he wrote many treatises on the religion, science and literature. As an upright nobleman, he always put forward the benefit of the Kingdom, not of the king. One day, while the king was discussion with his *a-twin-wuns* and *wungyis* at *Hlut-taw* on the personal affairs of the king and noblemen, U Po Hlaing made a courageous remark on the appointment of noblemen and officials as follows;

Your Majesty, it is an important reason of the ruin of thy kingdom when an incompetent person became an official by submitting sisters and even daughter to thee.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 141-42

<sup>53</sup>Nyo Mya, 2003, 282

<sup>54</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 141-42

<sup>55</sup>Nyo Mya, 2003, 282

<sup>56</sup>Nemyo Yaza Sitthu, 1966, 1-2

<sup>57</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 180

<sup>58</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 193

After hearing the inconvenient truth which shed light on the relations between the king and some noblemen, the king temporarily lost his temper and showed a lance of his father,<sup>59</sup> *Thayawaddy Min*, which once been thrust into the chest of U Po Hlaing's father. However, as a wise king, Mindon *Min* controlled himself. Instead of being killed, U Po Hlaing was dismissed from his office. During the early days of King Thibaw's reign, U Po Hlaing comprised in the reformist wing at court. The leader of which was Kinwun Mingyi. Their aim was not only to limit the power of monarchy but to introduce the balance of power between them and the king. U Bo Hlaing even wrote the *Yaza Dhamma Thigaha Kyan* or "*Treatise on the Compassionate Disposition of Righteous Government*".<sup>60</sup> This work, the last one of great scholar and statesman, favoured the constitutional government which aroused the royalists of the Court. Some year later U Po Hlaing, along with his master Kinwun Mingyi gradually faded out from the court life. He passed his last days on his dead bed as a deposed official.<sup>61</sup> Anyway this episode shows the emergence of diligent and upright noblemen who disregarded their lives for the benefit of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that some influential court officials had never been criticized the king even though they were entrusted various capabilities. The most prominent of such officials was Kinwun Mingyi U Kaung. As he being a member of the household servant of King Mindon, Kinwun Mingyi served under two successive reigns. He was firstly appointed as *Shwe-daik-so*-treasurer by king Mindon. In 1873, he was promoted to the rank of *wun-gyi*-minister of *Hlut-taw*. The promotion of Kinwun Mingyi to the highest rank was probably because of his ability and loyalty. The other important reason was his negligence and patience on the way what the king doing.

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<sup>59</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 193-194

<sup>60</sup>After Thant Myint -U, 2001, 159

<sup>61</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 185

After the deterioration of the health of King Mindon, intrigues of rival claimants and their backing queens and noblemen turned the palace into a shelter of plotters. The court grandees assembled to choose the next king.<sup>62</sup> In doing so Yenanchaung *Myo-za* who was allied by marriage with a number of important noblemen and military office holding families took the lead in attempting to make his favourite Prince to become king. One numerous queens and her son, the Pyinmana Prince was a rival claimant to the throne. Bhamo *Myo-za* U Bo, then a privy councilor, liked his nephew to become the king.<sup>63</sup> The Nyaungyan Prince who narrowly escaped from the massacre of royal siblings<sup>64</sup> was a nephew of retired *Si-daw Myin-wun*. Both men wanted one of these elder and popular princes to be elected as the king, in doing so, Kinwun Mingyi took the lead by installing Prince Thibaw on the throne.

### **Privileges and Accumulation of Wealth**

The biggest privilege of the noble men and royalties under native rule was the appanages allotted by the Crown. All of these noblemen were therefore known as *myo-za*, literally translated the term means "to eat the *myo*" or more correctly speaking one who "enjoying the revenue of *myo*".<sup>65</sup> As they were entrusted a wide range of authority, they were able to accumulate big fortune through their office. They were also donors of pagodas, monasteries, public rest houses, ponds, wells, and bridges to assume the title of *daga-* donor, the desirable dignity in the community. The noble men and officials made the lavish donation by using large sum of money. They also accustomed to record their meritorious works on the

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<sup>62</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 312-17

<sup>63</sup>Nyo Mya, 2003, 291-2

<sup>64</sup>Calbeck, 1892,4

<sup>65</sup>The term *Myo-za* is frequently interpreted into "fief-holder", However the word the medieval Europe and Some countries of Asian Like Japan. Weber, 1978 b, 1078-85

stone slab. The noblemen of later Konbaung period used the large sum of money for meritorious works as follow;

U Kaung ( <i>Wungyi</i> )	.....	80,000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Maung Gale ( <i>Wungyi</i> )	.....	38,930	<i>Kyats</i>
U Thaing ( <i>Wungyi</i> )	.....	17,0000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Pein ( <i>A-twin-wun</i> )	----	10,0000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Po Hlaing ( <i>A-twin-wun</i> )	.....	30,0000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Shwe Maung ( <i>A-twin-wun</i> )	.....	60,0000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Bo ( <i>Wun-dauk</i> )	.....	12,8000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Bo Min ( <i>Wun-dauk</i> )	.....	50,000	<i>Kyats</i>
U Pei Si (Town Governor)	.....	30,000	<i>Kyats</i>
Nemyo Mingaung Thurein ( <i>A-way Myo-wun</i> )	.....	35,070	<i>Kyats</i>
Maha Minhtin Min Kyaw ( <i>A-way Myo-wun</i> )	.....	26,000	<i>Kyats</i>

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Source : Khin Maung Nyunt, 1991, 61

During the later Konbaung period, the price of gold was only 20 *kyats* per tical.<sup>66</sup> Therefore those who could afford to use 100,000 *kyats* for any donation; he used over 330 million *kyats* of present day value. The amount of money mentioned above was merely used for their meritorious works. Therefore no one can assume the wealth accumulated by the noblemen for their large number of families. Here it is questionable that how did they accumulate such immense fortune? After fiscal revolution of King Mindon, the noblemen and officials had to enjoy salary for the

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<sup>66</sup>Toe Hla, "Monetary system of Burma in the Konbaung Period" *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol.62, part .i and ii, 1979, p.68 (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 1979)

service. The salaries of officials in king Mindon's reign can be known through the records of British officials. Albert Fytche attributed that "the salaries of the four minister of state is said to be £ 2,400 , the senior *Atweng-won*—who is also royal treasurer—receive the same as a *Won-gyee*, and remaining three, each, £ 1,500, the four *Won-donks* receive each £1,200 per annum. No perquisites are allowed, except those which may be occasionally and specially allowed by His Majesty."<sup>67</sup> Following table shows the list of salary of the selected noblemen and officials.

**Table-V**  
**List of the Salary of Selected Nobilities and Officials**

Rank	Salary (in Rs)
<i>Wungyis</i>	1,000
<i>Myin-su--gyiwun</i>	500
<i>A-twin-wun</i>	500
<i>Wun-dauk</i>	500
<i>A-twin-wun (Byè-daik)</i>	660
<i>Than-daw-zin</i>	200
<i>Myo-wun</i>	500
<i>Htaung-hmu</i>	300
<i>A-nauk-wun</i>	300
<i>Taya-thu-gyi</i>	300
<i>Na-khan-daw</i>	100
<i>Sayei-daw-gyi</i>	100
<i>Sayei-daw-gyi</i>	100
<i>Myo-sayei</i>	100

Source: Scott & Hardiman, 1901, 483

<sup>67</sup>Fytche, 1878a,242,F.n

As the British officers compiled the above mentioned list of the salaries were shown in rupees. The actual salaries in *Kyat* might be more than this. For example Watmasut *Wun-dauk* received monthly salary of average 660 *kyats* from King Thibaw's government.<sup>68</sup> The monthly salary of Pakhan Mingyi U Yan Way was 2000 *kyats*.<sup>69</sup> How could they save money to make the donation which cost capricious sum of money? In the case of U Yan Way who divided his salary into two halves. 1000 *kyats* went to his wife for household consumption. The remaining 1000 *kyats* was again divided into two halves: 500 *kyats* for his personal consumption and 600 *kyats* was to be kept by his wife.<sup>70</sup> Indeed the noblemen in Myanmar society were free users of their income. They had to spend in accordance with the rank and living over 50 percent of his salary. Therefore they must have other sources of income to support their large family members<sup>71</sup> and to make lavish donations. Some officials had to involve in the bribery to support their wives. During the reign of king Thibaw in 1878-80, a certain land surveyor married seven wives and supported his wives as follow,

To the son of first wife.....	873 <i>kyats</i>
To the daughter of second wife.....	650 <i>kyats</i>
To the sons of third wife.....	580 <i>kyats</i>
To remaining three wives.....	330 <i>kyats</i>
<b>Total.....</b>	<b><u>2433 <i>kyats</i></u></b>

Source: Toe Hla, 1987,294-295

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<sup>68</sup>*Watmasut Wun-dauk Ei Ne-zin Hmat-tan* (The Diary of Watmasut Wundauk), Than Tun (ed), Introduction by Daw Ohn Kyi II, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005, p.10 (Henceforth: *Watmasut Diary, 2005*)

<sup>69</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 134

<sup>70</sup>Saya Thein, 2010, 134

<sup>71</sup>Although polygamy practice was not legally tolerated almost all of Wungyis and noblemen married many wives. See Khin Maung Nyut, 1991, 65-66

Although no one know how did such minor officer earn money to support his wives, it is certain that he could not provide such great amount of money from his salary alone.

After the fiscal revolution of King Mindon, an attempt to end the appanage system, an effort was made to provide cash salaries to all officials and nobilities. At first this attempt was unanimously opposed by noblemen officials, but finally adopted by the early 1860s.<sup>72</sup> Although the noblemen had to repudiate their claims on their former appanages, they still were absentee landlords of the realm Most of their lands located in the productive areas of Kyaukse, Mu Valley and Mandalay. During the reign of King Mindon, the irrigated lands in Mandalay, Amarapura, and Madaya were allotted to the queens, members of royal households, princes and princesses, noblemen, and officials. It is believed that they continued to enjoy their rights as the absentee landlords even after the introduction of salary system. Following table shows the list of lands allotted to the noblemen and some officials.

**Table -VI**  
**List of Lands Owned by Noblemen and Officials**

Noblemen and Official	Original <i>Pe</i>	Waste Lands	Total	<i>Ya</i>	<i>Le</i>
<i>Popa Wun-dauk</i>	40		40		40
<i>Kyaukyè Wun-dauk</i>	40		40		40
<i>Wun-dauk-taw Lamaing-wun</i>	300	100	200		200
<i>Hlaingdet Myo-za</i>	80		80		80
<i>Hlut-taw Officials</i>	285.2	14	217.2		217.2
<i>Magwe Wungyi</i>	100		100		100
<i>Myadaung Wungyi</i>	100		100		100
<i>Pakhan Wungyi</i>	100		100		100
<i>Khampat Myo-za</i>	42		42		42
<i>A-thi Wun-dauk</i>	16		16		16

Source: (a) "List of Allotted Pe in and below the aunginle Lake, *Parabaik*, M.S National Libaray, No.1130 (b) 1230 M.E, List of Lands in Nanda, Aungpinle and Tamokaaso where the Kaukyi Rice to be Grown (1668.A-D), *Parabaik*, M.S, NLC

<sup>72</sup>Yule, 1968, XXXIV

Under customary rule, one visible inter-relationships between the king and noblemen, officials, landed gentries and *sawbwas* of Shan States was built through the *kadaw-days-days* paying homage which were usually held before and the end Buddhist lent and during the New Year. After the ceremony, the king redistributed some of the presents and tributes to the noblemen and officials. Some noblemen received silver bowls, various cloths, and cash.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the legal means of obtaining wealth, some noblemen attempted to obtain money through the taking bribes. They abused their power by collecting money, taking bribes from local headmen, and selling hereditary posts. During the reign of King Thibaw, Khampat *Myo-za* Wungyi U Shwe Maung, Bagan *Myo-za A-twin-wun* U Bo, Myauk Dawe Bo Yaung *Myo-za* Maung Maung Toke taken large sum of money from the local headmen to substitute, transfer or alienate *thu-gyi-ship*. Sometimes, the highest bidder would become local *thu-gyi*. The King therefore issued order to prohibit such improper appointments through the taking bribe.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, some complaints and appeals were submitted to the king by ousted headmen. During the time of King Mindon, who took interested in every detail of the government functions, arranged for direct popular petitions to be sent by placing locked wooden chest at the living quarter outside the palace. The people presented their grievances through the letters to the *Hlut-taw* directly.<sup>75</sup> This system was continued to use under King Thibaw who dismissed Khampat *Myo-za* U Shwe Maung, Bagan *Myo-za A-twin-wun* U Bo and Maung Maung Toke. However king's action was not good enough to halt the involvement of bribery by the officials.

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<sup>73</sup>"*Kodaw Let-saung-daw Sayin (from Sawbwas and Myo-zas)*", (1853 A.D), *Parabaik*, M.S, TNT-127 to TNT-127-26, Mandalay Ludu Library Collection. *pu.0099*

<sup>74</sup>"Nga Hla Baw's Appeal to the king", n-d, *Parabaik* M.S, 1, U Pweili, Nutmauk Collection

<sup>75</sup>*D.P.C.*, 1982, 182



As the influential and well-off persons, some noblemen were deeply involved in the money-lending business. The biggest money-lending nobility in King Mindon's reign was *Shwenanyo Lamaing-wun*, Officer-in-charge of Crown Lands. As he was also a brother-in-law of the king he had no any disturbance to accumulate wealth through the money-lending and land-mortgaging.<sup>76</sup> By the year of 1865 alone, *Lamaing-wun* U Hmon lend sum of 34,000 *kyats* to land mortgagors. In return he leased those lands to the officials and received 1530 baskets of paddy.<sup>77</sup> It is interesting to note that some provincial officers had to borrow money from the officials of royal capital. For example, *Myo-wun*, *Myo-thu-gyi* and other minor officers of Kani Township borrowed money from the Court officials of royal officials. Some of these money-lenders were *Myin-hmu-cavalry officer Maung Pwint*,<sup>78</sup> *Wun-dauk-taw Wun-shin-daw Myawadi Myo-za Min-gyi* Maha Minhla Thihathu, *Kun-ye-daw-min*-betel server of Badein Princess, *Ta-zaik-ôk-min*-officer of royal seal,<sup>79</sup> and *Si-daw Myin-wun*-officer of royal cavalry, Maha Minhla Thinkhaya<sup>80</sup>. In a time when there was lack of banking system and modern commercial practices, the customary money-lending practice was only acceptable and reliable means for the society.

It is interesting to note that some court officials involved in the serious crimes. During the reign of King Thibaw, the stability of many regions in Upper Myanmar had deteriorated. Particularly the former war-torn countryside during Myingun-Myinkhondaing rebellion fell under the lawlessness. Some local headmen involved in the robberies and thefts. The most serious robbery broke out

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<sup>76</sup>Toe Hla, 1987,121,135-136

<sup>77</sup>"*Shwe-nan-yoe Lamaing Sit-tan- mya* "(Land Rolls of Crown Lands and Records of Mortgaging Lands to Shwenayoe Lamaing Wun), *Parabaik* MSs, (Dr Toe Hla Handwriting Copy) (Henceforth: "*Shwe-nan-yoe*")

<sup>78</sup>"Money-Borrowing Deed of Kani *Sit-ke`*, 25, November, 1836,"*Parabaik*,M.S,K.S.O.C

<sup>79</sup> "Money-Borrowing Deed of Kani *Sit-ke`*, 25, November, 1836",*Parabaik*,M.S, K.S.O.C

<sup>80</sup> "Money-Borrowing Deed of Kani-myô *Asi-yin*, 28, December, 1842", M.S.,K.S.O.C

in Sa-lei Township. In 1882, U Bo Kyi, well-off merchant and donor of Sa-lei Yoke-son Monastery, was robbed by some decoits from Gwe-gyo, Pin, Kyauk-pa-daung, Popa and Meiktila. U Bo Kyi lost money, jewelry, clothing, and silver bowls all of which valued 19,700 *kyats* . The decoits also took Salei *Myo-sa-yei* UTha Yan as hostage and killed him. As U Bo Kyi had some contacts with influential persons at the royal capital, the government ordered local officials to reveal culprits. After some interrogations, the officials convinced the robbers had firm backing of Taing-da Min-gyi, the most influential court grandee of king Thibaw. Finally, U Bo Kyi had to satisfy with the small amount returned by local headmen.<sup>81</sup>

### **The Pinnacle today would become Firewood tomorrow**

As a saying goes မှန်ကင်းတလဲ့, ထင်တလဲ့. *hmangin-ta-hlè-htin-ta-hlè* literally the pinnacle today would become firewood tomorrow, meaning even though one enjoying the high social status of nobility, official and even king, he would lost his wealth, power or fame anytime. As their rank was created by the king, the nobilities and officials would lose their office any time. Whenever a new king ascended the throne, some officials of former reign were ruled out of their office by the new king. During the later Konbaung period, only Kinwun Mingyi ,Taungwin *Myo-za* Mingyi Maha Minhtin (U Thaing) and Shwemyodaw *Wun* U Pei Si were able to serve under two successive reigns.<sup>82</sup> The deposed noblemen and officials, gradually out of the political scenario of the royal court, became commoners. Some officials were forced to sell their lands and household properties and lived under desperate situation for the rest of their lives.

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<sup>81</sup>Maung Maung Latt, *Salei Panbu Yoke-son Kyaung Tha-maing Sa-dan-mya*( Paper on the History of Sa-lei Yoke-son Monastery), Yangon, Sarpei Bhiman, 1999,pp. 68-76(Henceforth: Maung Maung Latt, 1999)

<sup>82</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 128-29, 137

Some officials and noblemen had to face with the more severe fate in the midst of the court rebellions, attempted coup and power struggles. The tragic ends of Mingaung Nawrahta in 1760 and Maha Thiha Thura in 1783<sup>83</sup> were the enough example of the immortality of the lives of noblemen and officials. Another example of the immortality of the rank and power of officials was that of Myawadi Min-gyi U Sa. He began his career of the serviceman under Shwedaung Prince, the eldest son of Badon *Min* as clerk. During that time U Sa composed music and translated famous Siamese play *Ei-Naung*. When Sagaing Min ascended the throne, U Sa was promoted to the rank of Liaison officer and chief of Pyi-lon-yu Royal Boat. Actually, U Sa was not only an official and renowned poet but also an able commander in the battle field. When Manipur revolted against Myanmar in 1813, U Sa led a column of 1500 men in the expedition of Manipur.<sup>84</sup>The most outstanding achievement of U Sa was his leadership in the battle fields of the First Anglo-Myanmar War. Sagaing Min conferred U Sa the title of Min-gyi Maha Thiha Thura and entrusted him to lead an army. As an able commander, U Sa defeated the British forces at the battle of Gawdawpalin and Panwa (Ramu).<sup>85</sup> However the life of U Sa had a turning point with the rise of Thayawadi *Min* to the throne. As its mentioned earlier, Thayawadi *Min* was able to depose his brother Sagaing *Min* and to wipe out the rivals including Queen Nu and Her brother Maung O by sending them to prison. When the rebellion of Thayawadi broke out U Sa had to show his loyalty to the reigning King Sagaing *Min*. There after the rebellion, he was imprisoned by Thayawadi *Min*. However Maung O did not submit to Thayawadi *Min* and plotted to depose the king. When the plot proved to

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<sup>83</sup>Both of them were comrade-in-arms of Alaungmintaya and were executed by Naungdawgyi Min and Badon Min, sons of Alaungmintaya

<sup>84</sup>Bohmu Ba Thaug, *Sazo-daw-mya A-htok-pat-ti* ( The Biographies of Poets and Writers), U Khin Aye(Ed), Yangon, Yabeyi Press, 2002(Reprint),p.198(Henceforth: Ba Thaug ,2002)

<sup>85</sup>Natmauk Phon Kyaw, *Ingalaik-Myanmar Sit-thamaing* (History of Anglo-Myanmar Wars),Yangon, Bagan Press, 1966,p.48(Henceforth Phon Kyaw ,1966)

be failed Thayawadi *Min* executed Ex-Queen Nu, Maung O and accomplices. The king spared the life of U Sa, but sent to a labour gang six months before the execution of plotters.<sup>86</sup> By 1839, *Thathanabyu* The`-Inn *Hsayadaw* passed away. The king ordered to repair the road and clear the site for the cremation ceremony of *Hsayadaw* with the labour of the prisoners including U Sa. One day, Chief Queen and Daughter of Thayawadi *Min*, Suphayagyi went out of palace to pay homage the deceased *Hsayadaw*. When they saw U Sa, the Queen and princess suggested him to compose a eulogy to praise the king. U Sa followed the advice and composed the long poem which eulogized the Konbaung Dynasty. When the king was performed with the eulogy of U Sa, he ordered to release him from prison.<sup>87</sup> It is interesting to note that a contemporary record of an American Missionary reveals the different story of U Sa. It reads;

The report mentioned in my last, of the death of Meawade, the ex-woon-gyee, appears not to be true. He was dangerously ill, and recovered. On account of his talents as a poet and musician, he is not confined with the other state prisoners, but is allowed to live in a small hut by himself, in the prison compound, and is employed to teach the young people music and singing.<sup>88</sup>

Although the above mentioned story of U Sa has a slight difference with Myanmar sources, the imprisonment of U Sa shed light on the immortal lives of officials. In the long course of monarchical rule, the peaceful transition of power or peaceful reign is hardly seen. In the later Konbaung period, from the reign of Sagaing *Min* to Thibaw *Min*, two attempted coups and two rebellions broke out in

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<sup>86</sup>Ba Thaug 2002,200

<sup>87</sup>Ba Thaug, 2002,201

<sup>88</sup>Some Documents of Tharrawaddy's Reign : 1837-1846,Part. I, " Letter of Mr. Simons, Dated Rangoon, June, 20, 1838, Relations between Burmah and British India—"The heir apparent" and other put to death", American Baptist Missionary Magazine 29.2 (February 1839) After SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, Vol. 1, No.2, Autumn 2003 (Henceforth: Simons, 1838)

the short span of 66 years. Whenever the rebellion broke out the officials and noblemen were not able to choose the policy of neutralism. They were forced take part in either in the side of reigning monarch or the rival claimant. If their lord has won, they would be rewarded titles, fiefs, insignia of ranks and other unexpected fortune. If failed, followers would be executed or some were victimized in the rebellion. Following table reads,

**Table -VII**

**List of Noblemen and Officials who were Executed or Victimized in the Court  
Rebellions and Attempted Coups**

<b>Year</b>	<b>King</b>	<b>Noblemen and Officials</b>
1819	Bagyidaw	-
1837	Thayawadi	Letwèè <i>Win-hmu</i> Minkyaw Thiha Maung O, his wife and two daughters
1847	Bagan <i>Min</i>	Pakhan <i>Wun</i> (U Ka) <i>A-twin-wun</i> (U Ta) <i>Shwe-daik-soe</i> (U Chit Bet) and three others
1866	Mindo <i>Min</i>	<i>Myauk Taya-nga-se Bo</i> (U Tu ) committed suicide <i>A-myauk--wun</i> Mingyi Maha Minhtin Mingaung Myauk Dawebo Maha Mingaung Yaza (Khèpang <i>Myo-za</i> ) Myadaung <i>Wungyi</i> Laungshe <i>Wungyi</i> Myedu <i>Myo-za</i> Lewun <i>Than-daw-zin</i> Khawthandi-Ngaranè <i>Myo-ôk</i> <i>Thuyè Wun</i> Taung Dawebo Kinwun

Source: (Maung Maung )Tin , 2004 b, 74, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 103-110

Summing up, the history of Myanmar during the second half of Konbaung period (1819-1885) was significant in many ways. In this period Myanmar lost her territories through the two wars the British and eventually lost her independence after the Third War, and also experienced court rebellions, some modernization projects and expansion of diplomatic relations with the West. The Kings, nobilities

and officials involved in these political scenarios as *dramatis personae*. However from the time of Bagyidaw to the Bagan *Min* we can not see the notable performance of the noblemen and officials for the benefit of the Kingdom. With the exception of some military officials who gallantly performed their duties in the battle fields of First and the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, most of the officials and noblemen made no remarkable achievements. They involved in the regular court intrigues, competing to attain royal favour to secure their offices and making wealth. After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, King Mindon ushered the kingdom into the new era of reformations. He introduced a series of modernizations including departmentalization of central and provincial administration. However his achievements had proved to be the showpiece projects. Who was responsible for these unsuccessful attempts? One can put the blame on the British in Lower Myanmar who took extraordinary care to watch the each and every steps of King Mindon. The most responsible persons for the failure of refashioning of the state were King Mindon and his court grandees who were still dominated by the stereotyped monarchism. Although the King Mindon emerged as a reformist, he had never been acted as the "enlightened despots" of the West. His main objective was to secure his throne at any cost. Similarly almost all of the Court grandees and officials in the reigns of last two kings were royalists and opportunists. Any innovation for the benefit of the Kingdom could not be expected from them. Very few attempts were made to check the power of the monarch and to introduce constitutional reform by a couple of scholar-statesmen, but they perished away under the influence of deep-rooted monarchism. For many royalists, thinking about the checking of royal power was the biggest "unreasonable and improper plot" which cost properties, ranks and even lives. Anyway incompetent officials of the Court of Mandalay were partially responsible for the collapse of royal authority.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **A-HMU-DAN: BACKBONE OF THE TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

**I**t is generally accepted that the formation of *a-hmu-dan* remerged during the reign of Thalun *Min* (1629-48)<sup>1</sup> enough even though the evidence of the appointment of crown servicemen can be found as early as Inwa period and, precisely speaking, in Taungoo period.<sup>2</sup> However it was Thalun *Min* who clarified the duties and classes of crown servicemen and prescribed the obligations of the chiefs of crown service groups.<sup>3</sup> In the customary society, *a-hmu-dan* were considered to be higher in social status than *a-this-commoner*. The significant obligations and rights were as follows;

- (1) the monarchs allotted lands to the servicemen for residence for cultivation and personal subsistence,
- (2) a person from one service could not be transferred to another service,
- (3) transfer from an inferior group to superior one was prohibited,
- (4) a serviceman could not leave the land given to him by royal sanction,
- (5) serviceman expected to grow crops on the land allotted to him while he was not on active service,

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<sup>1</sup>Toe Hla, 1984, 37

<sup>2</sup>U-Thayaw Amat-kyi, *Hanthawaddy Hsinbyumyashin A-yei-daw-bon Mawgun U-dan* (The Achievements and Conquests of Hanthawaddy Hsinbyumyashin), U Toe Hla (ed), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005, p. 52 (Henceforth: U-Thayaw, 2005)

<sup>3</sup>"*Tha-lun Min A-mein-daw-dan*" (Royal Edict of Tha-lun Min), *Pei*, Palm Leaf Manuscript, National Library Collection, No.70, Ka-kha (Obverse) (Henceforth: *Pei*, M-S No.70)

- (6) with the exception in the time of emergency of war, the serviceman did not need to leave his fields,
- (7) the serviceman also undergo training to become skillful one,
- (8) the officers in charge were required to submit annual report stating the number of births, death, absconders, those who joined *sangha* order, disable and that of able-bodied persons of respective regiments, and
- (9) the officer in charge also needed to submit another list of the sex and age of everyone in the group.<sup>4</sup>

### **Categories of *A-hmu-dans*: Racial Divisions**

Based on the nature of their services, *a-hmu-dans* can be categorized into two groups, viz, military *a-hmu-dans* and non-military *a-hmu-dans*. Military *ahmu-dans* were sub-divided into three categories: house hold troops, capital garrison troops and field levies. The duty of household troops and capital garrison troops was to protect the king and royal capital. Field levies, usually scattering stationed in the rural areas, were mobilized in the wartime.<sup>5</sup> Non-military *a-hmu-dans* primarily comprised of palace servicemen *lamaing*-crown cultivators, boatmen,<sup>6</sup> masons,<sup>7</sup> lead miners, weavers, smithies and carpenter.<sup>8</sup> Of all these *a-hmu-dan* groups, Myanmar formed majority. However, since the emergence of war fares during the Taungoo period, Myanmar kings took the people from wherever they conquered as captives and populated them in Ayeyawaddy Valley and Chindwin Valley of central Myanmar. Over time, Kayin, Kathe', Maniperis, Thaninthayi,

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<sup>4</sup>Than Tun, "Administration under King Thalun: 1629-48", *Journal of Burma Research Society*, Vol. II, part. ii, Dec 1968, p.184 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1968), Also see Koenig, 1990, 107-118, and Toe Hla ,1987, 35-42

<sup>5</sup>Koenig, 1990, 116

<sup>6</sup>Than Tun, 1986 b, 404

<sup>7</sup>Than Tun, 1986 b, 520

<sup>8</sup>Than Tun, 1986 b, 619



Talaing-Mons, Da-we', Myanmar (Bamar), Yaw, *Yodaya* Siamese, Rakhine, Shan, Linzin- the captives from Vien-ching (Laos), Laung-shei, Inwa, and In-ta-yaws were recruited as the military *a-hmu-dans*.<sup>9</sup> By the middle of sixteenth century, Portuguese forged modern guns attracted the Southeast Asian monarchs for their warfare. Kings of Rakhine like Minbin as well as Tabinshwehti (1531-1550) and Bayinnaung of Myanmar hired Portuguese Mercenaries to dominate the neighbouring countries and to gain the commercial interest.<sup>10</sup> After the conquest of Thanlyin by Anaukpetlun (1605-1628), he took all Portuguese's<sup>11</sup> as the war captives and deported to the Chindwin Valley of Upper Myanmar. They were recruited as the *bayin-gyi*<sup>12</sup> gunners for the successive kings.<sup>13</sup> They played crucial role in the warfare in Nyaung-yan and Konbaung dynasties. Later they were reinforced with the Muslim (Mahomedan) captives who were taken by Bayinnaung's conquest of Bago in 1538-39 and Tabinshwehti's conquest of Rakhine in 1546.<sup>14</sup> Some Mahomedans voluntarily came to Myanmar from Rakhine. Mahomedans rendered their service under Myanmar Kings not only as military *a-hmu-dans* but as the palace guards.<sup>15</sup> By the middle of eighteenth

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<sup>9</sup>U-Thayaw,2005,ghu

<sup>10</sup>Victor B.Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycle: Anarchy and Conquest (c 1580-1760)*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987,p. 28 (Henceforth: Lieberman, 1987)

<sup>11</sup>These Portuguese were the followers of Philip de Brito who made, himself viceroy of Thanlyin after his venture with the king of Rakhine. Di Brito was killed in 1612 by Anauk-pet-lun.

<sup>12</sup>*Bayingyi* was a Indian word for Feringhi. At first it was primarily referred to all Christians later to Roman Catholic Christians.

A.Williamson (comp), *Burma Gazetteers Shwebo District*, Vol. A, Yangon, Government Printing, 1963 (Reprint), pp. 20-22 (Henceforth: Williamson, 1963 a)

<sup>13</sup>Williamson, 1963 a, 70

<sup>14</sup>Thein Hlaing, 2002,6

<sup>15</sup>Williamson, 1963 a, 73

century another European war captives primarily the French and English were recruited after the Alaungmintaya's conquest of Thalyin in 1756. Over 1000 foreigners, comprising English, Bayingyi, Thanlyin Kala, Thibawtha Kala,<sup>16</sup> Kale' Kala, and Kala of Company.<sup>17</sup> Some days later, about 300 French were arrested by the king from *La Galatee* and *La Fleury*, the French schooners approaching Thanlyin to give help to the Mons.

The important foreign crown servicemen after Europeans were the Siamese who were also taken into Myanmar as capties after a series of wars in Taungoo period. Particularly Bayinnaung (1551-1881) took the Siamese King, royal household members, artisans, craftsmen, cooks, musicians, cooks, and even hairstylists were brought to Myanmar.<sup>18</sup> During the Konboun period the Siamese war captives were performing the various services of the crown as; 1, military servicemen, 2, craftsmen, 3, musicians and dancers, 4, boatmen 5, elephanters, and 6, cavalry men. Next to Siamese, some captives from neighbouring kingdoms, like Shan-yun,<sup>19</sup> Kaung-han,<sup>20</sup> Mon, Linzin<sup>21</sup> were also put under crown service in military and non-military service. All of these foreign servicemen, known as *su-gya*, were brought into Myanmar since Taungoo period and Konboun period.

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<sup>16</sup>*Kala* derivated from the word *Kula*-meaning the people who come into Myanmar across the sea. *Thanlyin Kala* and *Thibawtha Kala* were served Myanmar kings since Taungoo dynasty.

<sup>17</sup>British East India Company's servicemen

<sup>18</sup>Than Tun, *Ayuthia Men in the Service of Myanmar Kings, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, "Some Observations on History and Culture of Early Myanmar, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2004, pp. 77-78 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 2004)

<sup>19</sup>The people from Chiangmai, U Thein Hlaing, *Khit-haung Myan-mar Tha-maing Thu-te-tha-na A-bhi-dan* (A Dictionary of the Historical Research on Ancient Myanmar), Yangon, Universities' Historical Research Center, 2002(Reprint), p.145(Henceforth: Thein Hlaing, 2002)

<sup>20</sup>The people from Kenghung, Thein Hlaing, 2002, 10

<sup>21</sup>The people from Vienchang, Laos, Thein Hlaing, 2002, 167

During the Konbaung period, the war captives were brought into Myanmar in Alaungmintaya, Hsinbyushin (Myedu) and Badon *Min's* reigns. Significant servicemen of the period were *Ka-the'*-Manipuris. As the small principality of Manipur had been a tributary state of Myanmar since Taungoo period. After the conquest of his kingdom by Alaungmintaya, Manipuri Raja agreed to send 2000 servicemen whenever Myanmar king engaging in the wars with any country. However as the Manipuris attempted to throw off Myanmar yoke at any opportuned moments, Alaungmintaya, Hsinbyu and Badon *Min* waged a series of war against Manipur and brought back thousands of Manipuri captives. Most of them became cavalymen of the crown and some were recruited as the palace servicemen.<sup>22</sup> In addition when the independent kingdom of Rakhine was occupied by Badon *Min* in 1784, Rakhine king, royal families and thousands of Rakhine captives were taken as captives and put under crown serive. Most of the Rakhine captives became religious bondsmen for Maha Muni image and some were recruited for the construction of Min-gun pagoda and renovation of pagodas and monasteries around capital. Few Rakhines became boatman and armed servicemen. It can say that most of the crown servicemen of Konboun period was primarily made up of war captives.

It is interesting to note that some people came into Myanmar and turned themselves voluntarily into the crown servicemen. Most significant of these servicemen were *Tayoke*-Chinese men. The Chinese came into Myanmar since the early times as jade miners and widely engaged in the jade mining industry in Kachin and Sagaing division.<sup>23</sup> Some of the Chinese immigrants were employed in

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<sup>22</sup>(a)Roy, 1958,50,55,63,66,70

(b)( Maung Maung) Tin, 2004a, 277-78, 349, (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004b, 142-45, 196-97

<sup>23</sup>Khin Maung Nyunt, "History of Myanmar Jade Trade till 1938," *Selected Writing of Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt*, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2004, pp. 16-19(Henceforth: Khin Maung Nyunt,2004)

as the crown servicemen as the lead and silver miners.<sup>24</sup> Some Chinese became the servicemen in Sugar-boiling group. Although the art of Sugar boiling had stemmed from India, The sugar-boilers in Myanmar were not Indian, but the Chinese who became employed since Badon *Min's* reign.<sup>25</sup> Some Chinese settling a few miles from Inwa had plantation of sugar-cane and produced a large quantity of excellent brown and yellow sugar.<sup>26</sup> However it is suggested that although the Chinese formed the majority in the category of foreigners from neighbouring countries, many of them were merchants conducted mule caravan trade. Only a few of men became the palace servicemen as *Tayok-sa-pyan*-the Chinese translators.<sup>27</sup> Many of Chinese immigrants, even though they had resided permanently in Myanmar, had never become the crown servicemen.

### **Functionalized Divisions**

As have mentioned, the crown servicemen were primarily divided into military *ahmu-dans* and non-military *a-hmu-dans*. The former were in general more highly esteemed than non-military *a-hmu-dans*. They were not even administered by ordinary *myo-wun-town* governor or *thu-gyis*, but by their regimental officers.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in *myin-cavalry* areas, the general administrations, judicial administration and management of all affairs of the crown servicemen and their households were handled by *myin-gaung* or *myin-zi-cavalry* officer. All military

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<sup>24</sup>Sangermano, 1962, 174

<sup>25</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 140

<sup>26</sup>Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951, p.74 (Henceforth: Purcell, 1951)

<sup>27</sup>"The letter of Chinese Emperor to the King of Burmah," As quoted in W.S Desai, *History of British Residency in Burma 1826-1840*, Yangon, Yangon University, Press, 1939, Appendix IV, p.471 (Henceforth: Desai, 1939)

<sup>28</sup>Furnivall, 1957, 31-32

service were allotted lands in Ayeyawaddy, Chindwin and Mu vallies, Central Myanmar.

### **Military Servicemen in Later Konbaung Period**

As have mentioned, military or armed servicemen of later Konbaung period can be divided into three categories, viz, royal house hold troops, capital garrison troops and field levies. Royal household groups were comprised of the most trusted servicemen.

Then Inner guards or household servicemen were supposed to put under the Charge of the *A-nauk-wun*- minister of western court, Shwe Nandaw-*wun*-minister of palace affairs, and privy councilors of *Bye'-daik*. Precisely speaking, *marabin* and *Shwe-pyi-hman-gin* groups were the guards of palace chambers and remaining groups were responsible to the *Htut-taw* and other offices. These groups were administered by respective *bos*-captains who were responsible to the above mentioned officials or ministers. The king carefully selected these captains and some of them were appointed from kinsmen or household servants.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the kings appointed officials and service men from their fief towns. Badon *Min*, for instance, reorganized Myauk Dawe Regiment from the natives of Thit-Seint, Taung-ma-law, Tha-zim, Chinadwin, Mauk-tak, Wet-ye', Ka-be', Wa-yaung, Kan-byu, Wa-taw-ma, Nga-Ya-hoe, Seik-phyu-gyi, Magyizauk, Kyoukka, Mashakkan, Mandalay<sup>30</sup> and Ywaton villages, all of which were located in his fief town Badon.<sup>31</sup> Following table shows the categories of household servicemen and their salaries in King Mondon's reign is showed on next page.

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<sup>29</sup>Tin, 1970, 92

<sup>30</sup>The village in Alon or Badon Myo, Monywa District

<sup>31</sup>U Maung Maung Tin, *Shwe-nan-thon Waw-ha-ra A-bhi-dan* (Dictionary of Palace Usages and Termanology), Yangon, Yabeyei Press, July 2005, pp. 278-79 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 2005)

**Table -VIII**

**List of Household Servicemen and Capital Garrison Troops in the Reign of  
Mindon *Min* and Thibaw *Min***

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name of Household Regiment</b>	<b>Nos of Servicemen</b>	<b>Adjudents (Musketeers)</b>	<b>Salary (Kyats)</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1	North Da-wè	685	Maung Ei, Maung Sein	7840	
2	South Da-Wè	675	Maung Kyaw Wa, Maung Lun	7730	
3	North 150	633	Maung San Bu, Maung Tha Ok, Mg Hnyin	7720	
4	South 150	547	Maung Chit Saya, Maung Bo Taing	6285	
5	North Marabin	799	Maung Be', San Tun, Ayeya	9225	
6	Shwepyi Hmangin	672	Maung Pyan Chi, Maung Hmu	6285	
7	Natsu Let wè	1009	Maung Kyaw Thu, Maung San	11620	Thibaw's reign
8	Natsu Letya	420	Maung Shwe Win, Bo Thein, Bo Kha	4810	"
			Maung San, Lu		"
9	Ywè Let-wè	455	Maung, Maung Po., etc	5395	
			Maung Saw,		"
10	Ywè Let-ya	389	Tha Yauk, Bo Kyi, Kyin U	4675	

No.	Name of Household Regiment	Nos of Servicemen	Adjudents (Musketeers)	Salary (Kyats)	Remark
11	Lat-wè Gyaung	570	Maung Shun, Shwe Hla, Bo Htaik	6610	Thibaw's reign
12	Lat-ya Gyaung	500	Maung Hton Gyi, Paw, Bo Thin	5890	"
13	South Marabin	356	Maung Htwa, Maung Gyi	4180	"
14	Shwe Hlan	504	U Maung, Maung I	5820	"
15	Natwhin Ywe	168	Maung Bo Khaung, Maung Be	2080	"
16	Nauk Win- gyin	176	Maung Htun Yauk	2027	"
17	Lin Zin	330	Maung Tha U, Maung Le	4005	"
18	Kinda Kalapyd	335	Maung Kywet, Maung Phyu	4005	"
19	Thu-Yè	1100	Maung Tun Aung, Hlauk, San Tun	11775	"
20	Taga Ni Ahmudan	117	Maung Shwe Tha, Be, Shwe O	2215	"
21	Bon TawToe	461	Maung Chein, Maung Chaw	5425	"
22	Bon Daw Phyit	294	Maung Kaung Son, Lin, soe	3615	"

No.	Name of Household Regiment	Nos of Servicemen	Adjudents (Musketeers)	Salary (Kyats)	Remark
23	So. (Let-ze)	426	Maung Shwe Q	2582.2 <i>mat</i>	Thibaw's reign
24	Kaunghan	95	Maung Kya Yit	1322.2 <i>mat</i>	„
25	Yun	114	Maung (Clerk of Yun Servicemen)	1350	„
26	Shet-Win	295	Maung Wun, Maung Ut	377.2 <i>mat</i>	„
27	Let wè Win	424	Maung Yan Lon, Maung Wet-myei	5505	„
28	Let-ya Win	114	Maung Pa Tu, Maung So, Maung Ya	1938.2 <i>mat</i>	„
29	Anauk Win	114	Maung Yan Kin, Maung Kaing	1772.2 <i>mat</i>	„

Source: Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 279-290

Some servicemen of inner guards or household servicemen were recruited since the time of Alaungmintaya from the war captives. the majority of such *ahmu-dans* were recruited from Bodon, Kabaing, Maungdaung, Monywa, Monywe, Kyei-mon, Nyaung-gan, Nga-pa-yin etc.<sup>32</sup> In King Thibaw reign, some intimate person with king became *bo*-captain of the afore said palace guards. For example, Maung Maung Toke who was supposed to the main author of the massacre of royal kinsmen at the beginning of King Thibaw's reign became the captain of North Dawe regiment. He was also rewarded as *Let-thon-daw-gyi* -one who had the special permission to hold the king's sword, lance and musket. In King

<sup>32</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 279-282



Thibaw's reign there were altogether 4028 servicemen. An English evidence mentions the forces of Inner Regiments or palace servicemen as follows;

	<b>North Wing</b>	<b>South Wing</b>	<b>Total</b>
Marabin	850	350	1200
Dawè	600	500	1100
Taya-nga-sè	700	500	1200
Shwepyi Hman-gin	-	-	800
Natshin Ywe			800
		<b>Total</b>	<b>51100<sup>33</sup></b>

The garrison troops of the royal capital were mentioned as follows;

	<b>Right Wing</b>	<b>Left Wing</b>	<b>Total</b>
Gyaung	600	700	1300
Ywe	550	650	1200
Nat-su	750	550	1300
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3800<sup>34</sup></b>

Royal security forces in Konbaung period were comprised of cavalry units, elephanteers, musketeers, gunners, boatmen, *daing*-shield bearing infantry units and *hlan*-lancers. The settlements of these regiments can be seen throughout Central Myanmar.<sup>35</sup> Of these regiments, cavalry horsemen were reorganized in Konbaung period. The largest regiment of cavalry men was Shwe-pyi Yan-aung Cavalry Division. It was divided into two sub-divisions, viz Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry Division (East), comprising Hlaingdet, Meiktila, Nyaung-yan, Pindale', Hta-yan- ga, Taik-hti-hlaing (Wun-dwin), Tha-ga-ra (Thazi), Ya-naung, Yamethin

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<sup>33</sup>Scott & Hardiman, 1900, 498

<sup>34</sup>Scott & Hardiman, 1900,498

<sup>35</sup>See Map (1)

and Yindaw. Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry Division (West) was comprised of Pyinzi, Kyauk-sauk, Nyaung-ok, Taung-tha, Pin, Natmauk, Kyaukpadaung, Popa and Tassungdwingyi.<sup>36</sup> The former cavalry groups before the Konbaung period were incorporated into Shwepyi Yan-aung. These groups were thirty-six Pyinzi Horses<sup>37</sup>, the forty-four Kyauk-sauk Horses<sup>38</sup> and fifty-five Ta-lok Horses.<sup>39</sup> Although their settlement has mingled with *su-lat* or *a-thi* area, they were separately administered by *myin-zi*-mounted officials and *myin-gaung*-cavalry officials. During Badon Min's reign, the cavalry groups like *let-ywei-nge*, Lanbu, Yu-daw-mu, Saw-buk-O, Khet-Lon, Dewa Alan-sein, theikdi-ha Sayai, Dewa Theikdi Hasari, Kupi Zayun, Myanmar, Taungbet Ko Thin-*myin*, Myauk-pet Ko-thin-*myin*, Kathe'-*myin* (Manipuri horsemen), Akkabat-*myin* (Cachari horsemen), Myo-ba-*myin*, Myin-zu-gyi, Ye'-yi-hman, Si-pottaya-*myin*, Si-tha-*myin*, Dabayin-*myin*, Pakhan-*myin*, Nin-daw-hnei-*myin*, Nauk-taw-pa-*myin*, Kyundaw-haung-*myin* and *Let-ywei-nge-myin* were expanded for military expeditions.<sup>40</sup>

After the two Wars with the British and with neighbouring countries, the strength of cavalry regiments was reduced to certain extent. For instance, *Kathe* cavalry regiment, organized by Alaungmintaya, since his conquest of Manipur

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<sup>36</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 207

<sup>37</sup>Frank N. Trager and William J.Koenig, *Burmese Sit-tans 1764-1826: Records of Rural life and Administration*, with the Assistance of Yi Yi, William J.Koenig (trans), Tucson, Arizona University Press, 1979, p.309 (Henceforth: Trager and Koenig, 1979)

<sup>38</sup>Trager and Koenig, 1979, 295

<sup>39</sup>"*Ta-lok Myo Thwe-thauk Sa-yin*" (List of the Blood-bond Elite Crown Service Units of Talok Myo'), Palm-leaf M.S, University Central Library Collection, U No. 14874 (Henceforth: Palm-leaf M.S 14874 MCLC)

<sup>40</sup>Maung Tint, "*Badon Min Let-htet Sit-hmu-dan*" (Military Servicemen in Badon Min's Reign), Myanmar Historical Bulletin, No. 2, 1978, pp. 69-70(Henceforth:Tint,1978)

with 2000 men, was decreased to 825 in Ya-ta-na-pôn period.<sup>41</sup> The strength of other cavalry groups were likely to be reduced in later Konbaung period. There were altogether 5275 cavalry man under king Thibaw.<sup>42</sup>

Whenever Myanmar Kings expanded their sphere of influence and power, Elephantry Regiments played a crucial role in the battle fields<sup>43</sup> in early Konbaung period. Alaungmintaya, founder of Konbaung Dynasty, had himself rode the royal elephant Yadana Htutkhaung in the battle field.<sup>44</sup> His successors Myeidu *Min*, Badon *Min* and Sagaing *Min* used elephants in the warfare. However the first and Second Anglo-Myanmar wars proved the fact that the elephantry regiments were suitable only in the conventional warfares. Effective field guns became the decisive elements in the battlefields of the second half of nineteenth century. During the later Konbaung period, the use of elephant in warefares gradually dwindled.

Elephants in Later Konbaung period herefore were mainly used in the pageant royal processions. The lands allotted to the elephanteers can be seen in Chausug Oo, Sa-gu, Sa-don, Da-ze, Petpandaw, Pin, Phaunglin, Ma-u-gyi, Le-zin, Thet-ke'-gyaung Italin, Thit Seint, Wun-byei, Chaung-u, and some villages of Chindwin Valley.<sup>45</sup> During the Ya-ta-na-pôn period, following elephant groups and elephanteers can be seen in the table of next page.

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<sup>41</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 267

<sup>42</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 198

<sup>43</sup>For the role of elephant in Myanmar Kingship, society and culture, See, Pale Aung, "Elephant in Myanmar Society (1752-1885)", Ph.D, Dissertation, Department of History, University of Mandalay, May 2007, pp. 1-58 (Henceforth: Pale Aung , 2007)

<sup>44</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 a, 229

<sup>45</sup>Pale Aung, 2007, Table. XXXIII, XIV

**Table- IX**  
**List of Elephanteers and Salaries**

No.	Name of Elephant Group	Elephant men	Salary
1	<i>Htu Sin</i> -used by the King	15	
2	<i>Si-Zu Sin-ma-daw</i> (Crown's use)	18	
3	<i>Htu-sin-ma-daw</i> (Crown's use)	9	
4	<i>Sin-daw-gyi</i> (Crown's use)	17	
5	<i>Ywei-sin</i> (used in Elephant regiments)	34	
6	<i>Win-sin</i> (used in Palace)	34	
7	<i>Htan-sin</i> (pack-elephant)	10	
8	<i>Hmein-thit-sin-daw</i>	13	
9	Kyin-sin (used in royal funerals)	?	
10	<i>Nauk-pè</i> Elephanteers		570 <i>pès</i> of land
11	<i>Auk-ma Sa-yei</i>	2	100 <i>kyats</i> each
12	Overseer of <i>Auk-ma</i> Servicemen	5	100 <i>kyats</i> each
13	<i>Auk-ma</i> Servicemen	220	2200 <i>kyats</i>
14	Messenger of Elephanteers	20	215 baskets of paddy
15	<i>Hsin-min Wun-dauk</i> (Assistant Ministers of Elephantry Groups)	2	200 <i>kyats</i>
16	<i>Hsin-min Na-gan</i>	4	120 <i>kyats</i>
17	<i>Hsin-min Sayes-gyi</i>	4	120 <i>kyats</i>
18	<i>Hsin-min Nauk-taw-htaing</i>	10	300 <i>kyats</i>
19	Clerk of <i>Danet Pala Hsin-wun</i>	1	15 <i>kyats</i>
20	<i>Da-net Pala</i> Servicemen	30	300 <i>kyats</i>
21	Mounted Elephanteers	654	6540 <i>kyats</i>

No.	Name of Elephant Group	Elephnat -men	Salary
22	Mounted Elephanteers (With elephant)	470	4700 kyats
23	Royal Household Elephanteers	8	300 kyats
24	Collectors of Elephant fodder	7	75 kyats
25	General Servicemen	61	660 kyats
26	Officer in-charge-of Trainers	30	325 baskets of paddy
27	<i>Hsin Sa-chi</i>	5	250 kyats
28	Physicians of Elephant	5	100 kyats
29	<i>Hsin Hmu</i> (Officer of mounted Servicemen)	18	360 kyats
30	<i>Hsin-kè</i>	5	75 kyats
31	Physicians of Elephants	5	100 kyats

Source: Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 256-2665

Armed servicemen of Myanmar Kings experienced fire arms in the wars against the Chinese during the second half of fourteenth century.<sup>46</sup> During that period, Chinese took upper hand position over Myanmar forces by using firearms.<sup>47</sup> Myanmar sources mention that Myanmar's first use of firearm (musket) at the beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> During the reigns of Tabinshwehti and Bayinnaung, warrior kings of Taungoo Dynasty, advanced fire arms technology

<sup>46</sup>Michael W. Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare (1300-1900)*, Leidan, Brill Academic Publishers, 2004, p.44 (Henceforth: Charney, 2004)

<sup>47</sup>Sun Laichen, "Military Technology Traslfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (e. 1390-1572), National University of Singapore, Vol. 34, part. iii, 2004, pp. 497-500 (Henceforth: Sun Laichen, 2003)

<sup>48</sup>Kala, 2006 b, 311 - 12

arrived Myanmar through the Portuguese mercenaries.<sup>49</sup> As have mentioned earlier, after the Anaukpetlun conquest of Thanlyin, Portuguese captives were incorporated into musketeers and artillery groups. During the Konboun period, Alaungmintaya organized thirteen musket regiments, comprising two palace guards, four bodyguards and seven field regiments, with 2698 men.<sup>50</sup> Almost all of these musketeers were recruited from Shwebo and *Mony-wa* districts. In Badon Min's reign, Dawei, Bayingyi, Gwe, Kyaukka, *Kyundaw Marabin*, Letwe' *Marabin*, *Letya Marabin*, *Lin Zin*, *Sun-Lun* and *Ta-ya-nga-se-daw* musketeers were reorganized. It is interesting to note that *thwei-thauk-su*-blood bonded elite servicemen and musketeer groups and cavalry groups were mingled, for instance, one can see *Talok Myin-myei Thwe-thauk*, *Pyin-si Thwei-thauk*, *Shweh-lan Letya Thwei-thauk* and *Kalabyo The-nat thwei-thauk* as the infantry servicemen.<sup>51</sup> Therefore it is difficult to say all *thwei-thauk* servicemen were related with the musketeers.

The kings frequently inspected the number of servicemen and their household members to prevent from deserting or absconding their assigned regiments or moving to other groups. When Badon Min enquired the *Pathi Kalabyo Thwei-thauk*, from Dabayin, Pyanchi Gonnahtin, chief of the regiment, traced the lineage of *Pathi Kalabyo*-muslim musketeers to the reign of Tabinshwehti.<sup>52</sup> However all musketeers in Badon Mins reign were administered by *Thwei-thauk-kyi*.<sup>53</sup> After the first Anglo-Myanmar War, 2239 musketeers, 2280

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<sup>49</sup>Harvey, 1967, 155, 159

<sup>50</sup>(a)( Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 a, 56, 66, 157, 210

(b) Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 28, 283-285

<sup>51</sup>Tint, 1979, 71-72

<sup>52</sup> "1145 M.E Pathi Kalabyo Thwei-thauk Sittan", *Parabaik*, M.S, U Thaung, Ye-U, Collection (Henceforth: *Parabaik*, M.S UTC)

<sup>53</sup>(a) Than Tun, 1986, 791-900

(b) Than Tun, 1987, 481-432

*hlan-gaing-lance* bearers 586 cavalrymen were stationed in the Shan states and other frontier areas like Mo-ne', Nyaung-shwe, Le'-cher, Yauk-sauk, Thon-ze, Ho-pon etc. while 1170 musketeers, 1140 lance bearers and 145 cavalrymen were performing the duties of expedition to Shan States.<sup>54</sup> It is believed that majority of musket groups were greatly reduced after the first Anglo-Myanmar War. In king Mindon's reign, the formation of armed servicemen regiments was much different from that of his predecessors. In early Konbaung period, the use of fire arms, muskets and guns, was less than that of middle Konbaung period. The army formation in those days was greatly relied on the conventional weapons of sword, lance, bows and arrows. So the early kings mobilized armies with massive manpower. The formation was thus no match with the military maneuver of the British armies in the first two Anglo-Myanmar Wars.

King Mindon, on 6 April 1853, sought the reasons why Myanmar armies could not withstand the attacks of British and he planned to carry out the following reformations.

- (1) to raise a more powerful fighting force,
- (2) to give top priority to get sufficient supplies of war material whatever available,
- (3) to boost up the morale of the fighting men, and
- (4) to collect provisions from places along the big river.

Without causing much hardship on the people for the aforesaid purposes, the king appointed town officers and special officers to materialize the army reformation. *Myit-sin-wun*-governor of Riverine Districts was assigned to administer the officials. The king also ordered to make precautionary measures to

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<sup>54</sup>Win Myint Aung, "Gunners of Myanmar Kings (1752-1885)", Ph.D Dissertation, Department of History, University of Mandalay, May 2007, pp. 48-49 (Henceforth: Win Myint Aung, 2007)

de feud royal capital by building fortress at the important sites.<sup>55</sup> The king convinced the situation which required drastic changes to compete with the British who became his very next door neighbours. He had great wishes to transform his 50, 000 armed servicemen<sup>56</sup> under modern training and to establish standing army. Existing rotating system of crown service was needed to abolish. A few young men were sent to Europe for training. French and Italian advisors were brought to Mandalay for the construction of new forts along Ayeyarwaddy River.<sup>57</sup> However the Kings attempt on army modernization has proved to be a showpiece project along with his other reformation in industry and administration. Although European advisors were employed for military training, trainees were ill-disciplined and gave little regard to their lessons. They even wasted their time by smoking, betel-chewing and making fun to each other.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the careful watching to each and every efforts of King Mindon by the British in Lower Myanmar became disturbances for the reformations of King Mindon.

The formation of army under King Thibaw was a mixture of customary style and western professional lines.<sup>59</sup> The garrison regiments of the royal capital were comprised of infantry, artillery, elephantry and cavalry groups. Infantry servicemen groups included musketeers, (*Shei-win, Ya-win, Let-we'-win, nauk-win, Lagzedaw, Zimme, Yun*).<sup>60</sup> In addition to the musketeers, the pageant military

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<sup>55</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 334-36

<sup>56</sup>Pollack, 1979, 119

<sup>57</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 113

<sup>58</sup>Than Tun, 1968, 289

<sup>59</sup>(a) Ohn Kyi II, "*Thibaw-min Let-htet Myan-mar Naing-gan Ôk-chôk-yei 1878-1885*", (Administration of Myanmar Under King Thibaw), M.A, Thesis, Department of History, University of Mandalay, 1968, p.348 (Henceforth: Ohn Kyi II, 1968)

(b) for the formation of military units from Badon *Min* to Thibow *Min*, See Maung Tint 1979, 68, Win Myint Aung, 2007, 51-54

<sup>60</sup>Ohn Kyi II, 1968, 358



procession of king Thibaw, on 6 Waxing *Thadingyut* 1241 M.E, comprised following artillery groups.

### List of Artillery Groups

	Name of Artillery Group	Captain	No of Gun	No of Servicemen
1	Set-kya <i>A-myauk</i>	Hashin		113
2	Mingala <i>A-myauk</i>	Maung-kye'		113
3	Mingala <i>A-myauk</i> (Suleigon)	Bo Maung		113
4	Mingala <i>A-myauk</i> (Bon-oe)	Maung Yauk		113
5	Yan-bon-khwin	Maung Kha		113
6	Taung In	Maung Thaw		113
7	Nauk Toe	Maung Shwe Tun		113
8	Min-ga-la-sein	Thwei-thauk		56
		Maung Po		
<b>Total</b>			<b>70<sup>61</sup></b>	<b>847</b>

Source: Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 276-77

Two years before the outbreak of Third Anglo-Myanmar War, the total number of artillery servicemen has reduced to 975 to whom the king issued 9085 *kyats* as monthly salary.

In addition to the infantry regiments, royal fleet of war canoes and barges played an important role in the expansion of the kingdom. Since the time of early dynasties, Myanmar had experienced not only in the naval warfare, but also some servicemen experiend as sea farers.<sup>62</sup> Both Myanmar and contemporary source materials frequently deals with the role of Myanmar war-canoes in the warfare of Konbaung period. During the king Badon's reign, royal fleets of war canoes played

<sup>61</sup>Nos of Gun was not mentioned in the original list

<sup>62</sup>Dalrymple, 1926a,211-213

important role in the Rakhine campaigns according to the account of British Envoy, royal fleet of war boats and barges was comprised of 500 war boats, each of which has carried by fifty or sixty oarmen.<sup>63</sup> However during the first Anglo-Myanmar War Myanmar royal fleet did not play a major role and performed the transport of war materials and servicemen in Rakhine Front.<sup>64</sup> During the Second Anglo Myanmar War, Myanmar royal fleet could not wipe out the naval blockade of the British, comprised of only three battle ships. Almost all Myanmar War-canoes and barges were destroyed under the fire power of British battle ships. Even Myanmar king's ship was seized by the British navy.<sup>65</sup> During the king Mindon's reign, a shipyard was established to produce steamers not only for commercial purpose but for the defense of the kingdom. In that shipyard 127 servicemen were appointed.<sup>66</sup> However most steamers produced by Ya-ta-na-pôn shipyard could not run effectively. During the king Thibaw's reign, 564 servicemen, including captains, pilots, mechanics, boiler men, steersmen, were serving in the fleet of royal steamers, while 108 servicemen 154 servicemen were employed in the producing and repairing of dump crafts, barges and river boats. When the king reorganized administrative departments, department of royal navy was separately functionalized under Wundauk Hlaingdet *Myo-za* Mingyi Maha Mingaung Thinkhaya.<sup>67</sup> After the reorganization of administrative department into nine ministries, Sa-le *Myo-za* Mingyi Thiri Maha Zeya Kyawhtin, interior minister of the department of royal navy, appealed the king to grant salary to the servicemen and to attach musketeers to the royal steamers and boats.<sup>68</sup> The king

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<sup>63</sup>Symes, 1968, 320-21

<sup>64</sup>Phon Kyaw, 1966,17,23

<sup>65</sup>Phon Kyaw, 1966, 203

<sup>66</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 244

<sup>67</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 327

<sup>68</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c

reorganized the servicemen of royal navy and appointed an Italian and French man as the advisors of royal navy. There were 5466 miscellaneous servicemen and officials in royal navy to whom monthly salary, totally 47899 *kyats*, was allotted.<sup>69</sup> Although the kings of later Konbaung period attempted to modernize the army organization lack of exposure of the officials and servicemen, the disturbances of the British in Lower Myanmar, particularly after Second Anglo- Myanmar War, and the frequent outbreaks of court rebellions kept the reformation under staggering pace.

### **Non- military Servicemen**

Of the non-military *a-hmu-dans*, *lamaing*-hereditary crown cultivators were noteworthy. Although their social status was supposed to be inferior to that of military *a-hmu-dans*, they were the very backbone of the agrarian economy of precolonial period. Although the origins of *lamaing* group traced back to the Bagan period, there was only vague evidence to testify the existence of such groups. After the collapse of Bagan, the seat of royal power was moved to Inwa, the capital commands the major granaries of Kyaukse, Taungbyon and Mu Valley. From that time on, Aungpinle Hton-don, Let-thit, Tha-mè-gon, Myo-tin villages were known as *Let-ya-daw Lamaing*-crown cultivator group (right) and Nanda south village and Nanda north village became *Let-wè-daw Lamaing*-crown cultivator group (right).<sup>70</sup> After the conquest of Manipur by Alaungmintaya 1758, Manipuri captives were incorporated into the said Let-wè and Let-ya *Lamaing* groups. All *Lamaing* groups were put under the jurisdiction of *Lamaing-wun* or *Shwe-nan-yo Lamaing-wun*-Officer of Crown Cultivators. During the Badon Min's

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<sup>69</sup>For the number of servicemen, royal steamers, boats, *sampans*, and barges, see (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 359-360, Maung Maung Tin, 2005, . 253-255

<sup>70</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 151

reign Taung-bet *Lamaing* and Nga Singu *Lamaing* were organized.<sup>71</sup> As they were assigned to work on the crown land, their settlements can be seen in the granary areas like Kyauk-se, Taungbyon, Madaya, Mu Valley and Minbu districts. For instance, the following villages of Kyaukse District were settled by *lamaing* groups in Badon *Min's* reign:

- (1) Ta Ohn Village
- (2) Ywa Nan Village
- (3) Min-dat Village
- (4) Myokhayu Village
- (5) U-yin-daw-gyi Village
- (6) Nga-pyaw-Ine Tayoke-su Village, and
- (7) Than Ywa Village<sup>72</sup>

The kings of Konbaung period took intensive care to maintain the *Lamaing* population. According to the list of population collected after the first Anglo-Myanmar, there were two added *Lamiaing*, viz-*Nan-ma-daw-phaya Lamaing*- the crown cultivators who working on the chief queen's lands and Hanthawaddy *Lamaing*. The total population of these *Lamaing* groups was numbered 8131 souls.<sup>73</sup> The kings therefore frequently issued order forbidding the marriage between *Lamaing* group and other servicemen. Anyone who married *Lamaing* cultivator, he or she had to discard the original service group to join *Lamaing* group. Even the princes or crown prince had to put the buffalo head to dance before the palace, if they married the *Lamaing* woman.<sup>74</sup> When *Lamaing* cultivators were summoned for carrying things with bullock-carts, they were

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<sup>71</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 114

<sup>72</sup> Than Tun, 2004, 194

<sup>73</sup> "*Lamaing A-hmu-dam Sayin Phaya*" (Compiled by Myawadi Myoza), *Parabaik*, M.S, National Library Collection, No. 732 (Henceforth: *Parabaik*, M.S 732)

<sup>74</sup> Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 151

allotted two baskets of paddy as salary.<sup>75</sup> Their share from yield of crown land was 86 baskets and three *seiks*<sup>76</sup> per 100 baskets. During the reign of King Mindon, there were 466 *pè* of three principal queens below the Aungpinle Lake<sup>77</sup> and over 400 *pes* in royal gardens around royal capital. In addition, the list collected in 1868 shows that there were 11650 *pès* in Aungpinle, Nanda and Tamokso Lakes. As almost all these lands were occupied by queens, princes, princesses and officials *Lamaings* played the important role to increase yield of paddy. The social and economic conditions of *Lamaings* were attributed to be more secure than that of other crown service group.

In addition to the *Lamaing a-su*, there were some craftsmen and artisans under crown service. They were primarily divided into *su-thei*-menial servicemen of palace chambers, *su-nu*-craftsmen comprising embroidery tapestry servicemen, etc and *su-gyan* comprising boatmen, servicemen of lock-up, executioners etc.<sup>78</sup> After the establishments of manufacturing factories under crown initiation in Mandalay, the number of crown servicemen swallowed with the servicemen of industries.<sup>79</sup> Some of them were not allotted lands for subsistence. Instead they were granted paddy or cash for their service.

### **Privileges and Problems**

As have known, the outstanding privilege of *a-hmu-dans* was the crown granted lands which created a clear division between the social status of crown servicemen and that of *a-this*-common tax-paying people. As the crown servicemen primarily

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<sup>75</sup> Than Tun, 1986, 349

<sup>76</sup>Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 150

<sup>77</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, NLC No. 1130

<sup>78</sup> Tin, 1970, 41-42

<sup>79</sup> For categories, population and salary of industrial servicemen, see Maung Maung Tin, 2005, 237-252

settled in the river valleys, irrigated zones of central Myanmar, their lands seems to be the productive ones.<sup>80</sup> For instance, during King Mindon's reign at the beginning of 1870s, the crown service-land in Kyaukse area was estimated to be 23609.75 *pe'*.<sup>81</sup> The list collected in 1877 shows the dramatic increase of crown service and in same area to 41464 *pe'*.<sup>82</sup> In Mandalay area the crown service land in Aungpinle, Nanda and Tamoksoe lakes numbered over 17, 000 *pe's*.<sup>83</sup> It is interesting to note that the crown servicemen in Ya-ta-na-pôn period still enjoyed the former privilege of possessing lands even after the introduction of cash salary system by King Mindon in 1865. Apart from the lands, a prominent privilege of military *a-hmu-dans* was *nauk-htauik kyei*-supplementary contribution from the non-service house holds to support the troops.<sup>84</sup> The military *a-hmu-dans* were expected to gain rewards in the battle fields. Particularly in the reigns of warrior kings like Bayinnaung, and Alaungmintaya, the military *a-hmu-dans* were rewarded lavishly. Even war booties were allowed to share between the officials and servicemen.<sup>85</sup> Owing to these privileges, the social and economic life of *a-hmu-dans* can be attributed to be secured to certain extent and *a-hmu-dans* were

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<sup>80</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, NLC 1130, *Parabaik* M.S NLC 1164, *Parabaik* M.SS, Thet Thet Naing, Tutor Department of History, Yenanchaung Degree College, Collection (Henceforth: *Parabaik* M.S, TTNC)

<sup>81</sup> "*Ko Kha-yaing Pe Sa-yin*" (List of Cultivated Lands in (Kyaukse) Nine District), *Parabaik* M.S, National Library Collection, No.1404 (Henceforth: *Parabaik* ,NLC, 1409)

<sup>82</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, NLC, No. 728

<sup>83</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, NLC, No. 1130

<sup>84</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 838

<sup>85</sup>(a) Damrong, "Our Wars with the Burmese", U Aung Thein (trans), *Journal of The Burma Research Society*, Vol.XXXVIII, part. ii, Dec 1955, and Vol. XL, part.tii Dec 1957, passim (Henceforth: Damrong,1957)

(b)( Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 *a*, 150-58, 125, 194

thought to be embraced their duties enjoyably. The real social life of *ahmu-dan* can be seen as follows;

### **Problems and Attempts for Survival**

Some scholars on Myanmar history use the term "dichotomy" to make a distinction between *a-hmu-dans* and *a-this*.<sup>86</sup> The term actually reliable to refer difference of these two groups merely while there was no difference of social and economic sufferings. Both *a-hmu-dans* and *a-this* were vulnerable to the misrule of the government and misconduct of their officials, famine, internal strife, and natural calamities. There were numerous evidences dealing with the mortgage of lands and other household properties of *a-hmu-dans* under economic sufferings. Even the hereditary officials and Crown appointed officials borrowed money to pay the expenses of town affairs and to present the homage ceremony at the royal capital.<sup>87</sup> Sometimes, the practice of *Ka-daw* or pay homage to the superior ones laid a heavy burden not only on the commoners, but on the crown servicemen and their respective officials. Sometimes, crown servicemen were molested by their respective officials. Some royal orders of later Konbaung period mention that crown servicemen were exploited by their respective captains in working on their allotted lands.<sup>88</sup> They were also forced to serve in the household works of influential officials and royalties at the royal capital. The crown servicemen living around Taungbyon, Sagaing, Tada-u, Myo-tha, Madaya, Myittha, Ku-me', Amarapura, Taung-dwin and even from Pinyinmana submitted petitions to the king

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<sup>86</sup>Koenig, 1990, 107

<sup>87</sup>"*Kani Myo-thu-gyi Hnint Myo A-si-a-yin-mya Ngwe-chei Sa-gyok*" (Money-Borrowing Deeds of Kani Myothugyi and Lesser Officers), *Parabaik* M.SS, No. 12, 24, 26, 30, Khin Saw Oo, Department of History, Loikaw University Collection (Henceforth: *Parabaik* M.SS KSOC)

<sup>88</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 494

to release from such service.<sup>89</sup> On 5 June 1875 King Mindon issued law on *Nauk-htauk-kyei* which prevented from alienating the crown service lands by themselves or by their officers, and from confiscating the yield of crown servicemen by their officers.<sup>90</sup> It is difficult to know the result of King's order under customary practices of embezzlements and corruptions. Thus follow-up order, dated 1 March 1879, can be seen which prohibited the officers of royal boatmen from taking some portions of yield from their servicemen.<sup>91</sup> Although military servicemen were rewarded lands and other provisions for their subsistence, there were some absconders from their service. The punishment was extremely severe. After the conquest of Rakhine in Badon *Min* reign, some servicemen deserted their levies. So Badon Min ordered *Myo-wuns* and *Sit-ke'* to arrest the absconders.<sup>92</sup> More severe order of Badon Min in 1797 reads,

Search and arrest all absconders from Mo-ne' expedition. Burn them alive with their household members. *Taik-wun*, *Taik-sayei*, *Su-htein* and *Su-ok* shall submit the absconders. Execute all *Taik-wun*, *Taik-sayei*, *Su-htein* and *Su-ok*, who failed to perform their duties.<sup>93</sup>

If the servicemen could manage to escape to other regions, the remaining household members, of the escape would be punished by death sentences. Even officials and princess who reluctant to carry out such severe duties, the king ordered "if I heard such reluctant, thou shall not hear my order second time."<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 500-505

<sup>90</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 884-85

<sup>91</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 959

<sup>92</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, UTC (typescript, 106)

<sup>93</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, UTC (typescript, 107)

<sup>94</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, UTC (typescript, 202)



The most disturbing problems for the stability of socio-economic life were the court rebellions. As have known, some rebellions broke out in palace enclosure. However, some spread to the provincial areas and greatly molested the local people. In later Konbaung period, Myingun-Myinkhondaing rebellion of 1866 greatly affected the areas of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East) and (West). In addition subsequent rebellion of Badein Prince greatly molested the Shwebo and Sagaing Districts.<sup>95</sup> The rebellions brought about the social unrest in such townships as Kyaukpadaung, Natmauk, Magwe, Pin, Taungdwingyi in the west and Meiktila, Paleik, Pyawbwei, Pyin-zi in the east. The people living in those areas became sandwich between the fighting of rebel levies and crown armies. Many villages within this area were burnt down to ashes by the rebels due to their loyalty to the king.<sup>96</sup> The instability of social life created by rebellion was revealed by the following letter of *Thudhama Sayadaws*. The letter reads,

We the Thuddhama Sayadaws, by order of his Majesty, send this order to gaing-ok and gaing-dauk of Kon-zaung in Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East)... Spare lives and properties of those who did not follow the rebels<sup>97</sup>... Gaing-ok and gaing-dauk shall admonish the Myo-wun, sit-ke' and other officers not to persecute the people whom they suspected as the followers of Myin-gun and Ba-dein<sup>98</sup>

Although *Thudama Sayadaws* and local *Sayadaws* attempted to restore the situation, many crown servicemen, altogether with *a-this*, run away from their

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<sup>95</sup>Toe Hla, 2004,35

<sup>96</sup>Sir Charles Croswaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, London, Frank Case and Co.,Ltd 1968 (Reprint), p.114 ( Henceforth: Croswaite,1968)

<sup>97</sup>Myin-gun and Myinkhondaing's followers

<sup>98</sup>"*Sint-sa*" (Order of Thudhamma Sayadaw), *Parabaik* M.S, Meiktila University Library Collection, No. 250 (Henceforth: *Parabaik* M.S MULC)

villages. They were found settled in British territory. According to a report dated 4 July 1875, from the local headmen of Amyintmyo to the *Hlut-taw*, it is stated that Nga To and Nga Mo, servicemen of Da-we Regiment (North) escaped to British Myanmar.<sup>99</sup> King Mindon passed a series of order to call them back to Upper Myanmar. He offered the returnees to exempt from paying taxes within five years. However some officials took the opportunity to exploit the returnees.<sup>100</sup> Owing to the movement of crown servicemen and commoners to Lower Myanmar, the situation of Upper Myanmar has never recovered to a peaceful one and weakened the provincial administration. These chaotic situations dragged on to the end of monarchy.

To sum up, the crown servicemen were organized by the kings of early times. They performed the miscellaneous duties of administration, warfare and even of the construction works of dams, weirs etc. *Lamaing*, the crown cultivators, played a crucial role for the development of agrarian economy. Naturally crown servicemen were supposed to be possessed higher social status than that of *a-this*-commoners. However they shared common woe with *a-this*. Severe punishments on those who absconded their reigments became questionable on the attitudes and sentiment of *a-hmu-dans* whether they embracing their duties enjoyably. As they played as the very backbone of customary rule, the provincial administration was paralyzed due to the collapse of *a-hmu-dan* community after the outbreak of Myin-gun—Myinkhondaing Rebellion.

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<sup>99</sup>"Report of Amyint Town clerk and Captain of Servicemen", 4 July 1875, *Parabaik*, M.S, UTC

<sup>100</sup>The repercussion of Myin-gun rebellion will be discussed in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A-THI AT THE GRASS ROOT LEVEL

The term *a-thi* is nowadays an extinct one which denoted the tax-paying commoners under pre-colonial rule. They settled in a permanent place called *su-lut* areas or the areas where the crown servicemen did not settle.<sup>1</sup> The areas settled by *a-this* were called *a-thi-taings* and *a-this* were also known as *taing-htans*.<sup>2</sup> They were administered by *a-thi-wun* commoners. *A-this* were regarded inferior to both military and non-military servicemen. Although they were not allotted to reclaim lands and these lands were customarily known as *bo-ba-paing-myei*-ancestral lands. The main responsibility of *a-thi* was to pay customary taxes known as *dasamabaga*<sup>3</sup> thithe or *tha-tha-mei-da*<sup>4</sup> income tax which was introduced in latter konbaung period. Although they were not liable to regular service, they might be recruited on occasions of emergency or warfare as military *a-hmu-dams*. *A-this* usually founded small villages near the lands they cultivated. Their village was of a closed type. They inter-married, knew and helped each other and over time, a tradition of co-operation gradually developed and villages came to resemble a large family.

As the local scarcity and sometimes serious famine forced the people to desert their native lands to move to the other places, the majority of new comers were probably not *a-this*. Those who deserted their original place and settled in a

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<sup>1</sup>Tin, 1976, 4

<sup>2</sup>*Jam-bu-di-pa Ôk-saung-kyan* (Jainbudipa in Nutshell) J.S, Furnivall and Pe Maung Tin (ed), Yangon, Burma Research Society, 1960, p. *Khu* (Henceforth: *Jam-bu-di-pa*, 1960)

<sup>3</sup>Tin, 1970,59

<sup>4</sup>*Tha-tha-mei-da* tax was exacted since the time of Mindon *Min*

new place was called *Kat-pa*. They became *Kyeik-su-a-thi* or quasi- *a-thi* of the community. Although they were immigrants from other communities, they were allowed to cultivate on the lands of *a-thi* by taking permission of local authorities. So they had to share the communities' taxes and service obligations. The king recognized the status of *Kyeik-su-a-thi* and sometimes they were organized into *Kyeik-su-taing*. The local headmen had to submit the population of *Kyeik-su-a-thi* in *Sit-tans*.<sup>5</sup> The children born to the union of the *athis* and *kap-pa* were called *a-las*.<sup>6</sup> The inheritance to the parentis property was decided through *gyo-bo-gyo-mahton*- male inherited father's and female mother's property. The son of *a-thi* father by *Kappa* mother could inherit the land and property of his father and daughter did not posses such rights.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Responsibilities of A-this**

The most important responsibility of the *A-thi* was paying taxes. According to Myanmar kingship, the king, in accord with his coronation oath, had to rule justly while he was able to claim one-tenth of the people's produce. The tax was known as *dasamabaga* items. In addition to *dhasamabaga*, land tax, irrigation or water tax collected in the wet-rice cultivation zones of Central Myanmar, and *hse-hna-hmu-min-daing* twelve items, to be submitted to the king, comprising resin of nim tree, plant fiber, tamarind, earth-oil, molasses, kapok, bael fruit, etc.<sup>8</sup> The kings of Konbaung period appointed hereditary officials for the judicial and revenue administration of the provincial areas. However, as it is known, as the economy of the whole kingdom has greatly relied on the agriculture, the people were able to

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<sup>5</sup>Trager and Koenig, 1979,277

<sup>6</sup>Tin, 1976, 5

<sup>7</sup>J.S Furnivall, *An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma*, Yangon, People's Literature House, 1957,p. 34(Henceforth: Furnivall, 1957)

<sup>8</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2005, 330

pay taxes in the years of regular harvests. In the years of poor harvest, the king could not impose taxes as he expected. In such situations, the king had to exempt the collection of taxes. For example, when Sagaing *Min* ascended the throne on 7 June 1819, the king exempted from the assessment of *dassamabaga* for three years. He even ordered his officers and local headmen to look after the welfare of the people by exempting miscellaneous taxes and revenues.<sup>9</sup> With the exception of such period of tax exemption, the people were generally forced to pay tax. Many land mortgage deeds and money-lending deeds reveal the fact that the people were forced to mortgage their lands and borrow money for such reasons as *ywa-hmu-saung-yan*,<sup>10</sup> *ywa-hmu-twet-pay-yan*<sup>11</sup> to pay charges or tax, to pay *min-hmu-kywei*, to pay crown tax<sup>12</sup> etc.

Sometimes, taxation and maladministration caused instability in the village community. As the local headmen were entrusted the whole administration, the revenue administration also has fallen into the hands of these officials. The rates of tax assessment were naturally different from one place to another. If an official conducted misrule for his own benefit, the people could not present their grievances to the king. In this situation, local monk leaders wrote epistles to the king to mention the sufferings of people. Let me mention Kyi-gan Shin-gyi

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<sup>9</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 162-163 *Let-ma-yun* (Executioner), Kan Ywa Village, Salin

<sup>10</sup>"Money-borrowing Deed of Nga San Bet, Nga Kyaw Zan", *Parabark*, M.S, Dated 7 Waxing Tabodwe 1172 M.E, Daw Thaug Thaug Collection, (Henceforth: DTTC)

<sup>11</sup>"Land-mortgage Deed of Maung Tha Taw, Salin", *Parabaik*, M.S, Date 8 Woning Wazo, 1174 M.E,(Henceforth: DTTC, No. 1-16)

<sup>12</sup>"Land-mortgage Deed of Nat-yin-daung Thugy"i, 13 September 1835 , *Pei* M.S , No.7, Khin Saw Oo, Tutor, Department of History , Loikaw University Collection , (Henceforth: DTTC , No.1-16)

*Sayadaw's* epistle which shed light on the situation of people before the outbreak of the First Anglo-Myanmar War. The epistle reads,

The date fixed by you, lord, for the final payment of taxes, and tolls is past, but the revenue from our village still remain uncollected, the villager faced a financial crisis of their own. The expected and carefully calculated income, so regular in the past has failed to accrue: the creditors press for repayment of debts, and all business, trade and crafts are disturbed state. On top of all, there are old taxes and new tolls to pay. Troubled and despondent, many villages and it is only through the assistance and leadership of the elders that village has been saved from complete disintegration.<sup>13</sup>

After the First Anglo-Myanmar War, Sagaing *Min's* government was forced to pay war indemnity to the British. The government imposed heavy taxation not only on the internal trade but on the people. When Major Henry Burney, the first British envoy for the establishment of Residency in the capital, came up to Inwa, he met a Danish merchant Marowly at Pyay. Marowly told Burney that the people were heaving imposed taxes for war compensation and as a result the economic life of the country was deteriorated.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Nauk-htauk-kyei***

An important cash contribution by the people, next to *diassamabaga*, was *nauk-htauk-kyei* or *nauk-taw-pa-kyei* cash contribution of *athi* households to support the enlisted men for crown service at the royal capital or military expeditions.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of Sin-gu *Min's* reign, the kings of Konbaung dynasty waged the

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<sup>13</sup>Maung Htin Aung (ed and trans), *Epistles Written on the Eve of the First Anglo Burmese War*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff , 1965 , pp. 9-10 (Henceforth : Htin Aung , 1965)

<sup>14</sup>Desai, 1939,64

<sup>15</sup>Thein Hlaing, 2002 , 82

wars not only with the neighboring countries or with the foreign invaders like the British but to douse the internal strife. Although the kingly virtues check the royal power from imposing heavy taxation on the people, the successive war fares forced the kings to collect taxes and cash contribution from the people. Only Sin-gu *Min's* reign was noted by the chroniclers as "Sin-gu *Min* was fond of lavish donation, and his reign was noteworthy for the absence of taxation, cash contribution to the crown and kingdom was generally in peace and prosperity".<sup>16</sup>

The highest cash contribution of *a-thi* can be seen among the cavalry areas. Wherever cavalry officers summoned *htaung-hni-like-htan-* conscription for cavalry regiment, *a-thi* household of *a-thi-taing* had to pay cash buying horse, food, clothing etc for newly recruited one. Each household inevitably had to pay their share of cash contribution, which ranged from 5 *kyats* of silver to 40.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes each *a-thi* household member had to be paid 5 *kyats* as *nauk-htauk-kyei*. Following list shows the cash contributions asked by the King Bodawpaya for his military campaigns.

1. List of cash contribution for Rakhine Expedition in 1784 demanded (three times)
2. Exacting cash on the people for Ayuthia Expedition in 1785 (demanded two times)
3. Additional exacting for Ayuthia Expedition in 1786, led by Lamaing-wun (demanded three times)
4. Exacting cash for Chiangmai Expedition 1787 (with three additional demand), and

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<sup>16</sup>(Maung Maung Tin, 2004 a, 382)

<sup>17</sup>U Thaug (Ye-u) (comp), "*Konbaung-khit Pyit-yat Mya*" (Events of Konbaung Period: Social, Economic, Political, Administrative, Religious and Military Records) unpublished (Typescripts)n.d (Henceforth: Thaug,n.d)

5. Exacting cash for town garrison troops and for equestrian show held in 1785.  
(demanded two times)<sup>18</sup>

The above mentioned cash contributions of the people were conducted only in the reign of Badon *Min*. Most of these contributions were paid by the household of crown service groups.<sup>19</sup> However, in later Konbaung period, *a-thi-taings* were supposed to pay each contribution for military campaigns. During the reign of Thayadaddy *Min*, Chieng-mai invaded Kyaing-ton, a tributary state of the Kingdom of Myanmar. Thayawadi *Min* sent Mone` expedition led by Mingyi Maha Minhla Mingoungkyaw. Meanwhile Taung-baing *Saw-bwa* attempted to throw off Myanmar yoke. Thayawaddy *Min* made extensive conscriptions in Mo-meik, Mōng-Lon, Thi-bous, Thonze, Mo-gōk, Kyat-pyin and in some region from Mu and Chindwin valleys.<sup>20</sup> The people also made cash contributions for these campaigns. For instance, the people from Kani Township mortgaged their lands to contribute cash for the Mo-ni and other expeditions to the Shan States.<sup>21</sup> Demanding cash contribution from the people has still lingered on up to the reign of King Thibaw. In his reign, the defiance of Shan *Saw-bwas* of Mo-ni, Yauksauk, Thi-baw and some principalities of Kyain-yan-gyi (*Lu 12 panas*) has revised. Some of them like Mo-ni *Saw-bwa* refused to present regular homage ceremony to the royal capital. King Thibaw, therefore, sent expedition to Shan States.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, Manipuri Raja began to overrun Myanmar territory. King

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<sup>18</sup>Thaung , n.d , 30

<sup>19</sup>Toe Hla, 2004 , 175-76

<sup>20</sup> (Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c , 47-48

<sup>21</sup>(a) "Ya-dry land Mortgage Deed of Maung Myat Kyaw for Coch contribution for kyaing-yon-gyi Campaign, 29 May 1841" , *Parabaik* , M.S, KSOC

(b) "Debt-Settlement Deed of Kani Town Clerk Borrowed for Mo-nè Expedition", *Parabaik* , M.S, No.26, KSOC

<sup>22</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 362-363



Thibaw again sent expedition to wipe out the invaders. For these expeditions people were demanded cash contributions. In Taungdwingyi Region, village headmen conscripted men and demanded cash contribution for Mo-nè campaign<sup>23</sup> and Manipur expedition.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the demanding of cash contribution for the military expedition, the people had to contribute money for the servicemen garrisoning along the Lower Riverine Districts. Each household paid 12 *kyats* and two *pe's* as *nauk-htau-k-yei*. Some borrowed money, some mortgaged lands and some entered into servitude to pay *nauk-htau-key*.<sup>25</sup> As the customary political thought of Myanmar elaborated the role of the king as "the lord of life, head and hairs of his subject people", the king naturally possessed the right to claim the labour and certain portion of their income.

### ***Tha-tha-mei-da***

The First and the Second Anglo-Myanmar Wars exhausted the royal treasury and forced the King Mindon to relinquish the Bago Province, the most important source of royal revenue, and miscellaneous taxes of maritime trade to the British. At the beginning of his reign, King Mindon did not have intention to introduce new taxes and continue to impose customary taxes. However, as have mentioned, growing indebtedness laid a burden not only on the government but on the people in rural area. At the beginning of his reign, King Mindon issued an order in favour of poverty-stricken people. The order reads;

in both the capital city and provinces, some officers were in need of funds to carry out some Myo Hmu Ywa Hmu-State Work required of

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<sup>23</sup>"The Statement of Nga Myo Cha, Zabakyikyat Thugyi", 26 March 1883, *Parabaik*, M.S, Htay Htay Myint, Tutor Lashio

<sup>24</sup>"The Statement of Nga Yan Way, 13 April 1880", *Parabaik*, M.S, HHMC

<sup>25</sup>Dr. Toe Hla, "*Myan-mar Le-ya Hnint Myan-mar Lu-hmu-da-le Tha-maing*" (History of the Agriculture and Social Customs of Myanmar)

Town or village People, and they had to borrow the necessary funds and in this way they fell into debt, people also took loans from each other and in some cases the man who advanced the loan was a powerful man and he used all devices to get back his money and there would be some injustice .... there were also cases when the debtor ... tried to evade the payment of debt; ... it would not be fair to say either to stop the payment of all debts or to get all debts paid; a plaint on debt shall be considered case by case and Hlutaws and Yondaw or any other court of a prince, unionist, officer, etc shall not do it, send all these case to the king.<sup>26</sup>

An assumption can be made on the above mentioned order that the king had greatly concerned about the indebtedness of the people. The sketchy orders were also passed particularly after the Myin-gun rebellion to write off the debts of the people and to exempt from paying taxation. However, while reconsidering his policy on taxation, the *a-thi* people and some merchants from Inwa submitted a report through *U-bok-taw-gaung* Maung Kho, Maung Myat Tha Oo that they agreed to submit *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax collected from all of people. The king had already planned to impose *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax like *Maha Thamada*-the first and foremost elected king of secular world, he introduced the tax throughout the realm in 1857 while he ordered to exempt from pay such tax to the people of Inwa for that year.<sup>27</sup> Now *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax abolished the existing old taxes. As regard to the introduction of *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax, the king ordered town and village headmen to collect the lists of original households and additional households and total population without omission. The king would like to prevent from tax evasion and embezzlement of officials. He also reminded that the officials shall take any punishment for omission if there were any omission or embezzlement.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Than Tun, 1989 , 408

<sup>27</sup>(Maung Maung ) Tin, 2004 c , 178

<sup>28</sup>Than Tun, 1989 , 664-665

The king probably designated to introduce new *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax by gaining accurate information on the number of households and on the situation of local economy.

The great difficulty of imposing *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax was to get the number accurate households. As a result, the actual collection of tax would be different from one region to another. For example in Taungdwingyi Township, *a-thi* household had to pay the amount ranging from two to ten *kyats* between the years 1861 to 1867. The people living in Pin, Nat-mauk and Kyaukpadaung areas where the paddy cultivation was not favourable as in Taungdwingyi had to pay eight *kyats* per household.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the local officials were empowered to fix the rate of tax. For instance, *Thwe-thauk-gyi* in Taungdwingyi district imposed. *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax has usually totaled between 8.5 *kyats* and 12 *kyats* in the time of favourable harvest.<sup>30</sup> However, according to the evidence collected so far, the people had to struggle to pay *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax by various ways. Particularly the people lived in the areas where *ya-dry* cultivation was the only source of economic performance, mortgaged their lands and properties to pay *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax. Some who could were not afford to pay *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax submitted petition to local monk leaders. For example, *a-thi-taings* in Taung-tha and Myin-gyans submitted the petitions to local monk leaders, on 23 November 1861, *Gaing-ôk Sayadaws* of Myin-gyan and Taung-tha Township wrote epistles to *Hlut-taw* to release taxation for that year.<sup>31</sup> However, *Hlut-taw* did not exempt from pay tax. Instead, it allowed the people to pay two installments, the first to pay in the month

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<sup>29</sup>Toe Hla, 1993 , 50

<sup>30</sup>Scott & Hardiman, 1901b , 114-117

<sup>31</sup>"The Epistles of *Gaing-ôks*, of Myingyan and Taung-tha", *Parabaik*, M.S, No.1. Dhammayon Monastery Collection, Meiktila (Henceforth: DMC)

of July and the latter in the month of January.<sup>32</sup> In the same years, *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax collected from Taung-tha and Nyaung-ok Township totalled 6100 *kyats*: The tax collected from Yin-daw and Ya-naung Township in Shwepyi-Yan-aung Cavalry District (East) amounted 1250 *kyats* and 194600 *kyats* respectively.<sup>33</sup>

As the king Mindon's reign saw the great sponsorship of the prosperity of Buddhist religion and donations for the welfare of *Sangha* order and building of numerous religious edifices, such massive donations required more taxation to be collected from the people. Just before and after the outbreak of Myin-gun Rebellion, the rate of *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax was slightly increased.<sup>34</sup> It is found that local officials assessed eight *kyats*, ten *kyats* and even up to fourteen *kyats* per household in some areas. However, the tax was soon reduced to ten *kyats* on the request of local monk leader.<sup>35</sup> It is suggested that although the rate of tax was reduced, most people could not afford to pay as the government expected. The epistles and requests of influential monks and provincial monk leaders to exempt from paying *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax reveal the economic distress of the people.

We come across the numerous evidence mentioning the role of *sanghas* in providing stability of rural community. In the years of poor harvest and serious drought, *sanghas* stood by the people to ease their sufferings by writing epistles or

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<sup>32</sup>"The Order Relating to Thathameida Tax", *Parabaik*, M.S , 1861 , History Department, Maandalay University Collection (Henceforth: HDMUC)

<sup>33</sup>"List of *Tha-tha-mei-da* Tax Imposed in Taungtha and Shwepyi-yan-aung Cavalry District East", *Parabaik*, M.S, No.14 , Shwesandaw Monastery, Yindaw Township, Collection (Henceforth: SSDC)

<sup>34</sup>Although the government increased *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax to some extent, it reduced or even exempted for some years due to the exodus of people to Lower Myanmar , Than Tun, 1989 , 655

<sup>35</sup>Scott & Hardiman, 1900b , 414

requests to the king not to impose taxation on the people.<sup>36</sup> Local monk leaders were empowered to check the rule of hereditary officials from collecting extra taxes.<sup>37</sup> On the contrary, the local monk leaders under the supervision of Thudhamma Council, performed the duties to supervise the local headmen in the assessment of *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax. On 10 August 1864, King Mindon gave the duties of supervising the collection of taxes to Salin *Sayadaw*, Madaya *Sayadaw*, Maung-daung *Sayadaw* and Thi-ga-za *Sayadaw* in the separate parts of the Kingdom.<sup>38</sup> *Sayadaws* instructed local monk leaders to supervise the local headmen to collect *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax properly and to make the lists of tax-exempted persons like destitute people, handicapped persons parents of the monks. *Thudhamma Sayadaw* also instructed the local monk leaders to admonish the people to pay taxes.<sup>39</sup> Although the instructions were made, a few officials committed embezzlements and punished for under-reporting the number of households and increasing the number of destitute families.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the king put his officials under the supervision of local monk leaders. The evidence from shwepyi Yan-naung Cavalry District (East) mentions the order of *Thudhamma Sayadaws* to make tight control on local headmen. The order reads,

*Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* Sayadaw in Meiktila region shall admonish the people that the duty of tax-paying is the requirement for the propriety

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<sup>36</sup>Taw Sein Ko, *Hlut-taw Hmat-tan* (Records of Hluttaw), Yangon, Government Press, 1960, p.140 (Henceforth: Taw Sein Ko, 1960)

<sup>37</sup>Myo Myint, 1987 , 194

<sup>38</sup>"A Receipt of the Letter of *Thudhamma Sayadaws* to collect Thathameida Tax 1235 M.E, 1873 AD)", *Parabaik* , M.S, Meiktila University Library Collection, No. 250 (Henceforth: MULC)

<sup>39</sup>Thant Myint – U, 2001 , 123

<sup>40</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, MULC No.250

of sasana and of the kingdom. Sayadaw, with compassion and benevolence, shall take charge the collection of the first installment of Thathameida tax of 1235 M.E(1873 A.D) within two months, *Kason* and *Nayon* (May and June). If the *Gaing-oks* and *gaing-dauks* find the officials who taking bribes or imposing extra charges or making embezzlement, their name shall be written in epistles and shall send to us (Thudhamma Sayadaws) through the officials who would come to Meiktila for monthly donation for local monks.<sup>41</sup>

The efforts of *Thudhamma Sayadaw* and the government in tightening control over the local headmen resulted considerable increase of *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax. In some regions, local headmen had submitted pledge to collect the number of original households and added households without any embezzlement.<sup>42</sup> During the last years of King Thibaw's reign, the amount of *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax increasingly fell. Although the king ordered to collect the tax in two installments<sup>43</sup> the people were not able to pay the tax. The revenue collected by King Thibaw's government steadily became worse. For example, in the year of 1878 of the total number of household in Sagaing Township, numbering 7,716, the number of household exempted from tax payment totaled 2646. The king assessed tax on 5070 households. Final three years of king Thibaw's reign saw the very poor harvest of rice. The people living in lower Chindwin district were on the verge of famine. Although the king attempted to seek the ways to meet his budgetary

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<sup>41</sup>"Pledge of Nat-yin-daung Village Headman, 15 May 1881" , *Parabaik* , M.S , no.31 , KSOC

<sup>42</sup>Ohn Kyi II, 1968,200

<sup>43</sup>"*Tha-tha-mei-da Ngwe A-thone-a-kyan Ko A-twin-wun Htan Pay-yan Sayin-choke Phaya*" (Brief list of Thathameida Tax to be Submitted to Interior Minister),1873 A.D, *Parabaik*, M.S, No.537, Library of Department of Religions Affairs, Yangon, (Henceforth: LDRC)

needs, including the innovation of state lottery, most of his attempts resulted in failure. Following table shows the comparison between the tax collected in 1869 and 1884/5.

**Table -X**

***Tha-tha-mei-da* Tax collected in Some Areas of Lower Chindwin District**

<b>Names of Township</b>	<b>1869</b>	<b>1884/5</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Bagyi	79,172	33,744	The whole collected from villages falling within the district
Kani	45,135	27,560	The greater portion collected from village falling within the district
Alon	1,62,156	76,05.6	Do
Total	286,464	137,360	
Amyint and Chaung-U	50,700	4496	
Kyaukmyet	4,400	5500	The rate in 1869 is said to have been Rs.8 and in Thibaw reign in Rs.10

Source : J.P Hardiman, *Burma Gazetteer: Lower Chindwin District*, Yangon,

Government Press, 1961, Reprint: pp.172-73 (Henceforth: Hardiman, 1967)

The above mention table reveals the under-payment of taxation spread throughout the realm under King Thibaw's rule. Even local hereditary chiefs, *a-hmu-dan* groups and *a-thi* began to fall in debt. The situations finally accelerated the social and economic instability during the last years of Konbaung dynasty.

In addition to *Tha-tha-mei-da* tax, the *a-thi-taings* were liable to pay other cash contributions. The most prevalent form of cash contribution was imposed by local headmen. The stray documents collected from Kani Township deals with the reasons of borrowing money or mortgaging lands as to pay *ywa-wham*- lesser

chief in charge of servicemen, to pay household expense of *myo-thu-gyi*, and to contribute money to settle the debt of *myo-wun*. As the frequent demand for cash contribution has prevailed in the rural community, some villages, including those of crown service areas, established a fund known as *mu-daing-mat-taing*. This fund was collected by assessors who were elected by the consent of majority of the community. In addition to these contributions, the frequent visits of *myo-wuns* and other officials also laid a burden on the people. Whenever the high officials like *myo-wun* touring to the villages under their jurisdiction, the local headmen and people had to make treatment with the great feasts and to submit present. The outstanding example can be seen though the following table dealing with the expense of people in Taungdwingyi Township.

**Table - XI**

**Expense of Taungdwingyi between March and Jund 1882**

<b>The Resaon of Expense</b>	<b>Amount of money (in <i>kyat</i>)</b>
1. visit of <i>myei-daing wun-dauk</i>	900
2. visit of Pindalè <i>wun-dauk</i>	300
3. general expense of town	42000
4. visit of <i>kha-yaing-wun-min</i>	14500
5. Cost to built the residential house and to pay clerks of <i>kha-yaing-wun</i>	3143.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>60963.25</b>

Source : Toe Hla, 2004, 132



Since the price of gold in Konbaung period was ranging 18 *kyats* to 20 *kyats* of silver per one tical, it is undoubtedly known that the people had to struggle not only for their survival but for cash contributions for various purposes.

### ***A-thi* as the crown servicemen**

Theoretically, *a-this* did not need to liable to render their service to the crown. However as the king had the right to claim the labour of all subject people, *a-this* become either corvee labourers or servicemen in various capacities whenever the crown needed. Since the Konboun period saw successive warfare, the *a-this* were occasionally forced into military service. It was King Badon who mostly demanded the service of the people either as armed servicemen or as the corvee labours. The king conscripted *a-this* for his Ayuthia and Manipuri expedition. It can say that the Rakhine refugee problem after his conquest in 1783 was brought about by the demand of men and provisions for unsuccessful campaign of Ayuthia. Six thousand men from Thandwe`, Yan-bye` and Man-aung were taken to Amarapura.<sup>44</sup> Similarly the people living in the Ayeyawaddy and Mu Valleys were conscripted occasionally. The local head men and regimental officers had to collect the population of their villages or towns. They had to submit the complete list comprising widows, disabled persons, monks, *a-this* and *kappas*. Following list shows the population collected by the mounted officer of Ye`-yi-hman Cavalry Regiment in Shwebo Township.

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<sup>44</sup>(a) A.C Banerjee, *The Eastern Frontier of British-India: 1784-4824*, Calcutta, Mukerjee, 1964 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) p.100 (Henceforth: Banerjee, 1964)

(b) Ashin Candamala Laikara, *Rakhine Ya-za-win-thit Kyan* (The New Rakhine Chronicle), Mandalay, Hanthawaddy Press, 1931, p.343(Henceforth: Lankara, 1931)

Adult male (deceased)	10
Adult female (deceased)	8
Male (old and infirm)	19
Female (old and infirm)	8
Widow	9
Young male	66
Young female	15
Remaining adult male	57
Remaining adult female	65
Excluded	6
Mounted cavalryman	1
Other cavalryman	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>
Household	64
Household to be conscripted	27

Source: *Parabaik*, M.S, UTC

The conscription sometimes did not exclude widows. The widows who had only infants, she had to hire someone else.<sup>45</sup> We come across evidence mentioning not only widows but anyone who were not able to perform the military duty had to be mortgaged the lands and property or borrowed money to hire the person to substitute them.<sup>46</sup> Some even became debt bondsman to hire someone else to render military service on behalf of him.<sup>47</sup> When Manipuri affairs broke out in 1819, Sagaing *Min* ordered the headmen of *A-nauk-pet-taik* -the regions on the west of Chindwin River under the supervision of Pakhangyi *Myowun* Mingyi Mingaung Kyaw to mobilize the army comprising *a-nauk-wun-su* –servicemen of

<sup>45</sup>*Parabaik* M.S, 1798, UTC

<sup>46</sup>"Land Mortgage Deed of Nga Tha Din, 15 July 1793", *Parabaik*, M.S, HHMC

<sup>47</sup>"Debt-bondage Deed of Maung Sa, 28 October 1819", *Parabaik*, M.S, HHMC

western court, *shwedaik-wun Wun-su*-servicemen of the royal treasury, *win-lay-myet-hna* –palace guards, *hsin-auk-ma* –elephanteers, *lamaing* –crown cultivators, artillery men, cavalavrymen, *thwei-htauik* –blood-bonded elite servicemen, etc.<sup>48</sup> In addition to these service men, *a-this* were recruited comprising 71 men from Ninywa, two from Nyintha, five from Parinywa, one from Si Pya, four from Kin Pin, three from Ta, two from Kya Pat, two from Pan Htaik Ywa and ten from Kaing Tu villages from Pakhangyi Township.<sup>49</sup> In addition, on 2 Waxing Naddaw 1182 M.E, Mingyi Mingaung Kyaw wrote to Tatmu Bula Ye`gaung, who might be the aide of Mingyi Mingaung Kyaw, to make notification to local officials to conscript the 600 men from Anaukpet Taik. Ye`gaung Kyaw Htin was empowered to punish the headmen who failed to submit the men from their village.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting to note that local *Saw-bwas* –autonomous chiefs of Shan States were empowered to make on behalf of the king. Following list, conscripted by Yazagyo (? Kalay) Sawbwa on 5 waning Tazaungbon 1191 M.E, reads

List of Men Conscripted by Yazagyo *Saw-bwa* and Cost of Buying Ammunitions and Provision

	<i>Kyat</i>	<i>Mu</i>	<i>Mat</i>
Goung Manum Ye`	9	-	3
Thu Wa	7	-	2
Myat U	5	-	-
Tun Pyo	4	-	2

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<sup>48</sup>“1182 M.E (1820 A.D) *Manipura A-yei-hnint Sat-thaw Hmat-tan-mya* (Records Relating to the Manipuria Affairs)”, 8 Waxing Naddaw, 1182 M.E, *Parabaik*, M.S, Universities Central Library Collection, No. 139317 (Henceforth: UCLC)

<sup>49</sup>*Parabaik*, M.S, 139317, UCLC

<sup>50</sup>“Letter of Mingyi Mingaung Kyaw to the Headmen of Anaukpet Taik”, Waning Naddaw, 1182 M.E, *Parabaik*, M.S, UCLC, No. 139317

Nga Kywin	4	-	2
Nga Pe	4	-	2
Myat Pyu	4	-	2
Continued .....			
Min Tein	2	-	2
Nga Min	2	-	2
Nga Pok, ? Pan Nyo Bo	5	-	-
Kyo Tha	1	-	-
Nga Hmaing	1	-	1
Mi Shin Ma Phyu	-	-	2
Mi Hla Chan	-	-	2
Nga Tet	6	-	-
Ammunition (gun powder)	2	-	1
Sword	2	-	-
Oil to smear to protect from			
Sword, spike (? charm)	-	-	3
Shouldered rain coat	1	-	-
Lance	1	-	-
Cost of repairing musket	1	-	1
Provision (food)	1	-	1
To pay Myat Aye	-	8	-
Two men with paddy and other provision	50	-	-

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Source: *Parabaik*, M.S, No.139317

The above mentioned source left something to consider, firstly the amount of cash in the list was contributed by the conscripted men to buy ammunition and other

provision. The list mentions the names of two women who probably made only cash contribution. The most interesting thing may be the expense of the conscripted men who bought the oil which was to be treated with supernatural means to take protection from lethal sword, spike and other weapons. As the date of the source mentions 1829, it is suggested that Myanmar had continued to deal with the subsequent problems of territorial dispute with Manipur brought about by the Yandabo Treaty.

In addition to the armed service, the *a-this* were sometimes liable to render as corvee labour. Since the Konboun kings were fond of erecting religious edifices, the people were forced to leave their works to render their service in the royal merits. Sometimes the movement of royal capitals created a great hardship for the people. Since the accession of Sagaing *Min*, there were four times of moving capitals, former three had either renovated or reconstructed the old capitals and the latter one made by King Mindon who built the new capital and palace.<sup>51</sup> On 11 September 1853 King Mindon permitted to hold a meeting of learned men and learned *theras* to get a decision whether the new capital should built.<sup>52</sup> Although the decision of majority protested against the movement of royal capital, worrying that the movement of the capital would impose heavy burden on the people, the king moved the capital to Mandalay. However, king Mindon, unlike his predecessors, had sensitivity to the feelings of his people and boosted the morale of the people by providing a humane and sound rule. After ascending the throne, the king repaired the lakes, weirs and canals in Shwebo as the works of owing gratitude for his successful rebellion. For this projects, the king did not impose any cash contributions on the people and paid wages from his own expense to the peasants and local people who worked in the repairing the irrigation

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<sup>51</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 b, 247-248, 376-383, 385, 395-402

<sup>52</sup>Than Tun, 1968 , 10

system.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, when he moved his royal capital the royal treasury gave all expenses in order not to create hardship for the people.<sup>54</sup> With the exception of such humane treatment of the king, the people were vulnerable to the taxation and misrule of the local headmen.

### **Glimpse of the Economic Life of A-this**

Many scholars and researchers had written works on the socio-economic life of the people in Konboun period.<sup>55</sup> Some researchers who studied the regional history of Konboun period also shed light on the socio-economic life of respective regions. As have known, the main source of economic life in Myanmar was agriculture. However up to the reign of King Mindon, the market for agricultural products was uncertain. With the exception of cotton, which had been the most wanted trade item of Sino-Myanmar trade before the Konboun period, most crops were chiefly grown for local consumption. In other words, the people mostly engaged in self-sufficient cultivation. The people in the delta area mostly engaged in wet-rice cultivation while the great majority of the people in Upper Myanmar working not only on the *ya* – dry cultivated lands as well as the irrigated rice lands of Kyauk-se, Minbu, Madaya and Mu Valley of Shwebo District.<sup>56</sup> Under pre-colonial rule the land holding systems can be divided into four categories, viz, the crown land, religious land, *a-hmu-dan* lands and ancestral lands claimed by the commoners.<sup>57</sup> The kings assessed land tax under two different systems. In upper

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<sup>53</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004c, 122-123

<sup>54</sup>Sithu Maung Maung Kyaw, *Mandalay Myo-ti Nan-ti Sa-dan* (The Treatise on the Establishment of Mandalay), Mandalay, Yadana Dipan Press, 1959, p.22 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Kyaw, 1959)

<sup>55</sup> For the most exclusive and detail studies on the socio-economy of Konboun period see, Toe Hla, 2004

<sup>56</sup>Trager and Koenig, 1979, 42

<sup>57</sup>Furnivall, 1957, 51

Myanmar the people had to pay one-tenth of their yield while the people of Lower Myanmar, assessment was made per unit of land worked or *per yoke* of buffalo.<sup>58</sup> In order to assess the land revenue as far as available and to prevent food scarcity some kings of Konboug period populated the principle rice growing regions of Upper Myanmar with the war captives. Most of them became crown servicemen.<sup>59</sup> For instance when Myeidu *Min* defeated Manipur and Shan States, he brought war captives from Linzin and Manipur and allotted Lands in Kyauk-se District.<sup>60</sup> However, it is generally known that *a-thi* Lands can not be found in the granary areas.<sup>61</sup> The possession of lands in the promising rice growing regions by the *ahmu-don* groups became one of the main differences of economic life between *a-this* and *a-hmu-dans*.

Although *a-this* were not allotted lands by the king, they were allow to reclaim the land in the areas outside the *a-hmu-dans'* land, crown lands and religious lands. Some became the peasant proprietors through the reclaiming of wet lands and *ya* lands in appropriate areas near by the perennial streams and fertile areas of central Myanmar.<sup>62</sup> However the people were generally reluctant to reclaim the lands on following reasons.

- (1) the revenue to be paid to the respective local *thu-gyis*,
- (2) certain amount of labours might be needed,
- (3) the vacant can be found usually in the distant areas from the villages,

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<sup>58</sup>Tranger and Koenig, 1979, 43

<sup>59</sup>Lieberman, 1984, 252

<sup>60</sup>Stewart, *Burma Gazetteer: Kyauk-se District*, Vol.A, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing and Stationary, 1925, pp 32-33 (Henceforth: Stewart, 1925)

<sup>61</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 87-88

<sup>62</sup>(a) "List of Rain fed Lands in Nat-mouk Township", *Parabaik*, M.S, 1908, 1963, Legyi Village Monastery Collection, Nat-mouk, No, 1, 2, 4 (Henceforth: LGMC)

(b) "List of Paddy Fields Owned by Me Nyain Tin of Nat-mauk Myo", *Parabaik*, M.S, n-d, LGMC

- (4) the yield might be poor in the newly reclaimed lands,
- (5) to be faced with the danger of wild beast and
- (6) possibility of difficult transportation.

In addition, the risk-averse policy and great reliance on the self-sufficient economy became the impediment for the development of the economic life of the people.<sup>63</sup> Owing to the reluctance of innovations in agriculture and lack of knowledge in using natural fertilizer, and backwardness of the methods of cultivation, the yield was evidently poor.<sup>64</sup> Although the people could produce for household consumption in the period of getting regular rainfall, they met with food scarcity, sometimes widespread famine, in the time of drought. In such situation, they had to depend on the government's provision. However most of the drought-hit people deserted their villages in search of food. Some had to mortgage their lands, household properties and their offspring to ease their sufferings. We come across numerous evidences which mentioning the peasant proprietors became tenants or eventually debt-bondsmen in the time of poor harvest or famine.

After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, Myanmar lost Bago Province, the most productive rice growing zone of Myanmar, to the British. King Mindon, therefore, implemented the extensive projects of irrigation to increase the yield of rice cultivation in the principle rice growing regions of Upper Myanmar.<sup>65</sup> He repaired or reconstructed about twenty irrigation net-works which could water

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<sup>63</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 113-114

<sup>64</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 114-124

<sup>65</sup>John Nisbet, *Burma under British Rule and Before*, Two Vols, Vol.I, Wesminster, Archibald Constable & Co.Ltd, 1901, p.305 (Henceforth: Nisbet, 1901)



100,000 acres of paddy lands.<sup>66</sup> The second half of 1850s, however, witnessed the consecutive years of poor rainfall. Thomas Spear reported the situation, thus:

we had little rain last year and consequently the crop rather deficient. But the villagers not being so much appressed with taxes as in the last reign. They have been able to reserve a considerable part of the former crop, so that I do not think there is any fears of a scarcity, much less famine, for some time to come. The people formerly were so much pressed to pay taxes and other exactions, that they had to sell of their paddy as it become ripe, and so had nothing to fall back upon; the case now is altered very much for the better.<sup>67</sup>

According to Spear's letter it is known that the people were facing with poor rain fall, their suffering was eased by the exemption of taxes by the king. In addition, the king managed to prevent the fluctuation of the price of rice by importing paddy from the Lower Myanmar. Before the intervention in 1856 the price of rice in Amarapura on average has risen to about three times that of Pyay. In June 1855 the price has arisen again and reached up to 120 *ticals* of *ywet-ni* per 100 baskets.<sup>68</sup> As the price of rice was increasingly high the people in rural area had to live on the *thon-lun-tin* rice.<sup>69</sup> However King Mindon was able to reduce his dependence of imported rice from Lower Myanmar – comprising rice, peas and millet.

During the Second half of the King Mindon's reign, the people of Upper Myanmar, primarily from Kyauk-se, Chindwin and Mu Valley and Taungdwingyi regions, were supposed to increase the yield of paddy. An evidence mentions that

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<sup>66</sup>*D.P.C., 1932, 145, 237*

<sup>67</sup>*D.P.C., 1932, 160*

<sup>68</sup>*D.P.C., 1932, 353*

<sup>69</sup>For the staple food in the everyday life of rural community see, Toe Hla, 2004, 31-46

the amount of paddy yielded in the areas of Baw-dwin, Chindwin, Taungdwin and Ledwin has totalled 777,322 baskets, 547,422 baskets, 4,212,225 baskets and 2,254,652 baskets respectively.<sup>70</sup> The price of rice gradually fell to some extent. Following table shows the price of paddy in Kani Township as instance.

**Table- XII**  
**Paddy Price**

Year	Price (in <i>Kyats</i> )
June 1852	32.1
October 1852	75
1859	125
1860	50
June 1862	40
June 1862	100
1863	60
August, 1867	40
September 1867	100
1868	61
1871	25
September 1882	50
January 1883	50
July 1883	100
September 1883	80
1884	100

Source: Khin Saw Oo, 2010, 106

<sup>70</sup>Htay Htay Myint, "History of Taungdwingyi (1885-4946)", Ph.D Dissertation, History Department, University of Mandalay, May, 2008, p.17(Henceforth: Htay Htay Myint, 2008)

Although the price fell from the year of 1860, the fluctuation can be seen between the years 1860 and 1880. The fluctuation was partly owing to the practice of cultivators in taking agricultural loans. Some farmers obtained money from the buyer or brokers to meet their expenses in seedling, hiring tenants, etc. After the harvest, the farmer had to hand over his yield with the price less than actual values.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, it is assumed that the paddy price of some regions sometimes represent only to the respective regions.

King Mindon on the other hand was able to reduce his dependency on the imported rice of Lower Myanmar. The rice imported from Lower Myanmar in 1867/68, totaled 100,486 tons at Rs 4,230,000, and has decreased up to 24,718 tons at Rs 60431 in 1872/73.<sup>72</sup> The king attempted to buy the paddy grown in his realm through the royal agents instead of buying from Lower Myanmar. The king appointed the agents to buy paddy to provide servicemen and the people in time of food scarcity. The farmers had to sell their paddy at the fixed-price of the agents. The farmer had now incentive to grow paddy. The people from Sagu Township for example sold their paddy to the royal agents.<sup>73</sup> In Min-gin Township the people sold paddy to the royal agents at the price of 125 *Kyats* per 100 baskets. The people had to admit that they would send their paddy without any chaff to *Wunbyei* jetty.<sup>74</sup> It is found that the price of paddy was fixed on the consent of the royal agents. The price was greatly reduced than that of actual value. But since the buying of paddy was carried out by the royal agents, mostly by the local headmen

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<sup>71</sup>Toe Hla, "*Wunbyei Tho-ma-hok Taik-kyan Se-ywa Ei Si-bwa-yei Son-chet Tha-maing*" (Wunbyi or Background Hstory of the Economic Focus of Ten Villages Excluded from *Taik* Administration Unit). *In Search of Myanmar History*, Vol. II, Yangon, Thein-haik Yadana Press, 1999, p.188 (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 1999)

<sup>72</sup>Myo Myint, 1987, 229

<sup>73</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 32

<sup>74</sup>"Money Borrowing Deed of Kani Myo Thugyi to Buy Paddy, 21 November 1837", *Parabaik*, M.S, KSO, No.24

who were assigned as the royal agents, the people had no choice but to sell their paddy.

The above mentioned sound harvest still lingered on to the early years of King Thibaw's reign. Abundant harvests during these years had reduced imports to a minimum and the people could buy rice at ever cheaper rates. Nevertheless, the final three years of King Thibaw's reign saw the serious drought and some regions of Lower Chindwin District were on the verge of famine.<sup>75</sup> The price of paddy has again arisen up to 100 *kyats* per 100 baskets in those regions.<sup>76</sup> Similarly the price of sesamum oil at the beginning of King Thibaw's reign was 66 *kyats* per 100 viss, had arisen up to 100 *kyats* in 1883.<sup>77</sup> The situation affected not only to the people but also on the government.

Although King Thibaw continued to exact Thathameida tax, the political instabilities which began since his father's reign after Myin-gun Rebellion and local scarcity created increasingly decline of the royal revenue. In some areas, the local chiefs even stopped paying revenue. In some areas the tax appeared to have been significantly reduced.<sup>78</sup> Finally the government sought the way to increase the royal revenue by various ways. The most popular one of the king and his some officials was the introduction of state lottery on 15 February 1879.<sup>79</sup> At first the government opened only a lottery house, then the number increased to ten and finally spread among the people. The government obtained 120,000 *kyats* from the ten lottery houses as revenue.<sup>80</sup> The lottery offered a possible 10,000 rupees win for a two rupees ticket, rising later to possible 50,000 rupees win for five rupees

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<sup>75</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001, 180

<sup>76</sup>Parabaik, M.S.S, KSOC

<sup>77</sup>Parabaik, M.S.S, KSOC

<sup>78</sup>Hardiman, 1967, 172

<sup>79</sup>Than Tun, 1968, 22

<sup>80</sup>Shwe Kaingtha, 1959, 205

ticket. While the king obtaining the increasing revenue, the people were forced to put under the indebtedness and consequent problems. Even George Scott, the then visitor at Mandalay, witnesses the situations and noted as follows.

In 1879 and 1880 Mandalay was simply flooded with lottery officer, ... under the superintendence of a minister of high rank. Those who were able to show the king the most money were highest in royal favour, and consequently the rivalry between these worthies ran very strong. The *Hpaung-wun*, *Myowun*, the lord high admiral, and lord mayor's establishment was generally admitted to be the largest and the best and it was certainly he who first began to try and allure the people. The minds of the people were kept in a state of perpetual unhealthy excitement. Neither buyers nor sellers were to be seen in the bazaar. Cultivators sold off their farming stock and implements, and launched all their money into the state lotteries. Fathers sold their daughters, and ... their wives, to have a final try for fortune. Business was entirely suspended, and all the people hovered about the lottery offices ... watching for an opportunity to thieve and rob ... The suburbs of Mandalay were filled for a time with ruined gamblers <sup>81</sup>...

The above mentioned remark was not an exaggeration because the primary source materials also shed light on the sufferings of people brought about by the state lottery. The prominent example can be seen through the story of Maung Maung Pu, betel server of the Chief Queen Su Phaya Latt, lost some 50,000 *kyats* in lottery gambling the therefore mortgaged his lands in Wunbyei for a sum of 8,000 *kyats* to an interior minister.<sup>82</sup> The state lottery was finally condemned as a source of socio-economic sufferings by the distinguished *sanghas* which reminded the

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<sup>81</sup>Shwe Yoe, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, New York, W.W.Norton & Co.Inc, 1963, pp.528-530 (Henceforth: Shwe Yoe, 1963)

<sup>82</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 167 (the quotation is made from unpublished manuscript)

king and the ministers as the cause of the downfall of the kingdom.<sup>83</sup> Realizing the problems which had created, the government finally terminated the state lottery in 1880.

### ***A-this* and Political Problems**

Throughout history, *a-this* were vulnerable to the misrule of the government and to that of local headmen. As the authority of the king was ineffectual outside the walls of capital, every aspect of administration was entrusted to the hereditary officials. As have mentioned, the socio-economic deterioration of the people was created by the constant requisitions of manpower and cash for the warfare and general expenses of the government which began since the Badon *Min*'s reign. Even the then European visitors and diplomats witnessed the situation and noted that "the misery of the people beyond description".<sup>84</sup> Although successive kings made effort to prevent corruption and misrule of local officials, their attempts proved to be failure and sometimes the misrule of local headmen led to the instability of rural community. The outstanding example can be seen through the events of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East) in King Mindon's reign. The people of Okshikkon, Nyaungkaya, and Aung-tha villages of Kabyu Village tract then fell under the jurisdiction of Kon-daung *Myin-gaung*-cavalry officer who persecuted the people and pursued for his own benefit. The people of said villages, comprising about 100 households, would not like to live under the rule of Kon-daung *Myin-gaung* and moved to Ywa-thit *daing* of Meiktila Township. In this event, *Myin-gaung* retaliated the people by confiscating the household properties of escapees. The problem became local disturbance when Nga Khwet, Nga Lu

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<sup>83</sup>Nisbet, 1910, 305

<sup>84</sup>Hall, 1945, 98

Hmon, Nga Shay-ga-lay and Nga Khway from Okshikkon, Nyaungkaya and Aung-tha villages made their complaints against Kondaung *Myin-gaung* to Meiktila *Myo-wun*. *Myo-wun* reminded Kondaung *Myin-gaung* not to persecute the people.<sup>85</sup> However, Kon-daung *Myin-gaung* continued his misconduct on the people. He even cooperated with Sa-myeik-shei *Myin-gaung* and committed another misrule over the people of Hla-naung-gan village. Finally the provincial monk leaders reminded the *myin-gaungs* to rule fairly. Meiktila *Gaing-dauk Sayadaw* U Sobana and Dhammayon *Gaing-dauk Sayadaw* gave further instruction to *Myin-gaungs* thus:-

We know that Samyeik-shei *Myin-gaung* and Kon-daung *Myin-gaung* committed persecution against Nga Cho, Nga Po, Nga Chit Phyu and their household members, comprising over forty people from Htanaunggan village, who were not happy to live in the cavalry areas and moved to live and work by paying taxes in other areas. Owing to the persecutions of *myin-gaungs* and *thu-gyis*, these poor people could not follow their occupations and were more impoverished. Therefore, Sa-myeik-shei *gaing-ok* and *gain-dauk* shall admonish *myin-gaungs* to rule the people kindly in accord with the "virtues of the elders".<sup>86</sup>

Like in the cases of writing epistles to exempt from pay taxes, the *Sangha* stood by the people by preventing harsh treatments of provincial officials.

The most serious problem that created the instability social and economic life of the people was created by Myin-gun-Myin-khon-daing Rebellion in 1866.

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<sup>85</sup>"Report of Meiktila Myo-wun On the Movement of People from Kon-daung Cavalry Village to Ywathit Daing in Meiktila", *Parabaik*, M.S, MUTLC, No. 250

<sup>86</sup>"Letter of U Sobana, Meiktila *Gaing-ôk Sayadaw* to Provincial monk leaders of Samyeik-shei Cavalry Area", *Parabaik* M.S, M.T.U.L.C, No-250

The rebellion greatly affected numerous villages from Magwe, Nat-mauk, Pin, Kyaukpadaung and Taungdwingyi regions. After the outbreak of Rebellion which claimed the lives of the Crown Prince and some senior officials, the rebel princes and their followers seized the royal steamer Yenansekyia and sailed down to Myin-gun and nearby villages and were asked to submit the quota of ten men from each village and some cash contribution.<sup>87</sup> Some village headmen joined the rebellion which some denied to cooperate with the rebel prince on fearing the punishment of royal army. When the rebellion was defeated and tranquility prevailed, it was found that the villages in Kyaukpadaung, Natmauk, Magwe, Pin, Taungdwingyi and the villages around Shwebo were devastated by the skirmishes between the royal army and rebel brigands.<sup>88</sup> The subsequent rebellion of Badein Prince, eldest son of late Crown Prince, further shattered the villages in Shwebo district when the rebel forces gained superiority on the royal army, many villages in the above forces gained superiority on the royal army, many villages in the above mentioned townships were burnt down to ashes due to their loyalty to the king.<sup>89</sup> For instance, on 8 August 1866 Thonze Prince arrived Wunbye village in Myinmu to collect servicemen to attack the followers of Myin-gun Prince. Five days later, however, Bo Kyan, Bo Pya and Bo Phi, followers of Myin-gun Prince, arrived Wunbyei and destroyed the village for submitting servicemen.<sup>90</sup> When the Rebellion was defeated, the royal army searched and destroyed the rebel's followers. In these retaliations, some villages were destroyed by the royal army under the suspicion of rebel's followers, King Mindon took the assistance of *Thudhamma Sayadaws*

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<sup>87</sup>"Statement of U Sutacri", Abbot of Kyaukpu Village Monastery, Myin-gun Village, dated 20 October 1871, *Parabaik*, M.S, Dr. Toe Hla Collection (Henceforth: THC)

<sup>88</sup>(Maung Maung) Tin, 2004 c, 230-240

<sup>89</sup>Croswaite, 1968, 114

<sup>90</sup>Toe Hla, 1996, 175



through the local monk leaders to give protection to innocent people and to restore the law and order in rural community. The following instruction of *Thudhamma Sayadaws* to local *gaing-ôks* and *gaing-dauks* reads:

The people were in great hardship and the towns and villages were in the state of turmoil because of the persecution of the local officials. Spare lives and properties of those who did not follow the rebels ... *gaing-oks* and *gaing-dauks* of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East) shall make instruction to the myo-wuns, sit-kès and other officers not to persecute the people under mere suspicion of the followers of *Myin-gun* and Badein Princess. *Sayadaws* shall make strict supervision to *myo-wuns* and *sitkès*.<sup>91</sup>

Some local headmen, however, had to continue their oppression on the people. Therefore, after the rebellion, the people from many villages of Magwe, Pin, Natmauk, Kyaukpadaung and some villages of cavalry districts fled into the British Myanmar. However not all the people who fled to the Lower Myanmar were rebels. The period during and after the outbreak of rebellion in Upper Myanmar was coincided with the reclamation of Delta by the British Government. Therefore some people moved there with the hope of restructuring their life in Lower Myanmar where the more opportunities were opening. As the British offered an opportunity to reclaim without any payment of reclamation fees, the landless farmers also moved to Lower Myanmar. For example, almost fifty per cent of 186 houses in Thabyeiwa Village, located between Meiktila and Wundwin, fled to Lower Myanmar.<sup>92</sup> Actually, this social movement was not the first time in Myanmar.

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<sup>91</sup>"Instruction of Thudhamma Sayadaws to Gaing-ôks and Gaing-dauks of Shwepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East)", *Parabaik*, M.S, MUTLC, No-2150

<sup>92</sup>S.Keith, *Report on the Second Settlement of the Meiktila District, 1907-1910*, Yangon, Government Printing, 1910, p.10Henceforth: Keith, 1910)

During the Second Anglo-Myanmar War of 1852, a large number of people fled to Upper Myanmar. A British source says that some were evacuated in accordance with the 'scorched earth' policy adopted by the Myanmar Government. After the annexation of Bago Province, there was a further exodus to Upper Myanmar. When the British government collected the census for revenue administration, they found that the population was only 100,000.<sup>93</sup> The second exodus was different from that of the first one. The people from the rebel controlled areas and those who suffered economic hardship created by droughts, other natural calamities and misrule of local chiefs fled to Lower Myanmar. To what extent the rebellion affected the Kingdom of Myanmar can be seen in the sudden increase of population in Bago District that numbered 613,640 souls; but after the rebellion in 1868, it came up to , 1,350, 898 souls. It is suggested that Myanmar immigrants in Bago totaled over 561,000.<sup>94</sup> As a result, many towns in Upper Myanmar were reduced to village status because of being depopulated. On the contrary, many villages in Lower Myanmar developed into town status with the immigrants from Upper Myanmar.

The British government of Lower Myanmar, which greatly in need of population to commercialize the rice cultivation of Ayeyawaddy and Sittaung valleys to support India after 1857 mutiny,<sup>95</sup> welcomed Myanmar immigrants by offering some privileges. On the contrary, King Minidon made utmost effort to prevent further movement of the people and to attract his subjects from Lower Myanmar. They were called back through the chief monks of respective districts or provinces. *Gaing-ôks* and *gaing-dauks* sent epistles to the king stating that the

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<sup>93</sup>J.S, Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, New York, New York University Press, 1956, pp.51-52 (Henceforth: Furnivall, 1956)

<sup>94</sup>*Supplement to the British Burma Gazetteer*, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing and Stationary, 1868, p.43 (Henceforth: *SBBG*, 1868)

<sup>95</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 44

most of the people ran away into Lower Myanmar, because they were intimidated by the rebels, and therefore, they should be pardoned from all civil and criminal lawsuits.<sup>96</sup> The king therefore offered the returnees that they did not need to settle their debts within five years, and also exempted from taxation for certain years. All local officials were also ordered not to arrest any of the returnees. However, some officials did not obey the royal order and exploited on the returnees for their own interest.<sup>97</sup> King Mindon eventually issued an order known as *Auk-pyan U-pa dei* of 1872<sup>98</sup> the Act for Returnees to give protection by all provincial officials to the returnees.

Myin-gun-Myin-khon-daing Rebellion greatly affected the economy and social life of the people. Many villages were totally devastated and the properties were looted by the people. As some officials and servicemen also fled to Lower Myanmar, the provincial administration has paralyzed. As a result the crimes escalated. As the rebels looted the royal treasures and people's properties, the king ordered through *Thudhamma Sayadaws* to all the monks of central Myanmar not to accept the offertories lest they should be the King's properties. Moreover, as the lack of secular authorities, the monk-students who were learning in royal capital were sent back to their respective native villages to help restore law and order with their local officials.<sup>99</sup> The king also exempted all the people in war-torn areas from taxation for five years so that the rural economy could recover within a short period.<sup>100</sup> However no concrete evidence shows the recovery and restoration of

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<sup>96</sup>"Epistles of Thudhamma Sayadaws", *Parabaik*, M.S, dated 18 January 1868, UTC

<sup>97</sup>"Epistle of the Budalin *Gaing-ôk* to Kani Town Officer to release Maung Tun Thin", *Parabaik*, M.S, dated 6 April 1868, KSOC, No.9

<sup>98</sup>Maung Kyin Han, "*Konbaung Khit Si-you-yei*" (Organization in the Konbaung Period) *Sanda Magazine*, No 106, February 1978, p.35(Henceforth: Kyin Han,1978)

<sup>99</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 638

<sup>100</sup>Than Tun, 1989, 657

sound social and economic situation in rural community through the efforts of the king.

During to the prevalence of the weakness of provincial administration, lawlessness took place in central Myanmar. Homicides, decoities, thefts and cattle smugglings disturbed both Myanmar and the British territories. The British officials and Myanmar officials cooperated to quell such crimes; the situation still lingered on to the King Thibaw's reign.<sup>101</sup> It is known that some serious crimes were backed by the provincial officials. The most serious crime which was believed to have been committed through the support of influential officers was the robbery of the donor of Sa-lei Yok-son Monastery U Bo Kyi by some culprits. By the year of 1887 a brigand made up of some decoits from Gwegyo, Pin, Kyauk-pa-daung , Popa , Meiktila, totaled 23 took Sa-lei town clerk U Tha Yan hostage and robbed U Bo Kyi's house. The decoits looted money, jewels, clothing and silver bowls which valued over 19,700 *kyats* and fled away. As U Bo Kyi had some intimate relations with the *Hlut-taw* officials, the government ordered Myingyan Myowun to investigate the culprits. After the preliminary investigation Nga Kyaw Zeya, Gwe-gyo *thu-gyi* was arrested on the ground of suspicions to be involved in the robbery. However he was soon released through the request of a monk leader. After his release, Nga Kyaw Zeya revealed that *Thon-myo-wun* Governor of three towns, (Natmauk, Pin and Kyaukpadaung) who was also empowered to investigate the robbery, was diverting the sources of information and delaying to detain the real culprits and arresting the innocent ones. As *Thon-myo-wun* and his younger brother Nga Hmon, who was also suspected to be an accomplice in robbery, had a firm backing of Taing-da Mingyi, the dacoits were still at large.<sup>102</sup> Finally U Bo Kyi, the victim of robbery, gave up all of his efforts

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<sup>101</sup>*The Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records*, Vol.I , Yangon , Superintendent Government. Printing, 1901, *passim* (Henceforth: *Hluttaw Records*, 1901a)

<sup>102</sup>Maung Maung Latt, 1999,68

to the reveal culprit who manipulated the robbery and had to satisfy with property of small value returned by some headmen.<sup>103</sup> This event revealed the fact that people were vulnerable to the lawlessness.

In conclusion, although *a-this* stood at the grass root level enjoying no privileges from the king, they were allowed certain social and economic rights. The social and economic status of *a-this* was considered to be inferior to that of *ahmu-dan* class. However the evidence shows that there was no remarkable difference between them. They suffered the same social and economic problems. In addition to the natural calamities, the wars and internal strife became the serious disturbance to the socio-economic life of *a-this*. As the central government could not carry out the complete control on the local headmen, the fate of the people in rural areas has fallen into the hands of these headmen. Although *sangha* institution took partial responsibility to carry out the maintenance of social stability and some administrative functions, certain evidence reveal many headmen committed misrule over the local people. After the outbreak of Myin-gun Rebellion, the social and economic life of *a-this* in the rural area was greatly devastated. Thousands of people in war-torn areas fled to the British Myanmar where sound opportunities were awaiting. The king made utmost effort to call back the fugitives and to restore law and order throughout his realm, but the situation never recovered. In a word, *a-this* were the most vulnerable to the misrule of government, wars, internal strife and natural calamity. However as the society was deeply influenced by the teaching of Buddhism there had never emerged popular unrest in the long course of monarchical rule.

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<sup>103</sup>Maung Maung Latt, 1999, 76

## CHAPTER SIX

### MYANMAR IN TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

**T**he monarchical rule and the customary society was changed abruptly on 29 November 1885 when King Thibaw, was dethroned by a British expeditionary force under the command of General Harry Prendergast. The customary society was terminated and the people had to live under the new administration, laws and conditions to which they had never been accustomed to. A couple of weeks after the deposition of King Thibaw, the British had no precise policy about the future of Upper Myanmar as well as that of the royalty. *Hlut-taw*, the supreme organ of the administration of Thibaw was not dissolved. Even after the formal declaration of the annexation of Upper Myanmar to the Queen's dominions on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1886, Colonel Sladen, former political agent of the British government, was assigned to take charge the function of *Hlut-taw* ran by the former court officials headed by Kinwun Mingyi. Even lord Dalhousie bewildered about the future of Upper Myanmar. He had a couple of plans to keep Upper Myanmar as 1, buffer state, 2, protected state, 3, a state ruled by regency and 4, state ruled by the leader of ecclesiastical hierarchy like that of *lama* in Tibet.<sup>1</sup>

In this situation, an expectation had revived among the former royalty. It was provoked by a rumour that the British would reinstate one of the princes who survived from the massacre of royal kinsmen in early King Thibaw's reign. Even James A. Colbeck, bishop of the Society of for the Propagation of Gospel who

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<sup>1</sup>Ma Kyan, "Lord Dufferin Mandalay-tho La-yauk-sin-ga" (The Time When Lord Dufferin Visited Mandalay), *Myanmar Historical Bulletin*, Vol. 4, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1979, p.161 (Henceforth: Kyan, 1979)

managed Nyaung Yan and Nyaung Ok Princes to escape from the massacre of royalty at the beginning of King Thibaw's accession, suggested that the pacification would restore in a very short time with the reinstatement of a prince to the throne. According to his letter, Colbeck wished Hteik-tin u-zun Prince who was the son of his most intimate Nyaung Yan Prince to become King.<sup>2</sup> This belief became one of the most important reasons why the people of Upper Myanmar did not revolt against the British immediately after the annexation of King Thibaw.

Indeed, the British authorities in Calcutta and England had already designated Upper Myanmar to become one of their spheres of influence. This idea, which had originated as early as eighty years before the deposition of King Thibaw,<sup>3</sup> was renewed with the affairs of Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation.<sup>4</sup> Finally the British adopted the policy of complete annexation and annexed Upper Myanmar to Queen's dominion.

### **Life of Royalties and Officials under Colonial Rule**

During the transitional period, the former royalty, nobility and privileged class had suffered the great economic and social hardship. They were humiliated by the annexation of their capital by the British. At first they saw *Hlut-taw*, the seat and symbol of power during the monarchical rule, was transformed into an Anglican Church, some Chambers of the golden palace became recreation centers and some became Upper Burma Club of the British expeditionary forces. Then they were forced to move from the palace precinct to the outside living wards. The people

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<sup>2</sup>Colbeck, 1892,58,63

<sup>3</sup>D.G.E, Hall (ed), *Michael Symes, Journal of His Second Embassy to the Court of Ava in 1802*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1955, p.141 (Henceforth: Hall, 1955)

<sup>4</sup>Hla Thein (Research Officer) "*Thibaw-min Padaw-ma-mu-gin In-galeik-Myanmar Set-san yei*" (Anglo-Myanmar Relations, Three Years before the Deposition of King Thibaw), *Myanmar Historical Bulletin* Vol .4, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1979, p.138 (Henceforth: Hla Thein, 1979)

living outside the palace were living under the ravages of British soldiers. The desperate situation of Mandalay was witnessed by Ivan Pavlovich Minayefe, Russian Orientalist who arrived Myanmar and stayed at Mandalay from 21 January to 16 February 1886, who noted that “Myanmar were angered with the unruly act of the British soldiers who were intoxicated and also committed harassment to the women. They can shoot the people without any proper reason. The compensation is only 30 *kyats* for one soul. In the chaotic situation of transitional period, *sasana* was gradually on the wane because most of the monks and novices did not wish to live under the rule of the British and moved their native villages and townships.” He also mentions that the British forces encamped at the precincts of pagodas and monasteries.<sup>5</sup> This situation triggered the unrest, which quickly developed into the armed resistance against the British imperialism.

The uprising of the people of Myanmar against the British was motivated by patriotic groups and local brigands made up of ex-headmen and crown servicemen. In the first element of patriotic resistance some princes and old aristocracy and ex-gentry leaders took part. Soon after the fall of Mandalay some hereditary chiefs themselves had gone into rebellion while the almost all of the princes were watching the situation at the capital. However in April 1886 when the British announced that Upper Myanmar shall put under the direct administration of the government of India, some of the princes had gone into rebellion. The prominent princes who led the rebellion were Myin-zaing Prince in Kyaukse, Htaik-tin Saw Yan Paing and Saw Yan Naing in Inwa, Htaik-tin Hmat in Shwebo, Shwe-gyo-byu Prince in Pakhangyi, and Lin-bin Prince who led the *saw-bwas* of Kyaukse, Mo-nè, Yat-sauk and Maing-naung. In addition, the rebellion was strengthened by the regionalized uprisings of ex- hereditary rural chiefs like *myo-*

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<sup>5</sup>Than Tun, *Ne-hlè Ya-za-win* (Field Researches on Myanmar History), Three Vols, Vol.III, Yangon, Nan-tha Press,1969, pp. 384-411 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1969)



*thu-gyis*, *ywa-thu-gyis*, *myin-zis* and *myin-gaung*.<sup>6</sup> Some *ex-myo-wuns* who wanted neither submit the British rule nor take part in the rebellion had taken refuge in other regions. Any way, rebel armies combined to attack all military posts up and down the Ayeyawaddy. In Mandalay, some guerrillas succeeded in entering the royal compound and setting several fires. In April 1886, a rumor of the decisive offensive against the British forces at Mandalay had spread and the people had to live under the great panic. On 25 August 1887 the British forces were able to arrest the Pakhan Prince (Maung U-Zon) and his followers who were taking shelter at Akkabat monastery.<sup>7</sup> Then the summary execution of suspected rebels and sympathizers followed.<sup>8</sup>

A couple of month after the annexation, the British who easily defeated Myanmar armies in the Third War gradually convinced that they were facing with a great problem of restoration of the law and order. Therefore, they attempted to control the members of royal family who would become potential leader of the future rebellion. According to Sir Charles Croswaithe any son or grandson of ex-king, any one who had only a drop of royal blood, he is the influential pretender and he would become a pivot who would attract the anti-British elements.<sup>9</sup> With this attitude, the British authority managed to send principal princes, queens and members of royalty into exile. In August 1885 Colonel E.B, Sladen, Commissioner of Rakhine, proposed Chief Commissioner to keep Nagabo Prince under custody. As he was a son of Badein Prince and Kani Prince, the British considered him as the key figure that would instigate any anti-British movement at

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<sup>6</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,25

<sup>7</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,27

<sup>8</sup> Watmasut Diary, 2005, 27

<sup>9</sup>Dr Kyaw Thet, “*A-htet Myan-mar-pyi Ko Thein-pike-sa-ga Byitisha-do Tha-baw-da*” (The Attitude of the British at the Beginning of the Annexation of Upper Myanmar), *Myanmar Historical Bulletin*, Silver Jubilee Publication, Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1982, p.273 (Henceforth: Kyaw Thet, 1982)

any time. Finally he was deported to Sit-twe where he was detained by the commissioner of Sit-twe. The prince was allotted 100 *kyats* per month as the pension.<sup>10</sup> Other princes and royal relatives were also deported to lower Myanmar. Sons of prince Kanaung; Prince Maung Myint, Prince Maung Phyu, Prince Maung Sit Aung and wife, Prince Maung Sit Naing, Prince Maung Bo and wife were deported from Mandalay on 7 December 1885, from thence sent to Myaik where they were live under the confinement of the British authority. Before the end of 1885, Ex-queens and daughters of King Mindon were deported to Yangon. Deported Queens comprised Khon-nit Ywa *Mihpaya*, Sagasein *Miphaya*, *Myauk-shwei-yei Miphaya*, Lin-pan *Mihpaya*, Thet-pan *Mihpaya* and deported princess were Kyauk-sauk Princess, Taung-tha Princess, Taing-da Princess, Naung-mon Princess, Pa-dein Princess, Min-dat Princess, Maing-lon Princess, Myin-gon Princess, Myo-gyi Princess. All of them were deported to Yangon. Maung Bo Shin, son of Prince Kanaung and Yan Aung Myin Princess, daughter of Prince Kanaung were forced to follow the queens and daughters of Mindon *Min*. In addition, Queen Hsinbyumashin, influential queen of Mindon *Min*, and her daughter Suphayagyi were deported to Da-we. Pakhangyi Suphaya and Miektila Suphaya, the sisters of King Thibaw, were allowed to continue to live in Mandalay. On 13 October 1888, Pyinmana Prince, son of King Mindon by Kyei-myin Princess, was deported to Bengal.<sup>11</sup> The British Government also planned to provide pensions to the detainees. In so doing, they categorized the royalties into three grades and provided pensions which ranged 50 *kyats* from 300 *kyats*.<sup>12</sup> Queen Hsinbyumashin was provided 300 *kyats* per month and Suphayagyi was allotted 150 *kyats*. However the amount of pension allotted to the royalties

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<sup>10</sup>Kyaw Thet, 1982, 275

<sup>11</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,28

<sup>12</sup>Kyaw Thet, 1982, 276

deported in lower Myanmar and that of the royalties who were allowed to live in Upper Myanmar was different as follows:

**Table - XIII**  
**The Rate of Pension Allotted to the Royalties**

Upper Myanmar	First Grade	150 <i>Kyats</i> per month
	Second Grade	100 <i>Kyats</i> per month
	Third Grade	50 <i>Kyats</i> per month
Lower Myanmar	Second Grade Queens	150 <i>Kyats</i> per month
	Second Grade Princes	150 <i>Kyats</i> per month
	Second Grade Princesses	75 <i>Kyats</i> per month
	Third Grade Princess	50 <i>Kyats</i> per month

Source : Kyan, 1980,98

For precisely speaking, Myauk-shwei-yei *Mihpaya*, Lin-pan *Mihpaya*, Thet-pan *Mihpaya*, Sagasein *Mihpaya*, Sein-don *Mihpaya* who were forced to settle in Yangon and *Tha-nat-sin* *Mihpaya* (in Myeik) were regarded as the second grade queens and granted 150 *Kyats* each per month. Additional money of 60 *kyats* per month was granted for house rent. Later, the amount of the pension of some queens was increased. In 1890 the pension of Linban *Mihpaya*, Thet-pan *Mihpaya* and Sagazein *Mihpaya* were increased from 150 *kyats* to 210 *kyats*.<sup>13</sup> Kya-pin Prince in Yangon, Kawlin Prince in Myeik and Nagabo Prince in Sit-twe were categorized into the group of second grade princes and were granted 150 *kyats* each while all second grade princesses were granted 75 *kyats* each.

Some queens were allowed to continue to live in Mandalay and received the same provision of the second grade queens in Lower Myanmar even though they were categorized as the first grade queens. Bagan *Mihpaya* Phakhangyi

<sup>13</sup>Kyan, 1980, 99

*Mihpayagyi* and *Meikhtila Mihpaya* who were allowed to live in Mandalay were categorized into first grade queens and granted only 150 *kyats* each. The princesses born of lesser queens became third grade princesses and received 50 *kyats* each.<sup>14</sup> Some princes were granted small amount of money as pension. Maung Ba O, Maung Sa Lwe, Maung Yon Phyu, the grandsons of Bodawphaya and Maung Win, son of Pyin-zi Prince were granted only twenty *kyats*.<sup>15</sup> It is assumed that the amount of pension was well enough to provide on ordinary family. As for the members of ex-royalty who formerly enjoyed the extensive rights in their former status, the amount granted by the British was not good enough to provide themselves. Over time, the royalties wholly depended on the pension and other provisions granted by the British. Their patriotic sentiment gradually faded away.

After the establishment of the British administration, some princes were forced to serve in the departments of civil administration. Even U Maung Maung Tin, renowned scholar prince and author of *Konbaung-zet Ma-ha-ya-za-win –daw-gyi* who also belonged to the lineage of King Hsinbyushin as well as a figure who revolted against the British rule after the British annexation of Upper Myanmar, was forced to serve as *myo-ôk* of Pin-le-bu in 1892 and Sin-gaing in 1898 respectively. U Maung Maung Tin, as an administrator under the British rule, was able to administer his jurisdictions so that he was conferred the titles of K.S.M and A.T.M by the British government.<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, some princes were forced to serve as humble servants under the British rule. Htaik Tin Myint, son of Thonze Prince, grandson of Mindon Min, had served as in the auxiliary police force in Bago. After his service as policeman from 1 April 1915 to 17 April 1918, he submitted a letter of petition to move him from the police department to the

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<sup>14</sup>Kyan, 1980,99

<sup>15</sup>Kyan ,1980,101

<sup>16</sup>(Maung Maung Tin), 2004a, 24-25

fishery department. Because of his health situation the time when he submitted a letter of petition, Htaik Tin Myint enjoyed the leave without pay. However, because of his economic distress, his father Htaik Tin Gyi applied for a post of fishery inspector for his son.<sup>17</sup>This application shed light on the desperate situations of the royalty in colonial period.

The court officials also lost their status and privileges under colonial administration. Soon after the fall of Mandalay, the British did not deport the influential nobilities and officials and utilized their effort to run the *Hlut-taw*. Even after the *Hlut-taw* was dissolved, they continued to keep the members of *Hlut-taw* to form the consultant body of Chief Commissioner. The members were comprised of the most reliable nobilities and officials like Kin-wun Mingyi, Taung-gwin Mingyi, Pin *A-twin-wun*, *Shwe-daik A-twin-wun* and Dipèyin *Wun-dauk*. They were granted high salary, ranging 500 *kyats* to 1000 *kyats*.<sup>18</sup> Other ex-ministers and officials who were suspected to have close relations with the rebel princes were either kept under watch or deported to other regions. The first and foremost target of the British was Taing-da Mingyi who was renowned for his strong anti-British sentiment and was able to organize followers any time. On 27 December 1885, when attending the *Hlut-taw* meeting, Taing-da Mingyi was arrested and deported to Hazariberg in India. On 19 April 1886, Shwe-hlam *Myo-wun* was kept under solitary confinement and later sent to Sittwe in exile. Hlei-thin *A-twin-wun*, who was watched under suspicion, asked the permission from the British authority to live in India and left Mandalay on 3 May 1886. Some ex-officials of King Thibaw were arrested for holding arms to stage uprising. It is interesting to note that some official like *Myo-wun* U Pei Si had cooperated with

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<sup>17</sup>The Application of Htaik Tin Myint , ACC No- 1697, 1/ 15(D), National Archive Department, p.2 (Henceforth: ACC, 1697,NAD)

<sup>18</sup>Kyaw Thet, 1982, 277

the British authorities to investigate the movements of ex-officials against the British.<sup>19</sup> For his cooperation, U Pei Si was conferred the title of “Companion of the India Empire”. The Members of Consultant body of Chief Commissioner was granted monthly salaries as follows;

Kin-wun Mingyi	1000 <i>kyats</i>
Taung-gwin Mingyi	750 <i>kyats</i>
Pin A-twin-wun	500 <i>kyats</i>
Shwe-daik A-twin-wun	500 <i>kyats</i>
Dipèyin Wun-dauk	500 <i>kyats</i>

After the dissolving of consultant body, the British granted pension salaries of 750 *kyats* to Kin-wun Mingyi, 450 *kyats* to Taung-gwin Mingyi, 200 *kyats* each to Shwe-daik A-twin-wun, Pin A-twin-wun and Dipèyin Wun-dauk and allowed to retire.<sup>20</sup> In comparison with the status and privileges of ex-queens and royalties, the nobility and officials who paid loyalty to the British were continued to enjoy some privileges including salaries higher than that of royalties. However the nobilities and officials who did not cooperate with the British were suffered economic hardship.

After changing the name of Mandalay Palace into “Fort Dufferin”, the officials and nobilities residing in the palace precinct were forced to move out of the palace. Some nobilities who could not afford the expense of movement presented applications to the British to provide money. Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Mandalay and Deputy-commissioner M.S Mathews managed to provide money for movement.<sup>21</sup> However, almost all of the provincial officials

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<sup>19</sup>Kyan, 1980, 96

<sup>20</sup>Kyan, 1980, 84-85

<sup>21</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 72-73

were provided nothing from the British government. Since they lived as the privileged persons under Myanmar King's rule, these officials were not able to find the suitable occupation for their survival, and finally mortgaged their properties to ease the problems. We come across the evidence of deteriorated situation of ex-nobilities and officials under colonial rule. Wife of Shwe-pyi Mingyi (Yaw Atwinwun U Po Hlaing) was forced to sell *Maha Thuzataka Bei-din Kyan-*, the book on astronomy and fortune-telling, written by her husband, to the wives of ex-nobilities for one *kyat* per book. Even Wat-ma-sut *Wun-dauk* had to borrow money from his friends.<sup>22</sup> Anyhow, under the pressure of socio-economic distress, ex-nobilities and officials had to collaborate themselves helped each other to bear the burdens and difficulties.<sup>23</sup> As for the ordinary crown servicemen, they were subjected to hardship more than that of nobilities. Most of them had to stagger for their survival some of them joined the armed brigands.

Although the socio-economic life of the royalties and nobilities had changed abruptly, that of the ordinary people who were acquainted with the difficulties since the time of monarchical rule seemed to be in status quo. With the exception of living under new systems of administration, revenues, education and healthcare, they had to struggle for their survival as they did under monarchical rule.

### **Changes of Economy**

Since the occupation of Lower Myanmar in 1852, the British transformed the domestic agriculture to commercial agriculture. They also introduced the bureaucratic administration, new revenue administration and judicial

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<sup>22</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,75

administration. The year 1869 saw the opening of the Suez Canal which brought about the important change in the international commerce. One year later, Sir John Clapham wrote *“Economic History of Great Britain”* “which emphasis the importance of three trends in modern economic history; “the steam age”, “the age of joint stock industrial organization”; and the age of “the undisputed British international supremacy”.<sup>24</sup> According to this theory, the British government considered it’s colonies as the sources to fulfill these three trends. In Lower Myanmar former deserted lands of Ayeyawaddy Delta were put under the commercial agriculture. A report of British Government in Lower Myanmar reads;

The earliest moves away from the purely subsistence farming basis took place in the Lower Burma delta area about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here agricultural development received a great impetus from the settled conditions brought about by the British rule, and also from the opening of the Suez Canal which provided increased facilities for transport, cheapened freight rates, and strengthened the demand for rice in Europe and other countries. “Land which”, as recorded by witnesses before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, “was largely covered with virgin jungle and regarded as the free gift of nature not worth appropriation has been transformed into permanent rice fields owned, bought, sold, mortgaged, and rented at steadily increasing prices. Casual cultivation for local requirements has given place to a highly developed system of industrialized agriculture organized for the export market. The division of labour has in the most developed areas been pushed the limit of specialization. The pioneer colonist has in large areas succumbed to the

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<sup>24</sup>A Study of Social and Economic History of Burma(British Burma) : Part .VI a, Burma under the Lieutenant-Governors, 1897-98 to 1913-14, The Pursuit of Efficiency, Yangon, The economic and Social Board, Office of the Prime Minister, 1958, p.1 (Henceforth: Social and Economic History, 1958 )



large landlord or money-lender cultivating a large estate by an agent or through tenants”.<sup>25</sup>

The government therefore gave priority to the development agriculture in Lower Myanmar along with industrialization in accord with marketing interest. However the government saw that the peasant proprietors were disposed by absentee and alien land owners in large areas of Lower Myanmar. According to land and revenue settlement report, it is known that, “the extension of the revenue survey over the whole of Lower Burma provided statistical material for dealing with the problem. One contributory factor was the ease with which a transferable title to land could be obtained.<sup>26</sup> The government therefore introduced the grant system which allowed cultivators to possess by paying no revenue for twelve years. However owing to the some difficulties, the grant system was suspended in Bago. The government accordingly introduced other systems like patta system, etc. Over time, people of Lower Myanmar began to familiar with the new system of socio-economy.<sup>27</sup> However, after the introduction of commercial agriculture, the British government was in need of labour and capital. They adopted the “recruitment scheme” by which thousands of Indian coolies and cheap labourers were inflexed into Myanmar. Chettyars- Indian money-lenders also migrated into

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<sup>25</sup>*Market Section Survey No.4, Market and Fairs*, Department of Agriculture, Yangon, Superintendent Government. Printing and Stationary, Burma, 1940, p.4 (Henceforth: *Market Survey, 1940*)

<sup>26</sup>*Social and Economic History, 1958*,33

<sup>27</sup>Ma Kyan, “*Thibaw-min Par-daw-mu Chein-ka Byitisha Myan-mar Pyi-thu-pyi-tha Do-ei A-chei-a-nei*” (The Situation of the people in British-Myanmar at the Beginning of the Deposition of King Thibaw) ,*Thamaing Hu-thi Hnit A-cha Sadan Mya* (What is History and Other Papers), Yangon, Yonkyichet Sarpei, 2008, p.153 (Henceforth : Kyan, 2008)

Myanmar to take part in the economic activities of Lower Myanmar.<sup>28</sup> Following table shows the population of Lower Myanmar in 1861.

**Table- XIV**  
**Population of British Burma (Myanmar), 1861**

Class	Bago	Taninthayi	Rakhine	British Myanmar
Indigenous	1,111,809	330,096	344,809	1,786,714
Indian	17,907	28,731	26,841	73,479
Chinese	2,001	8,118	135	10,254
European	1,252	1,146	164	2,562
Unclassified	17,220	3,311	4,357	24,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,150,189</b>	<b>371,402</b>	<b>376,306</b>	<b>1,897,897</b>

Source : Furnivall, 1956 , 53

For about ten years after the Second Anglo-Myanmar war, together with the reclamation of new lands and improvement in transportation, the population was increased. At that time, under the reign of King Mindon in Upper Myanmar, the Rebellion of Myingun and Myinkhondaing princes broke out in 1866, thus leading to great instabilities in Meikhtila, Pyawbwe, Magwe, Kyaukpadaung, Pin, Natmauk and Shwebo districts.<sup>29</sup> Especially, peoples who lived in the fighting areas fled to Lower Myanmar where the opportunities were waiting. Therefore, the instability in Upper Myanmar became the cause of suddenly population increase in Bago Province. The population of Bago was increased from 613,640 in 1855 to 1,350,898 in 1868. Therefore, it can be assumed that number of population who fled to Pegu Region from upper Myanmar totaled over 500,000. Many towns in

<sup>28</sup>Kyan, 2008, 154-156

<sup>29</sup>Toe Hla, 2004, 183

upper Myanmar also reduced to the village status because of the exodus of people.<sup>30</sup> The British Government in Lower Myanmar offered those who fled from Upper Myanmar some opportunities including the exemption of taxation and land revenue.

In the society of the Lower Myanmar which fell under the British rule thirty years earlier, the transformation of administration and economy seemed to be stabilized. However, as have seen, because of the influx of Indians under “Recruitment Scheme” and other immigrants like Chinese and Europeans, the society in lower Myanmar took the form of the “Plural Society” under which the people lived in their own communities, never cooperate, and therefore nationalist aspect could not be seen. The British Government also gave priority to import skillful workers from India because it could save the time and money rather than to train the natives.<sup>31</sup> In 1881 there were 11860 Europeans and Eurasians, 112962 Chinese and 246283 Indians in Lower Myanmar.<sup>32</sup> The amount of the foreign population seemed to be increased in 1885 and they had settled in the principal cities and dominated the economic life of the region. There was also a different social status between the people who lived in the cities and have-not. The foreign population also developed in the principal cities like Yangon, Maw-la-myaing, Sit-twe and Pathein.<sup>33</sup> In this situation some people from countryside moved to the cities to attain the government jobs, to open stores and to work as menial labourers. As the country was under the colonial rule, Englishmen, Europeans, Eurasians and Indians monopolized the government jobs. For the natives, opportunity to get the posts of town officers, deputy-commissioners and

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<sup>30</sup>*SBBG, 1869, 41-43*

<sup>31</sup>*Furnivall, 1956, 88-91*

<sup>32</sup>*Kyan, 2008, 155*

<sup>33</sup>*Kyan, 2008, 157*

magistrate was very rare. In 1881 there were only twelve native town officers.<sup>34</sup> Similar condition can be seen in the trading and commerce. European, Chinese and Indian businessmen dominated all of the wholesale and retail trade. A handful of native merchants were merely the dependents of these foreign merchants. In the sector of agriculture, cheap Indian labourers took the place of Myanmar cultivators while Indian chettyars dominated the money-lending business. Myanmar cultivators were forced to borrow money to provide the family, to reclaim the land and to meet the other expenses. Although the tradition and culture of customary had continued to exist in the rural areas of Lower Myanmar, the cultural norms of Myanmar society had disappeared in the cities under the emergence of plural society.

### **Progress of Infrastructure and Social Welfare**

Over a decade after the annexation of Lower Myanmar, the British introduced western education system to produce the educated persons who would become the backbone of bureaucratic administration.<sup>35</sup> However, up to the close of nineteenth century there was little progress of education along western line. The demand for educated men was very limited, and was met chiefly by monastic schools. Even Sir Arthur Phayre introduced a system based on the monastic education because of his high esteem on the moral discipline of the monastic training.<sup>36</sup> After the opening of Suez Canal, there was an increasing demand for English-speaking clerks. Therefore the Education Department came to be concentrated on Anglo-Vernacular schools to affiliate Calcutta University. By 1880 however there were only nine Myanmars who were able to matriculate.<sup>37</sup> It is suggested that almost all

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<sup>34</sup>Kyan, 2008, 157

<sup>35</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 123

<sup>36</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 124

<sup>37</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 125

of the ordinary people were not afford to send their children to the government schools. Similarly, the British managed to take care of public health by opening a few hospitals, and clinics. However the people still suffered the frequent visit of epidemic like small pox, cholera and plagues.<sup>38</sup>

In Upper Myanmar, two years after the occupation of Mandalay, the British Government was able to restore the law and order. The government therefore began infrastructural development throughout the country. Since the year of 1877, the construction of Yangon-Pyay railroad had already completed. Other railway lines and motor roads were continued to develop under following motives,

1, Social and Welfare motives

2, Economic Motives

After the annexation of Lower Myanmar, the government considered that it was their duty to improve the spiritual and economic conditions of the people.<sup>39</sup>For example, the government saw Yangon-Pyay Railroad as a means to facilitate and enhance “the free interchange of ideas and communication” between British and Independent Myanmar”.<sup>40</sup>In addition, the development of communication was viewed as a necessity to provide law and order in the country. The officials considered as follows;

Although Upper Burma was annexed without blood-shed in 1886, a few year of “constant patient works were needed before the country was pacified”; during the interim period patriotic uprising, when suppressed and dispersed by the British, degenerated ti petty robberies. The employment and wages given on the railways would have an excellent effect in pacifying the country and reconciling to English rule<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Kyan, 2008, 154

<sup>39</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 63

<sup>40</sup>Maung Shein, *Burma's Transport and Foreign Trade(1885-1914)*, Yangon, Rangoon Press, 1964, p.53 (Henceforth: Shein, 1964)

<sup>41</sup>Shein, 1964, 54

As for economic motive, the government considered that the railways projects would provide commercial interest and would be a welcome source of government revenue. The railways would become the motive for the expansion of cultivation and trade. The government therefore invested over £12 million over the first ten years of the occupation of the whole country.<sup>42</sup> Following table shows the construction of railways before the end of the nineteenth century.

**Table- XV**  
**Dates of Sanctioning and Opening of Different Railways**

Names of Station and Mileage Sanction	Date of Sanction	Date of Opening	Mileage
<b>Ayeyawaddy Valley Line</b> Yangon-Pyay (161) Branch Line	Sep.1874	May 1877	161.00
Pathein-Hinthada-Letpadan	Sep.1899	Dec.1908	65.66
<b>Sittaung Valley Line</b>			
Yangon-Taungoo	May 1811	July 1855	166.00
Suburban Line at Yangon	Sept 1874	Aug 1911	10.70
<b>Taungoo-Mandalay Line</b> Branch Line	Oct 1886	March 1899	220.00
Thazi-Myingyan			
Mandalay-Lasho	Jan 1892	Nov 1899	70.10
	Oct 1895	Mar 1903	177.39

Source : Shein, 1964, 248-49

The development of railways brought about the development of trade and agriculture. However these developments were enjoyed by the British firms and other European enterprises. They occupied the top of the economic hierarchy. By

<sup>42</sup>Thant Myint-U, 2001,222

1800 the seaborne trade of Lower Myanmar was completely controlled by the Europeans.<sup>43</sup> All of the rice mills, saw mills, inland water transportation, timber and other mineral extraction had fallen into the hands of the British. A scholar referred the situations as the “beginning of Plural Economy”.<sup>44</sup> However there was no place for the native entrepreneurs.

### **Development of Social Welfare**

The development of transportation and prosperity were accompanied by the political stability. The government therefore could carry out the establishment of formal administration in Upper Myanmar. Municipalities were founded in the principal cities of Upper Myanmar to undertake the general administration and development of the respective towns. For example, Mandalay Municipality was founded and it began to construct the metal road. The bamboo huts along the main roads were substituted with the brick mansions. Net work of sewage drainage system was constructed and oil-lamp posts were erected along the main roads. The government offices and residences of European took the place of huts and old buildings.<sup>45</sup> On 14 July 1904 tram line was constructed. New Zegyo market was reconstructed under the supervision of an Italian engineer.<sup>46</sup> Over time the scene of Mandalay was changed under the colonial government.

After the firm establishment of colonial rule, the British government gave priority to the education and public health. Meanwhile, the Department of Education in Lower Myanmar was able to run the monastic schools, lay schools

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<sup>43</sup>U Tun Wai, "Economic Development of Burma ; from 1800 to 1940", Yangon, Department of Economic, University of Yangon, 1961, p.51(Henceforth: Tun Wai, 1961)

<sup>44</sup>Tun Wai, 1961,51

<sup>45</sup>Shwe Gaing Tha, *A-hnit Ta-ya-byei Madalay* (Centenary Mandalay), Mandalay, Kyipwayei Press, 1959,p. 290 (Henceforth: Shwe Gaing Tha, 1959)

<sup>46</sup>Shwe Gaing Tha, 1959 ,291-94

and grant-in-aid schools. However some years after the occupation, the education in Upper Myanmar was still depended on the monastic schools. Actually, the western education in Upper Myanmar was introduced since the time of king Mindon by Dr Mark, Missionary of the Society of the Propagation of Gospel. But it was confined to the court circle. Three years after the annexation of Mandalay saw the establishment of grant-in-aid system for 52 schools. Of these schools, thirteen were monastic schools and remaining schools were lay schools.<sup>47</sup> With the development of schools, came the development of female education which could not survive under monastic education. In 1892-93, 183 students of 1826 attending at Anglo-vernacular schools were girls.<sup>48</sup> The government also opened the schools in other districts in Upper Myanmar. Therefore in 1901, various types of 694 schools; private schools, middle schools, government high schools, Anglo-Vernacular schools and missionary schools, were established and 6747 students attended in these schools.<sup>49</sup> At the beginning of twentieth century, there were 158 primary schools in Lower Chindwin District. In 1908-09, 2688 boys and 1171 girls were attending in these schools.<sup>50</sup> However, it is believed that the majority of the people were still relied on the monasteries for the education of their children.

Under the colonial administration, the public health care seemed to be considerably developed. The clinics, public dispensaries and hospitals were opened in Mandalay and other principal districts. As a tropical region, Upper Myanmar was frequently visited by the deadly epidemics like small-pox, cholera and respiratory diseases. The British government therefore attempted to vaccinate

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<sup>47</sup>H.F Searle, *Burma Gazetteer: Mandalay District*, Vol. A, Yangon, Superintendent Government; Printing and Stationary, 1928, pp. 216-217 (Henceforth: Searle, 1928)

<sup>48</sup>Searle, 1928, 218

<sup>49</sup>A. Williamson, I.C.S, *Burma Gazetteer: Shwebo District*, Vol. A, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing and Stationary, 1963 (Reprint) p. 227 (Henceforth: Williamson, 1963)

<sup>50</sup>Hardiman, 1912,200-204



the people to prevent small pox. However Khin Khin Latt, daughter of Wat-ma-sut *Wun-dauk*, was infected. Inspector U Ngo's daughters passed away due to the infection of small pox. Wife of Kyi-wun also got small pox.<sup>51</sup> Although the British Government vaccinated the people, there was a wide infection of smallpox among the people and it was partly due to the backward idea of the public who were still alienated with the Western medicine. Another deadly disease was the plague. Whenever the plague infected to a certain area, the people had to follow the traditional practice of *thu-yè-ma-yè-htoke*- beating the iron caskets or drums to drive away the evil spirit which bring the deadly disease.<sup>52</sup>

Soon after the occupation of Mandalay, the British Government made an effort to establish public hospitals because they were in need of western line of healthcare to give treatment to the British officials and the soldiers of Indian armies. However, they could not provide the whole expense and collected funds from the town elders, merchants and well-to-do families.<sup>53</sup> After the opening of the first hospital in Mandalay in 1887, other hospitals had emerged in Pyin-oo-lwin, Madaya and Myit-nge. Mandalay hospital was funded by the Hospital Finance Scheme while that of Pyin-oo-lwin was funded by the government. Regional Clinic and a Woman Dispensary were also opened in Mandalay. Later Queen Alexandra Children Hospital, funded by the S.P.G was opened.<sup>54</sup> It is interesting to mention that the Christian Missionaries had played an import role in the works of public health care. In 1890 Rev. W.R, Winston, Missionary from Methodic Church, asked the permission from Sir Charles Croswaite to open a hospital for the lepers. He was able to open that hospital near the Pyin-oo-lwin-

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<sup>51</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,109-110

<sup>52</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 110

<sup>53</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 112

<sup>54</sup>Searle, 1928, 226

Mandalay motor road in January 1891.<sup>55</sup> Before the opening of that hospital, the lepers were forced to settle in the fields near Shwe-kyet-yet Pagoda. The social workers of the Missionary made their great effort to organize the said lepers to come to take treatment. In the hospital the patients were given treatment by a doctor and nurses of Missionary. Later they were able to give shelter to the patients and the children of the patients at the Maha-zei-ya-bon Ward. On 5 March 1902 John Wehinger, a Missionary from the Roman Catholic Church, established Ma-naw-ya-man Leprosy Camp. A school was also opened for the infected children.<sup>56</sup> Overtime, the people saw the effective treatment of Western medicine and began to accept the treatment. However the former renowned indigenous physicians were able to open their own clinics.<sup>57</sup> It is assume that the people who settled in the capital were able to choose the way of treatment and the mortality rate would drop to certain extent.

After the annexation of Lower Myanmar by the British in 1852, the British Government headed by a Chief Commissioner was set up. The urgent task of British Government after the restoration of law and order was to take full responsibility for the social welfare of the people including the introduction of new education system. The Board of Directors of East India Company in Calcutta had to set up an educational strategy which should base upon a firm policy. At first they expected the occupation of Lower Myanmar as a good chance to spread civilization and the “Gospel”.<sup>58</sup> Later they expected the subordinates of the British colonies in Asia could come into contact with Britain through the spreading of their language, knowledge and traditions.

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<sup>55</sup>Shwe Gaing Tha, 1959, 294

<sup>56</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 113

<sup>57</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 110

<sup>58</sup>Furnivall, 1956,123

In 1854 the government submitted a report and it was known as “Wood’s dispatch” which recommended that to utilize vernacular language as a pivot of teaching, to give priority for the development of primary education and to support the government high schools and colleges. The report also urged to establish a separate government agency in each province to supervise the education affairs. During that time the government of India had already establish universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Therefore the government of British-Myanmar decided to carry out the educational scheme which was based upon the Wood’s Dispatch. It was carried out by Sir Arthur Phayre, the Chief Commissioner of Lower Myanmar.<sup>59</sup> As Phayre was well versed in Myanmar literature and culture, he introduced a system based on the monastic school.

Forty years after the annexation of Rakhine and Taninthayi, the government opened only four schools in Mawlamyine, Kyaukphyu, Sittwe and Pyay. The functions and administration of schools were entrusted to the respective principals and town elders because there was no department system to supervise the schools. Therefore the government proposed to establish Education Department as follows;

The existence of school was originally brought to the notice of Government by the Late Chief Commissioner, Sir Arthur Phayre; and in 1866, an Educational Department was formed, consisting of a Director of Public Instruction and four Circuit Teachers for the purpose of imparting a higher knowledge of grammar, arithmetic, and land measuring in the Monastery schools, whenever this could be done without hurting the prejudices of the religious inmates of the building.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>U Thet Tun, “*Koloni-khit Myan-mar Pyin-nya-yei*” (Education of Myanmar During the Colonial Period), *Tekkatho Pyinnya Padetha Sasaung*, Vol.V, part.iv, 1970, pp.658-59 (Henceforth: Thet Tun, 1970)

<sup>60</sup>*Report on The Administration of British Burma for the Year 1869-70* Vol. I, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing , 1936-37 (Reprint), p.104 (Henceofrth: *RAB,1936-37*)

Although the government established the Department of Education, its policy was apparent that the expenditure of money on education must be as low as possible. It was testified by the opening of a handful of government schools up to the year of 1866. On the other hand, the Grants-in-aid system was widely used in Lower Myanmar. According to this system, many monastic schools and lay schools were converted into government aided vernacular schools. Former missionary schools became Anglo-Vernacular schools.<sup>61</sup>

The first Government High School was opened on 2 March 1874 at Yangon. It provided classes from primary to the matriculation classes. Soon after the opening of the schools well-qualified teachers from England, Hayes, Dr. Romanis, Dr. Forchammer, were employed and therefore the school proved its efficiency and success within a short period. In 1876 a special class was opened for the students who would enter the matriculation examination for the Calcutta University. In 1877 two student passed the matriculation exam and in 1878 seven students passed from Yangon Government High School. In January 1879 an affiliate College of Calcutta University was opened at the High School for matriculated students.

Fifteen years after the establishment of the Government College, another college was established by the effort of American Baptist Mission. The Baptist Mission carried out its educational activities with humble beginning. The missionary had established a High School in Yangon. By the years of 1893 a student matriculated from the school to attend Calcutta University. Therefore the number of Colleges had been raised to two, by the creation of the Baptist College. One first Grade and one second Grade in Arts. The one was Government College. (Yangon College) and the other was aided by the Government. The average number on the rolls and the average attendance of these colleges between the year 1892-93 and 1896-97 is as follows:

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<sup>61</sup>Kaung, 1963, 73-74

**Table- XVI**

**Average Number of students on the Roll and Attendance of Government  
College of Baptist College**

Institution	Average Number on the Roll					Average Attendance				
	1892-93	1893-94	1894-95	1895-96	1896-97	1892-93	1893-94	1894-95	1896-97	1897-98
Government College	53	80	69	65	70	48	68	61	60	62
Yangon College	-	-	5	9	7	-	-	5	9	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>69</b>

Source : Report on Public Instruction, 1897-8 ,50

While the two Colleges were going through the progress, the activities on the basic education gained momentum. According to the 1867 census it was found that the monastic schools numbered 3438 with average daily attendance of 43,733 students and there were 340 lay schools and 4069 students attended daily. There were 31 registered monastic schools in Lower Myanmar in 1867-68 and there were not any registered lay-schools. However, the number of the registered lay schools had steadily risen to 723 in 1898-99.<sup>62</sup> The lay schools were the schools that introduced the teaching method and the curriculum prescribed by the education department, accelerated the implementation of the grant-in-aid system. Accordingly the monastic schools and lay schools were registered as the vernacular schools. It is interesting to note that although vernacular lay schools developed gradually, the number of monastic schools decreased. There were 704 lay schools in 1889 and the number increased up to 5269 in 1919. The number of

<sup>62</sup>Kaung, 1963, 36-37

monastic schools was 2882 in 1895 and fell to 2208 in 1910. However the number of the registered monastic schools rose to 3228.<sup>63</sup> The following table shows the number of registered monastic schools and registered lay schools 1889-1901:

**Table- XVII**  
**The list of the Registered Monastic schools and**  
**Lay schools (1889-1901)**

<b>The Year</b>	<b>The registered Monastic Schools</b>	<b>The registered lay schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
1889-1890	2327	704	3031
1890-1891	2434	757	3191
1891-1892	4324	890	5214
1892-1893	4619	967	5586
1893-1894	3151	910	4061
1891-1895	3318	986	4174
1895-1896	2882	987	3869
1896-1897	3069	1106	4175
1897-1898	3281	1215	4496
1898-1899	2975	1280	4255
1899-1900	-	-	-
1900-1901	-	-	2575

Source: National Day, 1970, 77-79

The introduction of colonial administration, western education and public health care brought about the drastic change of the way of life. The people were able to choose their own occupations under capitalist economy. There were also

<sup>63</sup>*A-myo-tha-nei Hnit A-myo-tha Pyin-nya-yei Hlok-shah-mu Tha-maing A-kyin* (History of the Emergence of National Day and the Movement of National Education), Yangon, Burma Socialist Programme Party, 1970, pp.77-79 (Henceforth: National Day, 1970)

influxes of the manufactured goods of the Europe. The goods produced from cottage industries like Lacquer ware, potteries, home-made clothing were displaced by the imported goods of glassware and other goods. However the profession of traditional craft and art like silk-ware weaving, embroidery, gold-leaves workshops, and tapestry continued to exist.<sup>64</sup> On the contrary, one can see the development of industries such as rice mills, printing machine, soft-drink industry, brewery, ice will, saw mill and lathe machine ran by Irrawaddy Flotilla Company.

In the provincial areas of Upper Myanmar although the British government made efforts to introduce modern way of life, the people had still embraced to the customary way of life. Some landed-gentry continued to hold their offices. Some became commoners yet stood as the affluent persons. Few of these ex-headmen continued to involve in money-lending business. A couple of years after the annexation, the government began to introduce western litigation system, revenue system and settlement operations. However the local people were bewildered with these new systems and continued to accept the customary practices. Although the western education was introduced, the influence of monastic education did not diminish in the rural community.<sup>65</sup> In commercial transaction, *parabaiks* were still used in spite of revenue stamps issued by the government.<sup>66</sup> In legal administration, the monks and influential village elders continued to use the old

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<sup>64</sup>Searle, 1928, 139

<sup>65</sup>Furnivall, 1956, 124-125

<sup>66</sup>"Agreement on Public Performance show between saing-sa-ya Ko Pu and Pa-mati Ko-ya", *Parabaik* M.S June 1901 , YMC

system of arbitration.<sup>67</sup> A decade after the occupation of Upper Myanmar, the customary society of the rural community had to face with the changes. The development of infrastructure such as construction of railways, motor roads, and irrigation net works played an important role in the transformation of the social structure in Upper Myanmar.

In Upper Myanmar, there emerged the class of businessman, industrialists and company-owners. Almost all of them were foreigners like, Frenchmen, Chinese, Jews and Indians. The Brahmins, who had attained certain privileges under the native rule, had followed their traditional occupation of the fortune-telling.<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that as Mandalay had been last royal capital and heartland of Myanmar culture, the social life of Mandalay was not changed. The foreign population in Mandalay was also lesser than that of other principal cities in Lower Myanmar. Therefore the occupations traditional craft and art still thrived in the society. For example *Yodaya* music troupe, Myanmar music troupe Myanmar *A-nyein*-public performance show with music and dancing, Mon *A-nyein* had still performed the public. Similarly ten traditional crafts was also continued to survive.<sup>69</sup> With the disappearance of the restrictions of native rule, well-to-do families in Upper Myanmar were able to live in the brick buildings.<sup>70</sup> There was emergence of orphanage and home for seniors.<sup>71</sup> The transformation of infrastructure and new economic condition greatly influenced the daily way of life of the people. Under the native rule, the carts and boats were the only means of

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<sup>67</sup>"Decision on the Theft of Nga Tha Hlaing's Buffaloes", *Parabaik* M.S, 24 April 1886, YMC, No.6

<sup>68</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005,57

<sup>69</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 82

<sup>70</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 83-85

<sup>71</sup>Searle, 1928, 177



transportation. Now the people were able to use the railways and steamers for transportation. Telegraphic communication was also extended. Post offices were opened. In the daily life, the people were used to the table and chair. New names of foods added the list of customary foods. These were *Yodaya Mon-di-siamese* rice noodle, Italian macaroni, Sicily rice, canned foods, ice, beer and etc. The people began to wear the silk, velvet and foreign textile. Some people were used to the practice of Western calendar and reading newspaper.<sup>72</sup> Although they lived under the new conditions, some people continued to maintain their time-honoured customs and traditions. In Mandalay ex-nobilities and officials still embraced their traditions such as paying homage to the elders in Myanmar New Year, giving presents in wedding ceremony and noviciation ceremony and consulting with fortune-tellers.

As a conclusion, the customary society was ceased to exist with the disposition of King Thibaw. As for the ordinary people, the transition of the administrative system and introduction of new socio-economic system had not a great effect; however this transition became a great blow to the royalties and nobilities. Most of them were deported, or sent into exile. They made the great efforts for their survival with the insufficient provision of pension of the British government. All of the nobilities were forced to abandon their residence in the palace precinct. Under the pressure of transition to the capitalist society, almost all of the royalties and nobilities had faced with the great economic hardship. As they had lived as the privileged persons under the customary rule, it is impossible for the royalties and nobilities to follow the new professions. Therefore most of them mortgaged their properties to ease their problems. Some princesses had to marry the ordinary people.

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<sup>72</sup>Watmasut Diary, 2005, 85-87

While the customary society was on the verge of erosion in Upper Myanmar, the people of Lower Myanmar used to the capitalist way of life. The British carried out infrastructural developments including the construction of railways, motor roads, etc. However, with the introduction of commercial agriculture the cheap Indian Labourers were imported into Myanmar. In addition the British, other Europeans, Eurasians and Indian began to control the economic life of the country. Because of the influx of foreigners, the society in Lower Myanmar took the form of the plural society. In Upper Myanmar, the people continued to embrace the tradition and culture of customary society. However the everyday life of the people gradually changed. In a word, it is undeniable that the customs and practices which were not fit to survive under the colonialism had disappeared forever.

## CONCLUSION

In both Myanmar and Western historiography, the socio-economic life and political aspects of the late Konbaung Period were mentioned with some unpleasant views. During this period, the kingdom of Myanmar and its people experienced the three Wars with the British and the elimination of the kingdom by the last one, two successful court rebellions and two abortive ones but left a serious socio-economic deteriorations and extraordinary contacts with the outside world. One of the above mentioned issues, the military disasters from the wars with the British greatly diminished the economy and prestige of the kingdom. Particularly, the Second Anglo-Myanmar created the landlocked kingdom with no more access of revenues from maritime trade and agricultural revenues. With the exception of some conscriptions and demands of cash contributions for the wars, the results of the wars with the British did not have much repercussion on the socio-economic life of the people.

The most serious disturbance to the socio-economic life of the people was brought about by the said court rebellions. All four rebellions of late Konbaung Period emerged through the weakness of the customary kingship and spread to the provincial areas. Out of these four rebellions, the rebel princes of three rebellions took Shwebo, the land of victory of Konbaung power house, and those of remaining one took the stronghold in their fief town. The successful rebellion of Prince Thayawaddy against his brother Sagaing *Min* and that of Mindon against his brother Bagan *Min* were ended within a short period even though it spread to Shwebo and neighboring region. However, the rebellion of Mingyun and Myinkhondaing in 1866 spread to the wide area comprising Meiktila and Shawepyi Yan-aung Cavalry District (East), Taungdwingyi, Magwe, Natmawk,

Pin, Kyaukpadaund, Shwebo and neighboring regions. The devastation of Myingun rebellion was strengthened by the subsequent Rebellion of Badain Prince.

Indeed, the people of Myanmar were vulnerable to the maladministration, heavy taxations and the natural calamities. One important reason why they could withstand under such pressures was the profound influence of Buddhism. Whenever they faced with one of the above mentioned pressures, they bore their misfortune nobly set about to accept or hold together what they facing with or what remained. Here, the role of monastic order in the customary society was quite remarkable. As the power of the king was ineffective outside the walls of capital, the provincial administration has fallen into the hands of hereditary officials. However they were not left alone. The provincial monk leaders could check their power for their own benefit. Even in the serious drought or poor harvest local monk leaders could ask the king to exempt taxation on drought-hit people.

The inter-relations among the king, monastic order and the people in the pre-colonial society had remarkable aspects. The king assumed themselves as the promoters and the defenders of Buddhism; they made their utmost efforts to provide the monastic order through the lavish donation. The *Sangha* Order buttressed the monarchy whenever necessary. Such inter-relations were more apparent in the time of King Mindon. Although the king lost revenue resources from Lower Myanmar after the second war with the British, he supported the monastic order at my cost. The provincial monk leaders, on the other hand admonished the people that the paying tax was the requirement of the prosperity of *Sasana* and the Kingdom. After the outbreak of Myingun Rebellion, the role of monastic order in secular affairs was more preeminent. Under the instructions of *Thudhamma* Council, the most supreme organ of monastic order appointed by king Mindon, provincial monk leaders helped the king to call back the people who

fled during and after the rebellion, to hear the disputes of *thu-gyi* offices, and to restore law and order in the war-torn areas during the rebellion. If we do not consider the causes and effects of Myingun rebellion, twenty-five years of king Mindon's reign was said to be a pleasant one to some extent.

When King Thibaw ascended the throne, the situations were aggravated by unsettled conditions. Indeed his father left not only throne but also rival claimants to the throne. The usual diplomatic deadlock again revived due to the strong protest of the British Residency against the massacre of royal siblings. In the situation, the role of court officials to maintain the kingdom was remarkable. Since the time of king Mindon, there emerged some scholar-officials and they took part in the reformation of the state and diplomatic relations with the outside world. Although their ranks and status were created by the king, a couple of officials emerged with the strong sense to reform the monarchism. Among them Kinwun Mingyi and Yaw *A-twin-wun* U Po Hlaing were remarkable for their ideas in favour of constitutional monarchy. However as the King Thibaw was unlike his European counterparts who accepted the enlightened despotism, the roles of reformists like Kinwun Mingyi were faded away. Owing to the lack of the able officials who could tell the king on the situations happening in the outside world, the young king threw himself to arms of France, the arch rival of the British. No one could save the situations which leading to the ruin of monarchy.

The customary society has ceased to exist with the British occupation of Upper Myanmar. The royalties and the privileged officials lost their status and privileges and were forced to become commoners. Most of the members of royal household and officials were deported or sent into exile. Although the British government provided pensions, the royalties and ex-officials made great efforts for their survival. Most of them were forced to mortgage their belongings to ease their problems. Some princesses even married to the commoners. In Upper Myanmar, the transition of customary socio-economy to the capitalist economy did not have

significant repercussions on their life. However, as they bewildered with the new legal and administrative and economic practices, they still embraced their customary practices of former days. On the contrary, the people in Lower Myanmar who fell under the British rule at least thirty years earlier, customary practices of former days. On the contrary, the people in Lower Myanmar who fell under the British rule at least thirty years earlier, they were familiar with the changes. However, with the introduction of commercial agriculture, the foreign immigrants primarily the cheap Indian laborers were imported into Myanmar. The British, other Europeans, Eurasians and Indians began to dominate the socio-economic life of the country. The everyday life of the people gradually changed. The old traditions and practices which were not fit to survive under the colonial administration and economy had disappeared forever.

## Appendix-I

### Presents given to a Princesses in ear-boring ceremony

No	Presents	Quality
1	Pearls	115
2	necklaces with diamonds, emeralds and rubies	7
3	necklaces decorated with diamonds and emeralds	2
4	pair of diamond earplug	1
5	a cluster of flowers decorated with diamonds	1
6	pair of bracelets decorated with diamonds and emeralds	5
7	pair of bracelets with 22 rubies	1
8	diamond, emerald and ruby rings	19
9	pairs of anklets shaped like a naya (mythical animal) Decorated with diamonds, emeralds and rubies	1
10	a footwear decorated with 88 rubies	1
11	gold bowls for drinking water	7
12	gold-plated cups	4
13	gold covers	2
14	gold goglet with cover	1
15	gold bowls for washing hands	2
16	gold gaung-paungs (salvers)	2
17	gold trays	3
18	gold bowls	17
19	gold rice pot	1
20	gold pots (for cooking)	1
21	gold ladles	2

22	gold spoons	3
23	gold casket	4
24	gold spittoon	1
25	gold bowl	1
26	gold (to be used as money)	200
27	silver (to be used as money)	7140
28	clothing	646
29	paddy land in Puba Village, in the district of Alon (for Pocket money)	167
30	paddy land of Nwadein Thungedaw, Methkaya Town (in <i>pe</i> )	180
31	buffaloes (in yokes)	10
32	cow (in yokes)	10
33	milch cows	10
34	young elephants	2
35	cow elephants	2
36	garden in Thonze Town	1
37	Shwe-hton boat	1
38	<i>Ayadaw</i>	3
39	<i>a-htein-daw</i> (nannies)	3
40	<i>a-chi-daw</i> (nursemaids)	1
41	Daughters of ministers as the princess' playmates	24
42	Mogaung Town (as life)	1

Source: Tin Moe Latt, "Myanmar Women in the Traditional Society (1752- 1885)",  
Mandalay University, Ph.D Thesis, History Department, 2007



## Appendix-II

### The List of tax-exempted items. (26 September 1878)

<b>Business and items</b>	<b>Tax-exempted value (in kyat)</b>
Myat-pa(gold-leaves) tax	47,000
Brokerage tax on riverine trade of four townships	70,000
Beans brokerage tax	24,000
<i>a-yat-yat swe-lut-khun</i> (general tax exemption)	27,000
tax on mutton flesh and hide	1,800
tax on fishery	7,200
general betal vine and areca nut	26,250
tax on horse brokerage	1,200
tax on lacquer cups	2,600
tax on (shin-mwe-lun hmo)silk cotton	1,500
tax on sugar brokerage	600
tax on lower riverine trade and brokerage	86,000

tax on wet lands and dry lands in lower riverine areas	4,000
tax on brokerage of Taung-dwin-gyi Township	10,000
tax on brokerage of Chaun-taung and Mya-taung area	600
tax on brokerage of Myin-mu Township	1,800
tax on brokerage of left and right bank of Mu River	600
tax on tree gum	3,360
tax on pagoda festivals and <i>nat</i> (shrine) festivals	17,000
tax on ?gambling at Thit-saint-gyi and Nga-bat-chaung	3,000
trade profit of cattle brokerage in southern route	60,000
total	385,950
<i>ta-ya kun-boe</i> (judicial fees)	60,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>445,950</b>

This decision was recorded by Maha Min-htin Min Kyaw, Herald in the presence of Ministers and Ministers of Interior.

Source: *Parabaik* (No.183), Mandalay Cultural Museum Collection.

### Appendix-III

#### List of the tax-imposed trades

<b>Business and items</b>	<b>Tax-imposed value (in Kyat)</b>
Profit of ruby trade	80,000
Profit of jade trade	100,000
tax on ruby brokerage	12,000
tax on jade brokerage	12,000
ferry tax on jade trade	2,400
Tax on Ya-da-na-pôn	333,756
Tax on 12 items from lower riverine trade	240,000
Tax on raw fish-paste	165,000
Tax on earth-oil trade in lower riverine	434,400
Tax on earth-oil trade in upper riverine	304,200
Tax from Dei-win	24,000
Tax on Taungoo twelve areas	50,000
Tax on Ba-maw twelve areas	12,000
Forestry tax from Taung-dwin-gyi township	25,000
Tax on cattle brokerage of northern route	666,000
Tax on <i>ze</i> (market), <i>kin</i> (chokey)and <i>ku-do</i> (ferry) north	25,500
Tax on south Dei-win	-

Tax on markets of four township	39,000
Tax on ferries of four township	48,800
Tax on Zei-gyo-daw	69,600
Tax on cotton blankets and lower garments	5,400
Tax on ferries of Chindwin river	33,000
Tax on Kyauk-ta-lone chokey	6,900
Tax on Min-gun chokey	8,400
Land revenue of jetty	2,400
Tax on firewood	6,840
Tax on twenty-four pagoda fair	10,000
Tax on ? salt trade of Shein-ma-ka	5,400
Tax on Bagan and Sa-lei ferries	1,200
Tax on ferries of left and right bank of Mu river	1,000
Tax on chokey of Mu creek	2,400
General forestry tax	750,000
Bullock-cart tax from Amarapura	50,000
Tax on floating logs in lower riverine	1,000
Tax from Ma-lon, Myei-the, and Thayet	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,554,196</b>

This decision was recorded by Maha Min-htin Kyaw, Heraid in the presence of Ministers and Ministers of Interior. (26 September 1878)

Source: *Parabaik* M.S (No.183), Mandalay Cultural Museum Collection.

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