



Min-gyi-nyo, the Shan Invasions of Ava (1524-27), and the Beginnings of Expansionary Warfare in Toungoo Burma: 1486-1539

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Min-gyi-nyo (r.1486-1531) occupies an important place in Burmese history as the first king of the First Toungoo dynasty of Burma (1486-1599). After Min-gyi-nyo's death in 1531 mainland Southeast Asia rapidly became the stage for large-scale expansionary warfare. This warfare unified what for hundreds of years had been separate isolated zones of Burmese and Tai political control. The Toungoo Dynasty rapidly established control for a short time over such far-flung states as Ayutthya, Lan Chang (Laos), and the Chinese Shan states. As a result of these wars the Burmese state expanded to a size that it has never matched again.

Min-gyi-nyo has long been neglected by historians of Burma. The last scholarly journal article on his reign was published in 1912 (Shwe Zan Aung, May Oung, and M.K., 1912). Lieberman (2003, 142-4, 150-1) and Surakiat (2005) have recently reasserted Min-gyi-nyo's importance for the study of state expansion and the early modern Southeast Asian polity. Despite this new-found importance, there is still no adequate narrative history of

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Min-gyi-nyo's reign available in English. The Burmese chronicle, the most important source for early modern Burmese history, has yet to be translated into English and Harvey's history of Burma provides only a very condensed history of Min-gyi-nyo's reign based on the Burmese chronicle and neglects significant historical details. The British colonial era approach to history and historiography also limits its usefulness as a historical source (Phillips, 2005; Lieberman, 2003, 6-9). In an attempt to remedy these defects, this paper is first and foremost a narrative history (U Kala, 1961; Lieberman, 1986). Rather than pre-selecting historical detail to support a specific theory of state formation and expansion, the unity of the original Burmese chronicle narrative is maintained. At the same time, steps have been taken to make this Burmese history relevant to the wider field of world and comparative history by adding periodization, background information, and relating it to relevant theoretical models outside the discipline of history.

Min-gyi-nyo's reign is important for understanding processes of polity expansion in early modern mainland Southeast Asia. His reign was a pivotal transition period between the political fragmentation of the Ava period (1365-c. 1555) and the consolidation and unity of the First Toungoo Dynasty. In focusing on this reign we will look for continuities and changes across the divide from the Ava period to the Toungoo period and trace the impact and influence of Min-gyi-nyo's reign and the Shan invasions of Ava (1524-27) on the later unprecedented geopolitical expansion of his successors. Manpower accumulation driven by raids and forced migration will be seen to be the primary driving force behind this expansion (Grabowsky, 1999, 2005). During the early 1530s, in the wake of the Shan invasions, there was a transition from the informal raids of Min-gyi-nyo which targeted the human and animal populations of Upper Burma to a sustained series of four sieges against the Mon kingdom of Ramanya in the south by Min-gyi-nyo's son and successor king Tabinshweihti (r. 1531-1550) waged over the period of four years (1535-39).

Lieberman's (2003) geographical framework for Southeast Asia allows for a precise definition of "polity expansion" and "expansionary warfare." Mainland Southeast Asia is broken into three autonomous sectors or regions: the western sector centered on the Irrawaddy river basin and the Burmese state that has traditionally held control over this area, the central sector centered

on the Chao Phraya river basin and the Tai kingdoms like Ayutthya and Lan Na that have held control there, and the eastern sector with Vietnamese hegemony. The western sector, which we are primarily concerned with, is further broken down into four sub-regions: Upper Burma, Lower Burma, the Shan Realm, and Arakan. To more adequately convey the geopolitical reality of the time, the more contextually correct Mon toponym “Ramanya” will be used for the geographical region and Mon kingdom of Lower Burma. There are several reasons for making this adjustment. Prior to Tabinshweihti’s conquest in 1539, “Lower Burma” was a Mon kingdom that also had a brief restoration from 1550 to 1551 after Tabinshweihti’s assassination. Tabinshweihti and Bayinnaung also made great efforts to legitimize themselves as Mon kings ruling their kingdom from Pegu, the traditional capital of the Mon kingdom. Two frontier areas, the northern Shan-Chinese frontier and southern Portuguese maritime frontier, also had an important influence on the interior. A more accurate geopolitical description of the Shan Realm breaks it into two overlapping frontier regions, a Shan-Chinese frontier region and a Shan-Burmese frontier region. In the pre-modern period frontiers were less well-defined and small states between larger neighbors were usually forced into dual allegiances and tributary relationships (Lieberman, 1984, 133; Winichakul, 1994). Historical demographers have designated warfare within one autonomous region as “internal” or intra-regional warfare and between regions “external” or inter-regional warfare (Turchin, 2003b, 2004). For our purposes, external warfare is equivalent to expansionary warfare and internal warfare is equivalent to non-expansionary warfare.

Tabinshweihti was the first Toungoo king to engage in expansionary warfare because he was the first to cross regional boundaries. In contrast, Min-gyi-nyo only went as far as making an exploratory probe or test march against settlements on Toungoo’s frontier with Ramanya. Min-kyi-nyo’s sphere of influence did, at its height, extend all the way up to the Nyaungyan-Meikhtila region near the Kyaukse irrigation district and Min-gyi-nyo did gradually extend the reach of his military expeditions all the way to Pagan on the Irrawaddy in the eastern part of Upper Burma, but all of this expansion took place within the confines of Upper Burma. Tabinshweihti, on the other hand, went on later in his reign to cross major regional barriers and attack Arakan to his east (1546-7) and Ayutthya to his west (1548). This last military expedition to Ayutthya

would set a precedent for the successor king Bayinnaung who brought Tabinshweihti's first ventures with expansionary warfare to their culmination.

The long-term trends of consolidation and unification are clear and easy to see (table 5), but the details behind the medium term dynamics of this transition are anything but clear. How did Burma transform itself from the fragmented and chaotic political state of the late Ava period in the fifteenth century to Bayinnaung's expansive but loosely held together confederation of states in the sixteenth century in the space of only a few decades? To what extent can this unprecedented state expansion be explained by structural and demographic factors and to what extent can it be explained by human agency or cultural factors such as superior military leadership and governance? How did Min-gyi-nyo set the stage for this later expansionary warfare? Lieberman (2003) argues that due to their greater availability European sources have been favored over indigenous sources and that this, in turn, has led to certain factors being favored over others in historical explanation:

I am convinced that the heavy emphasis on maritime influences to explain local change tends to be reductionist and exaggerated, at least for the mainland; and reflects above all the privileged position of European mercantile records, as opposed to less accessible indigenous sources more concerned with rural and court life. A variety of primarily *endogenous factors--extensive and intensive agricultural growth, migrations and local demographic fluctuations, the internally-driven elaboration of religious traditions, the relentless pressures of interstate competition and resultant state interventions in economy and society* --- have received little or no theoretical attention....In general, political, cultural, and domestic economic changes are too often conceived as epiphenomenal reflections of oceanic innovation (Lieberman, 1993, 478, my italics).

This paper will draw on indigenous Burmese and Chinese historical sources that focus on events in the interior of mainland Southeast Asia and read these sources in light of recent cross-cultural generalizations that have been made by scholars in the disciplines of political anthropology and historical demography (Johnson and

Earle, 2000; Turchin, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Tainter, 1988, 2004).

Warfare was a significant demographic factor during Min-gyi-nyo's reign. From the beginning of his reign, military campaigns originated from Toungoo and only rarely was Toungoo ever attacked by other states. Min-gyi-nyo alternated between periods of offensive warfare and long periods of peace. While the negative demographic impact of warfare rarely had a chance to affect Toungoo's population, the military activity of Toungoo, Prome, and the Mong Yang Shans had an effect on other regions of Upper Burma. So we can posit a differential warfare effect on the population of Upper Burma with some regions experiencing a population decrease, while others such as Toungoo experiencing a relative population increase. Increases in man and animal power due to the absence of warfare led to more conscriptable adult males, horses, oxen, and elephants creating a resource base for Toungoo's sudden expansion in the 1530s.

If the influence of European maritime-based factors from Burma's southern frontier on early modern polity expansion has traditionally been exaggerated, influences from the Shan Realm on the northern Chinese frontier have probably been under-emphasized. This may be due to the minor status accorded Burma in Ming dynastic sources. Expansions and contractions of the Burmese polity only register as significant events at the Chinese court after long intervals of time. Chinese sources do not usually distinguish between different Burmese sovereigns. During the whole course of the Ming dynasty, Burma was never recognized as a full state on par with Ayutthya or Vietnam (Wang Gung-wu, 1998, 313-14). Burma was viewed as no larger or important than any single Shan state in the Shan realm:

Any understanding of the political role of Burma was hampered by describing it as an aboriginal office subject to the jurisdiction of the governor of Yunnan, even after its resurgence in the 1540's. Indeed, surviving Ming records about Burma reveal this all too clearly. Apart from a few hints that it had Mon and Siamese neighbors and was in touch with the Portuguese to its south, Burma appeared to the Ming court as a recalcitrant and surprisingly rebellious powerful aboriginal power against which the rest of the aboriginal powers could form defensive alliances of various kinds and varying strengths.

It is extraordinary to see the grand unification of Burma during the sixteenth century depicted in Ming records as a number of troublesome border incidents on particular stretches of the Irrawaddy and the Salween rivers (with occasional alarms along the Mekong as well) (Wang Gung-wu, 1998, pp. 331-2).

Burma's northern Chinese frontier and the Shan Realm were nonetheless important to Burmese political expansion during the late Ava and early Toungoo periods, and were perhaps more important than the southern maritime frontier. There was never a Portuguese invasion of any region in Burma during this period, but there were several Shan incursions into Upper Burma and in 1527 Upper Burma was wrested from ethnic Burmese control and passed to a confederation of Shan states until 1555. Although one might object that this is political contraction, not expansion, this contraction in the Burmese polity of Upper Burma all the way down to Toungoo in the far south created conditions conducive to polity expansion and a re-emergent Burmese state. With no territory to the north left to expand into, Toungoo shifted its military focus to the south, invading the Mon kingdom of Ramanya, taking first the western delta region and its ports of Dagon and Bassein (1538), and finally the capital Pegu (1539). Then, gathering manpower from the south, Toungoo swung to the north, attacking Prome (1540), then Moulmein (1541), and finally Prome again (1542-43), followed by a drive deeply into Upper Burma into territory controlled by the confederation of Shans at Ava (1544-45).

Some comments are necessary regarding the dating of events and the use of historical sources. U Kala's *Maha-yaza-win-gyi*, the version of the Burmese chronicle used here, contains two parallel overlapping renditions of the events of Min-gyi-nyo's reign written from the viewpoint of the Ava and Toungoo courts which we will call the "Toungoo" and "Ava" narrative threads, respectively. The two narrative threads complement each other, often covering the same event from different perspectives, each supplying important information not provided by the other. The two narrative threads are inter-leaved in the narrative history of Min-gyi-nyo given below. For most events the chronicle only gives the year without extra data to reconstruct a more exact date from. When only a year is given, a date can only be placed in a two year range. Wyatt provides both years (e.g. 1456/7) in his edited versions of the *Chiangmai* and *Nan*

chronicles (Wyatt, 1994; Wyatt and Wichienkeo, 1998). When translating from Buddhist dates, the second date of the two dates (e.g. 866 + 639 = 1505), the commonly expected date, if there already is one, and sometimes both dates are used. The original Buddhist dates are also provided since they are more precise and also serve as a ready index into the Burmese chronicle which is organized chronologically. A thorough analysis, assignment of dates, and creation of a calendar for the period using the dating techniques of Eade (1989, 1995, 1996) remains to be done. So as not to burden the reader with the extensive military statistics that slow Burmese chronicle narrative down, these statistics are given in a note similar to a bibliographical reference at the end of the sentence where they occur like this "(E:100; H:1,000; 20,000S)" meaning one hundred elephants, one thousand horses, and twenty thousand soldiers.

The Ming Annals contain abundant descriptions of political events along the Shan-Chinese frontier during Min-gyi-nyo's reign that complement the Burmese chronicle and provide a more detailed picture of the situation that the Burmese state of Ava faced on the eve of the Shan invasion of 1524 that led to its downfall. The Ming Dynasty Annals [Chinese: Ming Shi-lu] are the primary source among all Chinese primary sources for the period. As Wade (2005a, 3) observes: "It is by far the largest single historical source for the Ming Dynasty in China (1368-1644)," and consists of daily verbatim records of memorials presented to the emperor as well as the debates and policy decisions that surrounded them.²

² All entries in the Ming Annals relevant to Southeast Asia have been translated by the Geoff Wade and are available to the general public online book at the University of Singapore (Wade, 2005b).

Upper Burma before Min-gyi-nyo (1481-86)

The events that shaped Min-gyi-nyo's reign started before he ascended the throne in 1486. Already in the early years of Minhkaung II's reign as king of Ava (1481-1502), Prome, Yamethin, and the Mong Yang Shans had achieved a large measure of independence. From the perspective of their overlord Ava, they were often in a state of rebellion. Shan raids from the north, that had been a problem throughout the fifteenth century, continued and grew in intensity. The Mong Yang Shans repeatedly attacked the northern garrison town of Myedu that guarded the important irrigation districts in the Mu river valley to the north of Ava thus threatening Ava's food supply. When the king of Prome died, the ruler of Tharawaddy to the south seized the throne. This new ruler proved to be more aggressive than his predecessor, immediately sending an expedition to take Magwe on the Irrawaddy river to the north.

Yamethin posed a special type of threat. Located close to the capital and usually ruled by a member of the royal family close to the king, its physical and political proximity to the throne of Ava made Yamethin a refuge for ambitious princes. Min-gyi-swa-saw-ke had held Yamethin as an appanage before he became king of Ava in 1367 (Bennett, 1971, 21). During the 1480's Yamethin arose as the principal threat to Ava in the eastern part of Upper Burma. The lord of Yamethin Min-ye-kyaw-swa also ruled over Ye-hlwei-nga-hkayaing [five irrigation districts] in or near Kyaukse. Although Ye-hlwei-nga-hkayaing is sometimes equated with Kyaukse, the toponyms associated with this region are located from the Meikhtila-Nyaungyan area right up to Kyaukse, so they are not entirely within Kyaukse. Whereas the Mu river valley irrigation district to the north of Ava is fairly well-defined, ending at the northern garrison town of Myedu, the target of most Shan incursions into Ava's territory, the extent and control of southern irrigation districts from Kyaukse to Yamethin, and thus the food supply of Ava, seem to be much less well-defined. Further work on the historical geography of the region from Yamethin to Kyaukse could help clarify the extent of Ava's control over its southern food supply.

Yamethin controlled important rice-growing regions near the capital, so this would have ranked Yamethin as an important

appanage with large food surpluses. These food surpluses led to Yamethin gaining a measure of independence in its actions, ignoring the wishes of its overlord Ava, eventually being considered rebellious by Ava, and finally being targeted in a punitive campaign. This was not the first time the lord of Yamethin had been considered rebellious. During the Chinese campaigns against Mong Mao (1436-1449) a king of Ava had even requested Chinese forces to subdue Yamethin as the price of handing over the Mong Mao [Luchuan] leader (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 196). The lord of Yamethin's rebellious nature seems to be fitting with his status as the younger son or brother at court. He was the youngest son of the king of Ava Mahathihathura (1469-81) (UKII:98) and the younger brother of Minhkaung II (1481-1502) (UKII:105). As we will later see on closer inspection, a large part of the chronicle narrative revolves around this figure.

Yamethin entered into rebellion in 1482 (BE 843). The Burmese chronicle usually does not describe how or why a vassal was rebellious, but it does provide hints. Not sending sufficient tribute to Ava, expanding the size of a fortified city, colluding with another vassal, attacking the settlements of another vassal, and removing population from a fief and relocating it to the vassal's capital, were all at one time considered acts of rebellion by the king of Ava. While Yamethin revolted in the east, the two brothers who ruled Salin and Se revolted in the west, so Ava was already facing a contagion of rebellion across Upper Burma when Min-gyi-nyo became king of Toungoo. The king of Ava ordered the ruler of Toungoo Sithu-kyaw-htin to march to Yamethin to put down the rebellion. He also mustered up some reinforcements to help him. Sithu-kyaw-htin marched straight to Yamethin and without waiting for the reinforcements from Ava engaged the Yamethin troops in a pitched battle. Sithu-kyaw-htin overcame the first wave of troops sent out of the town walls to meet him, but his troops were defeated by the second wave and Sithu-kyaw-htin died in battle. When the reinforcements arrived from Ava, Min-ye-kyaw-swa, the ruler of Yamethin, strengthened the town defenses and resisted from within the town walls, because he thought the Ava troops were too great to engage in pitched battle. The walls of Yamethin were too well-defended with guns to try to scale them, so Ava had to surround the town from a distance. After two months, they were called back to Ava. After Sithu-kyaw-htin's death at Yamethin in 1482 (BE 843),

his son Sithu-nge was appointed governor of Toungoo (UKII:105).

The king of Ava and his ministers assessed the distribution of power in Upper Burma during discussions recorded by the Burmese chronicle in 1483 (BE 844). Ava faced two threats: Prome and the Shans who continued to raid Myedu and Ngarane in the north (UKII:106). The king of Prome died in 1483 (BE 844) and his uncle Thado-min-saw the ruler of Tharrawaddy, south of Prome on the Irrawaddy near modern-day Henzada, marched to Prome and declared himself king of Prome taking his elder sister-in-law to be his queen. The same year he advanced to Magwe by land and water, an incursion into Ava's territory. The king of Ava immediately sent forces to attack them. When the two sides arrived at Maloon, they encamped there facing each other for one month. In the end, they reached a mutual understanding without engaging in battle, exchanged gifts and returned home (UKII:106).

Yamethin attacked Nyaungyan which was defended by Ava's troops in 1485 (BE 846). Yamethin hid in the forest near Nyaungyan until, under cover of dark after midnight, they left their hiding place and brought down the gates of the city by using an elephant as a battering ram. They took the town of Nyaungyan and after taking captives, elephants, and horses, they appointed a governor, garrisoned the town, and returned to Yamethin. A rebellious minister Sithuringatu fled the capital Ava in 1486 (BE 847) and took refuge with Min-ye-kyaw-swa at Yamethin. The king of Ava sent an expedition against Yamethin. They made assaults against the town walls several times but the walls of the town were well-defended, so when the rainy season was approaching they returned to Ava (UKII:107). To summarize, in the period leading up to Min-gyi-nyo's reign, Ava faced both internal threats from vassal states such as Yamethin and Prome in Upper Burma and external threats from the Shan Realm, but Toungoo was not yet considered a threat.



The Shan Realm before Min-gyi-nyo (1449-1503)

Several factors conditioned the relation between the Shan Realm, China, and Burmese Ava before Min-gyi-nyo's accession to power:

1. The Shan Realm was a perpetual threat to Ava.
2. The Shan Realm was effectively an economic frontier for Ava connecting it via trade to the vast expanding markets of Ming dynasty China (SLC 97-198; Brook, 1998).
3. The Shan Realm prospered economically from its proximity to China and trade in gems and luxury goods with which it was well-endowed (SLC 134-153).
4. Economic prosperity in the Shan Realm led to increased population and surplus wealth to finance armies and supply them with military resources such as weapons, animals, and the time of humans spent away from subsistence farming.
5. The Shan Realm had limited territory.
6. Shan expansion to the east into China was not possible.
7. Expansion to the south into Upper Burma was an easier natural alternative for territorial expansion.
8. On its frontier with the Shan Realm, the Ming Chinese state had a policy of divide and conquer and fragmenting potentially powerful frontier states (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 318-9), but this policy sometimes backfired and produced even stronger states (MSL 12 Oct 1499).
9. The Shan-Chinese frontier region was in a continual state of warfare from 1449 to at least 1503.

The most important events along the Shan-Chinese frontier during the fifteenth century were the Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns (1436-49). Liew Foon Ming (1996) presents a detailed narrative history of these campaigns from Chinese sources. These campaigns pitted the large Shan state of Mong Mao, which the Chinese state called the "Luchuan-Pingmian Pacification Commission" after conquering it in the late fourteenth century, against the Chinese state. The core region controlled by the Mong Mao state corresponded to modern Longchuan and Ruili districts on the Yunnan-Burmese border with the modern border town and commercial center of Ruili as its administrative headquarters. The influence of Mong Mao, however, extended east of Bhamo and the

Irrawaddy river all the way to the Salween river encompassing almost all of south-western Yunnan and to the west of the Irrawaddy river its influence also spread over the Shan states of Burma (Liew Foon Ming, 164, 1996). The Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns set the stage for Shan expansionary warfare after 1449:

The first Ming emperor had tamed the most powerful Maw Shan leader in 1387 and then, after 1398, carved up the large state of Luchu'an [P'ing-mien] into eight small territories. His son, the Yung-lo emperor, fragmented the Maw Shan [Mao Shan] state further by establishing two of the territories as pacification commissions, thereby raising them to the same status as Lu-ch'uan, and openly used these two tribes to check the power of Lu-ch'uan...The re-emergence of the Maw Shan chieftains of Lu-ch'uan followed on the withdrawal of Ming armies from Vietnam in 1427. Knowing that the Ming court was in no condition to fight on the Yunnan border, the Maw Shan tribes became increasingly ambitious during the next few years. After 1436, their armies began to invade the border counties of central Yunnan, reaching as far as the Yung-ch'ang and Ching-tung [in Chinese territory] (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 325-6).

The Chinese sent a series of four military expeditions against the Maw Shans over more than a decade. As Wang Gungwu observes:

This war had disastrous consequences for the Ming state, it disrupted the economies of all the southwestern provinces involved in sending men and supplies in fighting a war of attrition against a small tribal state and it cost the Ming state the respect of its tribal allies on the border, who saw how inept and wasteful the Ming armies were. Moreover, the war drew commanders, officers, men, and other resources from the north which might have been vital to the defence of the northern borders. It is significant that the end of the Lu-ch'uan campaigns early in 1449 was followed immediately by extensive tribal uprisings and other revolts in five provinces south of the Yangtze river, and, on the northern frontiers, by the spectacular defeats later in the year which virtually destroyed the imperial armies in the north and led to the capture of the emperor himself by the Mongols. The year 1449 was a turning

point in the history of the dynasty (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 326).

In the late fifteenth century the Shan state of Mong Yang rose to prominence in the Shan Realm and by 1527 Burmese Ava had fallen to a Shan invasion led by Mong Yang. According to the understanding of Chinese officials as conveyed in their memorials to the throne in the Ming Annals, after Mong Mao's defeat in 1449 the Chinese had eliminated the Mong Mao state by splitting it into pieces and Mong Yang was then founded by remnants of the Mong Mao royal family who were allowed to cross the Irrawaddy river [Jin-sha River, see Liew Foon Ming, 1996] and found a small state in return for a pledge not to cross the Irrawaddy river. The Mong Yang ruler Sawlon who later led the 1524-27 Shan invasions of Ava is even referred to in the Ming Annals as "the remnant spawn of the rebellious Lu-chuan [Mong Mao] bandit" (MSL 10 November 1528). The history of relations between a polity named alternatively Mohnyin (Burmese), "Meng-yang" (Chinese), or "Mong Yang" (Shan) with Burma and China goes much further back than this. The Chinese state had recognized a state called "Meng-yang" as far back as 1404 and a king of Ava during the early sixteenth century had been entitled "Mohnyin-thado" (1427-40) because of his military activities in Mong Yang (Liew Foon Ming, 2003, 153; Harvey, 96-99).

How can the Chinese claim that Mong Yang was founded after 1449 be reconciled with Burma's and China's record of relations long before this time? One explanation is that the remnants of Mong Mao's ruling house may have assimilated or been assimilated by the Mong Yang Shans and assumed their identity. As Lieberman (1978) points out, boundaries between ethnic groups during the pre-modern period were often fluid. Ethnic identities did not always determine political loyalties. Personal bonds of patron-client relations were the basic social glue. These personal bonds of fealty tolerated ethnic heterogeneity and even allowed ethnicity to be redefined to some extent. If this was the case, as Lieberman argues, between ethnic groups as different as Burmese and Mons, how much more so between linguistically and culturally similar Shan groups living in close proximity to each other and often related by blood (Daniels, 2001, 53-54; Liew, 2003, 152-154). As we will see, one of the most difficult problems in writing an accurate history for the period is making sense of the chaotic and often contradictory references to Shan groups and states. In the end, instead of striving

for a false sense of accuracy, perhaps it is best to acknowledge this indeterminacy as a feature of political life during those times.

The endemic state of warfare that divided different Shan groups in the Shan Realm from 1449 to 1503 seems to dictate against any sudden ethnic union, but Shan sources during this period indicate at least temporary periods of unity (Witthayasakphan, 2001a, 85-86; Witthayasakphan, 2001b, 31-32). The conquest of the Shan-Chinese frontier by the Ming troops in the late fourteenth century had fragmented the power of Mong Mao, but there are strong indications that the conflicts between Mong Mao and the Chinese state until Mong Mao's final defeat in 1449 hinged on the mobilization of the manpower of smaller Shan states (Liew Foon Ming, 1996). During this period Mong Mao continually tried to unify and reassert its power over the Shan domains that surrounded it that it had once controlled. The first impetus to union among Shan groups during the period we are investigating, the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, might have been the strong military leadership of Sawlon who the Burmese chronicle clearly portrays as the leader of the 1524-27 invasions.³ Chinese sources provide limited confirmation of this fact (MSL 10 Nov 1528). Within six years of the invasion in 1532, however, Sawlon was assassinated from within the ruling group of Shan elites. After Sawlon's assassination, the multi-ethnic character of Shan rule at Ava starts to become more apparent. It is possible that the strong military leadership of Sawlon provided an initial impetus for ethnic union and effectively masked the multi-ethnic character of the Shan invasion of Ava through the rhetorical tendency of chronicle history to equate the state with its ruler.

During the 1480s, the power of the two Shan states Mong Yang and Mong Mit, rose in tandem, fueled by trade with the rising Ming dynasty of China. Mong Mit was most famous for rubies from the town of Mogok, sending tribute missions to the Chinese court with them as early as 1407. Mong Yang was famous for amber and jade (SLC 127, 129, 227, 241). The adjacent Shan states of Hsenwi and Hsipaw effectively defined a boundary between Chinese and Burmese spheres of influence in the Shan Realm. Hsipaw was a steadfast ally of Ava for much of the fifteenth century and appears to have had no relations with the Chinese state since it is never

³ Here the Burmese "Sawlon" is rendered in Chinese as "Si Lun" and in Tai or Shan as "Tsa-lon" (Wade 2005c, entry "58. Lu-chuan/Ping-mian").

mentioned in Chinese sources. Hsenwi was the largest Shan political entity recognized by the Chinese state in the Shan Realm during the early Ming dynasty (SLC 2000, 228), but in the late fifteenth century over the course of several decades Mong Mit gradually broke free from Hsenwi's control and was finally recognized by the Chinese state as a separate political entity (SLC 230). In the mid-fifteenth century the Chinese governor of Hsenwi married his daughter Nang Hannong to the ruler of Mong Mit. She was put in charge of Mong Mit's gem mines and eventually became ruler of Mong Mit. Starting from the 1450s, Nang Hannong, using the gem trade with China as a lever, separated Mong Mit from Hsenwi. The role of Ming dynasty court politics and the gem trade in Mong Mit's serpentine rise to power during the later half of the fifteenth century has been documented by Sun Laichen (SLC 227-232). Other minor Shan states in the Shan Realm that are explicitly referred to in Burmese and Chinese sources include Kalei on the Upper Chindwin river as well as Mong Nai and Yawnghwe in the southern Shan states near modern-day Taung-gyi.

During the 1580s and 1590s, tribute missions were sent frequently to the Chinese court by Shan rulers. Sending a mission was usually a strategic move that often did not indicate actual submission. It was often used to delay Chinese military action, gain acquiescence to territory that had been seized, and also as a bid to get hard to obtain recognition as a state by China. Mong Yang sent regular tribute missions to the Chinese court with items such as elephants, horses, gold, and silver in 1482, 1487, and 1491. Mong Mit sent missions in 1481, 1483, and 1496. Hsenwi sent them in 1496, 1505, 1517, and 1530 (MSL: Mong Yang: 23 Apr 1482, 4 Apr 1487, 3 May 1491; Mong Mit: 19 Jun 1481, 25 Sep 1483, 4 Nov 1496; Hsenwi: 29 Apr 1496, 8 Nov 1505, 22 Mar 1517, 21 Oct 1530).

While the Mong Yang Shans were placating the Chinese to the north, they were engaging in regular raids on the Burmese frontiers to the south. In 844 (1483) the Burmese chronicle records that the Mong Yang Shans continued to attack Myedu and Ngarane in the north (UKII:106). In 1484 (BE 845) a new Burmese governor of Myedu was appointed (UKII:107). In 1484, Mong Mit was finally recognized by the Chinese state as an independent political entity (i.e. an "anfusi" or pacification office) no longer under the control of Hsenwi.

Compared with the chaotic state of continual warfare in the

Shan Realm described by Chinese sources, Burmese sources often hardly seem to describe the same region. This stems from the different approach taken by the Burmese and Chinese states in their relations with Shan states. In the face of endemic warfare in the Shan states, the Chinese state was reluctant to get militarily involved, choosing to control and monitor Shan states through continual diplomatic contact and coercion instead. The Burmese, on the other hand, were less concerned about continual monitoring and control and seem to have engaged in once-off military expeditions to extract promises of submission and token payments of tribute to the exclusion of diplomatic relations. The continual contact of Chinese officials with Shans in the Shan-Chinese frontier led to overall better descriptions of what was going on there when compared with Burmese descriptions of events in the Shan-Burmese half of the frontier.

A good example of Burma's military approach to relations is provided by the Burmese chronicle's description of a punitive expedition led by Ava against the two Shan states Mong Yang and Mogaung in 1477. Mong Yang and Mogaung are tightly associated with each other in the Burmese chronicle, more often than not acting as one political entity (SLC 233), but in the 1477 campaign they were treated as separate entities by Ava. The Burmese chronicle records that in 838 (1477) the king of Ava heard that the Mong Yang and Mogaung sawbwas [rulers] had entered into an alliance and were helping each other militarily, so the king of Ava ordered the crown prince to look after the capital of Ava in his absence and appointed his younger son, the lord of Yamethin Min-ye-kyaw-swa, to march by land with five armies (300E; 6,000H; 70,000S). The king of Ava himself marched with 12 armies travelling by river in his golden royal barge (70,000S). When they arrived at the port of Katha on the Irrawaddy, they disembarked and marched by land to Mong Yang. According to the chronicle, when the Mong Yang and Mogaung sawbwas learned of the king's arrival they lost heart and were not brave enough to resist. They sent gifts and arms and entered into the Burmese king's side. If they did in fact submit in this manner, what led them to do this? Perhaps the Shans were intimidated by the sheer size of Ava's forces. Perhaps it was common cultural knowledge that submitting in advance to Burmese forces was a cultural norm that would allow the local ruler to maintain his position of power and it was this expectation that led to an early

submission. After their submission, the Burmese chronicle records that the king of Ava took the Mong Yang sawbwa and gave him the town of Tagaung in the north on the Irrawaddy to rule over. Mong Yang was given to the younger brother of the Mogaung sawbwa to rule over. The king of Ava returned to Ava in 838 (1477) (UKII:98).

By itself, the description in the Burmese chronicle is unnoteworthy, but juxtaposed with Chinese sources it has important implications for later events. The Burmese were relocating the Mong Yang rulers with their followers to Tagaung near Hsenwi without the knowledge of the Chinese. Tagaung is on the Irrawaddy river south of Bhamo which would have given Mong Yang troops a head start in their later invasion and occupation of Bhamo around 1500. It would have put them one step closer to the Burmese heartland and given them a taste of the China trade that traveled down the Irrawaddy river from the entrepot of Bhamo. The Chinese are also likely to have misinterpreted this Burmese relocation as an independent move by the Shans (cf. MSL 12 Oct 1499).

Chinese sources also describe these events, but from a different perspective. In 1479 the Ming Annals record that Ava asked China to give it the town and territory surrounding Kaung-zin [Gong-zhang] on the Irrawaddy river near Bhamo (MSL 17 Oct 1479). There is usually a lag between events in the Shan Realm and their being recorded in Chinese sources. In this case, a two year lag in recording the event would put the Burmese military expedition against Mong Yang around the same time as the Chinese refusal to give the port of Kaung-zin to the Burmese. Kaung-zin was an important port and a stopping point for Burmese tribute missions to the Chinese capital. China had promised to give Mong Yang to Ava after Ava helped in the capture of Mong Mao's ruler Si Ren-fa in 1449. After apparently initially intending to honor this agreement (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, footnote 116, p. 198), Chinese officials eventually decided not to honor the agreement, so Ava requested this port town instead. The request was refused by the Chinese. In the wake of this refusal, Ava may have led an expedition against Mong Yang to uphold its prior claim to Mong Yang.

To summarize, the Shan Realm in the period leading up to Min-gyi-nyo's reign was politically fragmented and plagued with endemic warfare as well as frequently shifting loyalties and alliances. This very fragmentation and disunity, however, also gave the region a fluid and malleable quality with a future potential for

concerted action under strong leadership.



Min-gyi-nyo's Succession (1486-1492)

Min-gyi-nyo became king of Toungoo through an act of regicide in 847 (1486) when he was twenty-six years old. Min-gyi-nyo's uncle the king of Toungoo Si-thu-nge, refused to allow him to marry his daughter, so one night Min-gyi-nyo entered his uncle's house and murdered him together with one hundred of his servants and retainers. After Min-gyi-nyo murdered his uncle, he married his uncle's daughter, his cousin, and ruled over Toungoo as king (UKII:151). After seizing the throne Min-gyi-nyo sent the king of Ava two young male elephants together with arms and many gifts as tribute. The king of Ava, because he was "clever in the art of ruling" the chronicle adds, did not say anything and responded only with "I bestow Toungoo upon you" and handed Toungoo over to Min-gyi-nyo to rule (UKII:107). After he became king Min-gyi-nyo built a pagoda at the very site of his deceased uncle's former residence near a stream called Pop-pe, about 1000 feet from the north side of Toungoo, at a place which he named Mya-wa-di. Min-gyi-nyo built a white royal house and resided there with his queen.

Regicide was not uncommon during the Ava period in Burma and there was a high percentage of regicides at Toungoo successions. As Harvey points out, for two centuries after it was founded in 1280 Toungoo was "ruled by twenty-eight chiefs, of whom fifteen perished by assassination" (Harvey, 123). Regicide does seem to mark Min-gyi-nyo from the very beginning of his reign as aggressive and ruthless, but as we will see later Min-gyi-nyo was a loyal vassal to his overlord Ava. In many pre-modern political regimes, regicide stood as an initial test of power, strength, and ability to seize the initiative. Regicide was often not only usurpation but also "a challenge brought by one group of young warriors to the established tribal elite" (Di Cosmo, 1999, 11).

Min-gyi-nyo immediately followed up his succession with tests and proofs of his military ability close to home, raiding the region around Pyinmana northeast of Toungoo (UKII:151). After word of his first successful military actions spread, the Karen tribal people living in the hills around Toungoo, referred to in the chronicle as the "people who ate chickens" are said to have submitted to Min-gyi-nyo and become his servants (UKII:151). The spelling in the Burmese

chronicle is “kyet-tha-sa:-dou.” [chicken-meat-eat-plural] with the tone mark missing on “tha:” as it typically is in U Kala, written and copied in an era before strict spelling standards and spelling books [that-bon-kyan]. An U Kala footnote indicates that “Kyet-tha-sa:-dou” refers specifically to Karens residing to the east of Pyinmana at “Htein-pyaung-ngwe-taung Kyauk-taga” perhaps indicating a mountain near Loi-kaw in the modern-day state of Kayah, but there is also a settlement to the west of Pyinmana named “Kyet-tha:-le-ma.” (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 175-176). As with so many other passages in the Burmese chronicle of the late Ava period, more extensive historical geographical research is needed to connect chronicle references to places on the map and give them a meaningful geographical context.

Harvey (p. 124) claims that this refers to tribute being sent from the state of Karenni, but there are no references to a state of Karenni at this early date (Mangrai, 1969, 169). Tax records (sittans) from the Toungoo Land Roll of 1784 indicate that the area surrounding Toungoo was surrounded by Karen settlements that sent tribute in kind to Toungoo. Karens are said to have supplied the court with such forest delicacies and court favorites as pickled bamboo shoots, pickled sparrows, and pickled ant eggs, together with essential weapons technologies such as tail feathers of the shrike and poisoned arrows (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 144, 147). Flowers, especially orchids, were also a popular form of tribute. Apparently, everyone wanted to claim their rightful portion of this forest beauty and, quite possibly, status symbol. The Toungoo Sit-tan (tax records) record:

There were 250 orchids in each basket, but from the reign of your father until the present reign, there have been 500 orchids in each basket and two baskets constituted a load. ...villages have to provide twelve loads of orchids for the Golden Palace, two loads for the chief queen, and four loads for the Golden Hluttaw [council of ministers]. They also have to provide one sample basket, for the foregoing as well as two loads for the Bye-daik [palace administration], four loads for the crown prince, one load for the crown princess, and one load for the wun [official] of the crown prince. Once a year in time for the Royal Horse Exhibition, the deputy chiefs of the eleven cavalry charges (of Taung-ngu) are appointed to supervise the

transport of the orchids to the Golden Hluttaw...When a princess has been allotted Me-balan as an appanage, (the flowers) are sent to the princess (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 145).

Clearly, the Karen villages near Toungoo had, at least by 1784, a well-defined function as florists and purveyor of exotic delicacies to the Burmese court. The chronicle goes on to make a more far-fetched claim that when the far-away kings of the Mons and of Chiangmai heard how Min-gyi-nyo was filled with glory and might they brought the five regalia of a king to him together with their best elephants, horses, jewels, and even their daughters and made offerings to him. There is no corroborating evidence for this claim.



Toungoo as a loyal vassal: Military engagements with Yamethin and Pegu (1492-1502)

During the 1490s, Min-gyi-nyo built a new capital and proved himself both as a military commander on the battlefield as well as a loyal vassal to his overlord the king of Ava. After proving his military strength on his own at Pynmana to the north, Min-gyi-nyo proved his strength several more times during the 1490s against forces from the Mon kingdom of Ramanya and in punitive military expeditions against Yamethin on behalf of the king of Ava. In 1493, he attacked Kyaung-pya on the Toungoo-Ramanya frontier and in 1496 repulsed a Mon expedition sent in retaliation. In the late 1490s he once again attacked Yamethin and Ramanya's frontier, this time raiding settlements along the whole length of Ramanya's frontier with Upper Burma from Toungoo to Prome. Min-gyi-nyo's successes in these military engagements impressed the king of Ava who awarded him with gifts and titles despite the fact that his tribute payments to Ava were deficient.

Min-gyi-nyo strengthened Toungoo's ties to a more universal Buddhism originating in Sri Lanka in 1492 (BE 853). A princess, the future Queen of Yindaw, was born this year and a new capital named Dwayawaddy [Dvaravati] was built. Min-gyi-nyo moved from Myawaddy near Poppe stream to the new city and resided there (UKII:151). Harvey maps this city founding to the modern-day

settlement of “Myogyi...near the Lakoktaya pagoda outside Toungoo” (Harvey, 124). A mission of Sinhalese monks from “the lineage of the great Elder Divakara who belonged to the Mahavihara fraternity” visited Min-gyi-nyo in his new city (Pranke, 2004, 268). Min-gyi-nyo invited the great elders Suvannasobhana and Divakara who accompanied this mission “to accept a monastery built for them in the eastern quarter of Dvaravati [Dwayawaddy, Toungoo]. This residence became known as Thihoyauk monastery. Under their guidance, the king purified the Sasana [religion] in the city of Taungoo [Toungoo] so that it would be wholly in accord with the Theravada, and for this reason all monks residing there became united under the lineage of the great elders” (Pranke, 2004, 218). In the same year an umbrella was raised and fixed atop the pagoda which Min-gyi-nyo had built in the middle of the new city (UKII:151). It seems to have been the experience of becoming a new father which stimulated Min-gyi-nyo to engage in this great burst of building and religious activity.

After the Mon king Dhammaceti (r. 1453-1492) died in 1492 (BE 854), Toungoo attacked settlements on the frontier between the Mon kingdom and Toungoo. It was a common practice in early modern Burmese warfare to send a small expedition to test an opponent’s strength before sending a larger expedition against it. Although the chronicle does not explicitly label this campaign as a “test campaign” as it does other later campaigns, this is a reasonable interpretation of this small probe into Mon territory. The Burmese chronicle relates the details of the campaign. Min-gyi-nyo attacked two villages on Ramanya’s frontier with Toungoo named Ka-chi and Kyaung-pya. The ruler of Kyaung-pya was a Shan from Kyauk-myo named Tho-taing-pwa. Min-gyi-nyo launched a surprise attack against Kyaung-pya at night. The Burmese chronicle says that Tho-taing-pwa riding his elephant Shwei-kyei engaged Min-gyi-nyo in one-to-one combat. Min-gyi-nyo seized the initiative and jumping over to Tho-taing-bwa's elephant, swung his sword at him and pierced his armor and body, splitting it in two pieces. Tho-taing-bwa's elephant was captured and named Min-kon-daing-nya, literally “the King himself captured it” (UKII:152). When the king of Ava heard of Min-gyi-nyo’s exploits he was so pleased that he presented Min-gyi-nyo with gifts including a betel box, teapot, and water jar cover. At this time Thet-shei-kyaw-htin addressed the king and pointed out that

Min-gyi-nyo had built the new city of Dwayawaddy but had never sent any of the elephants, horses, and captives that he had captured during his military expeditions to Ava as tribute. In the future, no doubt, he would revolt. The king of Ava could not bring himself to believe that a ruler of a state as small as Toungoo would ever revolt (UKII:108).

Angered by Toungoo's incursion into his territory in 1493, the new Mon king Ban-ya-yan sent a punitive expedition against Toungoo in 1496 (BE 857). An army led by forty ministers marched from Pegu to Dwayawadi and surrounded the town (100E; 160,000S). Min-gyi-nyo appointed his younger brother prince Min-kyi Sithu-kyaw-tin to attack from the back gate of the town (80E; 30,000S) while Min-gyi-nyo attacked from the southern gate (30E; 20,000S). All of the sixteen armies of the Mons were defeated and fled. Seventy elephants and over thirty thousand captives were taken. Many died in battle. When Min-gyi-nyo's forces had conquered over the sixteen Mon armies, he informed the king of Ava of the victory and the elephants and captives that had been captured. The king of Ava was so pleased with Min-gyi-nyo's military prowess that he added the prefix "Maha" meaning "Great" to his already existing title so that title he bore the title "Maha-thiri-zeya-thura". The five regalia of a king were also bestowed upon him (UKII:108, 153).

Ava called upon Toungoo to deal with the rebellious vassal Yamethin in 1496. Min-ye-kyaw-swa of Yamethin had raided the villages of Sa-ba-taung, Ain-bu, Nga-sein-in, and Tan-ti outside of its domains and taken away human captives, buffaloes, and cows in 1492 (BE 853) (UKII:152). Ava sent Min-gyi-nyo on a punitive expedition against Yamethin four years later in 857 (1496). Although this delay of four years before retaliation might seem long, it is similar to the delay of three years between Toungoo's attack on Ramanya's border (1493) and Ramanya's punitive expedition to Toungoo (1496). Min-gyi-nyo raided Sa-ba-taung and Aing-bu near Yamethin and took away buffaloes, horses, and captives (50E; 300H; 20,000S). Min-ye-kyaw-swa launched a counter-attack and Min-gyi-nyo was forced to retreat. When the king of Ava learned that Toungoo had reasserted Ava's authority over Sa-ba-taung and Aing-put he was so pleased that he awarded Min-gyi-nyo with a bracelet and a ring from his own hands (UKII:110).

In the late 1490s, Toungoo was ordered once again to attack

the villages of Yamethin and Yei-hlwei-nga-hkayaing [five irrigation districts]. Min-gyi-nyo also raided Kyauk-hkye and Kyaung-pya on the Toungoo-Ramanya frontier for elephants, horses, and captives. After this, Min-gyi-nyo marched to the Prome-Ramanya frontier region and led raids for captives, elephants, and horses (80E; 6,000H; 10,000S). He also captured a group of Hsin-aut-ma, a type of female elephant of less prestige than a white elephant used as a decoy for catching wild elephants (UK:153).



A Succession Struggle Over the Throne of Ava? (1501-02)

The five years from 1501 to 1505 were a period of tumult and change in Ava and Toungoo. In 1501-02, the king of Ava and the lord of Yamethin both die and there is a migration of elites from Yamethin to Toungoo. Shortly after the accession of a new king to the throne there is an attempt on his life, a subsequent purge at court, and the flight to Toungoo of elite fleeing from this purge. The following year, in 1502-03, the northernmost garrison town in the Mu river valley, Myedu, is taken by the Mong Yang Shans providing a clear signal to all of Ava's vassals in Upper Burma that Ava's power and control over its domains was waning. The same year Ava makes an attempt to draw Toungoo closer to itself as an ally by forming a marriage alliance with Toungoo and providing valuable settlements near Kyaukse as a gift and appanage. Toungoo rises in importance at the same time as Yamethin falls in importance. In 1503-04, Toungoo reverses its earlier behavior as an obedient vassal, depopulates the settlements it has been given as a gift, and relocates the population to areas near Toungoo, clearly an act of ingratitude and rebellion against its overlord Ava. Ava sends a punitive expedition against Toungoo that is quickly defeated by Toungoo. In the short space of two years Toungoo changes from an obedient vassal to clearly demonstrating that it is stronger than its overlord Ava.

In 1501-02, Ava and Yamethin were interlocked in a series of events surrounding the succession to the throne of Ava. In about August of 1501 [Tawthalin of 863 (1501/02)], Min-ye-kyaw-swa, the rebellious ruler of Yamethin and the five irrigation districts, passed away and over 1,000 of his servants and retainers migrated to Toungoo (UKII:153). The king of Ava Minkhaung II died shortly afterwards in about the month of April [Tagu] of 1502 just before the

Buddhist New Year in 864. A coronation was held with Minkhaung's younger son Narapati being made king in the month of May [Kason] of 1502.

Since the new king Narapati's uncle, the rebellious lord of Yamethin Min-ye-kyaw-swa, had passed away during the previous year, the new king Narapati marched to Yamethin in about July [Waso] of 1502 to claim his inheritance of elephants, horses, silver, and gold. He brought Min-ye-kyaw-swa's daughter back to Ava in a palanquin. Arriving back to Ava, he raised the older sister of the former king to be his queen (UKII:112).

Shortly after the new king Narapati ascended the throne, a plot was launched against his life. In about November [Natdaw] of 1502, Nga-thauk-kya, the servant of Shwe-naw-rata, the son of the king's elder brother, attacked Narapati with a sword. The sword hit the pole of the king's white umbrella and the white umbrella fell over the king covering him. While this was happening the lord of Ye-nan-tha, son of a king's attendant, ran to Nga-thauk-kya and grabbed him. While Nga-thauk-kya was struggling for the sword, they fell to the ground and Nga-tha-yauk struggled to free himself. Then the lord of Ye-nan-tha, addressing the royal ear, spoke thus "If the lord of Yenantha lets go of Nga-thauk-kya he will kill king Narapati and your reign will come to an end, so kill us both!" King Narapati took the very sword that had been used against him and slew Nga-thauk-kya, sparing the life of the lord of Ye-nan-tha (UKII:113, 153).

The king then ordered the lord of Ye-nan-tha to catch Shwe-naw-ra-ta. Shwe-naw-ra-ta was reportedly only twelve years old and obviously working for others at court. He was living in the palace with his mother who was a queen. The lord of Ye-nan-tha took the boy prisoner and handed him over to the king. The king made an investigation to find out who had enticed the young boy to act in the way he had. When the king found out who was behind the plot he had them executed. In about December [Natdaw] of 1502, the young boy Shwe-naw-ra-ta was made to "disappear in the water" meaning he was given the execution traditionally accorded royalty, placed in a bag, and put in the water to drown (UKII:153). Five members of the Avan court, the servant of King Narapati's father Mahathihathura Shin-htwei-na-thein, the ruler (myo-sa) of Pin-ta-le, the king's servant Thi-hmu, Le-hmu, and Ye-myat-hla, were afraid of being killed in the purge that followed the

assassination attempt, so they fled to Toungoo with their attendants, horses, and elephants, all together more than seven hundred people (UKII:113). Min-gyi-nyo gave his sister Myinmala in marriage to Shin-htwe-na-thein, his brother-in-law Min-Uzana having passed away. Min-gyi-nyo raised each of these nobles to a rank commensurate with their former rank in the Avan court (UKII:153).

Although the chronicle doesn't explicitly record it as such, all these strange events surrounding the death of king Minhkaung II in 1501-02 seem to be linked to some crisis at the court of Ava and to provide evidence of a succession struggle. Both the king of Ava Minhkaung II and the ruler of Yamethin Min-ye-kyaw-swa die during the same year, only months apart. The cause of these deaths is not given in the chronicle and no link is drawn between the deaths, however during the same year many residents of Yamethin migrate to Toungoo and after an assassination attempt on the new king of Ava Narapati, instigated by a member of Ava's ruling family, many members of the Avan court, most likely with strong connections to the ruler of Yamethin, fearing they might be executed in the subsequent purge, also migrate to Toungoo with their followers. These migrations together with its extensive military activity must have given Toungoo some modicum of independence and recognition as a power in its own right from the other vassals of Ava in Upper Burma. In fact, from this time forward Yamethin recedes into the background and Toungoo starts to take its place as the most powerful vassal of Ava in the eastern part of Upper Burma. Yamethin is rarely heard of again.

Mong Yang Controls Bhamo (1498-1503)

Mong Yang's occupation of Bhamo from 1494-1503 was a turning point in the history of the Shan-Chinese frontier. After withdrawing from Bhamo in 1503, Mong Yang changed the focus of its expansionary warfare from other Shan states on the frontier with China to Ava's territory in the south. By the 1540s, Ava was ruled jointly by a confederation of Shan states. The question that primary sources do not answer directly is when this alliance or confederation of Shan states first arose, when the Shan states along the Chinese frontier stopped fighting each other and started working together.

The Burmese chronicle lists five Shan states in the joint campaign against Tabinshweihti's southern forces in 1542: Mong Yang, Mong Mit, Bhamo, Hsipaw, and Ava. By 1543, Mone and Yawnghwe have been added to the list.

While Toungoo's sphere of influence was expanding in Upper Burma, Mong Yang's sphere of influence in the Shan realm was also expanding. In the 1490s, Mong Yang allied itself with Mong Mit's enemy Hsenwi. In 1494, following Ming orders, Mong Yang attacked Mong Mit, and took Bhamo and Kaungzin. Up to 1499, Mong Yang had taken thirteen settlements from Mong Mit which the Ming asked Mong Yang to return to Mong Mit, but Mong Mit refused to do. By 1499, Kale was also allied with Mong Yang. During the period 1500-03, the Chinese state planned to attack Mong Yang with the help of a local alliance of states including Hsenwi, Ava, Mong Mit, and Mong Nai, but in the end chose to continue their former less ambitious strategy of long-term diplomacy (SLC 237, MSL 15 Nov 1500).

Which Shan state controlled the important trade entrepot of Bhamo on the Irrawaddy provided a good measure of relative power among the states along the Shan-Chinese frontier. Bhamo was the point where overland trade routes from China met river trade routes going into Burma (MSL 28 Sep 1499). From the mid-fifteenth century Hsenwi controlled Bhamo. During the warfare that plagued the region in the later part of the century, Bhamo passed to Mong Mit in the 1480s (SLC 128-129, footnote 553). In 1594, Mong Yang, Hsenwi, and Chinese forces made a joint attack against Bhamo in an attempt to wrest it from the hands of Mong Mit. Mong Yang succeeded in this and occupied the town. In 1503, under pressure from the Chinese, Mong Yang retreated from Bhamo, effectively handing it over to the Chinese, but this did not last for very long. By 1511, Bhamo was in the hands of Hsenwi, although Mong Yang took Bhamo back that year, indicating the continuing tension between the two relatively equally matched states (UKII:119). By the 1540s, Bhamo stood as an independent member of the Shan confederation.

The year 1503 was a turning point for warfare along the Shan-Chinese frontier. Before 1503, there was endemic warfare and after that there is hardly any. Since the primary concern of the Chinese on the Shan frontier was diplomacy to put an end to warfare, most entries in the Ming Annals deal at least indirectly with warfare. This makes the number of entries for Shan states during a

given period a rough proxy variable for the intensity of warfare on the frontier during the period. Using this data (see table 1 below) we can infer a rise in the intensity of warfare on the frontier after the Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns end in 1449 until the 1490s and a decline thereafter.

Decade	Mong Yang	Hsenwi	Mong Mit	Total
1450s	9	11	0	20
1460s	3	2	0	5
1470s	4	3	4	11
1480s	9	7	8	24
1490s	6	11	13	30
1500s	11	7	6	24
1510s	1	2	3	6
1520s	1	1	2	4
1530s	1	2	1	4
1540s	0	0	0	0
1550s	0	0	0	0

Table 1: References in the Ming Annals to Shan States on the Frontier with China (Source: MSL Meng Yang Index)

The Chinese goal during the late fifteenth century was to maintain peace on the Shan-Chinese frontier and by maintaining peace avoid incursions into Chinese territory. This had not always been the case though. The idea of “divide and conquer” had long been used as a policy rule of thumb on the Shan-Chinese frontier to keep the states there divided and weak (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 314). Assertions such as “Why would it ever be necessary to send an expedition ? ...We can use yi to attack yi [Shans to attack the Shans]” in the policy debates of this period exemplify this policy (MSL 8 Oct 1483). Some within Chinese official circles argued that this policy of divide and conquer would only lead to larger Shan states that were even more threatening to China when the manpower and resources of the defeated side had been incorporated into the victor’s side. This point is made in a policy debate at the turn of the century: “If we say that: ‘When two groups of yi [Shan] fight each other, it is to China’s advantage....if he [Sawlon] is ignored, then within several years he will gather a force and train it and then,

when the calamity occurs, even if we use millions of soldiers and expend mountains of money, it will be to no effect” (MSL 12 Oct 1499). “Calamity” being a reference to the disastrous 10-year Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns that ended in 1449. Chinese officials stationed in the Shan Realm thus felt that the conditions along the frontier were conducive to group solidarity and centralization among the Shans. At the end of the paper, we will review the literature on state formation and expansion to determine what these factors likely were.

In the last decades of the fifteenth century, the logic in the debates of Chinese officials is that if the Shan states were invading and seizing each other’s territory, then they would eventually invade and seize Chinese territory as they did in 1449, necessitating a face-saving Chinese military campaign to reclaim the territory. The events of 1449 had clearly demonstrated how difficult and risky such campaigns could be. Military campaigns were to be launched only as a last resort (MSL 18 Jul 1482). If Shan states were not invading and seizing each others’ territory on the frontier then the Chinese state was satisfied. Whether Shan states were invading and seizing the territory of other states far from the Chinese frontier was a matter of less concern to the Chinese state. After the invasion of Ava in 1527, the Chinese state instructed Shan chieftains to leave Ava alone (MSL 10 Nov 1528), but only pursued this line for a limited period of time and quickly lost interest. This turn south in Shan military activity after 1503 eventually led to an intensification of incursions and raids into Ava territory and finally in 1524 deep penetration into Ava’s territory, effectively a full-scale invasion. With their occupation of Upper Burma from 1527-1555 the Shan Realm played an important role in the transition from the Ava to First Toungoo dynasty. This occupation conditioned the restoration of Burmese rule in Upper Burma by placing constraints on Toungoo’s military activity. The north was effectively blocked to Toungoo, so Toungoo chose to target the south.

Around 1494, the Chinese enlisted the help of Mong Yang in a punitive expedition against Mong Mit to take back control of Bhamo which they had occupied. After several problems the expedition succeeded in taking control of Bhamo, but the Mong Yang Shans moved across the Irrawaddy river that had been a strictly enforced boundary since their defeat at the hands of the Chinese in 1449 and occupied Bhamo. Not until 1503, after several requests by the

Chinese, were the Mong Yang Shans finally convinced to withdraw from Bhamo. Almost immediately after their withdrawal, in the same year, the Mong Yang Shans move south, attacking and taking Ava's northern garrison of Myedu. Although they had attacked the garrison on several other occasions, this was the first time the Mong Yang Shans actually took the garrison town. As we will see later, this had almost immediate ramifications for Ava's internal-domestic politics.

The causal connection between warfare and population growth starts to become explicit with the short period of Mong Yang Shan control over Bhamo from 1494-1503. After the Mong Yang Shans had been barred from crossing the Irrawaddy river, their population eventually grew within the limited territory they had been allotted and when the carrying capacity of the land had been exceeded the descendants of the original settlers spread out. In 1498 they finally violated the agreement and crossed the Jin-sha [Irrawaddy] river en masse. Chinese sources describe the migration across the river: "Si Lu (sic) [must be Si Lun = Sawlon] resides at Meng-kuang which is on the other side of the river. The 5,000 or 6,000 who have crossed the river are all the yi [Shan] troops of the chieftains. They rely on their lances and crossbows and do not have the benefits of armour, helmets, or firearms" (MSL 12 Oct 1499). The numbers quoted almost amount to a resettlement of whole populations. Since Shan states occupied territory that they seized from other states along the Shan-Chinese frontier for several years one might suppose that the soldiers brought their families and engaged in farming during their occupation.

The Ming Annals provide a detailed narrative history of how Mong Yang captured and eventually abandoned Bhamo. Sometime shortly before 1494/95, Si Die, the ruler of Mong Mit, attacked and occupied Hsenwi territory when its ruler Han Wa Fa was away on a journey to Mong Nai to marry a woman there. The Chinese state made preparations for a military campaign ordering "the accumulating of grain, the opening of roads, and the casting of military weapons" (MSL, 4 May 1499). Mong Mit attacked Manzhe [?] next and the wife of the governor there traveled to Mong Yang and requested help from Sawlon. Sawlon because he was restricted to the west bank of the Irrawaddy petitioned Chinese officials to allow him "to gain military merit by killing or capturing Si Die" (MSL 4 May 1499). The request was approved by Chinese officials because other

Shan groups feared Sawlon and Mong Yang's forces. When Si Die heard of the approach of Mong Yang forces he withdrew his troops from Manzhe and retreated to a safe position and the Mong Mit commander who Si Die had left in charge, Xin-man, was captured by Mong Yang. Han Wa Fa was invited to re-establish himself as ruler of Hsenwi. This power did not last long though, because soon after Han Wa Fa reported to Chinese officials that Si Die had returned to his territory and once again had usurped power claiming the allegiance of settlements that actually belonged to Hsenwi.

Finally, the Chinese state itself decided to involve itself militarily by sending a punitive expedition against Mong Mit. Chinese officials in Yunnan figured that Si Die had not been captured which meant that hostilities and incurions into Hsenwi's territory would continue until he was captured. The Mong Yang troops as well as troops from other small Shan states were ordered to join a Chinese force of twelve thousand soldiers under the leadership of three commanders Jiong, Dong-shan, and Ke. The Chinese forces were to provide "defense and escort" so apparently the real fighting was to be entrusted to native troops. Mong Yang Shan forces were sent across the Irrawaddy river to attack Bhamo. Hearing of this, the Mong Mit ruler Si Die ordered his commander Si Ying to fortify and defend Bhamo. The Chinese contingent of the expedition was plagued with problems from the very beginning. The commanders could not agree where to deploy troops and although there were granaries stocked with grain:

...the troops on the expedition were not given any grain and the two armies began to grumble. Ke thus provisioned the troops using the official silver which was to be given as rewards for achievements, and from stores which he had accumulated, and reduced the monthly grain ration for each guard, so as to restore the diverted official funds. Shortly thereafter Ke went to Jiong's camp to discuss matters. The servants of the commander Dai Ji lost control of their fire and it burnt the camp, destroying thousands of military weapons (MSL 4 May 1499).

After this catastrophe Ke joined his forces with the Mong Yang forces. While he was talking with one of the senior Mong Yang Shan leaders Lun Suo: "Lun Suo, who had already crossed the river

[before the Chinese], pointed to a hawk and said to Lin Ang [Chinese commander] 'We are like that hawk. When we take land we control and live off it.' Ke was sad and depressed when he heard this and could not sleep. He thus sent a person to urge Jiong to meet him at Man-mo [Bhamo]" (MSL, 4 May 1499). In other words, territorial expansion to gain cultivatable land was the motive for Mong Yang Shan warfare, perhaps implying that the ratio of population to resources was too great and that the carrying capacity of the land had been exceeded. Ke realizes that the motivations of the two sides in joining this campaign were entirely different and that difference would eventually lead to conflict. The Chinese side expected humility, submission to the Chinese emperor, and an end to aggressive warfare and the seizing of neighboring territories. Mong Yang expected to gain land that the inhabitants of their state could expand into and cultivate. This eastwards expansion towards Chinese territory would eventually be abandoned in the face of continual Chinese opposition and replaced with southward expansion into the territory of Burmese Ava.

Returning to the facts of the campaign itself, Mong Yang and Chinese troops eventually encamped in front of the Bhamo stockade. The Chinese sent representatives to request Si Ying, the Mong Mit commander in charge of the Bhamo stockade, to surrender. Si Ying refused, instead ambushing Mong Yang troops, wounding one and killing two. Si Ying hung their heads outside the stockade as a warning. Five Chinese sentries were wounded by arrows. The Chinese commander Jiong ordered Shan soldiers to move up to a point in the mountains overlooking Bhamo to better control it, but Si Ying's troops remained in the stockade, refusing to engage in battle. A Chinese messenger was sent offering discussions for a peaceful surrender. This offer angered the Mong Yang Shans who wanted to fight, but the Chinese troops had run out of food supplies and had been reduced to eating the hearts of banana trees. The Chinese commander Ke withdrew his troops to Meng-du and Jiong to Mt. Nan-ya. The remaining commander was worried that the Mong Yang forces would block his retreat route, so he started to lead his troops back along the Gan-yai route, "the troops hungry and exhausted, moreover, heard that troops sent from Man-mo [Bhamo] were in pursuit and in the ensuing struggle to escape, an inestimable number of troops were trampled to death" (MSL 4 May 1499). Ke, reaching Meng-du, was met by the female chieftain Nang

Fang acting as an envoy for Si Die the Mong Mit ruler. Ke ordered them to return the land that had been occupied, recompense the Chinese government for grain expended during the campaign, send two elephants to the local Chinese governor as an apology, and prepare local products to be sent as tribute to the Chinese capital. When Ke was called back by the regional commander, Mong Yang was also ordered to withdraw its troops from the area, but continued to cross the river and attack Mong Mit forces. Eventually, Mong Yang succeeded in overcoming Mong Mit forces and occupied Bhamo sending troops in rotation to provide defenses. Chinese envoys made repeated requests to the Mong Yang leader Salon to withdraw to no avail (MSL 4 May 1499, 8 November 1499). The Chinese leaders of the expedition were later censured and faced disciplinary hearings investigating their actions during the campaign. They had to explain what motivated them to join ranks with the Mong Yang Shans who later seized Bhamo for themselves after it was taken.

Mong Yang's seizure of Bhamo was a surprise for the Chinese. On the one hand, Mong Yang had helped the Chinese pacify Mong Mit and regain land. The Chinese called this an "achievement." On the other hand, Mong Yang had taken control of this land, nullifying the achievement and any benefit the Chinese might have derived from Mong Yang's military aid. The Chinese were confused about what to do in such a situation and were continually trying to gauge whether the Shan chieftains had taken advantage of them (8 November 1499). After Sawlon sent local products as tribute to the Chinese throne, a realistic assessment of the situation is made:

His sending of local products in tribute is aimed at delaying our sending of troops. He has other plans and is looking for opportunities to regain the former Lu-chuan territory. If we accept his tribute, he will think that we want the benefit of his tribute goods, and will thus reduce the charges against him. Then it will finally not be possible to recover the occupied areas. In such a situation when will the armed conflict be ended and when will they see peace! (8 Nov 1499)

This clearly indicates that tribute was often only a symbol of submission without any economic value, meaningless if not accompanied by actual submissive behavior. After occupying

Bhamo, Sawlon joined with Hsenwi in attacking Mong Mit “killing or carrying off 2,000 yi [native] persons and stealing elephants, horses, gold, and precious stones. He intended to annex Mong Mit so as to subsequently be able to regain his former territory.” (MSL, 29 Sep 1499)

By 1503, after repeated requests from the Chinese, Sawlon finally withdrew from Bhamo. Sawlon is said to have “obeyed the orders, returned Man-mo [Bhamo] and other territory, a total of 13 areas which he had occupied previously, and withdrew his horses, elephants, and yi [native] troops back across the Jin-sha [Irrawaddy] river.” Then he sent as tribute “six elephants, 600 liang of silver as well as gold and silver wine utensils, a gold saddle, a gold hook, elephant tusks, peacock tail feathers, and other local products” to the Chinese court (MSL, 11 Feb 1503).

Mong Yang quickly marched south the same year (1503), attacking and taking Ava’s Myedu garrison protecting the Mu river valley and Ava’s food supply. This would be the first of many attacks against the Mu river valley that would culminate in a full-scale invasion in 1524. Since Mong Yang’s military activity on the Shan-Chinese frontier stops or is at least greatly reduced from 1503, Mong Yang apparently redirected its military focus to the south this year. It is also possible that in the wake of Si Die’s death [ruler of Mong Mit], the Shan states along the Shan-Chinese frontier began working together or at least reached some truce. Perhaps, the military drive to the south into Ava’s territory was accompanied by some settlement to the south. Some indications are given in the Ming Annals and the Burmese chronicle that Sawlon and Mong Yang had previously occupied territory in Ava at a place called Ting-zhan during the Cheng-hua reign (1465-87) which in Burmese is probably “Tagaung” on the Irrawaddy (MSL 28 Sep 1499; UKII:98). Unrelenting Chinese resistance over several decades to Shan expansion in the Shan-Chinese frontier region was probably the main reason why it came to an end around 1503, but economic factors that are not as well-recorded no doubt played a role also. Prohibitions against the gem and luxury good trade by the Chinese court combined with the withdrawal of the eunuchs who procured these goods from the frontier reduced trade to a low level and reduced the value to the Shans of occupying trade entrepots such as Bhamo. As Sun Laichen observes, “eunuchs were withdrawn from Jinchi-Tengchong and the capital of Yunnan in 1522 and 1530

respectively. During the early reign of Jiajing 1522-1566), in 1525 and 1531 we observe that a shortage of gems occurred in the Ming court" (SLC 143). To briefly summarize, 1503 was an important turning point for Shan states along the Shan-Chinese frontier. Warfare drops sharply from this point on and warfare to the south against Ava starts to become more important.



Ava's Attempt and Failure to Forge an Alliance with Toungoo (1502-05)

During the period 1502-04, Ava's waning power was clearly demonstrated in several critical events. First, Ava lost control over its northern frontier and food supply when Mong Yang invaded and occupied the northern part of the Mu river valley. Second, in the wake of this invasion, Ava made a failed attempt to forge an alliance with Toungoo. In 1502/03 (BE 864) the Burmese chronicle assesses the distribution of power in Upper Burma and lists Mong Yang, Prome, and Toungoo as threats to Ava, slightly different from the last assessment in 1483 which only lists Prome and the Shans in general as threats. Within a space of 20 years (1483-1503) Toungoo and Mong Yang have emerged as threats to Ava's power in Upper Burma (UKII:114).

Mong Yang attacked Myedu in 1502/03 (BE 864) and Thet-daw-shei, the governor of Myedu, resisted from the town as long as he could, but due to delays in the arrival of reinforcements he abandoned the town and fled south during the night. Reaching Tabayin he joined with the ruler there and strengthened its defenses. Mong Yang took Myedu and halted its campaign there (UKII:114).

The king of Ava, following the advice of his ministers, tried to draw Toungoo into a closer relationship of cooperation in 1502/03 and to accomplish this, formed a marriage alliance accompanied with a gift of territory. The king of Ava summoned his ministers and generals and discussed affairs of state with them. The minister Thet-daw-shei addressed the king, "Now Sawlon of Mong Yang has attacked our territory Myedu and Nga-ra-ne several times. The king of Prome also cannot be trusted. Toungoo Min-gyi-nyo also has a lot of elephants, horses, and troops. If he is not faithful to the king, if he

wants to revolt, then he can revolt. To prevent him from revolting and so that he will serve the king for a long time, it is better to give him in marriage to someone closely related to the king” (UKII:114). The king of Ava thought that this advice was sound and gave Min-hla-htut, the daughter of Thadodhammadayaza, the royal uncle who ruled over Salin and the “ten settlements” to Min-gyi-nyo in marriage together with new territory to rule over.

The Burmese chronicle enumerates the settlements given to Min-kyi-nyo as Yei-hlwei-nga-hkayaing [five irrigation districts] including Pya-gaung, Kin-tha, Shwe-myo, Taung-nyo, Talaing-the, Pet-paing, Sa-thon, Myo-hla, In-te, In-paut, Kyat, Than-nget, Be-gu-tha-beit, and In-chon. All these settlements were all given to Min-gyi-nyo and he was made a white umbrella bearing king (UKII:114, 153). These settlements are between Toungoo and Kyaukse to the north, some of them in the same area north of Yamethin that Min-gyi-nyo had carried on punitive raids against the ruler of Yamethin on behalf of the king of Ava. The gift of Yei-hlwei-nga-hkayaing, an appanage that Yamethin had previously held, clearly signals that Ava has replaced Yamethin with Toungoo as its most important vassal in the eastern part of Upper Burma.

After these settlements were given to him, Min-gyi-nyo ordered the inhabitants relocated to Toungoo and the settlements they had previously occupied returned to a forest state. Up to this time Min-gyi-nyo had been an obedient and loyal vassal following orders and carrying out military expeditions on behalf of his overlord the king of Ava. Breaking from his previous obedience, Min-gyi-nyo removed the entire population from the settlements he had been given as a gift to him and resettled them near Toungoo. Raiding this gift of territory for manpower was surely not what Ava had intended. A more traditional strategic relation of tribute or taxation in return for protection would have met traditional expectations, protecting the appanage from future Shan incursions and drawing Toungoo closer into the fold of Ava’s allies. As the Burmese chronicle notes, Min-gyi-nyo’s response of brute resource extraction constituted an act of revolt against Ava (UKII:153).

This rebellious act was followed by yet another rebellious act. Min-gyi-nyo gained new dependencies in the Nyaungyan-Meikhtila area just south of Kyaukse in 1503/04 (BE 865). When the ruler of Nyaungyan Min-ye-kyaw-tin died, the town of Nyaungyan and many of its dependent towns allied themselves with Toungoo.

Accumulating manpower in this fashion was a rebellious act that signaled a move to bolster military strength for future military action just as enlarging the fortified area of a town would be. Based upon the subsequent acts of support given by these lords to Toungoo this is the strongest evidence there is of a tributary relation between Toungoo and a weaker state. Nyaung-yan and five towns tributary to it, Thin-kyi, Yin-daw, Meikhtila, Myin-nyaung, and Tha-ga-ra, together with three sons of the deceased ruler, Baya-kyaw-tin, Min-don-ta and Min-pyi-ywa came over to Min-kyi-nyo's side. This no doubt meant that they took an oath of allegiance, forged an alliance, and became in some sense tributary or subordinate to Toungoo but the three sons remained in their appanages. Min-don-ta was given in marriage to Min-gyi-nyo's daughter who became known as the queen of Yindaw because Min-don-ta ruled over Yin-daw. Min-pyi-wa ruled over Thin-kyi (UKII:153).

In 1503/04, the king of Ava sent a punitive expedition against Toungoo to punish it for depopulating the appanage, but Toungoo intercepted it and defeated it before it arrived in Toungoo. They didn't completely crush Ava's forces though. Ava's forces followed them and attacked them on their way back to Toungoo. The dramatic details of this incident are recorded in the Burmese chronicle. It is said that when the king of Ava heard that his people, the lords from the Nyaungyan-Meikhtila area, had become the servants of Toungoo, he appointed Yaza-thin-kyan as commander-in-chief of an expedition and together with elephants and horses he ordered them to attack Myin-nyaung and Tha-ga-ra, two of the settlements that had been given to Min-gyi-nyo and from which he had removed inhabitants. When Min-gyi-nyo heard of this, he marched on the town (120E; 6,000H; 50,000S). The forces from Ava resisted from inside the town walls. Min-gyi-nyo led the attack riding his elephant and Ava was defeated. Then Min-gyi-nyo ordered his soldiers to take Pyauk-maing. On their return march forces from Ava followed them and attacked them. In a scene from the Burmese chronicle reminiscent of a modern day action film, the commander in chief Yaza-thin-kyan in pursuit of Min-gyi-nyo's forces rode his royal elephant Yan-kaung and attacked Min-don-ta the king of Toungoo's son-in-law who was riding his elephant Na-ga-wa-ra. Yaza-thin-kyan's elephant bolted and ran away from the engagement. Min-don-ta pursued and attacked Yaza-thin-kyan, cutting off his head according to the chronicle. They took lots of

captives, buffaloes, and cows as war prizes. Then they subjugated the villages belonging to the ruler of Pyinzi which belonged to Meikhtila and took lots of elephants, horses, and captives together with cows and buffaloes (UKII:154). Min-gyi-nyo organized members of Toungoo's ruling elite for war in 1504/05 (BE 866). The Burmese chronicle provides a list of "descendants of heroes and warriors" who were formed into cavalry groups and awarded titles. These military units would be used in Min-gyi-nyo's last period of military activity during 1505-10 before he settled down to more peaceful pursuits and the development of his kingdom (UKII:154).

The judgment passed on Min-gyi-nyo by Harvey in his *History of Burma* is neither fair, nor accurate. Harvey claims that the politics of Min-gyi-nyo's succession, the treachery and betrayal that he exhibited in regicide, followed him into the early years of his reign. Harvey claims that when the king of Ava recognized Min-gyi-nyo as the legitimate ruler of Toungoo "having thus condoned murder and put a premium on disloyalty, he refused to believe that Min-gyi-nyo was about to attack him, mumbling 'he would never dare.' But Min-gyi-nyo did dare: whenever he wanted slaves or cattle, he came raiding as far as Meiktila to get them, and his son conquered Ava." Harvey concludes his assessment with a little irony: "the 1829 chroniclers cite Minhkaung's treatment of Min-gyi-nyo as an instance of statesmanship" (Harvey, 102-3). With these sweeping statements Harvey is not giving the Hmannan chronicle of 1829 a very detailed reading. A more detailed reading shows that Min-gyi-nyo disregarded the authority of his overlord the king of Ava only in the face of his waning power and authority after the fall of the Myedu garrison to Mong Yang in 1503. Most of Min-gyi-nyo's military campaigns were against smaller, weaker settlements dependent on stronger states like Yamethin which makes Min-gyi-nyo's early military campaigns closer to once-off raids for resources than permanent institutions of authority. In this respect, Harvey's characterization of Min-gyi-nyo's warfare as raids seems correct. Furthermore, it was not the "1829 chroniclers" who described Ava's recognition of Min-gyi-nyo as an "act of statesmanship". The same passage can be found in U Kala's *Maha-yaza-win-gyi* first published in the early eighteenth century (U Kala, 1961; Lieberman, 1986) and there's no reason to believe that this judgement does not go back even further to the original compiler of Ava's chronicle during the First Toungoo dynasty.

Leniency towards rebellious tributary leaders and reinstatement to their previous position after chastisement is common in the Burmese chronicle, so the king of Ava's quick recognition of Min-gyi-nyo is not an anomalous event in Burmese history.

To briefly summarize, during this first period of his reign (1486-1504), Min-gyi-nyo seized power with an act of regicide, tested his military leadership capabilities with easy expeditions against nearby settlements, in the mid-1490s helped Ava wage punitive warfare against the powerful leader of Yamethin, and after having been awarded by Ava for his efforts, betrayed Ava's goodwill and defeated a punitive expedition that Ava sent against him. During this whole time the threat that Mong Yang posed to Ava was looming on the horizon. When Mong Yang took the Myedu garrison in 1502/03, Ava suffered a sudden loss in prestige and standing among its tributary states which was the likely immediate cause of Toungoo's rebellious actions in 1503-1504. The Burmese kingdom of Ava had entered into a permanent state of decline.

Toungoo Reaches Maturity: An Alliance with Prome and Expeditions to the West (1505-1510)

For the next five years of Min-gyi-nyo's reign Toungoo and Prome waged war together attacking settlements in a very small but important region centered on Pagan, a region which roughly corresponds to "Myingyan District" of the British colonial era. This region is delimited by a triangle composed of three settlements: Pakan-gyi, Pakan-nge, and Kyaukpadaung with the Irrawaddy river serving as its western border (see map 2). Pakan-gyi (Greater Pakan) is located near the intersection of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers not far from the capital Ava. Located slightly upriver and north of Pagan on the Irrawaddy, Pakan-gyi is matched down river to the south of Pagan by the Pakan-nge (Lesser Pakan). If a triangle is drawn from Pakan-gyi south to Pakan-nge along the Irrawaddy, then inland to Kyaukpadaung near Mount Popa, and finally from Kyaukpadaung to Pakan-gyi again, this triangle defines the focus for Toungoo-Prome joint military activity in the western part of Upper Burma from 1505 to 1510. This area was far to the north of either Prome or Toungoo with Magwe serving as a half-way point and staging area between Prome and this region. This region has a

border on the Irrawaddy river which probably heightened its economic and political value. The Irrawaddy was the most efficient transportation route in Upper Burma facilitating trade, the movement of troops, and the extraction of economic rents from trade in the form of tolls and duties on cargo shipped along the river. The ancient capital of Pagan must have also given this region symbolic significance to those who sought to control it militarily.

The first decade of the sixteenth century can be broken into two distinct periods. From 1502 to 1505, Min-gyi-nyo took the first steps towards independence. By 1505, although Toungoo was not a threat to Ava militarily, it certainly was not the ally Ava had planned for when it tried to forge an alliance with it in 1503. Toungoo offered no military assistance to Ava in its increasingly urgent battle against Shan encroachments on its territory. From 1505 to 1510, Min-gyi-nyo acted in an increasingly independent manner. In this middle part of his reign he moved fluidly throughout Upper Burma, setting up a sphere of influence surrounding and protecting Toungoo from raiding and predation on its human and animal populations by other states. This sphere of influence would persist through the Shan invasions of the 1520s into the reign of his son and successor Tabinshweihti. The military resources from this sphere of influence (people, horses, elephants, cattle, oxen) would provide the initial impetus when Tabinshweihti began the First Toungoo dynasty's state expansion, an expansion that would last until the death of Bayinnaung in 1581.



Toungoo and Prome attack the Pagan region (1505-6)

The alliance of Toungoo and Prome originates in the Burmese chronicle as a series of stylized meetings between the rulers of Toungoo and Prome. In the Burmese chronicle these meetings signal that the political environment of Upper Burma has fundamentally changed and that a new era was beginning. Min-gyi-nyo becomes as Lieberman (2003, 150) describes it, “a master of opportunistic alliance” figuring that alliances with Prome and Taungdwingyi that together with Toungoo spanned the southern frontier of Ava were more valuable alliances than the alliance that Ava had tried to foist upon it. An alliance with Ava would have entailed the commitment and wastage of military resources (men, horses, elephants) in future

battles against the Shans. This would also have risked creating an enmity with the Shans that might have resulted in Toungoo eventually becoming the target of Shan offensive warfare. Toungoo's alliances with Prome and Taungdwingyi were of a fundamentally different nature. They were more of non-interference pacts than true alliances in which resources were committed to helping the other side, agreements not to interfere with each other's raiding activities, territorial expansions, and attempts to establish a sphere of influence. Toungoo and Prome's geographical separation to the east and west of Upper Burma's southern marches made this arrangement feasible.

The Toungoo narrative thread of the chronicle records the Prome-Toungoo alliance as starting in 1505 (BE 866) (UKII:154). The king of Prome traveled upriver from Prome and met face to face in full war array in front of Swei-kyaw pagoda with Min-gyi-nyo's forces after which the two kings pledged loyalty to each other. The chronicle does not reveal the reasons or events surrounding the Toungoo-Prome alliance. The two rulers simply meet, take an oath of loyalty, and march off on their joint military expedition. After their meeting was over, Min-gyi-nyo marched overland and, passing by Sale, attacked Singu. The king of Prome left his camp at Sa-kyaw, a village near Kyaukpadaung, traveled upriver to Singu, and invited his junior Min-gyi-nyo to his royal barge where they ate together on plates made of precious stones. After this they attacked Pagan, but were unable to take it. From Pagan they marched to Sale accompanied by the military contingents of the lord of Yindaw Min-ton-ta and the lord of Thin-kyi Min-pyi-wa (both towns near Nyaung-yan) who had become client states of Toungoo in 1504. When they reached Sale which must have been early in 1505 (BE 866), they surrounded the town and laid siege to it (UKII:154, 115).

The king of Ava called on Hsipaw to help him put an end to Toungoo and Prome's military actions. The king of Ava called all his ministers and generals together and asked them for their advice. He told them that the kings of Toungoo and Prome were currently laying siege to Sale and that he had heard they had come in great force. He asked whether they thought it would be appropriate to send an expedition to quell the rebellion. The minister Nei-myo-kyaw-tin addressed the king pointing out that in the north at settlements like Si-bok-taya, Sitha, and Tabayin, when Ava was militarily present in force the Mong Yang Shans did not attack. He suggested that Ava

call upon its ally the Hsipaw *sawbwa* to provide reinforcements and a display of strength. The king of Ava agreed and sent gifts to the Hsipaw *sawbwa* requesting him to come and help. The Hsipaw *sawbwa* marched quickly to help his little brother the king of Ava (60E; 3,000H; 40,000S). Narapati traveled downstream, leading the Ava's naval forces from his royal barge encrusted with gemstones. By river, three hundred small ships with sails [ka-tu], three hundred war barges with iron hull-plates and hooks propelled by oars [hlawka-than-hlei], were sent with seventy thousand 'brave' warriors. By land five armies were sent (300E; 6,000H; 50,000S). The king appointed the ruler of Pagan as general to lead the land forces (Charney, 1997, 19-20; Myanmar English Dictionary, 1993,19). That more troops were sent by river points to the greater efficiency of river transport. War animals were apparently only transported by land, although this was not invariably the case. When they arrived at Bon mountain near Sale, the river forces left their boats and launched an attack (UKII:155).

The combined forces of Ava and Hsipaw quickly defeated the combined forces of Toungoo and Prome. When King Narapati, riding his elephant Saw-yan, attacked, the ranks of the Toungoo and Prome kings were broken and they fled from the battlefield. The Hsipaw *sawbwa* pursued the troops of Min-don-ta and destroyed them. They took more than sixty elephants, ten thousand horses, and three thousand captives. They also captured Min-ton-ta and his elephant. Many died. The Avan narrative of the Burmese chronicle adds that "from that time on, the kings of Toungoo and Prome were awed by and showed respect for Narapati the king of Ava." For the first time Min-gyi-nyo's drive towards independence had been thwarted for the first time (UKII:115,155).

Many of Min-gyi-nyo's ministers, generals, relatives, friends, and soldiers were taken captive by Ava's army during the battle and were held in the town of Singu. Min-gyi-nyo led an attack against the town riding his elephant and secured the release of the captives. After freeing the captives, Min-gyi-nyo marched first to Pakan-nge (south of Sale) and then to Natmauk and nearby Pin. During their march to Nat-mauk, Min-gyi-nyo's soldiers encountered the king of Prome's elephant Za-ti-tu-ra which had been abandoned because it could no longer march. Min-gyi-nyo brought it back to Toungoo with them. From Natmauk Min-gyi-nyo began his march back to Toungoo raiding Kyaukpadaung and Ta-yin-taing and taking many

captives, buffaloes, and cows at these places.

What was the objective of this joint expedition by Toungoo and Prome? Since nothing came of this expedition, the question is not asked, but why did Prome and Toungoo target this region near to Ava but far away from their own states? Was their ultimate objective the conquest of Ava? The extension of long-term political and economic control (taxation, tribute) over the distant Pagan-Myingyan region, or was it merely raiding to augment their human and animal populations? Was this joint expedition by Toungoo and Ava a real threat to Ava? If the king of Ava had not acted quickly and opposed them, if Toungoo and Prome had been allowed to continue their chain of conquests unchecked, could they have accumulated enough manpower and animal resources to attack and take Ava? Would they even have considered attacking Ava? To a Burmese state such as Toungoo or Prome, Ava may have had a certain unassailable status as *primus-inter-pares* in the ethnic Burmese Buddhist world, that prevented its being attacked, albeit small pieces of Ava could be chipped away in a piecemeal fashion with expeditions against Ava's tributary states.

Posing a counterfactual historical question points out the essential asymmetry of a Shan versus Burmese conquest. Instead of Prome offering an alliance to a Shan campaign making its way southwards down the Irrawaddy as it did in 1524, could the mirror image situation of Shans offering an alliance to a Toungoo and Prome making their way northwards along the Irrawaddy towards the capital at Ava have been possible? This later scenario is inconceivable. Toungoo and Prome both benefited from the order, security, and perpetuation of Burmese ethnic traditions of rule that came from the rule of their overlord Ava. Shans were outsiders with no such vested interest in the existing system. Fault lines were beginning to form in the political map of Upper Burma, fault lines that would eventually split Upper Burma between Burmese rule at Toungoo and Prome and Shan rule at Ava all the way up until the restoration of Ava to ethnic Burmese rule by Bayinnaung in 1555.

There was yet another Shan assault against the northern frontiers of Ava in 1507. As the chronicle describes it, during the same year 1507 (BE 868), Mong Yang, having taken Myedu in 1503, attacked the garrison at Tabayin and took it together with Ngarane. When Narapati heard of this, he quickly sent the ruler of Pagan with two hundred attack elephants, three thousand cavalry horses, and

sixty thousand 'brave' warriors. When this force arrived in Tabayin, before sending them into battle the king of Ava gave his generals a long inspiring speech. By the end of the battle Tabayin had been retaken (UKII:116).

The Rebellion of the Three Princes at Pakan-gyi (1508)

Two years later in 1508, Toungoo and Prome had another opportunity to assert their independence. The king of Ava continued to face dissension and threats to his power within Ava's royal family in addition to the threats from Toungoo and Prome to the South and the Mong Yang Shans to the north. In 1508 (BE 869), the ruler of Pakan-gyi died and three royal princes seized Pakan-gyi. The three princes were the king of Ava's younger half-brothers, Min-gyi-thin-ka-thu, Min-gyi-lat, and Min-gyi-htwe, the sons of his step-mother. They gathered together elephants, horses, and troops and occupied Pakan-gyi. The rebels at Pakan-gyi called upon Min-gyi-nyo and the king of Prome to come and help them. Min-gyi-nyo and the king of Prome gathered forces and marched towards Pakan-gyi, but having learnt their lesson at Sale in 1506, they cautiously decided to wait before committing themselves to the princes' side. On the way to Pakan-gyi from Toungoo Min-gyi-nyo passed through several towns including Kyaukpadaung, Popa, Ngathayauk, Taywindaing, Singu, Ywa-tha, and Kya-o raiding and gathering animal and manpower resources along the way, finally halting first at Yenankyaung and then joining Prome at Magwe which the king of Prome had taken and occupied. There Min-gyi-nyo renewed his alliance with the king of Prome.

The renewal of the alliance between Toungoo and Prome is immersed in ritual. The senior, Thado-min-saw, king of Prome, sent word to the junior, Min-gyi-nyo, that he would like to meet, literally from the chronicle "the father requested to see his son." The king of Prome sent a boat to bring Min-gyi-nyo to him. Mingyi-nyo went accompanied only by his attendants, betel box, and water holders. When Min-gyi-nyo arrived on the royal boat the two kings ate together on plates made of precious stones and swore an oath of loyalty. Then they marched together and when they arrived at a place called Kin-pein-naga they ran out of water. While the

elephants, horses, and soldiers were suffering from lack of water, they made an oath of loyalty once again. All of a sudden there appeared a stream and the horses and elephants were able to drink. While they were waiting for news there, they heard that Pakan-gyi had already been taken by the king of Ava and that the three brothers had been beheaded by their half-brother the king. After hearing this news, Min-gyi-nyo started back home in the year 1509 (BE 870). The king of Prome returned to Magwe.

Meanwhile, to put down the rebellion in Pakan-gyi, the king of Ava had appointed eight armies with two hundred fighting elephants, five thousand horses, and eighty thousand soldiers to march overland while he advanced on Pakan-gyi by river with three hundred fighting boats and thirty thousand soldiers. When the king of Ava arrived at Myaung-tu he joined with his other forces marching overland and encircled the town of Pakan-gyi. Seven days later, because there were almost no arms within the town to defend the town with, the rebels could resist no longer, and the walls of the town were mined. After Pakan was taken, Narapati summoned his three younger brothers in front of him, and spoke to them in front of ministers and generals: "When our father and elder brother passed away since there is no one worthy to rule over the golden palace, I took the golden palace and ruled from there. Recently there have been many disturbances caused by Prome, Toungoo, and Mong Yang, that when I am in trouble, instead of helping me, you turn against me and revolt. Even though I have a son, I have not given him the title of crown prince because I intend to bestow this title upon the person who most deserves it. Since you do not have any love for me, there is no way I can have pity on you." After speaking to them thus, he executed his three half-brothers. Those who had joined with the brothers in their revolt were also executed (UKII:117, 156).

Having subdued the rebel princes in Pakan-gyi the king of Ava turned his attention to Magwe to the south, still occupied by the king of Prome. He sent Thet-daw-shei and Tha-daw to Magwe by land (300E; 5,000H; 80,000). The king of Ava traveled down the Irawaddy from the capital to Magwe leading naval forces in his royal barge (three hundred Chinese boats built in the shape of Lon-kyin birds, two hundred big iron boats, and forty thousand soldiers). When they arrived at Magwe they attacked and defeated Prome's boat armies that had been sent out in advance. Prome's navy fled

and the Avan forces followed them to Prome where they laid siege to the town both by land and water. When Prome had finally been taken they captured thirty fighting elephants, sixty horses and over two thousand people. When the king arrived at Magwe he handed everything over to these to his commander Tuyin Banya and returned to Ava (UKII:118).

On his way back to Toungoo from western Upper Burma in 1509 Min-gyi-nyo learned that the ruler of Yindaw had joined with Prome. The ruler of Yindaw Min-pyi-wa was one of the Nyaungyan lords who came over to Toungoo's side in 1504 and helped Min-gyi-nyo in his expedition against Sale in 1506. Apparently as a reaction to this news, Min-gyi-nyo raided settlements near Yindon named Palein-kyei-pon, Yu-pon, Min-lan, Kon-paung, Kan-taung, and Baut-laut and then encamped to the west of Yindon at Ma-kaing mountain. It is not clear why Yindaw's allying itself with Prome would have caused Toungoo to raid settlements near Yindaw. Perhaps the motive was opportunistic, these settlements being left unprotected by Yindaw, perhaps the motive was punitive, even though Prome was an ally, Min-gyi-nyo felt that this shift in loyalty was betrayal, or perhaps Min-gyi-nyo was punishing these settlements of Yindaw that were acting rebellious in the Yindaw ruler's absence. What the text does reveal is that ties of fealty were weak and realignments of loyalties common during the late Ava period, reflecting the increasing political fragmentation of the era (UKII:156).

After these raids near Yindaw, Min-gyi-nyo is said to have first made inquiries into the affairs of Taungdwingyi and then marched to Taung-dwin-gyi where he met with the ruler and discussed affairs with him. The result of these discussions was a marriage alliance, with a marriage between his son and the lord of Taung-dwin-gyi's daughter. After arriving back in Toungoo, the people of Toungoo baked bricks to build a new city with. In 1510 (BE 871), the prince of Taungdwingyi Min-gyi-shwe-myat came to Toungoo and was married to the princess So-min, Min-gyi-nyo's daughter (UKII:156).

What political implications did this marriage alliance have? Did it signify a difference in power? Can we infer which side initiated the alliance or which side benefited the most from the alliance? Harvey states unequivocally in his history that Min-gyi-nyo "was going to take Taungdwingyi in 1509 when its lord induced him to take a marriage between their children instead" (p. 125), but is this

inference justified? Are marriage alliances always concessions offered by the weaker side to placate the stronger side? Marriage alliances seem rather to be offered typically by the stronger side to placate a weaker but potentially rebellious side. We have already seen this logic at work in the marriage alliance that Ava offered Toungoo in 1503. It also holds for the marriage alliance Ava offered Taungdwingyi earlier in the Ava period. As Bennett observes, when the king of Ava Thihathu (r. 1312-24), "...after establishing his new capital at Pinya, set out to establish his ascendancy, he subdued the ruler of Toungoo without much trouble, but to secure Taungdwingyi he thought it wise to give its lord one of his daughters in marriage" (Bennett, 1971, 21). So we have two precedents of stronger powers offering their daughters to the rulers of weaker tributary states to form alliances, both precedents that contradict Harvey's explanation. The Burmese chronicle does not explicitly draw any conclusions about what political implications this marriage alliance had, so any inference of motives can be at most tentative and speculative, but Taungdwingyi lied to the south of Ava between Toungoo in the east and Prome in the west. This location on the border of the Mon kingdom of Ramanya gave it an important buffer state function and put it in a powerful position and made it more an ally than a vassal to Ava.

Min-gyi-nyo built a new capital and named it Ketumadi in 1510 (BE 872). As the king of Ava built a new palace the same year and added the title "Shwe-nan-kyaw-shin" [Lord of the Golden Palace] to his name, Toungoo was likely motivated to build the new capital as a status symbol to rival its overlord or perhaps to make an outright declaration of independence). The Burmese chronicle describes the layout of the new palace and the ceremonies that took place when the city had been completed. Around a lake filled with lotuses Min-gyi-nyo planted jackfruit, mango trees, and many other edible fruit trees. He also planted flower and fruit gardens with jasmine. In the middle of the lake he built a fine residence. On the other side of the lake a rest-house was built where the king would entertain and reign from happily. Near the palace in the middle of the city a temporary platform was built and monks were invited from the area surrounding the city, both far and near, to come there. The monks were provided with the eight perquisites of monkhood and rice offerings were made without cease, to the royal father Maha-thinkaya as well. To the poor and destitute without clothing or

food, Min-gyi-nyo offered clothing and rice without cease. To the court Brahmins he offered silver basoes [male sarongs] (UKII:157).

The “Legend of the Golden Hinthu Duck” tells the story of how the new city of Ketumadi was auspiciously founded:

Mingyi Nyo...reigned in Lokuttara Dwarawaddy for 19 years when he was *advised by his councillors to found a new city in order that he might live over a hundred years and become more powerful. The king himself already had a desire to remove his capital from Lokuttara Dwarawaddy which was then being eroded by the river.* He was therefore very pleased with the idea. He then invited wise ponnas [Court Brahmins], ministers, and rahans over to his palace and consulted them as to the choice of site for the proposed town. And they told the king as follows...*a pair of Hinthas will fly from due east. The spot on which they drop their food will be the most auspicious site for the new palace. On each of the four sides of the city wall to be built, there should be a main gate with four smaller ones, making up 20 gates in all. At the entrance of each gate, there should be erected a thein. The city should be surrounded by three moats—a water moat, a mud moat, and a dry moat.* The Shwehintha Pagoda was built under the king’s personal supervision. The list of things deposited in the Pagoda is as follows: --- In the two porcelain vessels presented by the emperor of China... (Shwe Zan Aung et al., 1912, 82, my italics)

This legend resurfaced rather strangely in 1912 when the treasure chamber of Shwe Hinthu pagoda near Toungoo was opened and the objects described in the legend were found. This discovery led to an acrimonious debate between Burmese literati over Min-gyi-nyo’s regnal dates in the “Rangoon Gazette” that was later republished in the Journal of the Burma Research Society (Shwe Zan Aung et al, 1912).

There is also a legend about how Min-gyi-nyo met the mother of Tabinshweihti at this lake. The legend holds that after the new city of Ketumadi was built in 1510 “the Kya In or Lotus Lake (the present lake) was included in the city limits, and it was some time after that that the King while he was out one day inspecting the overflow of water met the daughter of the Nga New Gon thugyi

[headman of Nga-nu-gon village] who became Tabin Shwehti's mother" (Shwe Zan Aung et al., 1912, 81). The 1912 article on Min-gyi-nyo also contains a debate over the veracity of this legend and the origins of Tabinshweihti's mother that Harvey apparently used to locate her hometown at Penwegon (Harvey, 125). As Harvey usually does not provide citations for his frequent mappings of ancient history to contemporary geography, this example clearly shows that these mappings should not be accepted on face value.

From the time he built his new capital in 1510, Min-gyi-nyo also mysteriously ceased all military activity until 1523 when he renewed his raids as Shan incursions into Avan territory intensified. During this long period of peace Min-gyi-nyo probably devoted himself to more peaceful economic pursuits such as improving Toungoo's agricultural capabilities in the face of mounting population pressure, building "new irrigation tanks and systematically reclaiming jungle and wastes for cultivation" (Lieberman, 1993, 6).



Shan Raids and the Fall of Ava (1510-1527)

As the Burmese chronicle lapses into a long period of silence for Toungoo and Min-gyi-nyo, Shan raids into Burmese territory begin to intensify. Perhaps this silence signals a shift in focus to more important events that were threatening the very existence of the Avan state itself. The Burmese chronicle is after all a "Yazawin" or royal chronicle (Hla Pe, 1985, 53) recording, in a fashion, the events that occupied the attention of the king, not only the events, but also the aspect of events that the sovereign found important. To the king of Ava whatever minor assertions of its power Toungoo might have engaged in were now dwarfed by the threat on Ava's northern border, yet the lack of historical data for this period in the Toungoo thread of chronicle narrative is curious. Even during periods of peace there are events that occupied the king's time such as improvements to irrigation systems, hunting for elephants, religious donations, and other ceremonies. The only time the reader is given a glance into this part of Min-gyi-nyo's life is in the short eulogy given on his death that provides some personal details surrounding his life such as his fondness for elephants, growing cotton plants, and his penchant for holding feasts (UKII:159). This long hiatus in the

Toungoo thread of the narrative does have precedents though. There are similar long pauses in other local Southeast Asian chronicles during relatively peaceful periods such as the period of Burmese control of Chiangmai in the seventeenth century in the Chiangmai Chronicle (Wyatt and Wichienkeo, 1995, 129-132).

In the first Shan offensive of the new decade against the northern settlements of Ava, both the Shan and Burmese sides call on their respective allies for help. In 1511 (BE 873), the king of Ava and the Hsipaw Sawbwa renew their alliance. Sawlon the ruler of the Mong Yang Shans, said by the chronicle to be envious of this alliance, marched to Bhamo which then belonged to the Hsipaw sawbwa and surrounded the town. The Hsipaw sawbwa sent word to the king of Ava to march to Myedu, occupied by the Mong Yang forces, and encircle it. The king of Ava sent forces to attack Myedu (150E; 6,000H; 120,000S). When they arrived at Myedu they attacked the town, but because the forces defending the town had lots of guns, cannons, and arms they could not take the city. They retreated to a distance from the city and encircled it. While they encircled the city, vassals of Mong Yang, the rulers of Twin-tin, Mingin, and Kalei came out of the city to attack the Avan forces in the darkness at ten at night in the heavy rain (100E; 200H; 40,000S). The whole twelve armies of the king of Ava were destroyed. The king of Ava retreated to the garrison towns of Tabayin and Si-bok-taya and reinforced himself there with elephants, horses, and troops (UKII:119).

From 1513 to 1515 there were rebellions in the southwestern part of Upper Burma just north of Prome. In 1513 (BE 875), Sagu to the southwest of Ava on the Irrawaddy rebelled. The king of Ava led an expedition south and subjugated the town. In 1515 (BE 877), the king of Ava marched to Mye-hte ruled by the son of the king of Prome. The ruler of Mye-hte submitted to the Avan king before he arrived tendering, in what is almost a stock phrase of the chronicle, "gifts and weapons" signifying his submission. The king of Ava met with the family of the Mye-hte ruler. Prome had more recalcitrant satellite states with a more independent attitude towards Avan hegemony, though. After Mye-the, Narapati laid siege to the heavily fortified town of Phin-ta-sa that belonged to Prome. Failing to take the city, he finally returned to Ava when the rainy season began (UKII:120).

Tabinshweihti, Min-gyi-nyo's son and successor, was born in

1517 (BE 878). From 1518 to 1520, Mong Yang resumed its attacks along Ava's northern border. In 1518 (BE 879), Sawlon led attacks against villages belonging to Myedu and the king of Ava marched to Sitha, gathered reinforcements there, and marched on to Nga-ra-ne where he met Mong Yang forces and engaged them in battle. The Shans were forced to take refuge within the town of Nga-ra-ne. Finally, the Shans were defeated and fled. The king of Ava appointed rulers for Nga-ra-ne and Myedu and returned to Ava. In 1520 (BE 881), a war broke out between the Kalei Shans and the Mong Yang Shans and they fought for nine months. An expedition was sent from Ava to pacify both of the cities. Before the expedition arrived in Kalei, the Kalei sawbwa surrendered in advance. Kalei together with its nine districts and ten villages once again became a tributary state of Ava. The nearby settlements of Lan-pot, Pyaung-pya, Kani, and Kane on the Upper Chindwin river also became tributary states of Ava (UKII:120). In anticipation of future attacks by Mong Yang the town of Mingin on the Upper Chindwin river was fortified and a strong garrison placed there. Garrisons were placed at Myedu, Si-bok-taya, Tabayin, and Ngarane. Amyin on the lower Chindwin river was given to the Kalei sawbwa to rule over and protect (UKII:121). This Upper Chindwin region would become the entry point for Mong Yang's invasion of Ava four years later in 1524.

According to the Hsenwi chronicle, when Chao Kam Saen Fa (r. 1523-1542) succeeded to the throne of Hsenwi in 1523 he requested all his vassal states to come and pay allegiance. This event of local importance is not recorded in Chinese or Burmese sources and cannot be independently verified, but it shows cooperation among Shan states during the critical period of the early 1520s just before the Shan invasion of Ava. According to the Hsenwi chronicle, the sawbwas [rulers] of Mong La, Mong Di, Mong Wan, Mong Kawn, Mong Jae Fang, Mong Mao, Mong King, Mong Ding, Mong Laem, Mong Saeng, Mong Nong Yong Huay, Satung, Mong Pai, and Hsipaw all came and paid allegiance, but the sawbwa of Mong Nai did not come. The lord of Mong Nai chose instead to take refuge with the Burmese king of Ava to the south. The king of Ava not wishing to create problems with Hsenwi, accepted the submission of the Mong Nai sawbwa, but gently sent him back to swear fealty to the Hsenwi sawbwa, his true lord. In the end, the harmony of the political system was restored (Witthayasakphan, 2001b, 31-32). There are potential inconsistencies in this text, namely Hsipaw was usually

allied with Ava, so why would it be pledging allegiance to Hsenwi? Perhaps this was actually a meeting of equals, perhaps the chronicle exaggerates the extent of those states submitting to it as vassals, or perhaps Hsipaw had dual allegiances. Hsenwi was allied with Mong Yang, so why isn't Mong Yang present? Perhaps the presence of Mogaung [Mong Kawng] which is often considered to be one and the same as Mohnyin [Mong Yang], at least in Burmese sources, explains Mong Yang's absence.

Min-gyi-nyo, after a long hiatus of over ten years, once again embarked on a campaign of offensive warfare and raiding in Upper Burma in 1523 (BE 884). The peace of the previous ten years would have allowed the population of Toungoo to grow, a population he could call on to provide troop levies. First, he attacked the cities of Yamethin and Tan-twin and many elephants, horses, and captives. He is said by the chronicle to have captured many Shans during this initial expedition. In 1524 (BE 885), he captured Pin and Natmawk in the west near the Irrawaddy and far from Toungoo. Perhaps Min-gyi-nyo was pulled out of his long inactivity by the increasing threats to Ava's power by the Shan incursions from the north. Perhaps, he wanted to test his military strength in the new world that was rapidly changing much as he did when he first took power as a young man in 1486 (UKII:151).

The First Invasion of Ava (1524-1525)

In 1524 instead of their normal raids against Ava's northern garrison towns of Myedu, Si-bok-taya, and Tabayin, Shan forces moved further to the west to the Chindwin river and made a drive deep into the Burmese heartland of Ava in what amounted to a flank attack against Ava. The Chindwin river defined the far western border of Ava's domain and was probably not as well protected as the Mu river valley garrisons towns of Myedu, Si-bok-taya, and Ngarane. Mingin on the upper Chindwin river was attacked first. Hearing of this, the king of Ava marched to Myedu. After taking Mingin, Sawlon advanced to Myedu to attack the Burmese forces there. The cavalry of the two sides first engaged in battle. When the Shan cavalry retreated, they fought with their elephant corps. Then the Burmese cavalry was forced to retreat. The Shans overcame the Avan troops and took Myedu and then advanced on Ngarane and Si-bok-taya taking them as well. The Avan forces were forced to

retreat and the commander of the Tabayin garrison abandoned the town. Sawlon resided in Myedu for one rainy season and then advanced on the religious center of Sagaing, raiding and burning all the temples and houses there. From Sagaing, sweeping through the Chindwin river valley, he took Kani, Kane, Nat-taung, Badon, and Amyin. At the confluence of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers, the Mong Yang forces crossed over to Pakan-gyi on the western side and took the town together with the villages of Lapot, Pyaung-pya, and Ban-chi. Marching to the west of Kun village all the way down the Irrawaddy river to Thayet also on the western side of the Irrawaddy, all the local rulers of the region from Sakut, Salin, Baunglin, and Leh-kaing fled the area (UKII: 122).

In the wake of Mong Yang's invasion, Burmese Prome joined with Mong Yang as an ally and Burmese Ava called on its long-standing ally Shan Hsenwi. As the chronicle describes it, Thado-min-saw, king of Prome, sent an ambassador to Sawlon when he was in Thayet with gifts of tribute offering military aid in exchange for Ava's throne. Sawlon agreed and Thado-min-saw went to meet with him in Mye-hte travelling by boat. Thado-min-saw built a pontoon bridge for Sawlon to cross over to the eastern side of the Irrawaddy river with his troops. They decided they would march on Ava together and that Thado-min-saw would have the throne and Sawlon would only take horses and elephants as prize. As they advanced downstream, towns either submitted to them or fled. The rulers of Taungdwingyi and Yamethin fled. When Sawlon had crossed over from Pakangyi and started taking settlements to the east of the Irrawaddy river, the king of Ava, and his ministers decided it was time to act decisively, so they called the Shan sawbwa of Hsipaw to come and help them (UKII:123). The king of Ava sent the ambassador Nanda-thin-kyan to the Hsipaw sawbwa with gifts. The Hsipaw sawbwa immediately gathered troops and headed to Ava. Arriving there they built a bridge over the Myit-nge river and encamped on the other side of the river at Taung-bilu-to-le-gyi. The king of Ava Narapati welcomed him and invited the Hsipaw sawbwa to the palace where they feasted on plates encrusted in jewels. The king expressed his gratitude to the Hsipaw sawbwa for coming and helping him. Min-u-ti, the brother-in-law of the king of Yamethin, reported to Narapati that Sawlon was now in league with Thado-min-saw king of Prome and that Sawlon was advancing on Ava on the eastern side of the Irrawaddy river attacking settlements

along the way, while the king of Prome Thadominsaw was advancing by water and subjugating all the settlements in the western region. Both gathering together military resources such as elephants, horses, and human war captives to use in a final assault against Ava, a move that pre-figures the later manpower accumulation strategies of Tabinshweihti and Bayinnaung. Narapati discussed these developments with the Hsipaw sawbwa and they decided to strengthen the defenses of Ava in anticipation of an imminent attack (UKII:124).

After these alliances been made events progressed quickly to a final assault on the capital of Ava at the confluence of the Myit-nge and Irrawaddy rivers. As the chronicle describes events, Mong Yang forces under Sawlon marched very quickly and when they arrived they encamped near Ava starting from Ta-pe-htaut-yit, surrounding Seit-kaung-kwet. Five days later, Tho-han-bwa, son of Mong Yang Sawlon, came to attack the battalions from Taung-bilu riding on an elephant. Baya-kyaw-tu servant of the lord of the golden palace Narapati returned the attack riding on his elephant Ye-myat-hla. The elephant that Tho-han-bwa was riding ran away because it was frightened. When Baya-kyaw-tu was trying to pursue him, Sa-maw-kham, the nephew of Sawlon, joined in the attack helping Tho-han-bwa. Then Baya-kyaw-tu's elephant took fright and Baya-kyaw-tu was shot by the bullets of the enemy and died on the back of his elephant. After Baya-kyaw-tu passed away, Nanda-kyaw-htin fought against Sa-maw-kham, Sawlon's nephew, riding his elephant Ye-du-son. Saw-maw-kham's elephant fell over and ran away. When Sawlon saw that Saw-maw-kham was running away, he pulled out his sword and displayed his naked sword to his generals, ministers, and the rest. When the Shan ministers saw their lord display his sword in this manner, they immediately entered the fray and fought elephant to elephant and horse to horse because none of them dared remain back with their armies. When Ava's resisting forces had been eliminated, Shan soldiers ran right up to the base of the city walls, scaled them, and took the city. Many soldiers were injured and died in this final assault on the walls. Ava fell in early February of the year 1525.

The king of Ava and the Hsipaw ruler, since they dared not resist from the town anymore, fled during the night to the east of the Irrawaddy to a place named Sin-kaung and remained there. The chronicle records that when Thet-daw-shei-kyaw-htin and

Ne-myo-kyaw-htin heard that the king of Ava had fled from Ava, they presumed that they should not resist from Kyaut-ta-lone, so they decided to reunite with their king where he was staying. Thinking like this, they marched northwards and when they arrived at the place called Wet-kyet they crossed over the Irrawaddy to the east and reunited with their king at the place called Sin-kaung-wet-win. The king of Prome's boat troops arrived at Kyaut-ta-lone at dawn, soon after Thet-daw-shei's troops had left. When Thado-min-saw arrived he released all his war captives and Sawlon made him king of Ava. Three days later taking all the best elephants and horses, Sawlon went back to Mong Yang crossing the river at Sagaing. After Sawlon had returned to Mong Yang, Thado-min-saw returned to his own country of Prome with all the leaders of Ava. At that time he took away Thiri-bon-htut the daughter of king Narapati and queen Damadewi who was only eight years old. He also took away the Buddhist monk named Shin Maharattathara (1468-1529) who composed such famous Burmese classical poems as the Kogan Pyo, the Hattipala, and the Meiktila Lake Mawgun (Harvey, 104). After his victory, Sawlon of Mong Yang appointed governors over northern cities bordering on Shan domains including Myedu, Ngarane, Si-bok-ta-ya, and Tabayin garrisoning them all with strong troops (UKII:125; Harvey, 106).

When Min-gyi-nyo heard that Ava had fallen, he marched to the region south of Ava. When he was encamped at a place called Lut-lin-kom, the former vassals of Ava came to take asylum with him. They included the rulers of Amyin, Nyaungyan, Yamethin, Wa-ti, Pinle, Pinya, and Shan-pait-taung. The king met with these governors at a place called Htaut-kyan-taing. Those who entered into the service of Min-gyi-nyo brought with them altogether twenty fighting elephants, six hundred horses and attendants, and over ten thousand men and women (UKII:158). This realignment of loyalties of former vassals of Ava seems to fall somewhere between forced and voluntary migration. Small settlements around Ava, having lost their overlord had also lost all protection against Shan incursions, so they realigned their loyalties and became clients of Toungoo perhaps migrating south to the safer Toungoo region also. This sort of realignment of loyalties during periods of political fragmentation and dynastic collapse were common (Lieberman, 1984, 40-43, 152-181; Fernquest, 2005). Harvey, striving for drama rather than objectivity, transforms the Burmese chronicle narrative into a clear

case of voluntary migration with a heavy dose of heroic human agency added for good measure:

The lords of Pinya in Sagaing, Myittha in Kyaukse, and Hlaingdet in Meiktila district, with many a Burmese family, noble and commoner, fled south to take refuge at his [Min-gyi-nyo's] feet. In delight he exclaimed 'Now I know why the bees swarmed on the gate of Toungoo. It meant my city was to be populous.' It meant something far more than that, although he did not realise it (Harvey, 125).

A close reading of the first Shan invasion of Ava raises several questions. The Shans apparently at first had no desire to control Upper Burma. After their success they merely took animals as war prize and secured the border between Upper Burma and their territory. The actions of the king of Prome also raise questions. Why did he return to Prome? Did he feel vulnerable to an attack by remnants of the Avan court? This is the last we hear of Thado-min-saw. He does not participate in the second Shan invasion. When the Shans attack Prome in 1532, he has already been replaced by another king Bayin-htwe. The Burmese chronicle has Sawlon accuse Thado-min-saw, the 1532 king's predecessor, of betraying his promise to "work for him." Obviously, the Burmese chronicle is not revealing all significant details here, but a reasonable surmise would be that because the king of Ava was still alive, the Burmese kingdom of Ava still had a *raison d'être* and a formidable rallying point for a restoration. The king of Prome Thado-min-saw probably returned to Prome rather than face a renewed attack by the king of Ava and the Hsipaw sawbwa.

Chinese sources provide an independent confirmation of Ava's first fall. The first memorial to the throne indicating that Burma had been involved in warfare with the Shans is found in an entry in the Ming Annals dated 10 November 1528. Given the usual lag between events in the interior of Burma and their entry into Chinese records, the entry surely refers to the first invasion of Ava. In the Ming Annals entry no exact dates are given and there is a high degree of ambiguity in the events described, but it is clear that some momentous conflict has occurred between Shan states and Ava. The request is made that "Si Lun [Sawlon] of Meng-yang [Mong Yang] be warned against having communication with Meng-bie [Muang Pyi =

Pyi = Prome in Burma] and against invading or disturbing Ava-Burma” (MSL, 10 Nov 1528). Sun Laichen has also noted that “Chinese and Burmese sources...coincide with respect to the help Mong Yang obtained from Prome” during the first invasion (SLC footnote p. 239). Reference is made to Burmese Ava two additional times in this Ming Annals’ entry in an ominous but also very ambiguous fashion. A member of the Burmese royal family, perhaps the king of Ava, is said to have died: “...the grandfather of the Ava-Burma royal family member Mang Qi-Sui was extremely loyal, but he became involved in disputes and thereby met his death,” but later in the same Ming Annals entry the dead Mang Qi-sui is reappointed to his former position: “Mang Qi-sui is to be shown great compassion and assistance. He and Si Zhen are both permitted to inherit their respective posts.” A more detailed analysis of the original classical Chinese text of this Ming Annals entry and how it relates to other sources is necessary.



The Second Invasion of Ava (1527)

After the first fall of Ava in 1525, Toungoo did its best to pick up the pieces and obtain the loyalties of former vassal states to the south of Ava, but was quickly rebuffed when Narapati the king of Ava and the Hsipaw sawbwa [ruler] regrouped their forces and led a punitive expedition against Toungoo to punish it for its treacherous behavior. After the second and final fall of Ava in 1527, Toungoo tried to create a no-man’s land between itself and Shan territory by destroying all the irrigation dams, canals, ponds, and streams in the territory separating them. Miraculously, the new Shan rulers proved to be much less expansionist after taking Ava and chose to leave Toungoo alone, choosing instead to attack Prome, its former ally in 1532, after the death of Min-gyi-nyo.

The Burmese chronicle describes these events in detail. After abandoning Ava, the king of Ava and the Hsipaw sawbwa [ruler] encamped at a place called Sin-kaung Wet-win and counted their troops. The king of Ava had just 250 fighting elephants, four thousand horses, and eighty thousand soldiers. Since the Hsipaw forces had been destroyed, there were only eighty fighting elephants, five hundred horses, and seventy thousand soldiers. When the king of Prome left Ava and returned to Prome, the king of Ava and the

Hsipaw sawbwa marched back to Ava. The king of Ava told the Hsipaw sawbwa that their flight from Ava had saddened him deeply, they had not been lucky and had made mistakes in choosing the places to resist from. The Hsipaw sawbwa replied that every person had failures as well as victories. He assured the king that he would not abandon him and that he would travel to Mong Nai and Yawngghwe in the southern Shan states and reinforce his elephants and horses there returning within the year to help him fight the Shans when they returned (UKII:126).

When Min-gyi-nyo heard that Ava had fallen, he marched to Yamethin south of Ava, subjugated all of the villages and towns there, and took away all the elephants, horses, buffaloes, and cows (100E; 4,000H; 40,000S). When the king of Ava heard of this from his brother-in-law the ruler of Yamethin U Tii, the king of Ava Narapati and the Hsipaw *sawbwa* marched to Yamethin in great haste (300E; 6,000H; 120,000S). Min-gyi-nyo decided not to engage them in battle and retreated to Toungoo. King Narapati and the Hsipaw *sawbwa* followed in pursuit all the way to Toungoo and tried to take the city several times, but since Toungoo was well fortified with lots of guns, they could not succeed. After remaining there for one month, they went back to Ava because Ava was still in disorder (UKII:127).

When the king of Ava and the Hsipaw *sawbwa* arrived back in Ava, the Hsipaw *sawbwa* made preparations to return to Hsipaw in the Shan states because the rainy season was approaching. He asked the king to send word to him if something happened that required his help. As for the king, since he presumed that he owed the Hsipaw sawbwa for all his great deeds, he gave to him five viss of gold, thirty viss of silver, ten elephants, and many other strange clothes which were specially made for him, but the sawbwa refused to accept them and insisted that he was the one who had to give the king of Ava gifts. King Narapati then presented the sawbwa with his own horse named Bayin-ke-taung together with a precious saddle made of rubies and asked him to always ride this horse in memory of him. The sawbwa also refused to accept this gift and returned it to the king. He took with him ten good horses, two hand-held cannons (Nga-mi-paut = a gun without a trigger, handheld rocket launcher), and returned to Hsipaw. The king's son, the crown prince, accompanied him right up to the place called Shwei-sa-yan. The lord of the golden palace Narapati, the king of Ava, summoned all the

governors of cities and villages from the whole country and ordered them to be faithful to him always and to carry out their duties by keeping in mind the two meritorious deeds of kings. The oath of allegiance was administered to them and they were all presented with many gifts (UKII:127).

During the interval between the first and second invasions of Ava in 1526 Mong Yang and Hsenwi attacked Mong Wan on the Chinese-Shan frontier according to a Shan chronicle. They first attempted to overcome the state using treachery, claiming that the younger sister of Mong Wan's queen wished to visit her older sister. When this ruse failed they laid siege to Mong Wan. They were eventually able to cut off the walled town's water supply which led to someone opening the gates of the town and letting the attacking forces into the town. Mong Yang and Hsenwi laid waste to Mong Wan and burned it to the ground (Witthayasakphan, 2001a, 85-86). Mong Yang's invasions of Ava, events of much larger geopolitical significance that took place both before and after this local political event, are strangely missing from this Shan chronicle as well as other Shan chronicles.

Sawlon had entrusted the government of Ava to the king of Prome Thadominsaw. A tribute relation with Mong Yang and more efficient extraction of Ava's wealth than that which could be obtained by raiding Ava's heartland would have been the likely result of such an arrangement. After Thadominsaw abandoned Ava and Ava fell back into the hands of its former king Narapati, Mong Yang must have felt the need to reconquer Ava, this time taking personal responsibility for the governance of Ava and assigning this responsibility to a member of the Shan ruling elite. Sawlon, ruler of Mong Yang, sent his son Kame to attack Ava for a second time in 1527 (BE 888) with three hundred fighting elephants, ten thousand horses, and 150,000 horses. When they arrived at Han-lin-met, the king of Ava learned of their approach and called together all the governors of towns and villages. He also called the Hsipaw *sawbwa* to come and help. The king of Ava appointed his son the crown prince to resist them from Pakan-gyi (80E; 1,000H; 20,000S). When the crown prince arrived in Pakan-gyi, he crossed to Nawin-kaing on the other side of the river and attacked and defeated the Shans who were at Amyin on the lower Chindwin River. After staying there about two days, he marched upriver to Badon and subjugated the town. From there, he crossed over to Kani and subjugated it. When

he had taken these three towns, he captured twelve elephants, 160 horses, and over one thousand war captives. While he was staying at Kamni, one night he fell ill and passed away that very night. Without the crown prince, all the ministers and generals who had accompanied him on the campaign collected all their troops and went back to Pakan-gyi. Sawlon marched from Han-lin to Sagaing and built a pontoon bridge there, ordering his troops to cross over from Kyaut-ta-lone and encircle the capital city of Ava (UKII:128).

The lord of the golden palace king Narapati dared not leave the walls of the town to attack them because his forces were weak and the Hsipaw *sawbwa* had not yet arrived. To defend the city, cannons and guns were placed on the city walls. After encircling the city for eight days Sawlon informed his generals that they would attack the city the next day. Those who refused to march would be executed with his own sword. As the chronicle describes it, when Sawlon's troops saw his sword, they did not consider themselves to be alive anymore. They did not pay any heed to the guns shooting from on top of the city walls. Some started to dig around the moat, others raised their ladders to climb over the wall. Many died when they were shot by guns on the city walls. Most of them died when they were struck by pieces of wood or thrust with spears. Even though they died in that way, they did not think they were dying, they just kept scaling the walls of the city and eventually out of sheer persistence managed to breach the defenses of the city (UKII:129).

The gates of the town were opened and the lord of the golden palace Narapati riding his elephant Shwe-sa-taik came out from the city. Moving from one side of the moat, he tried to cross over to the eastern side. Tho-han-bwa, Sawlon's son, engaged the king in battle on his elephant. While he was fighting, the king of Ava was hit by a shot from a firearm fired by the Shans and died on the top of his elephant on the 12th waxing moon of the month of Tagu in the year 1527 (BE 888), on the last day [ata-sa] of the three festival days of Burmese New Years [thin-kyan]. Being born on this day portends misfortune, so likewise, according to traditional Burmese norms, the new Shan state of Ava had an inauspicious beginning (Myanmar Language Commission, 1993, 559). An alternative version in the Hsipaw chronicle has Narapati less heroically being taken captive and executed (Sai Aung Tun, 2001, 10). The king of Prome and the Mon king of Pegu are said by the chronicle to have died in the same year as the king of Ava.

In 1530, there is finally a belated but unambiguous confirmation in the Ming Annals that Ava had fallen to the Shans, but Mong Mit, not Mong Yang, is assigned blame: "The region of Meng-mi [Mong Mit] has precious stone mines and these are controlled by the native chieftain *Si Zhen*...he has forcibly occupied this territory and, relying on his wealth and might, has *swallowed up Ava-Burma*, Mu-bang and Meng-yang and moved close to Teng-chong, so as to spy on the situation within our borders" (MSL, 16 Feb 1530, my italics). Thus Ming Dynasty Chinese sources provide independent confirmation of the historical fact of Ava being invaded by Shans, a historical fact described in greater detail in the Burmese chronicle.

Here, Shan names become a problem and an obstacle to the historical interpretation of texts. Is the Chinese "Si Zhen Fa" the same as the Burmese "Tho-Han-Bwa"? "Si" [Chinese], and "Tho" [Burmese] are apparently transliterate "Chau" in Shan which means "lord", "ruler", or "prince" which is usually rendered "Chao-fa" or "Chao-x-fa" where x is the one-syllable personal name which distinguishes the person from other rulers. So the question can be rephrased: Are Chinese "Zhen" and Burmese "Tho" transliterating the same one-syllable Shan name? Similarly, "Sawlon" in Burmese transliterates as "Si Lun" (思倫) in Chinese sources but looks a lot like "Si Lu" (思祿) the name of Si Lun's father (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 197), the second syllables of which fall well within what could be taken as a normal range of transliteration error. Knowledge of the names of the Shan rulers of the period is unfortunately currently derived almost entirely from transliterations in Chinese and Burmese sources.

If Tho-han-bwa was from Mong Mit this would provide further evidence of Shan cooperation at the time of the invasion of Ava (1524-27). The argument runs as follows, if "Si-Zhen-Fa" is the same as "Tho-Han-Bwa" and the two names refer to the same person, then some important contradictions between Burmese and Chinese sources are explained. Tho-han-bwa who is active in the fighting during the first invasion is appointed ruler of Ava after the second invasion. Even though Burmese texts refer to him as the son of Sawlon this may in fact refer to him as being a junior to Sawlon. According to the Ming Annals Si-Zhen was a member of Meng-yang's ruling family (MSL 10 November 1528) and a native "houseman" as

well as a “native chieftain” of Mong Mit (MSL 18 March 1529, 16 February 1530). Sawlon and Tho-han-bwa are intimately associated with each other in the Burmese chronicle with Sawlon taking the senior leading role and Tho-han-bwa taking the junior following role. This is certainly in keeping with a later Ming Annals entry that refers to them as the two Shans responsible for the Shan invasion and the death of the Burmese king: “the Mengmi [Mong Mit] native official Si Zhen and the Meng-yang native yi Si Lun” (23 April 1560). Although further analysis by trained linguists is necessary and the search for the actual rendering of these names in Shan should continue, for now “Si Zhen” will be taken as synonymous with “Tho-han-bwa” and “Si Lun” with “Sawlon”.



The Aftermath of the Mong Yang Shan Invasion and the Death of Ming-gyi-nyo (1527-1532)

After the fall of Ava much of the royal court fled to Prome and Toungoo together with their servants and attendants. Others threw in their lot with the new Shan rulers and were given back their old positions and sources of wealth. Sawlon made his son Tho-han-bwa king of Ava and gave him two hundred fighting elephants, four thousand horses, and sixty thousand soldiers. A Burmese minister from the Ava court, Min-gyi-ya-naung, was called back from hiding in the forest to help the new king with administrative affairs and adjusting to the cultural differences between Shan and Burmese administration. He was given the town of Pyinzi as an appanage to rule over. The towns and villages of Ava were given to Burmese and Shan ministers. Tho-han-bwa gave the town of Salin to Sithu-kyaw-htin. Pagan was given back to the prince who had ruled over it before. He gave Kamni to Naw-ra-tha, Paung-ti to Pyan-chi, and Amyin to Thet-daw-shei. Soon after putting the kingdom of Ava in order Sawlon returned to Mong Yang, leaving his son to rule over Ava by himself.

Some fairly independent sources corroborate that Shans were given towns and villages. A seventeenth century Chinese geographical treatise claims that Sawlon divided up Ava’s land between Mong Yang and Hsenwi (Du shi fangyu jiyao gaoben by Guyu (sic) (1631-1692) cited in Liew, 2003, 162). Nineteenth century

tax records (sittans) indicate that the military units of some Shan states were relocated to areas near the new Shan capital in Ava. Tax records from 1802 indicate that Sawlon settled a Shan military unit at Myaung-hla in the Kyaukse irrigation district. The military unit was called “Let-ma-wun-daing” (left shield unit) with soldiers from the Kalei Shan area on the Upper Chindwin river, Tein-nyin, Maing-ze, and Nyaung-shwei in the southern Shan states (Trager, 1979, 383-4).

The Burmese chronicle records that the question of what to do about Prome and Toungoo, two large Burmese states on the new Shan-Ava state’s southern frontier, arose in Tho-han-bwa’s discussions with his chief minister Min-gyi-yan-naung. The chronicle relates that this Burmese minister deceived the Shan king and thereby saved the tradition of Burmese kingship from extinction. When Tho-han-bwa asked him what he thought about military expeditions to Toungoo and Prome, the minister actually thought that it would be an easy Shan victory, but lied and told him that “marching to Toungoo would just mean tiring Ava troops for nothing. It was not necessary. Because of his might they would come on their own and prostrate themselves in front of him. He said that they would not dare to remain where they were without doing anything, without submitting, because they already knew that Ava had been conquered.” (UKII:130) Traditionally on a change of ruler, tributary states were obligated to come to the new ruler and renew their loyalties and swear an oath of loyalty.

After the conquest of Ava, the Shans were not quick to act against either of the two remaining Burmese strongholds to the south: Toungoo and Prome. The Burmese chronicle asserts that Tho-han-bwa presumed that if a state like Toungoo or Prome attacked him, it would be easily defeated. Thinking like this, he sent lots of gifts and ammunition to both Toungoo and Prome inviting them to come and discuss affairs with him and enter into a friendship. Then the kings of Prome and Toungoo sent a lot of gifts in return and became quite friendly with Ava. Min-gyi-nyo was afraid that the Shans would come and inhabit the land along Toungoo’s border with Ava, so he destroyed all the dams, canals, ponds, and streams and created a buffer or no-man’s land between Toungoo and Shan Ava. In the year 1531 (BE 892) when Min-gyi-nyo passed away, his son Tabin-shwei-hti became king.

In the Burmese chronicle’s eulogy for Min-gyi-nyo, the

chronicle not only praises the dead king but also reveals some personal details about his life. On the head of this king one hair had the length of a whole roll of thread. This king was an expert in the art of shooting an arrow and throwing spears. He also excelled in the preparation of food, preparing food on special occasions for Buddhist monks, ministers, his relatives, and elderly people. He appointed very smart people to cook and had two attendants serve the food to each of his guests. Min-gyi-nyo was quite talented. He knew about the future and was filled with wisdom. When he was about to pass away, he kept a taming ground for elephants inside the town. Cotton plants (let-pan-ping) grew outside the town. Instead of growing cotton plants outside the town as they normally were, he started growing them inside the town. He grew them there, even though his master, a Buddhist monk who had traveled to Sri Lanka, forbade him to grow them there because it was not an appropriate place. He did not listen to the monks advice and built a taming ground for elephants and grew cotton plants near the elephant taming ground. In that taming ground he built a house and reigned over his kingdom from there in the last years of his life (UKII:159).

The Shans decided to take Prome in 1532 (BE 894) and extend their domains to the border of the Mon kingdom of Ramanya to the south. Mong Yang Sawlon marched to Ava, called his son Tho-han-bwa to his side, and marched on to Prome with three hundred fighting elephants, eight thousand horses, and 120,000 soldiers. Bayin Htwe, the king of Prome, when he heard that Mong Yang Sawlon was marching to Prome, strengthened the fortifications of the town, the walls, moats, canals, and sent away all his queens, sons, and daughters to the western side right up to a town named Ta-le-se. The Shan forces encamped at Prome starting from Myaut-na-win stream right up to Prome's mountain. The king of Prome, thinking of his future, took with him lots of gifts, ammunition, and provisions and sent them to the Shan ruler. Then Mong Yang Sawlon told him that in the past the father of the current king of Prome had promised him that he would help attack Ava and after that would work for him, but he failed to do that. Because of that, he asked whether he would work for him or whether he was going to attack him. The king of Prome thought that Mong Yang Sawlon and his sons were so strong that he would not be able to resist them. He felt the only alternative he had was to deal nicely

with them and act according to their wishes. The king of Prome tendered his submission by traveling to Sawlon's camp with one thousand of his attendants and gifts of clothing such as Basoes [male sarong]. Sawlon took the king captive with all his attendants, a clear breach of Burmese custom. In the Burmese chronicle submission by a vassal to the overlord in advance of his arrival before engaging in battle signaled a good faith effort that was rewarded by reinstating the vassal ruler, similar to a person submitting a pro-forma letter of resignation that they know their superior will refuse to accept. After taking the king of Prome captive, Sawlon started his journey back to Mong Yang passing through Ava on the way. When he reached Tabayin he set the king of Prome and his attendants free, but when he passed through Myedu there was a dispute between two factions of the Shan ruling elite and Mong Yang Sawlon was assassinated by his own ministers.

In the king of Prome's absence, his son had assumed the throne of Prome, taking the title King Narapati. Almost five months later when his father arrived back to Prome, the son did not allow the father to enter the city and closed the gates of Prome to him. His father was forced to live outside the city, became sick, and passed away after one month living in his tent that was pitched on the other side of Na Win stream at Prome. The son gave the father a proper burial and the new king Narapati took Thiri-bon-htut, the daughter of the king of Ava Narapati who died in 1527, as his queen (UKII:131). These events during Shan ruler over Upper Burma are just a few among many which signify a breach of the moral order in Upper Burma that came with the Shan invasion, a moral order that would only be gradually reinstated after Tabinshweihti retook Prome in the 1540s and marched north towards Ava. Only his successor Bayinnaung would finally retake Ava in 1555.

A Shan Confederation rules Upper Burma? (1527-1555)

The fall of Ava in 1527 resulted in a sudden and short-lived expansion of Shan rule over Upper Burma from 1527 to 1555. This state expansion was to be over-shadowed by Bayinnaung's even greater expansion of the Burmese state into the Tai region to the east from 1551 to 1581. The confederation of Shan states that ruled over Upper Burma after the invasion of 1527 caused a radical shift

in the regional geopolitical structure of western mainland Southeast Asia. The Shan realm suddenly extended along the Irrawaddy in the east all the way to the borders of Prome's territory in the south. In 1532, after Prome was taken, the Shan Realm stretched all the way to the border of the Mon kingdom of Ramanya. In the eastern part of Upper Burma, Shan rule respected the rule of Min-gyi-nyo's ruling house in Toungoo and left it intact with its own sphere of influence. Even after Min-gyi-nyo's son Tabinshweihti embarked upon warfare against Pegu from 1535 to 1539, the new Shan state never chose to attack what must have been a weakly defended northern Toungoo frontier.

The existence of the Shan confederation is only revealed at certain critical junctures in the Burmese chronicle narrative. One critical juncture occurs when the king of Prome calls on five Shan sawbwas [rulers] to break the siege that Tabinshweihti waged against Prome in 903 (1542). The *sawbwas* of Ava [Tho-han-bwa], Hsipaw, and Mong Yang come to Prome's aid and two additional sawbwas, of Bhamo and Mong Mit, arrive late after their defeat. Another critical juncture takes place in 904 (1543) after the palace coup of Burmese residing at the Avan court (UKII:136). After the Ava *sawbwa* (or king of Ava) Tho-han-bwa is assassinated, the sawbwa of Hsipaw, the former Shan ally of Ava at the time of its defeat in 1527 is chosen by the Burmese as his successor. Perhaps the choice of a Shan successor by a Burmese led coup was necessitated by the need to keep the confederation of Shan states that defended Ava intact. Shortly after the Hsipaw sawbwa becomes king of Ava he organizes a military expedition to retake Prome from Tabinshweihti. By this time the confederation has expanded to seven sawbwas including two new sawbwas from Yawnghwe and Mong Nai in the southern Shan states. These two new sawbwas most likely joined as long-time allies of Hsipaw, because during the Shan invasions of 1525-7 the chronicle already records the Hsipaw sawbwa as traveling to these Shan states to replenish his elephants, horses, and soldiers (UKII:126). As mentioned above Kyaukse tax records (sittans) from the nineteenth century also contain evidence of a Shan confederation during this period (Trager, 1979, 383-4).

It is not clear when this confederation began or how it evolved. Burmese sources indicate that by 1543 (BE 904) the Shan confederation included seven states: Mong Yang, Mong Mit, Bhamo, Hsipaw, Mong Nai, Yawnghwe, and Kalei. Hsenwi's absence from

Burmese sources is noteworthy as is Hsipaw's absence from Chinese sources. Even though frontiers were ill-defined in the pre-modern period, states can be roughly divided as being on one or the other side of the frontier. Along an axis stretching from Ava's capital into Yunnan, Hsipaw lied on the Burmese side and Hsenwi lied on the Chinese side. This fact seems to have conditioned the relationships that these two states developed with the larger power centers of Ming dynasty China and the Burmese state of Ava. Hsipaw was a close and reliable ally of Ava according to Burmese sources. Hsenwi was early recognized as an autonomous ethnic region [An Fusi = Pacification Office] by the Ming Dynasty in 1404 and was a frequent participant in inter-state conflicts along the Shan-Chinese frontier recorded by Chinese sources (SLC 2000, 79; Liew Foon Ming, 2003, 152). In addition to regular relations between states, military intelligence was another source of information of events on the other side of a frontier. The absence of references to Hsipaw in Chinese sources and Hsenwi references in Burmese sources seems to indicate that military intelligence was limited. The question also arises of why Mong Mit and not Hsenwi is mentioned by the Burmese chronicle as a member of the Shan coalition in the 1540s? Although Mong Mit started off as part of Hsenwi, it eventually challenged its overlord and was recognized by the Chinese as a separate autonomous ethnic region in 1584. If Tho-han-bwa who ruled Ava after 1527 was in fact from Mong Mit, Mong Mit may well have eclipsed Hsenwi in importance by then and "swallowed" it up as the chronicle usually describes it.

Local Shan chronicles help elucidate the history of smaller Shan states. The Shan Realm had two levels of interstate relations: 1. relations between large Shan states like Hsenwi, Hsipaw, Mong Mit, and Mong Yang and their larger and more powerful overlords, China and Burma, and 2. relations between these larger Shan states and smaller Shan states (and perhaps even groups of non-Tai ethnicity such as Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman, and Lolo, see Daniels, 2001). Shan chronicles provide a lot of information about the later local type of relation, including marriage alliances, shifting loyalties, and endemic inter-state warfare, but this history is difficult to reconcile with and integrate into the larger-scale historical narratives of China and Burma. References to events outside the locality that might help verify local events and fit them into a larger geopolitical landscape are often missing from Shan

chronicles.

In the limited survey of Shan chronicles made for this paper there was only one reference to the 1524-27 Shan invasions of Ava, the most important event in Tai-Burmese relations of the early modern era. A version of the Hsipaw chronicle recorded by Sai Aung Tun (2001) mentions the invasion, but follows the Burmese chronicle so closely as to cast doubt on its independent origin. It is also a second-hand transcription, the original manuscript not being made available to scholars for more detailed scrutiny.

Why are the invasions of Ava included in the historical narratives of larger states like Ming dynasty China and Ava while they are missing from the narratives of the smaller Shan states subject to these states? (Hsenwi: Witthayasakphan, 2001b; Scott, 1900, 217-220; Mong Mao: Witthayasakphan et al, 2001a; Mangrai, 1969, ii-xiv; Scott, 1900, 216-217, from Elias, 1876; Mogaung: Mangrai, 1969, xviii-xxiv). Censorship or pressures on court historians to self-censor might be one explanation. A chronicle celebration of a Shan victory over the Burmese state of Ava would have been offensive to later Burmese sovereigns after the restoration of Burmese rule to Upper Burma in 1555. Of course this argument only holds if Burmese sovereigns or members of the ruling elite had access to these local texts. Lists of books held in the royal libraries at the Burmese capital might be helpful in this regard. Later Konbaung historical events described in Shan historical chronicles also might provide a better test of this hypothesis because of the abundant historical data available for the period.

Power relations between states sometimes determine the inclusion or omission of events from historical narratives. Overt censorship or pressure on historians to self-censor texts to match state policy is even a present-day phenomenon. A leading scholar of Ming dynasty relations with Tai polities claims that there is evidence that historical texts in the modern PRC have sometimes been “edited or changed” to serve the “exigencies of the modern Chinese state,” the alterations making the texts seem as though “these polities and societies had long seen themselves as part of or attached to Chinese polities” (Burmaresearch Forum, SOAS, University of London, 17 Aug 2005). The Shan chronicle of Mong Mao that has been used in this paper was, in fact, initially a translation from Shan to Chinese (Kazhangjia, 1990) and then a translation from Chinese into central Thai for a readership in Thailand (Witthayasakphan et al, 2001a),

providing one example of how, if there was a power-legitimizing change to a historical narrative, it could unwarily be disseminated to larger audiences. The point is that going back to and including original Tai manuscripts with translations as Mangrai (1981) did should be standard practice with the historical texts of smaller states because of these power relationships. Successive redactions and translations of texts run the risk of introducing cumulative errors as Pullum (1989) clearly demonstrates.

The authors of official state chronicles of small Shan states likely felt political pressures during the compilation and writing of chronicles that changed as their overlord changed. For example, truthful but negative depictions of warfare and its devastations in the Chiang Mai chronicle are much more common in the eighteenth century wars with the Burmese than they are in the sixteenth century ones (Wyatt and Wichienkeo, 1995). Does this mean that warfare in the sixteenth century had less bloodshed? Probably not (see Charney, 2004, 17-22). Negative references to a powerful overlord like Burma which ruled Chiang Mai from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries would have risked offending the overlord and might even have been considered an act of rebellion. Versions of earlier Chiangmai chronicle narrative were actually translated into Burmese and kept at the Burmese capital as the *Zinme Yazawin* for the Burmese ruling elite to glean information from regarding court and administrative traditions in Chiangmai (Sithu Gamani Thingyan, 2003, i-ii, 53-67). They probably had access to Shan chronicles too.

Long periods of unexplained silence seem to increase as chronicles becomes more local, silence (or erasure) being a particular easy form of self-censorship to implement. Compare the continuity of the Burmese chronicle with the long hiatuses of the Chiangmai chronicle under Burmese rule after 1558. Traditions of critical textual analysis in philology (see Warring States Project, 2005) and anthropology (see Scott, 1990) provide guidance on how to deal with these textual silences and censorships when compiling composite histories from different historical traditions. In explaining the silence of the evidence Brooks (2005b) notes that “there are various reasons, other than literal nonexistence, why some item of culture is not, or seems not to be, mentioned in the texts of the time,” a “cultural taboo” being one such reason. Brooks provides an example from the Chinese Warring States period which bears some

similarity to the invasion of Ava omission:

Non-Chinese peoples are mentioned occasionally in texts of the 14th century, but after a certain point, such mentions cease. The point where such mentions stop is probably the point at which hostilities escalate between the Chinese and a new coalition of steppe peoples to the north. The existence of a society comparably organized but adversatively disposed was a fact which the Chinese worldview could not readily accommodate (Brooks, 2005b).

It is also unclear whether Mong Yang had any Shan allies when it invaded Ava from 1524 to 1527. Mong Yang worked with Hsenwi and other smaller Shan states as well as the Chinese in the 1594 offensive against Bhamo, but the state of endemic warfare in the Shan Realm meant that alliances and vassal-overlord relations could change rapidly. Mong Yang vassals are mentioned in 1511 as being Mingin and Kalei [Upper Chindwin] and Twin-tin along the invasion path used in 1524 (UKII:120), but it is unclear whether this relation still held in 1524. The Burmese chronicle only mentions Mong Yang as the invading force in 1524-7, but by 1527 “Mong Yang” had been used to refer to Shan invasions from the north for so long that it could well have frozen into a fixed chronicle cliché without much intrinsic meaning. Chinese sources are more ambiguous about who invaded Ava:

Some Chinese sources record that Mong Yang and Mong Mit...or even Mong Yang, Mong Mit, and Hsenwi altogether...sacked Ava and partitioned its territory, while Burmese chronicles show that Mong Yang almost single-handedly (except with some help from Prome) conquered Ava. The actual situation should be that Mong Yang and Hsenwi formed an alliance, but Mong Mit was not part of it, as Mong Mit was even attacked by Mong Yang after Mong Yang sacked Ava...Chinese and Burmese sources...coincide with respect to the help Mong Yang obtained from Prome (SLC 239).

The evidence in the Burmese chronicle indicates that sometime after 1527 Shan rule at Ava became a loose confederation of Shan states at least for defense and the election of a ruler. As Scott and Hardiman (1900, 200) observed, Shan states were “semi-independent States which only united for common action under a...chief of particular energy, or in cases of national emergency.” The Shan alliance included Mong Mit, the state that Mong Yang and Hsenwi had fought against at the behest of the Chinese in the late 1400s. How did this confederation of Shan states that eventually ruled Upper Burma evolve? How exactly did this confederation rule the Shan states? How did the different Shan states benefit from participating in this confederation?

Many open questions about members of the Shan confederation remain. There is the question of when Hsipaw the former ally of Ava joined the Shan confederation and whether there were any states that did not join the confederation. Answering these questions will require more detailed primary sources covering events in Upper Burma for the period 1527 to 1542. What were the Shan motives for this sudden invasion of Ava? Prior to 1524, Mong Yang’s military actions against Ava had been restricted to attacking small garrison towns in the Mu irrigation district and the Irrawaddy. In 1524, the Mong Yang Shans made a sudden entrance into the Chindwin Valley and started systematically moving down the Chindwin and then Irrawaddy river valleys right up to Thayet raiding settlements along the way. Why this sudden shift to targets deep within Upper Burma? Was it simply the pursuit of additional territory or were there additional motivating factors such as trade or Shan relations with their Chinese overlord to the north? What did the Shans stand to gain from controlling this territory? We will look at three possible explanations here: 1. Control of trade routes, 2. Resource extraction and raiding for plunder on a grand scale, and 3. Relieving population pressure on the limited territory of the Shan realm thereby reducing the endemic warfare of the region and creating a more secure border for the Chinese state.

First, control of trade would have been a logical economic motive for the Shans to invade Upper Burma. Such a motive has often been assigned to Tabinshweihti’s invasion of Ramanya to the south from 1535 to 1539. As (Bin Yang, 2004) has shown, trade along a “Southwest Silk Road” from Yunnan to South and Southeast Asia was substantial. The flow of cowries originating in the Bay of

Bengal into Yunnan and their use there as an important medium of exchange until the seventeenth century attests to the importance of this trade with China. The trade routes for this trade have been reconstructed by Deyell (1994) by “examining how bullion was shipped from Yunnan and Upper Burma into Bengal during the period 1200-1500” (Bin Yang, 2004, 289).

The first two routes were mostly overland routes. The first route passed “from Yung Chang to Momien, crossed the Irrawaddy to Mogaung, went north through the Hukawng Valley, across passes in the Patkai Range, to the Upper Brahmaputra Valley.” The second route “followed the Shweli River, crossing the Irrawaddy at Tagaung, followed the Chindwin River north, and crossed via the Imole Pass to Manipur. Overland trade routes, besides being slower than river transport, probably suffered from higher degrees of interference such as tolls, warfare, and banditry.

The third trade route passed through Upper Burma and relied mostly on more efficient river transportation. The third route “embarked on the Irrawaddy at Tagaung, Ava, or Pagan, and then passed from Prome over the Arakan Range (Arakan Yoma) to Arakan. A variation of this went directly from Pagan to Arakan via the Aeng Pass. This gave access to either a land route northward to Chatigaon, or embarkation on the coastal trading boats to Bengal” (Bin Yang, 2004, p. 289, citing Deyell, 1994, p. 128). Control over this third lowest cost trade route through the rivers of Upper Burma would be one logical motive for invasion. Controlling this important trade route would have allowed a monopoly on trade along the more efficient river route or at least the collection of tolls and duties.

Second, raiding on a much grander scale than had been attempted by the Shans before would be another logical motive for invasion. If earlier Shan military activity against the northern borders could be characterized as raiding for plunder and booty, seizing any form of transportable wealth, with little if any strategic objective of setting up some system of governance for taxation and more permanent resource extraction, the invasion of 1527 can be seen as raiding on a much larger scale with Burmese Buddhist religious institutions themselves as the target, institutions which absorbed much of Ava’s food surplus and wealth. This included large amounts of physical wealth such as silver, gold, and gemstones, building materials, and land, as well as manpower that was pledged to monasteries to support them. Whereas the

traditional modes of Burmese religious reform to recapture this wealth stayed within culturally acceptable bounds, according to the chronicle the Shans used essentially military techniques to reclaim this wealth, reducing the population of monks through state-sponsored murder and raiding religious edifices such as pagodas that absorbed much surplus wealth in their underground treasure chambers and in their decoration (Aung-Thwin, 1985, 181). In the face of Shan plundering of Burmese religious wealth, religious donations virtually ceased at Ava and with it the passage of wealth into religious institutions (Aung-Thwin, 1998, 128).

Third, relieving the population pressure on the limited territory of the Shan realm would have been another logical motive. The endemic warfare in the Shan realm in the fifteenth century recorded by Chinese sources was mostly over limited territory (Liew Foon Ming, 2003, 154), the occupation of Bhamo's territory by Mong Yang from 1494 to 1503 being one well-documented example of this. One can imagine the massive territorial expansion of the Shan Realm, and reduction in population density that Mong Yang's invasion brought about as solving the problem of limited territory and land, eliminating the *causus belli* for the warfare that plagued the Shan Realm.

All told, the question of a Shan alliance during the invasion of 1524-1527 and a confederation afterwards raises more questions than it answers. The Burmese chronicle has a heavy ideological overlay during this period due to the politically-sensitive nature of Shan rule which throws suspicion over many of its interpretations. The information that Ming dynasty China had access to does not seem to penetrate very far beyond the Shan-Chinese frontier. In the absence of additional independent primary sources, only tentative speculations can be made. As Aung-Thwin (1998) has shown with the myth of the "Three Shan Brothers" there is always the danger that historical speculation based on thin evidence is mistaken for historical fact.

Toungoo's Southward Expansion Against Pegu (1535-1539)

Shortly after the death of Min-gyi-nyo Toungoo began a new era of polity expansion with expeditions against the Mon kingdom of Ramanya (1535-39). The Ming Annals only completely register the significance of this expansionary warfare one century after it took place:

...in the early Jia-jing reign (1522-66), Ava-Burma was destroyed by Meng-yang [Mong Yang]. The chieftain Mang Ji-Sui [king of Ava Shwe-nan-kyaw-shin Narapati] and his entire clan were all killed. Only Mang Rui-ti [Tabinshwehti] and his brothers were able to escape and they fled to the Toungoo stockade. There they *borrowed forces to exact revenge and they became daily more powerful, swallowing up territory on all sides. Gradually they became too powerful for it to control (lit: the tail became too big for the dog to wag)*....How can it be expected that Ava-Burma will not expand! (MSL, 28 May 1627, my italics).

Clearly, despite missing or inaccurate detail, the significance of Burmese state expansion was eventually acknowledged by the Chinese court, albeit with a significant time lag. Chinese sources even display an understanding of the process of state expansion. The “eating food” metaphor used above to describe Burmese state expansion is found rather poetically in an even later source which likens annexing tribal lands to silk worms nibbling on mulberry leaves (Mingshigao cited in Liew, 2003, 155). As the above source makes clear, it is manpower accumulation (“they borrowed forces to exact revenge and they became daily more powerful”) that makes this territorial expansion (“swallowing up territory on all sides”) possible, town-eating [myo-sa] as the Burmese language would describe it.

There were several factors that likely influenced Toungoo's decision to march south against Mon Ramanya in 1535. The Shan confederation had just taken Prome which demonstrated their collective strength and made Toungoo to the east an obvious next target. This placed a time constraint on Toungoo. Toungoo had to act quickly if it wished to avoid being swallowed up by the Shans. Since 1509 Toungoo had only been engaged in intermittent military

activity. Later in this paper we will argue that warfare during the First Toungoo dynasty can be characterized as a process of manpower accumulation. This process took time to get in motion. If the goal of the state was a very large important target with a lot of manpower to the north, the Shan Confederation, and the state hadn't engaged in warfare for a long time, it would have to target smaller and weaker states to the south and build up manpower with victories there before it could hope to target the larger state in the north and be victorious there. The story of Toungoo from 1535 to 1539 is a story of manpower accumulation for warfare against the Shans, an attempt to overcome the threat that the Shans posed to Toungoo by building up a strong enough force to become a threat to the Shans.

It is worth questioning whether Tabinshweihti actually played an important role in this early period of Burmese state expansion from 1535 to 1539 or whether his role only increased in importance during the campaigns against the south as he gained military experience. Tabinshweihti would have been only ten years old when Ava fell under Shan control in 1527, hardly old enough to play any role in his father's last military expeditions. In 1532 almost immediately after Tabinshweihti became king at age fifteen, the Mong Yang Shans attacked and took Prome in the west. In the face of this immediate Shan threat to Toungoo, the decision to start military operations against Ramanya to the south may have been a *fait accompli* forced upon the young king by older more experienced ministers at court. These same ministers would no doubt have played an important role during the initial stages of the campaign of 1535-39 also.

Modern Burmese histories of the early modern period often unconsciously equate the sovereign with the state just as the Burmese chronicle does, describing every action taken by the state as an intentional act of human agency by the sovereign. This is a natural result of following the narrative line of the Burmese chronicle, the most important primary source for the period. The Burmese chronicle as a "Yazawin" or royal chronicle records events relevant to the life of the king, so it is natural that chronicle narrative is written from this unquestioned perspective, but a broader historical perspective would separate rhetoric from historical fact. The practice of sovereign-centered chronicle narrative favors an interpretation of Tabinshweihti being more

actively involved in political decision-making and leadership than perhaps he actually was at his young age. Close study of other independent sources written from a Mon, European, or non-royal Burmese perspective might prove useful in determining the role played by Tabinshweihti in the Toungoo court earlier in his reign.

What enabled Toungoo to make its first drive towards state expansion? Lieberman enumerates four factors behind Toungoo's final victory in 1539: "a more martial Toungoo tradition, larger forces, Muslim mercenaries, and splits in the enemy camp" (Lieberman, 2003, 151). The martial traditions of Toungoo had been strengthened by Min-gyi-nyo's constant military activity earlier in his reign. Larger forces resulted from Toungoo's high military participation rate and its being sheltered from warfare for fifty years. This freedom from warfare gave the Toungoo region a good population base for conscripting a large army to launch against Ramanya. This increase in military manpower will be shown by comparing the military statistics in the Burmese chronicle between the reigns of Min-gyi-nyo and Tabinshweihti in the next section of this paper. The wealth that maritime trade had brought to the Mon kingdom of Ramanya must also have been well known in the Toungoo court and the prospect of acquiring this wealth must have made it an attractive target. The last two factors that Lieberman enumerates, mercenaries and an enemy weakened by internal divisions, only entered the picture during the campaign itself as we will see.

Toungoo launched an attack against the south in 1535. From 1535 to 1539 Toungoo sent a total of four military expeditions against Pegu. Tabinshweihti accompanied the first expedition at the age of nineteen, a mere four years after becoming king. In 1535 (BE 896) the first expedition marched from Toungoo to Pegu (40E, 800H; 40,000S) with the future king Bayinnaung Kyaw-tin-nawrata leading the advance troops. The army encamped at Seintaung near Pegu and attacked Pegu repeatedly for only seven days. The chronicle claims that Toungoo gave up after such a short period of time because the Mon king's ministers, Binyalaw and Achi-daw, who had looked after the Mon king in his youth were such good advisors that nothing could be achieved so the expedition returned to Toungoo (UKII:162)

It is important to keep in mind that all of Toungoo's expeditions against Pegu were sieges and this conditioned the

nature of the warfare Toungoo waged during these years. The generalization of “flight rather than fight” that has been applied to Southeast Asian warfare certainly does not apply to this lengthy campaign or any of the campaigns that came after it (see Charney, 2004, 73-78, for a critique of this generalization). The most basic factor in successful siege warfare would have been manpower. Great numerical superiority of attacker over the defender would have resulted in the walls of the city being scaled or breached by mining operations when attackers were allowed to get close to the base of the walls. In the absence of great numerical superiority, other factors came into play. As Keegan observes of siege warfare:

All the works of siegecraft available to commanders before the invention of gunpowder were devised between 2400 and 397 B.C. None except starvation, offered a certain, or even very effective, means of bringing a fortification to surrender. A besieger's best hope of a quick result, lay in exploiting the defender's complacency or achieving surprise. Treachery was another device. Those methods apart, an attacker might sit for months outside the walls, unless he could find a weak spot or create one himself...In general, the advantage in siege warfare before gunpowder always lay with the defender, as long as he took the precaution of laying in supplies...the attackers might themselves run out of food, or even more probably succumb to disease in their unhealthy encampments (Keegan, 1993, 151).

Gunpowder probably played only a minor role in these campaigns. The chronicle only records the Mon defenders, not the Toungoo attackers, as using firearms. This leaves manpower accumulation, starvation, surprise, and treachery as possible strategies. The ability of Toungoo forces to wait long enough for starvation within the city walls would have been limited. During each of Toungoo's campaigns against Pegu, the Toungoo forces returned to Toungoo at the onset of the rainy season. The great bulk of the forces would have been peasant conscripts and as Charney observes:

...unlike professional units, general peasant conscripts, were essentially farmers called away from their fields for seasonal campaigns. This could affect field campaigns, for peasant levies would simply 'melt away' with the outbreak of the rainy season

in order to plant crops. Likewise, a long campaign that kept peasants far from home or left large numbers of them dead meant that there would be insufficient labour to work the fields at home. Dramatic losses of peasants in war could spell agricultural disaster in the years ahead. Moreover, it could have long-term implications for royal or elite manpower reserves in future wars (Charney, 2004, 220).

Returning to Toungoo at the onset of the rainy season was necessary to maintain the manpower base from which to conduct regular yearly sieges against Pegu. The regular pattern of Toungoo's sieges eliminated surprise as a strategy, leaving manpower accumulation and treachery as the remaining strategies that Toungoo could and eventually did adopt.

Toungoo attacked Pegu for the second time in 1536 (BE 897). The expedition encamped at a place named Jackadaw near Pegu (60E; 800H; 60,000S). The Burmese chronicle reports that muslim mercenaries ("Kala-Panthei-dou- Sein-pyaung-Mya-ta-pu-nin Myo-Hteit-ka nei-ywei hlut-lei-thi", UKII:163) fired down on them with guns from the top of the city walls and inflicted many casualties, making it impossible to scale the town's walls. After staying in Pegu for three months, they returned to Toungoo as the rainy season approached.

The Burmese chronicle also reports that about this time omens started to appear that signified that the end of the current Mon dynasty at Pegu was drawing near. For seven days stars fell down like rain, but when they reached the ground they disappeared. South of Pegu in the delta area a gigantic fish came ashore. The height of its body was fifty *taung* (about twenty-five yards) and the length was four hundred *taung* (two hundred yards). A mountain named Ein-pyoun collapsed all by-itself, with many small hillocks shifting from one place to another, and the ground cracking. A crow flew onto the throne of the Mon king of Pegu, but it was encircled by many other crows. They managed to catch the crow with a snare and quickly burned it at Shwei-modo pagoda at Pegu. A stone post known as Zimalanameik fell down by-itself. The water that flowed in the river became dirty and red like blood. These were only some of the significant omens that appeared at this time (UKII:163).

Toungoo marched to Pegu for the third time in 1538 (BE 899). With a total of seven armies Bayinnaung led the advance guard and

Thado-damma-yaza the rear guard (200E; 800H; 70,000S). Min-ye-thin-ka-tu was appointed to watch over Toungoo in Tabinshweihti's absence. Mon troops met them in advance and the cavalry of the two sides engaged in battle at Colia town near Pegu. The Toungoo cavalry gained the upper hand and pursued the Pegu forces right up to the walls of Pegu, capturing horses, elephants, captives, and the Mon minister Thamein Bru along the way. The Toungoo forces encamped at a place called Tenetkou near Pegu and laid siege to the town, but they could not scale the walls of Pegu because the walls of the town were thick and well-built with large numbers of cannon and mortars arrayed along the wall (UKII:164).

This was the third siege Toungoo had unsuccessfully launched against Pegu and by this time the walls of Pegu must have seemed almost impenetrable. Toungoo decided to change its strategy and attack the smaller and more vulnerable towns that lay to the west of Pegu first. As the Burmese chronicle describes this campaign to the western delta region of Mon Ramanya, first, Tabinshweihti marched to the west of Pegu and encamped at Thagon [Dagon]. There he divided the forces into separate divisions which were then sent off to attack the tributary towns of Pegu: Bassein, Myaungmya, Tayaintara, Kebaung, and Depadwei. The Toungoo king Tabinshweihti then marched back to Pegu and tried several more times to take Pegu. Unsuccessful, as the rainy season approached, Toungoo forces returned to Toungoo (UKII:164).

This campaign to the western delta region could have fulfilled four objectives. First, manpower could be augmented before making further siege attempts against the walls of Pegu. Second, the forces could have been augmented with either Indian Muslim or Portuguese mercenaries with firearms and technical know-how, who would have likely been residing in the seaports of Mon Ramanya. Third, the western delta region may have supplemented Toungoo's military food supply, if the food supply in the area immediately adjacent to Pegu ran out, the Toungoo troops would have to return to Toungoo, but if alternative food supplies in the western delta region could be found, then the siege could be extended for a longer period of time. Fourth, seizing the money and transportable wealth such as silver generated by maritime trade as prize or plunder may have been an additional objective.

During the first three campaigns, Toungoo repeated the same pattern of siege warfare. Either the initial assaults against the walled

city were immediately successful or if the city walls were well-defended, the attacker was forced to retreat from the walls to distance themselves from enemy fire, perhaps making several more attempts to scale or undermine the walls, and then before the rainy season began, if they still were not successful, they returned home. This pattern is repeated so frequently in the Burmese chronicle narrative of the Ava period that it is almost reduced to a meaningless formula. The question has to be asked whether formulaic descriptions like this in the Burmese chronicle correspond to actual recorded historical facts or are rather stock historical interpretations based on generalized notions gleaned from other sources and inserted automatically by the chronicle's author at appropriate points.

In addition to this Ava period pattern of siege warfare, a new pattern begins to emerge in the chronicle narrative during the early First Toungoo Dynasty period, manpower accumulation to augment the forces of an unsuccessful siege. This new pattern starts in much the same way as the earlier pattern with an expedition against a large settlement. Sometimes an initial assault on the larger settlement fails and sometimes there is no attack at all because the defenses are just too strong and they anticipate failure. Then the smaller tributary settlements surrounding the larger settlement are systematically raided for military resources (men, horses, elephants) which are extracted out of these settlements and finally, after the forces of the invading army have been suitably augmented, the larger settlement is attacked and taken. Oaths of loyalty are then administered and longer-term tributary relationships are set up with the larger settlement and its satellite settlements. Bayinnaung's expeditions against Prome (1552) and Ava (1555) are later examples of this pattern of manpower accumulation from surrounding settlements before attacking a larger settlement. In short, the smaller and more vulnerable settlements surrounding the larger target settlement are subjugated first and troop levies are taken from them to attack the larger settlement with.

Toungoo must have known that the western delta region was a population rich area where troops levies, food supplies, and transportable wealth like silver and gold could be obtained. According to (Lieberman, 1984, 18) travelogues and census records from this period indicate that the western delta area was one of just four rice growing regions that would have supported a large farming

population and large armies. In Ramanya these bands of rice-growing settlements included: “the western delta around Bassein and Myaungmya, along the Martaban-Moulmein litoral, along the Irrawaddy from modern Myanaung to Danubyu, and along an arc from Dagon and Syriam to Pegu.” Toungoo forces passed through two well-known port cities, Dagon and Bassein, in their campaign through the western delta region. As Tomes Pires wrote in his *Suma Oriental* (1516) of the wealth in these port cities:

...and from this port [Dagon near Yangon] fifty leagues away is another port which is called Cosmyn (Bassein) which is the principal port of the kingdom of Pegu where there are come to trade many ships, that there come each year four or five ships from Bengalla and the goods that these ships bring are Synabafo textiles, and other sorts of cloth that are consumed in the kingdom and are taken outside through the interior. These ships arrive at this port in March and part of April, they leave from there at the end of June. They take the greater part of their employment in silver made into rings which are made in the same Kingdom...The silver mine is in the Kingdom of Pegu and a great amount is produced. The greater part goes toward Bengal and to the kingdom of the Klings and some comes to Malacca. There is a gold mine in the same kingdom of Pegu which produces a lot (Cortesao, 1944, 109, 111 quoted in SLC 178-9).

Although the chronicle does not explicitly say so, we can infer that Toungoo brought back with them to Toungoo significant increments to manpower, wealth, and weaponry after raiding these port cities on its third campaign against Pegu. Since the western delta region was probably inhabited by arms-bearing Muslim Indians and Portuguese, foreign mercenaries accompanied by their advanced weapons may have entered the Toungoo for the first time at this point (Lieberman, 1984). During Toungoo’s previous campaigns against Pegu they had encountered well-armed Portuguese and Indian Muslims in the employ of the Mon king of Pegu. This would have been their first exposure to this new military force since all their prior military activities had been in insulated Upper Burma. Lieberman describes the impact that Portuguese mercenaries and European military technology must have had:

...the principal contribution of the Portuguese to Southern ascendancy [First Toungoo Dynasty with capital in Pegu] was military. In the 1530's, bands of Portuguese freelance soldiers started to furnish rulers along the Asian littoral with warships and more especially with arquebuses and small cannon superior to any Indian or Chinese weapons hitherto available. Portuguese cast-metal muzzle loaders were less likely to burst, their trajectories were longer and more accurate, and their shots more heavier than those of Asian cannon of equivalent weight. Although Burman and Mon kings never acquired massive siege guns such as rendered stone walls and old-style castles untenable after about 1450 in Europe, they used Portuguese cannon to good effect by mounting them on high mounds or towers and then shooting down into besieged towns. By itself, this technique was seldom decisive. But when used in conjunction with large-scale conventional assaults and mining operations, it could clear the walls of enemy soldiers, demoralize civilians, and create gaps in wood and even brick defenses. Despite their cumbersome loading procedures, handheld arquebuses or matchlocks were also valued because of their light weight, superior penetration (compared to arrows), short-range accuracy, and intimidating noise. The Burmese learned to integrate arquebuses skilfully into both infantry and elephant units. Portuguese weapons proved particularly effective against northern Shans, who had limited experience with firearms (Lieberman, 1984).

As Keegan observes (Keegan, 1993, 151, see quote above) treachery has always been a common means of breaking a siege. Toungoo used an act of treachery to create "splits in the enemy camp." This act of treachery led to a political purge at the Mon court in 1538 (BE 899) and the two highest ministers next to the king, Binnyalaw and Binnyakyan, were executed (UKII: 165). Binnyalaw was one of the two ministers whose leadership the Burmese chronicle praises in resisting Toungoo's first siege in 1535, so this purge amounted to a significant split in the enemy camp. As Harvey summarizes the rather lengthy story:

In spite of several attempts, Tabinshweiti could not take Pegu city. Therefore he had recourse to stratagem. The Pegu king's ablest supporters were two commanders whom he sent to Tabinshweiti with a letter asking for friendly relations. Tabinshweiti pointedly avoided referring to the letter but treated the envoys themselves with unusual honor. After their return he wrote a letter to them by name 'When the matter you arranged with me is finished, I will give one of you Pegu and the other Martaban to rule over.' The bearers of this letter had instructions to insult the Talaing thugyis [Mon leaders] by demanding food gratuitously, and having thus provoked a quarrel, to run away leaving the letter behind. They did so, and the Talaing thugyis forwarded the letter to their king, who at once, perceiving the two commanders to be traitors, put them to death. Thus deprived of their best leaders, the Talaings lost heart, many of them deserted, their king fled to Prome, and Tabinshweiti entered Prome without striking a blow in 1539 (Harvey, 153-4).

Harvey notes that this same stratagem was used by Maha Bandula during the Konbaung period in 1825 which adds to the credibility of the event.

The Burmese chronicle claims that Toungoo's fourth campaign against Pegu encountered no resistance. The Mon king Thu-shin-tagara-rupi, anticipating problems in the defense of Hanthawaddy evacuated the city and led his forces upriver to Prome intending to unite his forces with those of his brother-in-law the king of Prome Thado-damma-yaza. Portuguese sources claim that Portuguese mercenaries aided the Mon side in this final stand. The Portuguese account of events emphasizes that Toungoo's superior manpower was the decisive factor that allowed them to take the city:

In the year 1539 the Viceroy dispatched a trading galleon, under the command of Fernao de Moraes, to Pegu. On arrival at that port, the King with promises and favours induced him to aid him against the King of Burma, who was *invading his territories with such a force that the combined armies are stated to have numbered over 2,000,000 men and 10,000 elephants*. Moraes embarked in a galliot and took over command of the Pegu fleet, with which he made great havoc among the enemy's

ships. At the same time *the Burmese land troops came on like a torrent, carrying all before them*, and easily gained the city and kingdom of Pegu. The rival fleets engaged in a desperate encounter, but the Pegu ships, finding themselves *overpowered by the superior numbers of the Burmese fleet*, deserted Moraes, who alone in his galiot performed wonders single-handed but was finally killed (Danvers, 442, my italics; also Stevens' translation of Faria y Sousa, II.10 cited in Harvey, my italics).

Having finally taken Pegu, the capital of the Mon kingdom of Ramanya, as well as the main ports of Dagon and Bassein, Toungoo now controlled coastal access to European firearms, trade revenue, Portuguese and muslim mercenaries, as well as the population of large stretches of the south to wage war with. This momentum would eventually propel Toungoo into a second, more vigorous phase of expansion into Prome, Arakan, and Ayutthya.



Demographic Factors Behind State Formation and Expansion

Manpower accumulation driving state expansion is a recurrent and unifying theme during the late Ava - early Toungoo period (1486-1539). Several causal relations between population and warfare with an effect on state expansion have been proposed in the literature including: 1. positive and negative causal relations between population and warfare, 2. causal relations between military manpower and military victory, and 3. causal relations between population density, social structure, and the type of warfare employed such as short-term raiding for plunder or long-term conquest for territory. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence that these relations played a role in state expansion can be found in the Burmese chronicle.

First, there are relationships between population and warfare. Warfare has a negative effect on population growth from factors such as mortality from battle, epidemic, and famine; lower birth rates; and flight-emigration from the area of hostilities (Wrigley, 1969, 64; Turchin, 2003b, 2, 6). Reid (1988) following Parker (1996) holds that bloodshed and mortality rates for Southeast Asian warfare were low because the taking of war captives to augment a state's population was the main objective of warfare. Bloodshed

reduced the enemy's population, the very store of wealth that warfare was being waged to obtain, so rational combatants minimized bloodshed. Charney (2004) questions the universal validity of this theory and presents several counter-examples (Reid, 1988, 124; Parker, 1996 (original 1988), 117-125; Charney, 2004, 17-22).

Using mortality to define warfare, equating bloodshed with the intensity of warfare, as Turchin (2003b, 5) does, simplifies the problem. Whether of low or high intensity, all would agree that warfare increases mortality, the question is whether warfare in early modern Southeast Asia was uniformly of low intensity or not, and if not, then what variables were responsible for variations in intensity? Were overlords waging punitive campaigns against their own vassals less likely to engage in intense, high mortality warfare? When two different cultures met in battle, like Burmese and Shans or Burmese and Mons, were mortality rates high due to the absence of any pre-existing cultural rule limiting bloodshed? Although battle casualties are not listed like troops levies are in the Burmese chronicle, the chronicle does make an explicit note when casualties were great as they were in the Mon attack on Toungoo in 1496, Ava's attack on Toungoo and Prome occupying Sale in 1505, and the first Shan siege of Ava in 1525. As Charney argues (2004, 74), military leaders were apparently willing to risk bloodshed at least sometimes to achieve important military objectives. Along the lines of Clausewitz and Keegan (1993), it could be argued that it was the willingness of a military leader to engage in high-intensity total war and expose troops to the danger of bloodshed that enabled victory or at least avoided defeat. Examples of both high and low intensity warfare can be found during Min-gyi-nyo's reign. As for high intensity warfare, the Burmese chronicle's depiction of the intensity of the final Shan siege of Ava in 1527 implies that under the leadership of Sawlon Shan forces were oblivious to bloodshed and that this was an important factor in their victory (UKII:129). The frequent small-scale raids for humans and animals that Min-gyi-nyo made against the smaller satellite settlements of larger states in Upper Burma were probably an instance of low-intensity, low-bloodshed warfare. Altogether, there was likely a mix of low and high intensity warfare which forensic archaeological evidence could prove or disprove.

Population growth's positive effect on warfare is a more controversial hypothesis. Malthus (1798) held that population pressure on limited land caused warfare as well as disease and famine. In general, population pressure on limited territory can lead to the carrying capacity of the land being exceeded and diminishing returns from agriculture. The causality between population growth and warfare has formed the basis for a "warfare theory of state formation", but recent empirical tests have failed to establish this causal connection as a general rule (Turchin, 2003b, 1-3; Diamond, 1999, 284). The hypothesis that population pressure causes internal warfare with a time lag has been shown to be a more limited and reasonable hypothesis. The relationship holds at a lag because diminishing returns from agricultural production lead to population growth overshooting the taxes that can be generated from that population. Without taxes, the state is unable to build up the military resources necessary to suppress internal warfare (Turchin, 2003b, 7). As we've already seen, the history of Mong Yang's occupation of Bhamo provides some textual evidence that the carrying capacity and "ratio of population to resources" of the Shan Realm had been exceeded and this was a motive for expansionary (external) warfare. In an opposite effect, Turchin (2003a, 52-53) argues that high population density is negatively correlated with group solidarity, a pre-condition for centralization of power and expansionary warfare. Further research on the population density of the Shan Realm during this important era is needed.

Second, the causal relationship between military manpower and military victory has always been strong. Military theorists including Napoleon have long held manpower superiority to be the most important determinant of victory in warfare (Keegan, 1993, 306). In pre-modern Southeast Asia, as Charney (2004, 219) observes, "prior to the eighteenth century, the rule of thumb was that the larger the size of the army...the greater the likelihood of a successful outcome of a military campaign" and as Lieberman observes, its larger population gave Upper Burma a military advantage over other regions:

Notwithstanding the value of firearms, in an era of limited specialization manpower was still the best single indicator of military success. Upper Burma's demographic superiority helps to explain not only why Burmans consistently dominated

Shans, Laos, and better armed Mon enemies, but also why the capital after 1600 remained in the dry zone rather than at the coast (Lieberman, 1993b, 503).

There are strong indications that Toungoo's four campaigns against Pegu (1534-38) were backed by ever increasing man and animal resources and that the final assault succeeded largely because of great numerical superiority. Unlike other causal relations, this causal relation can actually be explored statistically (see tables 2, 3, 4). Military statistics recorded the military resources (elephants, horses, soldiers, boats) that were mobilized for a military expedition. There is a long tradition of skepticism regarding these statistics because of some obvious exaggerations particularly during Bayinnaung's reign, but a recent exchange between Charney (2003) and Lieberman (2003) discusses the reliability of these statistics and how they sometimes act as a form of textual rhetoric.

Some patterns are immediately recognizable in the military statistics of Min-gyi-nyo and Tabinshweihti's reigns. The overlord's troop counts are in general quite a lot larger than that of the vassal's. We would expect Ava's troop counts to be several times larger than Toungoo's and this is in fact the case. The average Ava troop count is ninety-eight thousand and the average Toungoo troop count is twenty-four thousand, so we can generalize that on average Ava was able to muster about four times as much manpower as Toungoo, a reasonable ratio between overlord and vassal. The initial success Toungoo troops had against Ava's punitive expedition of 1503 seems to have been due to the exceptionally strong forces raised for this campaign. The troop counts are double the average and while cavalry counts are not exceptional, the elephant count is about fifty percent greater than normal (120 vs. 80). Perhaps Min-gyi-nyo was able to temporarily mobilize a large percentage of the male population and animal resources from the appanages that Ava had recently given to it. After 1503, troop counts return to normal and Toungoo together with Prome are roundly defeated by Ava in the Myingyan region in 1505-06. After this defeat Toungoo studiously avoids military encounters with Ava.

Changes in the data over time support the argument that Toungoo acquired a zone of control that was free of warfare for a long period of time and that during this period of time freedom from warfare led to increased population and a ready pool of manpower

available for conscription and use in military campaigns. In 1524 Toungoo fielded an army of ten thousand in an expedition South of Ava. After more than a decade of peace in 1535 Toungoo fielded an army of forty thousand in its first invasion of Pegu. The army fielded by Toungoo during the course of its four campaigns to Pegu from 1535 to 1539 increases in size from forty thousand to seventy thousand, an increase that can be explained by manpower accumulation during the campaigns themselves.

Table 2: Military Expeditions (from Ava), Min-gyi-nyo's Reign

Date	Chronicle	To	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
869 (1508)	UKII:117	Pakan-gyi	200	5,000	80,000
870 (1509)	UKII:118	Magwe	300	5,000	80,000
873 (1512)	UKII:119	Myedu	150	6,000	120,000
875 (1514)	UKII:120	Sakut	150	5,000	80,000
877 (1516)	UKII:120	Myehte	300	5,000	80,000
879 (1518)	UKII:120	Myehte	350	6,000	120,000
881 (1521)	UKII:120	Kale-Mong Yang	250	6,000	90,000
885 (1523)	UKII:122	Myedu	300	6,000	100,000
888 (1527)	UKII:128	Pakan-gyi	80	1,000	20,000

Table 3: Toungoo Military Expeditions, Min-gyi-nyo's Reign

Date	Chronicle	From	To	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
857 (1495)	UKII: 110	Toungoo	Yamethin	50	300	20,000
858 (1496)	UKII: 108, 153	Ramanya	Toungoo	50 + 30	none	10,000 + 20,000
Late 1490s	UKII: 153	Toungoo	Prome Region	80	6,000	10,000
865 (1503)	UKII:154	Toungoo	Ava at Ngaraneh	120	6,000	50,000
886 (1524)	UKII: 158	Toungoo	South of Ava	20	600	10,000

Note: Source of men for all entries was Toungoo

Table 4: Toungoo Military Expeditions, Tabinshweihti's Reign

Date	Chronicle	From	To	Elephants	Horses	Soldiers
896 (1535)	UKII:162	Toungoo	Pegu	40	800	40,000
897 (1536)	UKII:163	Toungoo	Pegu	60	N.A.	60,000
899 (1537)	UKII:164	Toungoo	Pegu	200	800	70,000
No Date	UKII:166	Toungoo	Pegu	120	800	70,000
No Date	UKII:166	Toungoo	Pegu	200 boats		10,000
No Date	UKII:166	Pegu	Prome	200	800	80,000
No Date	UKII:166	Pegu	Prome	700 boats		40,000

Note: The source of men for all forces listed here was Toungoo.

Third, political anthropologists have long hypothesized a relationship between population density, social structure, and different types of warfare. When a social group evolves from a local chieftainship to a more regionally organized polity:

Warfare and territoriality remain central, but the goals change. The nature of warfare shifts fundamentally, from competition between local groups over land and other resources – in which enemies are killed or driven off – to conquest warfare that seeks to expand the political economy by capturing both the land and labor and bringing them into elite control (Johnson and Earle, 2000, 249).

A distinction can be made between two kinds of objectives in military campaigns: short-term raiding for plunder versus long-term conquest of territory. The objective of short-term raiding was immediately transportable wealth such as manpower (war captives),

animals, precious metals, and sometimes food (Keegan, 1993, 126). The objective of territorial conquest was a more permanent long-term extraction of wealth through tribute and taxation from the conquered territory (Jones, 2001). This second kind of military objective has been labeled “strategic” and “persisting” by military theorists, because it is forward looking and persists over a long period of time. Setting up and enforcing this long-term relationship of wealth extraction requires the creation of a threat of disciplinary action, of a punitive military campaign if tribute or taxes are not forthcoming. In return for the tribute and taxes given to the overlord, the vassal receives protection from other aggressors. One also has to ask the question whether the tribute has any immediate economic value or is rather a symbol of submission in which case it is not fulfilling a function of wealth extraction at all, but rather an ideological function. Tribute has also been used as a means of exchanging trade goods (Reid, 1993, 234).

Manpower accumulation from raiding is likely to have been more important than longer term relations of taxation and tribute during the reign of Min-gyi-nyo. This raiding interpretation is favored by the Burmese chronicle text itself. The descriptions of most military campaigns during Min-gyi-nyo’s reign in the Burmese chronicle end with the formulaic phrase “and they took many elephants, oxen, and captives” as war prize, so a large fraction of the human and animal wealth of captured settlements were likely carted back to the capital of the invading state, but since statistics are rarely ever given on war prize it is not clear to what degree the population and pool of conscriptable males was incremented by taking war captives. This war prize should have eventually resulted in increases in the detailed military resource statistics provided before each campaign. Min-gyi-nyo’s practice of attacking the smaller more vulnerable satellite settlements of larger settlements or states along an axis from Toungoo to Kyaukse and on the way to and from his campaigns in the east near Pagan from 1505 to 1509 seems most amenable to a raiding interpretation. Later on in the Burmese chronicle, during the reign of Bayinnaung, the establishment of more permanent relations of tribute and taxation are marked by formal oaths of allegiance to the new conquering ruler, but during the late Ava period these oaths of allegiance are only hinted at, for instance on the death of a ruler, the overlord-vassal relation must be re-established by traveling to the capital and taking an oath of

allegiance to the new overlord. No such trip to the capital to renew loyalties is reported for Min-gyi-nyo.



A Model of State Formation and Expansion

From relationships between demographic variables, we now turn to a model of the role that warfare played in state formation and expansion. Four stages in state formation have been proposed by Di Cosmo (1999, 26): 1. crisis, 2. militarization, 3. centralization, and 4. acquisition of external resources. In economic terms, an exogenous shock throws a state out of a stable political equilibrium and sets in motion endogenous mechanisms of adjustment (2,3, and 4) that will eventually return it to equilibrium.

First, a crisis is the precipitating cause behind state formation. A crisis is defined as “a general, sometimes abrupt, worsening of economic, political, and social conditions, carrying with it a sense of impending change.” Bad climate, bad harvests, droughts, epidemics, overgrazing, and tensions between ethnic groups are all cited as possible precipitating causes behind a crisis that leads to war (Di Cosmo, 1999, 10). Many of these crises can be subsumed under population growth’s positive effect on warfare discussed above. Chinese sources provide ample evidence of tensions between ethnic groups along the Shan-Chinese frontier, whereas the more royal eulogizing style of the Burmese chronicle tends to leave such precipitating causes out of the narrative. One possible crisis in the Shan realm along the Shan-Chinese frontier consisted of population pressure on limited land bounded to the east by the Chinese and the south by Ava. In Toungoo, a possible crisis was the Shans taking Prome two years prior to Tabinshweihti’s first expedition against Ramanya. Toungoo would have been the next likely candidate in the Shan southern expansion. The only alternative was to attack Ramanya in the south and build up manpower from there for an assault against the north.

Second, the initial crisis leads to militarization and the mobilization of the society for war. The military participation rate of the society increases and a high percentage of the adult males are conscripted into military service. Imperial bodyguard units are also formed to strengthen the personal power of the ruler and create greater cohesion in the upper ranks of the military. The general

population that conscripts are drawn from undergoes subordination to put it on a war footing. Censuses and tattooing are instituted to stem the flow of population out of social groups that bear a greater burden during warfare such as royal servicemen into those that are exempted like religious institutions (Lieberman, 1984, 40-41, 152-181; Aung-Thwin, 1985; Charney, 214-216). In Burmese society conscripts did not draw a salary and were expected to provide many of the perquisites of war that states in other societies and times (e.g. Roman) provided soldiers with such as food supplies and personal weapons (sword, knife, lance, spear, shield, protective gear, bow and arrow, crossbow, boats, Charney, 2004, 23-41, 105). Rigid disciplinary rules that involved the families of soldiers were used to subordinate the population for war: “to ensure the loyalty of conscripts, their families were treated as hostages for their good behavior” (Charney, 219).

Third, centralization occurs next when small states begin to form alliances and work together. Di Cosmo uses the term “ideology in reserve” to “suggest the latent possibility of the state, made possible by the willing consent of tribal components to alienate part of their power for the greater good of the resolution of the crisis” (Di Cosmo, 1999, 14). Centralization occurs when:

During a crisis several leaders would emerge and strive to create a new order, thereby restoring peace; they were usually junior members of the tribal aristocracy vying for power. The competition revolved around the ability of the leader and his close military associates to defend the interests of the tribe. If successful, the leader would attract the support of several other tribes (Di Cosmo, 1999, 13).

Turchin (2003a) argues that “frontier conditions impose an intense selective pressure under which weaker groups with low asabiya [group solidarity] fragment and are incorporated into stronger groups” (Turchin, 2003a, 56). He enumerates several factors in frontier regions like the Shan-Chinese frontier that serve as catalysts for group solidarity and centralization: 1. inter-group conflict, 2. low population density, 3. small group size, 4. large neighboring state, 5. absence of mountains, 6. presence of rivers, 7. proselytizing and exclusionary religion, 8. primogeniture, 9. society-wide mechanisms of male socialization (Turchin, 2003a,

54-6). Factors 1, 3, 4, and 6 held along the Shan-Chinese frontier, but 5 and 7 did not. It is not clear whether the other factors held or not.

Fourth, the final stage is the actual acquisition of external resources to ensure the future existence of the emergent state. The focus is on more efficient resource extraction. As Di Cosmo describes it, it is “the search for more efficient and more sophisticated ways to supply the new politically dominant class with sufficient means for its continued existence” and “the gradual – but uneven – expansion of ways to achieve better control and management of revenues.” States run through an evolutionary sequence of fiscal stages in their finance that runs: raiding, tribute, taxation. As Di Cosmo describes the evolution, fiscal policies become “less rapacious and erratic.” From raiding parties “swollen to the size of fully-fledged armies” states pass to more permanent and lasting control by demanding tribute from conquered states, but tribute can be difficult to collect from remote vassals and must ultimately be backed up with the threat of punitive expeditions, so tribute can be volatile and when it disappears can provoke a crisis (Di Cosmo, 1999, 17-18, 27). To ensure fiscal revenues, governors with garrisons, not tributary lords, are appointed from the center to manage more reliable regular taxation of agriculture and trade on the periphery.

Grabowsky (1999) has argued for the “primacy of manpower” in pre-modern mainland Southeast Asian history and the importance of manpower raids and forced migration (vs. voluntary migration) in pre-modern warfare and state formation. He points out that because raiding for manpower was so effective, more efficient forms of resource extraction that required a higher degree of control such as direct taxation were not necessary:

the control of manpower, not the conquest of land, was the crucial factor for establishing, consolidating, and strengthening state power...Thai, Burmese, and Cambodian chronicles provide ample evidence of how Southeast Asian rulers launched successful attacks against weaker neighbors in order to seize large parts of the population and to resettle the war captives in their own realm. At the same time, the victorious side was very often *content to establish a loose tributary relationship with the former enemy whose resources of*

manpower had been reduced (Grabowsky, 1999, 45, my italics).

In pre-modern Burma military manpower resources were extracted in two different ways: 1. permanent resettlement to the overlord's center, and 2. troop levies from the vassal periphery at the time of military campaigns to states that were even further afield that were being targeted for conquest. Whereas permanent resettlement resembled once-off raiding, troop levies resembled taxation in that they required long-term control (unless, of course, the military expedition using troop levies actually passed through the tributary state subject to troop levies). Military manpower resettled at the center, however, was more valuable because it could be mobilized quicker and controlled more reliably. The relationship between population growth and expansionary warfare was therefore strongly affected by the coercive capacity of the state to mobilize manpower for expansionary warfare. Once the military manpower and animals of a state had been augmented, they needed to be mobilized which brings us back to the second stage above.

Feedback mechanisms that describe the forces at work in pre-modern state formation have taken a prominent place in some important recent works on world history (Lieberman, 2003, 65; Diamond, 1999, 87). These feedback mechanisms provide a focal point for integrating the diverse and numerous causal factors that complicate history (cf. Wrigley, 1969, 109). A demographic feedback loop can be used to describe the relation between manpower accumulation and warfare in pre-modern Southeast Asia. After conquest on the periphery of a state's sphere of control, military resources (human captives, animals, weapons, ammunition) were brought back to the center where they could be better organized into conscriptable units for further expansionary warfare. Warfare required strong systems of patronage, extraction, and coercion (Lieberman, 2003, 31). A starting point for such a feedback mechanism is the notion of a "manpower-warfare multiplier" to show how manpower accumulation leads to state expansion (cf. the money supply and Keynesian multipliers of economics). If territory was expanded by a certain amount, a certain fraction of the population was taken from the land of this new territory and used for further expansionary warfare. Multipliers translate into systems of first-order differential equations like those borrowed from ecology by Turchin (2003a) to describe population dynamics in pre-modern

agrarian states. The differential equation itself describes the dynamics of the system, how different factors determine rates of change in the system. Combined with a set of “initial conditions”, a starting point for a given historical situation, the differential equations determine a unique trajectory through historical space. This notion is not new and dates as far back as Carl Hempel’s description of covering laws in the philosophy of history (Dray, 1974, 67; Hempel, 1942). The main benefit is the conceptual clarity resulting from this approach, rather than any simplistic notion that events in complex evolving historical states could be entirely described by a simple differential equation. A model similar to Turchin’s (2003a) that summarizes the forces at work in sixteenth century mainland Southeast Asian state expansion will be the subject of a future paper.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper has been to provide a narrative history charting the forces at work behind state expansion in the early Toungoo period. Both the reign of Min-gyi-nyo and the Shan invasions of Ava played important roles in this expansion. From the very beginning of Min-gyi-nyo’s reign, after seizing the throne of Toungoo in 1486, Min-gyi-nyo built an ever widening sphere of influence in Upper Burma. After conquering the Pyinmana area near Toungoo, during the 1490s Min-gyi-nyo attacked the rebellious vassal Yamethin on behalf of his overlord the king of Ava and made exploratory military probes along the frontier of Mon Ramanya to the south. In 1501-03, there was a succession struggle at Ava as well as an invasion and occupation of the northern part of the Mu River valley, an important part of Ava’s food supply. In the wake of these events, the new king of Ava attempted to draw Min-gyi-nyo closer to him through a marriage alliance and a gift of strategically important territory near Kyaukse, another important part of Ava’s food supply. Min-gyi-nyo entered into a state of rebellion for the first time, spurned Ava’s gift and depopulated the territory. Ava sent a military expedition against Toungoo in retaliation, but Min-gyi-nyo intercepted it ahead of time and defeated it. Shortly afterwards, in 1505, Toungoo joined with Prome and attacked towns in the Myingyan area near Pagan. Toungoo was defeated and humbled by a

joint military expedition sent by Ava and Hsipaw. In 1505, three princes rebelled and seized the town of Pakan-gyi at the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers. Instead of making an immediate move to help the rebels, Toungoo and Prome bided their time with expeditions against settlements like Magwe to the south. Their caution was vindicated when the princes were defeated and executed. During his trips from Toungoo to and from these campaigns, Min-gyi-nyo attacked and raided settlements along the way, in some instances establishing marriage alliances. In 1510, the king of Ava built a new capital and palace and Min-gyi-nyo followed his example. After 1510, while Ava was burdened by Shan raids of increasing intensity, Toungoo settled back to a period of peace. Only in 1523 did Min-gyi-nyo venture out of Toungoo again in a military expedition. During the Shan invasions of Ava (1524-27), he gained many loyal vassals in the area south of Ava. Min-gyi-nyo died in 1531. The new Shan state at Ava invaded Prome in 1532 and in 1535 Toungoo under a new king Tabinshweihti started a series of attacks against Pegu, the capital of Mon Ramanya, that led to Toungoo's conquest and control over the southern Ramanya region and its lucrative maritime trade.

Several demographic factors that played a role in state formation together with a model of state formation have been assessed for their relevance to early Toungoo state expansion (1486-1539). Although many might regard the lack of primary sources for the First Toungoo Dynasty as limiting research possibilities, it is hoped that shining the light of disciplines such as historical demography, political anthropology, the anthropology of war, as well as economic theory (Schmid, 2004; Van Tuyl and Brauer, 2004) on the evidence combined with a continued search for new primary sources will allow new advances to be made in this important but understudied period of Burmese history. Perhaps archaeological evidence will also one day supplement the evidence that is now almost entirely textual.

Table 5: List of Military Expeditions:**Min-gyi-nyo's Campaigns**

Pyinmana, Kyaukse	(1487)
Yamethin, Kyaukse	(1492)
Kyaungpya on the Mon border	(1496)
Kyaukse, Pyinsi	(1503)
Nyaungyan	(1504)
Salei, Bontaung	(1506)
Amyin, Nyaungyan, Yamethin, Wadi, Pinle, Pinya, Shan-pait-taung	(1525)

Tabinshweiti's Campaigns

Dagon, Bassein, Western Delta Region	(1538)
Pegu	(1535-1538)
Prome	(1540)
Mottama	(1541-42)
Prome	(1542-43)
Defeats Northern Shan Counterattack	(1543-44)
Subjugates middle Burma	(1544-1545)
Arakan	(1546-7)
Ayutthya	(1548)

**Bayinnaung's Conquests (Tun Aung Chain, 2004)
Reconquest of the Burmese Heartland**

Toungoo	(1551)
Prome	(1551)
Hanthawaddy	(1552)
Martaban	(1552)
Bassein	(1552)
Ava	(1555)

Conquest of the Northern Tai Region

Mong Mit	(1557)
Hsipaw	(1557)
Yawnghwe	(1557)
Mong Yang	(1557)
Mogaung	(1557)
Mongnai	(1557)
Chiangmai	(1558)
Chiangmai	(1559)
Hsenwi	(1558)

Mengmao (1563)

Conquest of Ayutthya and Laos

Ayutthya	(1564)
Ayutthya	(1569)
Vientiane	(1574)
Mogaung	(1576)

Table 6: Geographical Outline of Settlements in Upper Burma and the Shan States, Late Ava Period

❖ Upper Burma

- Northern Frontiers
 - ◆ Mu River Valley (Aung-Thwin, 1990, 72)
 - Myedu
 - Ngarane
 - Si-bok-taya
 - Tabayin [Dipeyin]
 - Sitha
 - ◆ Upper Irrawaddy River Valley
 - ◆ Upper Chindwin
 - Kalei
 - Mingin
- Myingyan (Pagan Region)
 - ◆ Pakangyi
 - ◆ Pagan
 - ◆ Singu
 - ◆ Sale
 - ◆ Pakanngge
 - ◆ Kyaukpadaung
 - Sa-kyaw
 - ◆ Mount Popa
 - ◆ Natmauk
 - ◆ Pin
 - ◆ Taywindaing
 - ◆ Ngathayauk
 - ◆ Shwe-kyaw Pagoda
- Lower Chindwin (West)
 - ◆ Kani

- ◆ Badon
- ◆ Amyin
- Kyaukse (East) (Aung-Thwin, 1990, 70)
 - ◆ Myitta
 - ◆ Sadon (Sa-thon)
- Ye-hlwe-nga-hkayaing (Footnote UK:152; Than Tun, 1983-86, v.10, p. 1)
 - ◆ Pya-gaung [Kyidaungkan] (Harvey, 124)
 - ◆ Kintha
 - ◆ Shwe-myo (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 172-173)
 - ◆ Taung-nyo (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 149-150)
 - ◆ Talaing-the (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 171-172)
- Appanages Given to Min-gyi-nyo by Ava (1503)
 - ◆ Ye-hlwe-nga-hka-yaing
 - ◆ Pet-paing
 - ◆ Sa-thon [Sadon in Kyaukse?]
 - ◆ Myo-hla
 - ◆ In-te
 - ◆ In-paut
 - ◆ Kyat
 - ◆ Than-nget
 - ◆ Begu-tha-beit
 - ◆ In-chon
- Meiktila (East)
 - ◆ Nyaungyan
 - ◆ Yindaw
 - Palein-kyei-pon
 - Yu-pon
 - Min-lan
 - Kon-paung
 - Kan-taung
 - Baut-laut
 - ◆ Thin-kyi
 - ◆ Meiktila
 - ◆ Tha-ga-ra (Trager and Koenig, 1979, 152)
 - ◆ Myin-nyaung
 - ◆ Ywatha
 - ◆ Kan-daung
 - ◆ Hlaingdet

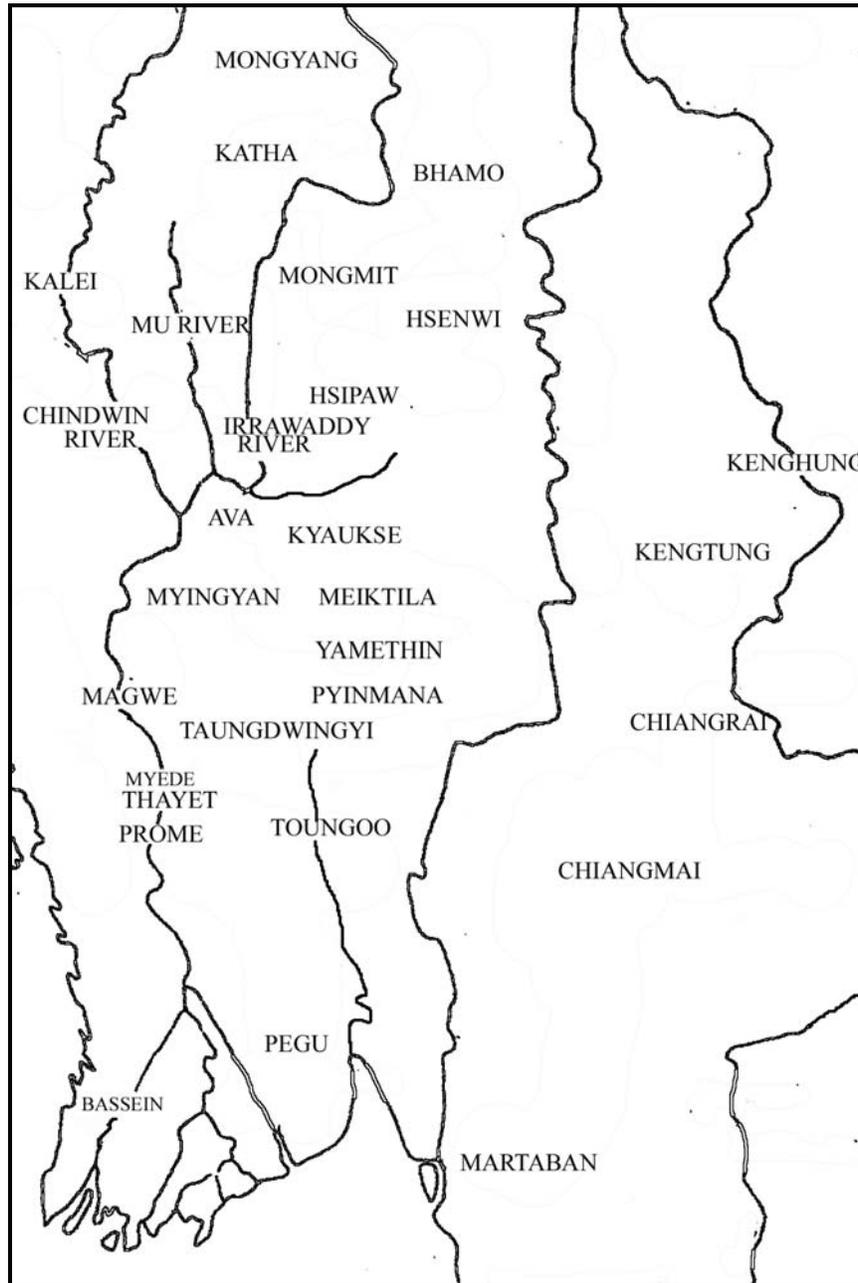
- Yamethin
 - ◆ Saba-taung
 - ◆ Ain-bu
 - ◆ Nga-sein-in
 - ◆ Tan-ti
- Southern Irrawaddy River Basin
 - ◆ Salin
 - ◆ Natmauk
 - ◆ Sagu
 - ◆ Magwe
 - ◆ Malun
 - ◆ Thayet
 - ◆ Myede
 - ◆ Prome
 - ◆ Myanaung
 - ◆ Tharawaddy
- Southern Frontier
 - ◆ Prome (West)
 - ◆ Taungdwingyi (Central)
 - ◆ Toungoo (East)
- ❖ Shan Realm
 - Mong Yang (Mengyang)
 - Mogaung
 - Mong Mit (Mengmi)
 - Hsenwi (Theinni, Mu-bang)
 - Onpaung (Hsipaw, Thibaw)
 - Kalei
 - Bhamo and Kaungzin
 - Katha
 - Mong Nai (Mone)
 - Nyaungshwe (Yawngshwe)
 - Mong Mao (Luchuan-Pingmian)

Table 7: Toponym Variants

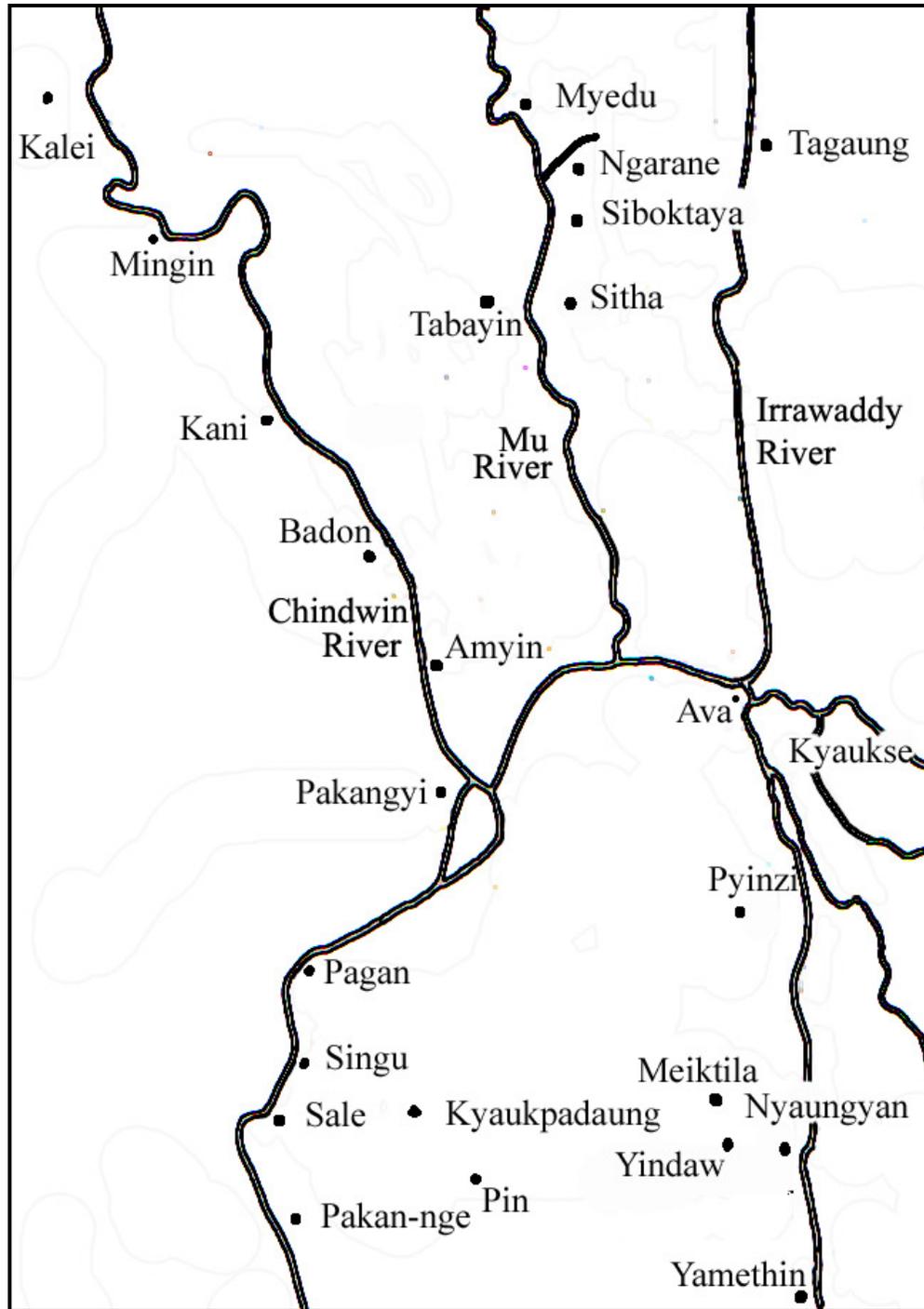
Ethnic Name	Ethnic Group	Region	Chinese Name	Burmese Name
Mon	Ramanya	Lower Burma		
Ava	Burmese	Upper Burma	Mian-dian	Ava
Mong Yang	Shan	Shan Realm	Meng Yang	Mohnyin
Hsenwi	Shan	Shan Realm	Mu-bang	Theinni
Hsipaw	Shan	Shan Realm	None	Thibaw, Onpaung
Mong Mit		Shan Realm	Mengmi	
Mong Nai	Shan	Shan Realm	Meng-nai	
Bhamo	Shan	Shan Realm	Man-mo	
Yawnghwe		Shan Realm		

APPENDIX

Map 1: Map of Burma and Siam



Map 2: Map of Upper Burma



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URL:<http://www.umass.edu/wsp/methodology/history/finding/silence.html>
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Note:

The following addendum to Jon Fernquist, (2005) "Min-gyi-nyo, the Shan Invasions of Ava (1524-27), and the Beginnings of Expansionary Warfare in Toungoo Burma: 1486-1539," *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 3.2 (Autumn 2005): 35-142, was submitted after the journal was off to press (so to speak). We have added it here at the end of the volume. It is hoped that readers of Jon's article, earlier in this journal, will also take note of this additional and revised material.

M.W.C.

**Addendum: The Shan Realm in the Late Ava
Period (1449-1503)**

Jon Fernquist

Several factors conditioned the relation between the Shan Realm, China, and Burmese Ava before Min-gyi-nyo's accession to power:

1. The Shan Realm had been a perpetual threat to Ava since the end of the Pagan dynasty (Than Tun, 1959, 111-12).
2. The Shan Realm was an economic frontier for Ava connecting it via trade to the expanding markets of Ming dynasty China (SLC 97-198).
3. The Shan Realm prospered economically from its proximity to China through trade in gems and luxury goods with which it was well-endowed (SLC 134-153; Brook, 1998, 75-79).

4. Much Shan wealth was expropriated by the Chinese state through various forms of taxation (Ward, 2004, 5, 16-17, 28-29).
5. Increased wealth in the Shan Realm from farming and trade led to increased population and a surplus to finance armies and supply them with military resources such as weapons, animals, and the time of humans spent away from subsistence farming.
6. Ming China's conquest and consolidation of power in Yunnan created more Shan states with some degree of local independence but with limited territory (Ward, 2004, 4, 5, 9, 22-25; Daniels, 2003, 3-10).
7. Shan expansion to the east into China was not possible.
8. Expansion to the south into Upper Burma was an easier natural alternative for territorial expansion.
9. On its frontier with the Shan Realm, the Ming Chinese state had a policy of divide and conquer and fragmenting potentially powerful states (Ward, 2004, 23-25; Wang Gungwu, 1998, 318-9), but increased warfare sometimes resulted in even stronger states (MSL 12 Oct 1499).
10. The Shan-Chinese frontier region was in a continual state of warfare from 1449 to at least 1503.

The Shan state of Mong Mao arose in the power vacuum that ensued after the fall of the Dali kingdom in Yunnan to the Mongols in 1254. Through expansionary warfare the power of the Mong Mao state eventually extended over most of the Shan states of Burma and Tai ethnic states of Yunnan. This all came to an abrupt end in the 1380's when the newly emergent Ming state invaded Yunnan and proceeded to consolidate its power there. The center of the Mong Mao state was located in the modern-day districts of Longchuan and Ruili on the Yunnan-Burmese border and had its capital at what is now the modern-day border town of Reili (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 64; Daniels, 2003, 5-6; Wade, 2004, 31; Tapp, 2000; Reynolds, 2003).

From 1498 to 1504 the Ming replaced the tributary relations of the Tai states that surrounded Mong Mao with administrative divisions and taxation of their own making (Ward, 2004, 4-5, 9; Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 168-9). Under the pressure of increasing taxation, in 1411 Mong Mao refused to receive imperial envoys

with proper ceremony which led to the Mong Mao leader being removed from office in 1413. During the twenty years from 1413 to 1435 the next ruler Chau-ngan-pha [Sa Ngam Pha, Thonganbwa] waged constant warfare against the former tributary states of Mong Mao. Although his initial ambition may have been to reclaim Mong Mao's lost territory, the zone of Tai states soon fell into a state of endemic warfare much like that which would exist in the later part of the century. Such an endemic state of warfare is not uncommon among small proto-states (Ferguson and Whitehead, 1999; Turchin, 2003; Haas, no date, 11-14; Johnson and Earle, 2000, 34-45). Mong Mao was not always the aggressor. In 1436 Mong Mao received a tax exemption because of Hsenwi encroachments on its land (Liew Foon Ming, 169-170).

In the 1530s the intensity of warfare increased. As Wang Gungwu observes:

The re-emergence of the Maw Shan chieftains of Lu-ch'uan followed on the withdrawal of Ming armies from Vietnam in 1427. Knowing that the Ming court was in no condition to fight on the Yunnan border, the Maw Shan tribes became increasingly ambitious during the next few years. After 1436, their armies began to invade the border counties of central Yunnan, reaching as far as the Yung-ch'ang and Ching-tung [in Chinese territory] (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 325-6).

Eventually, one of the tit-for-tat seizures of territory in this state of endemic warfare triggered Chinese military intervention. In 1437 the ruler of the Tai state of Nandian requested Chinese assistance in returning land that had been taken from it by Mong Mao. The regional commander of Yunnan was requested to make an investigation into the matter and in 1438 he found that Mong Mao had "repeatedly invaded Nanlian, Ganyai, Tengchong,...Lujiang, and Jinchi" and that the Mong Mao ruler had "appointed local chieftains of the neighboring regions subordinate to him without asking for the approval of the Ming court and that some of these men joined forces with him to invade Jinchi" (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 170). In response, the Chinese sent the first of four military expeditions against Mong Mao in a war that would last for over a decade, a war that is now known as the "Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns" (1436-1449). As Wang Gungwu observes:

This war had disastrous consequences for the Ming state, it disrupted the economies of all the southwestern provinces involved in sending men and supplies in fighting a war of attrition against a small tribal state and it cost the Ming state the respect of its tribal allies on the border, who saw how inept and wasteful the Ming armies were. Moreover, the war drew commanders, officers, men, and other resources from the north which might have been vital to the defense of the northern borders. It is significant that the end of the Luchuan campaigns early in 1449 was followed immediately by extensive tribal uprisings and other revolts in five provinces south of the Yangtze river, and, on the northern frontiers, by the spectacular defeats later in the year which virtually destroyed the imperial armies in the north and led to the capture of the emperor himself by the Mongols. The year 1449 was a turning point in the history of the dynasty (Wang Gungwu, 1998, 326).

The rise of the Shan state of Mong Yang that would soon play such a significant role in Burmese history after 1524 occurs in the chaos that ensued at the end of the Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns. The third campaign from 1443 to 1444 removed Chau-ngan-pha from power as the ruler of Mong Mao, but his son Chau-si-pha [Jifa] escaped capture and established a power base in Mong Yang on the west bank of the Irrawaddy river (Daniels, 2003, 8). A fourth campaign was sent in 1449 to capture him, but probably failed to achieve this main objective. The Chinese allowed remnants of the Mong Mao royal family to remain in Mong Yang if they agreed never to cross the Irrawaddy river to the east. Chinese sources disagree about how Chau-si-pha finally met his end, one Shan chronicle even claiming he reigned for another fifty years (Mangrai, 1969, xx). The version of events found in the official Chinese history includes one possible motive for Mong Yang's eventually invasion of Ava in 1524-27, revenge:

Jifa [Chau-si-pha] escaped to Mengyang [Mong Yang] in early 1449 but was caught by the chieftain of Ava-Burma. In April 1454 the chieftain of Ava-Burma asked the Chinese to revert the land to him and the Ming ceded Yinjia...to Burma, so Si

Jifa and his family, a total of six people, were delivered to the Ming troops at a village on Upper Irrawaddy. Si Jifa [Chau-si-pha] was immediately escorted to the capital where he was executed. However, Ava-Burma let Si Bufa, the younger brother of Si Jifa, go free. He and his son, Si Hongfa (Thohanbwa) continued to rule Mengyang without the official approval of the Ming court. They sent tribute missions to China, but the court kept a close eye on the matter. Early in the Jiajing reign one of the descendants of Si Renfa [Chau-ngan-pha, Thonganbwa], then ruling Mengyang, managed to take revenge. In 1527 (Jiajing 6) he led an army that marched south to invade Ava-Burma, killing the chieftain Mang-ji-si (Shwenankyawshin) [Narapati (1502-1527)] and his wife (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, 198).

Mong Yang, to the northwest of Mong Mao, in 1449 began to emerge as the successor state to Mong Mao.

During the 1480s the power of the two Shan states Mong Yang and Mong Mit, rose in tandem, fueled by trade with the rising Ming dynasty of China. Mong Mit was most famous for rubies from the town of Mogok, sending tribute missions to the Chinese court with them as early as 1407. Mong Yang was famous for amber and jade (SLC 127, 129, 227, 241). The adjacent Shan states of Hsenwi and Hsipaw effectively defined a boundary between Chinese and Burmese spheres of influence in the Shan Realm. Hsipaw was a steadfast ally of Ava for much of the fifteenth century and appears to have had no relations with the Chinese state since it is never mentioned in Chinese sources. Hsenwi was the largest Shan political entity recognized by the Chinese state in the Shan Realm during the early Ming dynasty (SLC 2000, 228), but in the late fifteenth century over the course of several decades Mong Mit gradually broke free from Hsenwi's control and was finally recognized by the Chinese state as a separate political entity (SLC 230). In the mid-fifteenth century the Chinese governor of Hsenwi married his daughter Nang Hannong to the ruler of Mong Mit. She was put in charge of Mong Mit's gem mines and eventually became ruler of Mong Mit. Starting from the 1450's Nang Hannong, using the gem trade with China as a lever, separated Mong Mit from Hsenwi. The role of Ming dynasty court politics and the gem trade in Mong Mit's serpentine rise to power during the later half of the

fifteenth century has been documented by Sun Laichen (SLC 227-232). Other minor Shan states in the Shan Realm that are explicitly referred to in Burmese and Chinese sources include Kalei on the Upper Chindwin river as well as Mong Nai and Yawnghwe in the southern Shan states near modern-day Taung-gyi.

During the 1580s and 1590s tribute missions were sent frequently to the Chinese court by Shan rulers. Sending a mission was usually a strategic move that often did not indicate actual submission. It was often used to delay Chinese military action, gain acquiescence to territory that had been seized, and also as a bid to get hard to obtain recognition as a state by China. Mong Yang sent regular tribute missions to the Chinese court with items such as elephants, horses, gold, and silver in 1482, 1487, and 1491. Mong Mit sent missions in 1481, 1483, and 1496. Hsenwi sent them in 1496, 1505, 1517, and 1530 (MSL: Mong Yang: 23 Apr 1482, 4 Apr 1487, 3 May 1491; Mong Mit: 19 Jun 1481, 25 Sep 1483, 4 Nov 1496; Hsenwi: 29 Apr 1496, 8 Nov 1505, 22 Mar 1517, 21 Oct 1530).

While the Mong Yang Shans were placating the Chinese to the north, they were engaging in regular raids on the Burmese frontiers to the south. In 1483 (BE 844) the Burmese chronicle records that the Mong Yang Shans continued to attack Myedu and Ngarane in the north (UKII:106). In 1484 (BE 845) a new Burmese governor of Myedu was appointed (UKII:107). In 1484 Mong Mit was finally recognized by the Chinese state as an independent political entity (i.e. an "anfusi" or pacification office) no longer under the control of Hsenwi.

Compared with the chaotic state of continual warfare in the Shan Realm described by Chinese sources, Burmese sources often hardly seem to describe the same region. This probably stems from the different approach taken by the Burmese and Chinese states in their relations with Shan states in the late fifteenth century. In the face of endemic warfare in the Shan states, the Chinese state was reluctant to get militarily involved, choosing to control and monitor Shan states through continual diplomatic contact and coercion instead. The Burmese, on the other hand, were less concerned about continual monitoring and control and seem to have continued a strategy of once-off military expeditions to extract promises of submission and token payments of tribute to the exclusion of diplomatic relations. The continual contact of

Chinese officials with Shans in the Shan-Chinese frontier during this period led to overall better descriptions of what was going on there when compared with Burmese descriptions of events in the Shan-Burmese half of the frontier. Rhetorical differences between the Chinese and Burmese traditions of historical writing may also be a factor.

A good example of Burma's military approach to relations is provided by the Burmese chronicle's description of a punitive expedition led by Ava against the two Shan states Mong Yang and Mogaung in 1477. Mong Yang and Mogaung are tightly associated with each other in the Burmese chronicle, more often than not acting as one political entity (SLC 233), but in the 1477 campaign they were treated as separate entities by Ava. The Burmese chronicle records that in 1477 (BE 838) the king of Ava heard there was warfare in the Shan states and that the Mong Yang and Mogaung sawbwas [rulers] had entered into an alliance and were helping each other militarily, so the king of Ava ordered the crown prince to look after the capital of Ava in his absence and appointed his younger son, the lord of Yamethin Min-ye-kyaw-swa, to march by land with five armies (300E; 6,000H; 70,000S). The king of Ava himself marched with 12 armies travelling by river in his golden royal barge (70,000S). When they arrived at the port of Katha on the Irrawaddy, they disembarked and marched by land to Mong Yang. According to the chronicle, when the Mong Yang and Mogaung sawbwas learned of the king's arrival they lost heart and were not brave enough to resist. They sent gifts and arms and entered into the Burmese king's side. If they did in fact submit in this manner, what led them to do this? Perhaps the Shans were intimidated by the sheer size of Ava's forces. Perhaps it was common cultural knowledge that submitting in advance to Burmese forces was a cultural norm that would allow the local ruler to maintain his position of power and it was this expectation that led to an early submission. The logic being, probably, that the quicker the submission to the Burmese, the quicker the Burmese would return to the capital and leave them to rule without interference. After their submission, the Burmese chronicle records that the king of Ava took the Mong Yang sawbwa and gave him the town of Tagaung in the north on the Irrawaddy to rule over. Mong Yang was given to the younger brother of the Mogaung sawbwa to rule over. The king of Ava returned to Ava in 1477 (BE 838)

(UKII:98).

By itself, the description in the Burmese chronicle is unnoteworthy, but juxtaposed with Chinese sources it has important implications for later events. The Burmese were relocating the Mong Yang rulers with their followers to Tagaung near Hsenwi without the knowledge of the Chinese. Tagaung is on the Irrawaddy river south of Bhamo which would have given Mong Yang troops a head start in their later invasion and occupation of Bhamo around 1500. It would have put them one step closer to the Burmese heartland and given them a taste of the China trade that traveled down the Irrawaddy river from the entrepot of Bhamo. The Chinese are also likely to have misinterpreted this Burmese relocation as an independent move by the Shans (cf. MSL 12 Oct 1499).

Chinese sources describe similar events, but from a different perspective. In 1479 the Ming Annals record that Ava asked China to give it the town and territory surrounding Kaung-zin [Gong-zhang] on the Irrawaddy river near Bhamo (MSL 17 Oct 1479). There is usually a lag between events in the Shan Realm and their being recorded in Chinese sources. The transportation delay alone for sending a message to the capital in Beijing was at least three months (Brooks, 1998, 30). In this case, a two year lag in processing the information would put the Burmese military expedition against Mong Yang around the same time as the Chinese refusal to give the port of Kaung-zin to the Burmese. Kaung-zin was an important port and a stopping point for Burmese tribute missions to the Chinese capital. China had promised to give Mong Yang to Ava after Ava helped in the capture of Mong Mao's ruler Si Ren-fa in 1449. After apparently initially intending to honor this agreement (Liew Foon Ming, 1996, footnote 116, p. 198), Chinese officials eventually decided not to honor the agreement, so Ava requested this port town instead. The request was refused by the Chinese. In the wake of this refusal, Ava may have led an expedition against Mong Yang to uphold its prior claim to Mong Yang.

To summarize, the Shan Realm in the period leading up to Min-gyi-nyo's reign was politically fragmented and plagued with endemic warfare as well as frequently shifting loyalties and alliances. This very fragmentation and disunity, however, also gave the region a fluid and malleable quality with a future potential for

concerted action under strong leadership.

A Shan Confederation rules Upper Burma? (1527-1555)

The fall of Ava in 1527 resulted in a sudden and short-lived expansion of Shan rule over Upper Burma from 1527 to 1555. This state expansion was to be over-shadowed by Bayinnaung's even greater expansion of the Burmese state into the Tai region to the east from 1551 to 1581. Shan rule over Upper Burma after the invasion of 1527 caused a radical shift in the regional geopolitical structure of western mainland Southeast Asia. The Shan realm suddenly extended along the Irrawaddy in the east all the way to the borders of Prome's territory in the south and in 1532, after Prome was taken, it reached the border of the Mon kingdom of Ramanya. In the eastern part of Upper Burma, Shan rule left Mingyi-nyo's ruling house in Toungoo and intact with its own sphere of influence. Even after Mingyi-nyo's son Tabinshwehti embarked upon warfare against Pegu from 1535 to 1539, the new Shan state chose not to attack what must have been a weakly defended northern Toungoo frontier.

Shan rule over Upper Burma consisted of a confederation of Shan states. Although Chinese sources provide confirmation that Ava fell to a Shan invasion around 1524-1527, the evidence for Shan political control over Upper Burma from 1527 to 1555 lies entirely in Burmese sources. The existence of the confederation is only revealed at certain critical junctures in the Burmese chronicle narrative. One critical juncture occurs when the king of Prome calls on five Shan rulers to relieve the siege that Tabinshwehti waged against Prome in 1542 (BE 903). The sawbwas of Ava (Tho-han-bwa), Hsipaw, and Mong Yang come to Prome's aid and two additional sawbwas, Bhamo and Mong Mit, arrive late after their defeat. Mustering together forces from these disparate states to the north of Ava to defend the southern borders must have presented quite a challenge. Although collectively the confederation may have been able to field a formidable army, this manpower must have been difficult to mobilize. Another critical juncture takes place in 1543 (BE 904) after the palace coup of Burmese residing at Ava's court (UKII:136). After the Ava sawbwa Tho-han-bwa was assassinated, the sawbwa of Hsipaw, the former Shan ally of Ava

at the time of its defeat in 1527 is chosen by the Burmese as his successor. Perhaps the choice of a Shan successor by a Burmese led coup was necessitated by the need to keep the confederation of Shan states that defended Ava intact. Shortly after the Hsipaw sawbwa becomes king of Ava he organizes a military expedition to retake Prome from Tabinshwehti. By this time the confederation has expanded to seven sawbwas including two new sawbwas from Yawnghwe and Mong Nai in the southern Shan states. These two new sawbwas most likely joined as long-time allies of Hsipaw, because during the Shan invasions of 1525-7 the chronicle already records the Hsipaw sawbwa as traveling to these Shan states to replenish his elephants, horses, and soldiers (UKII:126). Later in this section we will look at the demise of the Shan confederation under Bayinnaung and the evidence that these events provide of Shan cooperation.

There is some evidence of Shan migration to and settlement in Upper Burma during the period of the Shan rule. As mentioned above, Kyaukse tax records from the nineteenth century show Shan settlement at Myaung-hla in Kyaukse (Trager, 1979, 383-4) and one of the last kings of Ava under the Shan confederation, Mobyé Narapati (r. 1546-52), is said to have constructed Nga-kyi weir in Kyaukse, no doubt accompanied to some degree by Shan settlement (Harvey, p. 109). It is also worth speculating that both agricultural technology and the Buddhist religion may have started to flow into the Shan Realm with increased Shan contact with lowland Burmese practices after the Shan conquest of Upper Burma in 1527. Daniels (2003) finds significant changes in agricultural technology that likely began in the sixteenth century (Daniels, 2003, 18-21; Daniels, 2001, 77).

The origins of the Shan confederation hinge on the question of whether Mong Yang had any Shan allies when it invaded Ava from 1524 to 1527. The evidence is scattered and inconclusive. Mong Yang worked with Hsenwi and other smaller Shan states as well as the Chinese in the 1594 offensive against Bhamo, but the state of endemic warfare in the Shan Realm meant that alliances and vassal-overlord relations could change rapidly. Minkin, Kalei [Upper Chindwin] and Twin-tin along the invasion path used in 1524 are mentioned as being Mong Yang vassals in 1511 (UKII:120), but in 1520 they had once again become vassals of Ava. This is at least evidence for the possibility of quickly changing

loyalties and alliances. The Burmese chronicle only mentions Mong Yang as the invading force in 1524-7, but by 1527 “Mong Yang” had been used to refer to Shan invasions from the north for so long that it could well have frozen into a fixed chronicle cliché without much intrinsic meaning. Chinese sources are more ambiguous about who invaded Ava:

Some Chinese sources record that Mong Yang and Mong Mit...or even Mong Yang, Mong Mit, and Hsenwi altogether...sacked Ava and partitioned its territory, while Burmese chronicles show that Mong Yang almost single-handedly (except with some help from Prome) conquered Ava. The actual situation should be that Mong Yang and Hsenwi formed an alliance, but Mong Mit was not part of it, as Mong Mit was even attacked by Mong Yang after Mong Yang sacked Ava...Chinese and Burmese sources...coincide with respect to the help Mong Yang obtained from Prome (SLC 239).

The discontinuous transition from conflict and endemic warfare to an era of Shan political cooperation is rather perplexing. There is at least some precedent for this type of proto-state formation among the Mongol ethnic groups of China’s northern border. To make better sense of the scattered evidence of cooperation we will construct a model of state formation and expansion based on Di Cosmo’s model for China’s northern borders later in this paper. The evidence in the Burmese chronicle indicates that the functions of the confederation were limited to defense and the election of a ruler. As Scott and Hardiman (1900, 200) observed, Shan states were “semi-independent States which only united for common action under a...chief of particular energy, or in cases of national emergency.” How did this confederation achieve coordination among its various members? How did the different Shan states benefit from participating in this confederation?

What were the Shan motives for this sudden invasion of Ava? As we have seen the human agency motive of revenge that official Chinese historiography provides is one possibility, but were there more fundamental structural reasons based on economic or demographic factors? Prior to 1524 Mong Yang’s military actions against Ava had been restricted to attacking small garrison towns in the Mu irrigation district and the Irrawaddy. In 1524 the Mong

Yang Shans made a sudden entrance into the Chindwin Valley and started systematically moving down the Chindwin and then Irrawaddy river valleys right up to Thayet raiding settlements along the way. Why this sudden shift to targets deep within Upper Burma? Was it simply the pursuit of additional territory or were there additional motivating factors such as trade or Shan relations with their Chinese overlord to the north? What did the Shans stand to gain from controlling this territory? We will look at three possible explanations here: 1. Control of trade routes, 2. Resource extraction and raiding for plunder on a grand scale, and 3. Relieving population pressure on the limited territory of the Shan realm thereby reducing the endemic warfare of the region and creating a more secure border for the Chinese state.

First, control of trade routes would have been one logical economic motive for the Shans to invade Upper Burma. Such a motive is found in the expansionary warfare of the Mong Mao state prior to the Ming conquest. In the Baiyi Zhuan [Account of One Hundred Barbarians] Mong Mao is said to have “*repeatedly invaded and disturbed the various routes*. Marshal Dashibadu...went to punish him, but could not subdue him. Si Kefa *annexed even more routes*” (Daniels, 2003, 5, translating Jiang Yingliang, 1980, 52-55, my italics, see also Wade, 1996; Wade, forthcoming). Controlling trade routes is also a motive often assigned to Tabinshwehti's invasion of Ramanya to the south from 1535 to 1539. As (Bin Yang, 2004) has shown, trade along a “Southwest Silk Road” from Yunnan to South and Southeast Asia was substantial. The flow of cowries originating in the Bay of Bengal into Yunnan and their use there as an important medium of exchange until the seventeenth century attests to the importance of this trade with China. The trade routes for this trade have been reconstructed by Deyell (1994) by “examining how bullion was shipped from Yunnan and Upper Burma into Bengal during the period 1200-1500” (Bin Yang, 2004, 289).

The first two routes were mostly overland routes. The first route passed “from Yung Chang to Momien, crossed the Irrawaddy to Mogaung, went north through the Hukawng Valley, across passes in the Patkai Range, to the Upper Brahmaputra Valley.” The second route “followed the Shweli River, crossing the Irrawaddy at Tagaung, followed the Chindwin River north, and crossed via the Imole Pass to Manipur. Overland trade routes, besides being

slower than river transport, probably suffered from higher degrees of interference such as tolls, warfare, and banditry.

The third trade route passed through Upper Burma and relied mostly on more efficient river transportation. The third route “embarked on the Irrawaddy at Tagaung, Ava, or Pagan, and then passed from Prome over the Arakan Range (Arakan Yoma) to Arakan. A variation of this went directly from Pagan to Arakan via the Aeng Pass. This gave access to either a land route northward to Chatigaon, or embarkation on the coastal trading boats to Bengal” (Bin Yang, 2004, p. 289, citing Deyell, 1994, p. 128). Control over this third lowest cost trade route through the rivers of Upper Burma would be one logical motive for invasion. Controlling this important trade route would have allowed a monopoly on trade along the more efficient river route or at least the collection of tolls and duties.

Second, raiding on a much grander scale than had been attempted by the Shans before would be another logical motive for invasion. If earlier Shan military activity against the northern borders could be characterized as raiding for plunder and booty, seizing any form of transportable wealth, with little if any strategic objective of setting up some system of governance for taxation and more permanent resource extraction, the invasion of 1527 can be seen as raiding on a much larger scale with Burmese Buddhist religious institutions themselves as the target, institutions which absorbed much of Ava’s food surplus and wealth. This included large amounts of physical wealth such as silver, gold, and gemstones, building materials, and land, as well as manpower that was pledged to monasteries to support them. Whereas the traditional modes of Burmese religious reform to recapture this wealth stayed within culturally acceptable bounds, according to the chronicle the Shans used essentially military techniques to reclaim this wealth, reducing the population of monks through state-sponsored murder and raiding religious edifices such as pagodas that absorbed much surplus wealth in their underground treasure chambers and in their decoration (Aung-Thwin, 1985, 181). In the face of Shan plundering of Burmese religious wealth, religious donations virtually ceased at Ava and with it the passage of wealth into religious institutions (Aung-Thwin, 1998, 128).

Third, relieving the population pressure on the limited territory of the Shan realm would have been another logical motive.

The endemic warfare in the Shan realm in the fifteenth century recorded by Chinese sources was mostly over limited territory. One can imagine the massive territorial expansion of the Shan Realm and reduction in population density that Mong Yang's invasion brought about as solving the problem of limited territory and land, eliminating the *causus belli* for the warfare that plagued the Shan Realm. Migrations of Shans southwards into Lan Na around 1517 searching for new agricultural land is additional evidence that the Shan Realm was experiencing some demographic pressure that needed to be relieved around the time of the invasions of 1524-27 (Grabowsky, 2005, 42).

Local Shan chronicles could help elucidate the history of interstate competition and cooperation in the Shan Realm. The Shan Realm had two levels of interstate relations: 1. between large Shan states (e.g. Hsenwi, Hsipaw, Mong Mit, and Mong Yang) and the two much larger non-Shan states, China and Burma, and 2. between the larger Shan states and smaller Shan states (and perhaps even groups of non-Tai ethnicity such as Mon-Khmer or Tibeto-Burman-Lolo, see Daniels, 2001, 53-68). Shan chronicles provide a lot of information about the later local type of relation, including marriage alliances, shifting loyalties, and endemic interstate warfare, but this history is often difficult to integrate into the larger-scale historical narratives of China and Burma (see Daniels (2005 forthcoming) for a successful integration). References to events outside the locality that might help verify local events and fit them into a larger geopolitical landscape are often missing from Shan chronicles.

In the limited survey of Shan chronicles made for this paper there was only one reference to the 1524-27 Shan invasions of Ava, one of the most important events in Tai-Burmese relations of the pre-modern era. A version of the Hsipaw chronicle recorded by Sai Aung Tun (2001) mentions the invasion, but follows the Burmese chronicle so closely as to cast doubt on its independent origin. It is also a second-hand summary, the original manuscript not being made available to scholars for more detailed scrutiny.

Why are the invasions of Ava included in the historical narratives of larger states like Ming dynasty China and Ava while they are missing from the narratives of the smaller Shan states subject to these states? (Hsenwi: Witthayasakphan, 2001b; Scott, 1900; Mong Mao: Witthayasakphan et al, 2001a; Mangrai, 1969, ii-

xiv; Scott, 1900, 216-217; from Elias, 1876; Mogaung: Mangrai, 1969, xviii-xxiv). Censorship or pressures on court historians to self-censor might be one explanation. A chronicle celebration of a Shan victory over the Burmese state of Ava would have been offensive to later Burmese sovereigns after the restoration of Burmese rule to Upper Burma in 1555. Of course this argument only holds if Burmese sovereigns or members of the ruling elite had access to these local texts.

Power relations between states sometimes determine the inclusion or omission of events from historical narratives. This can include overt censorship or pressure on historians to self-censor texts to match state policy. Texts are sometimes edited or changed to make them seem as if “these polities and societies had long seen themselves as part of or attached to Chinese polities” (Burmese Research Forum, SOAS, University of London, 17 Aug 2005). The Shan chronicle of Mong Mao that has been used in this paper was, in fact, initially a translation from Shan to Chinese (Kazhangjia, 1990) and then a translation from Chinese into central Thai for a readership in Thailand (Witthayasakphan et al, 2001a), providing one example of how, if there was a power-legitimizing change to a historical narrative, it could be unwarily disseminated. The practice of including the original manuscript source of translations, as Mangrai (1981) did, would ensure that the historical narratives of smaller less powerful states do not disappear into the oblivion of larger state nationalist rhetorics. Successive redactions and translations of texts run the risk of introducing cumulative errors as Pullum (1989) clearly demonstrates.

The authors of Tai chronicles have likely always felt political pressures during the compilation and writing of their chronicles that changed when their overlord changed. For example, truthful but negative depictions of warfare and devastation under a Burmese overlord were much more common during and after the Chakri conquest of Lan Na than they were in the period immediately after the imposition of Burmese hegemony in 1558 (Wyatt and Wichienkeo, 1995). Does this mean that warfare circa 1558 had less bloodshed? Probably not (see Charney, 2004, 17-22). Negative references to a powerful overlord would have risked offending the overlord and might even have been considered an act of rebellion. Versions of the earlier Chiangmai chronicle narrative

were actually translated into Burmese and kept at the Burmese capital as the "Zinme Yazawin" for Burmese ruling elite to glean information from regarding court and administrative traditions at Chiangmai (Sithu Gamani Thingyan, 2003, i-ii, 53-67).

Long periods of unexplained silence also seem to increase as a chronicle becomes more local, silence (or erasure) being a particular easy form of self-censorship to implement. Compare the continuity of the Burmese chronicle with the long hiatuses of the Chiangmai chronicle under Burmese rule after 1558. Traditions of critical textual analysis in philology (see Warring States Project, 2005) and anthropology (see Scott, 1990) provide new perspectives on how to deal with these textual silences and censorships. In explaining the "silence of the evidence" Brooks (2005b) notes that "there are various reasons, other than literal nonexistence, why some item of culture is not, or seems not to be, mentioned in the texts of the time," a "cultural taboo" being one such reason. Brooks provides an example from the Chinese Warring States period that bears some similarity to the invasion of Ava omission:

Non-Chinese peoples are mentioned occasionally in texts of the 14th century, but after a certain point, such mentions cease. The point where such mentions stop is probably the point at which hostilities escalate between the Chinese and a new coalition of steppe peoples to the north. The existence of a society comparably organized but adversatively disposed was a fact which the Chinese worldview could not readily accommodate (Brooks, 2005b).

Many open questions about the origin, evolution, and strength of the Shan confederation remain. It may even be the case, as it was in the case of the "Three Shan Brothers," that the Shan coalition never actually did exist, at least as the Burmese chronicle portrays it (Aung-Thwin, 1996). There is the question of when Hsipaw the former ally of Ava joined the Shan confederation and whether there were any states that didn't join the confederation. Hsenwi's absence from the 1542 list of states in the Shan confederation is noteworthy. Even though frontiers were ill-defined in the pre-modern period, states can be roughly divided as being on one or both sides of the frontier. Along an axis stretching from Ava's capital into Yunnan, Hsipaw lied on the Burmese side and Hsenwi

lied on the Chinese side. Hsipaw was a close and reliable ally of Ava according to Burmese sources. Hsenwi was early recognized as an autonomous ethnic region [An Fusi = Pacification Office] by the Ming Dynasty in 1404 and was a frequent participant in inter-state conflicts along the Shan-Chinese frontier recorded by Chinese sources (SLC 2000, 79; Liew Foon Ming, 2003, 152). After Bayinnaung's conquest around 1557 Hsenwi would permanently move to the Burmese side of the frontier. As we've seen Mong Yang seems to have been poised ambiguously on both sides of the frontier alternatively entering into the Chinese and Burmese political spheres of control, but like Hsenwi permanently moving to the Burmese side after Bayinnaung's conquest around 1557.

What exactly the systematic presence or absence of references to a state means in the historical records of a given state means is not clear. It could indicate regular relations between states or the extent of military intelligence regarding events on the other side of the frontier. The absence of references to Hsipaw in Chinese sources and Hsenwi references in Burmese sources seems to indicate that relations as well as military intelligence were limited at least after the Ming conquest. The question also arises of why Mong Mit and not Hsenwi is mentioned by the Burmese chronicle as a member of the Shan coalition in the 1540's? Although Mong Mit started off as part of Hsenwi, it eventually challenged its overlord and was recognized by the Chinese as a separate autonomous ethnic region in 1584. If Tho-han-bwa who ruled Ava after 1527 was in fact from Mong Mit, Mong Mit may well have eclipsed Hsenwi in importance by then and "swallowed" it up as Chinese sources describe it.

All told, the question of a Shan alliance during the invasion of 1524-1527 and a confederation afterwards raises more questions than it answers. The Burmese chronicle has a heavy ideological overlay during this period due to the politically-sensitive nature of Shan rule which throws suspicion over many of its interpretations. Ming China's knowledge of political events does not seem to have penetrated very far beyond the Shan-Chinese frontier. In the absence of additional independent primary sources, only tentative speculations can be made. As Aung-Thwin (1998) has shown with the myth of the "Three Shan Brothers" there is always the danger that historical speculation based on thin evidence is mistaken for historical fact.

The End of the Shan Confederation (1554-1557)

Perhaps the greatest amount of information about the Shan confederation comes from the events surrounding its demise. In 1555 having re-established the kingdom of his predecessor Tabinshwehti, Bayinnaung marched north to re-conquer Upper Burma. When the king of Ava learned of this, he called the Shan states of Hsipaw, Bhamo, Mogaung, and Mong Yang to come to his aid. The governors of the northern garrison towns of Myedu, Ngarane, Si-bok-taya, Sitha, Tabayin, and Kani were ordered to move south and garrison the town of Amyin near the confluence of the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers. On Ava's southern approaches forces Yamethin, Wati, Yindaw, Hlaingdet, Nyaungyan, Tagara, Pindale, and Pyinsi together with Shan fighting boats were ordered to put up a defense from the port town of Tayot on the Irrawaddy, but quickly fled upon Bayinnaung's approach (UKII: 244). Advancing on Ava, Bayinnaung repulsed a Shan cavalry attack and marched on to Sagaing near the capital of Ava. The governor of Sagaing is said to have fled to Mong Yang, perhaps indicating that the governor was of Shan ethnicity (UKII:246).

The walled capital of Ava fell quickly to Bayinnaung's onslaught. Events in the Shan state of Hsipaw show the state of chaos following the fall of Ava and how deeply Shan rule had penetrated Upper Burma. Hsipaw was ruled by a sawbwa named Paw also known as Hkon-maing-kyi (King of Ava 1543-46). Paw's son ruled over the town of Singu in Upper Burma on the Irrawaddy south of Pagan. When Paw's son heard that Ava had fallen, he retreated to the walls of Singu, strengthening his defenses, but was quickly defeated by a special expedition sent by Bayinnaung (UKII:249). Paw's son fled back to Hsipaw. Paw gave his son the Shan state of Mong Nai to the south to rule over. Paw died in 1556 (BE 918) and his younger brother Sa-hsain-loun, who was resident in Hsipaw at the time, became ruler of Hsipaw. When Paw's son heard about this in Mong Nai, he gathered together an army, marched to Hsipaw, and attacked the city. Sa-hsain-loun sent gifts to Bayinnaung requesting his help, but sawbwa Paw's son managed to overcome Hsipaw's defenses. The town was taken and Sa-hsain-loun was killed (UKII:257)

Again indicating how difficult it must have been to muster

together troops from the remote north for the defense of the southern borders of Shan Ava, several of the Shan states were late in arriving to Ava's defense as they had been at Prome (1542). The Hsipaw sawbwa is said to have arrived after the fall of Ava (UKII:248). At the time Ava fell to Bayinnaung's forces, three of Shan states, Mogaung, Mohnyin, and Kalei, were marching towards Ava to provide aid. When they learned of the defeat at the town of Tawatein in the Shan states they halted and encamped there (UKII:250).

Bayinnaung followed up his victory at Ava with a short campaign into the southern Shan states to attack the Shans that were coming to Ava's aid. Mogaung, Mohnyin, and Kalei fled to Myedu after a short battle, but the governors of Pakan, Si-bok-taya, and Tabayin (brother-in-law of the Mong Yang ruler) all surrendered. The governor of Wuntho (nephew of the Mong Yang sawbwa) was appointed to resist from the village Ta-se along the route to Myedu. The Burmese forces first overcame the forces at Ta-se and pursued them all the way to Myedu where they routed the combined forces of Mogaung, Mohnyin, and Kalei (UKII:251).

As the rainy season was quickly approaching which make transportation in the northern reaches of the Shan Realm extremely difficult, Bayinnaung decided against following up his recent victory with an attack on the centers of the Shan states themselves to the north. Bayinnaung appointed new Burmese governors for the important northern garrison towns of Myedu and Si-bok-taya. In acts of munificence Bayinnaung awarded the governors who had just submitted to him appanages to rule over. Pakangyi was given to the governor of Tabayin, brother in law of the Mohnyin sawbwa, and Badon was given to the governor of Si-bok-taya, nephew of Mohnyin sawbwa. The governors of Kani and Amyin were reinstated. Here the chronicle once again stresses an early submission is rewarded with reinstatement of the ruler, pointing perhaps to a didactic function of the chronicle directed at sons of tributary rulers resident at the Burmese capital and future Burmese generals on campaign. To what extent this practice was a rhetorical creation rather than historical reality can only be determined by further independent sources. Finally, on the march back to Ava several small states and towns were subjugated including San-pe-nago (Bhamo), Kyan-nyut, Tagaung, Kyuntaung, Myat-taung, and Hti-kyaing (UKII:252).

In 1557, after having spent the rainy season in the southern capital of Pegu, Bayinnaung broached the subject of further expeditions into the Shan realm to his ministers. The minister Banyadala argued that the usurpation of the throne at Hsipaw by Paw's son was so serious and the Shan states so strong that just appointing the king's younger brother, sons, generals, and ministers to be leaders of the expedition would not be good enough, the king himself would have to lead the expedition. Only when the king accompanied the expedition would all his younger brothers, sons, generals, and ministers lay down their lives. After conquering Hsipaw, Mong Mit, Bhamo, Mogaung, Mong Yang, and Kale would quickly follow. The lesson being conveyed here by the Burmese chronicle is that the risk of bloodshed is necessary to military success. To what extent warfare actually involved bloodshed in battles is something that only independent sources or archaeological evidence can determine.

Marching to the north, Bayinnaung passed through Pagan and when he reached the port of Tayot-myo on the Irrawaddy two local governors offered to help him catch the ruler of Mong Yang, also at that time ruling over Wun-tho. These were the two governors that Bayinnaung had appointed during his last campaign in the north, the governor of Tabayin who was the brother-in-law of the Mong Yang sawbwa and the governor of Sibok-taya and Badon. While Bayinnaung resided for a time at Ava, the Hsipaw ruler, who he had appointed on last expedition to the north, and the ruler of Thon-hse came and submitted to the king (UKII:260).

In due time a military expedition left Ava headed for Mong Mit, Hsipaw, and Mong Yang marching along three paths. One division marching along the path of Kin-taya-ngan, another from Thon-hse to Mong Mit passing besides Mong Yang, and the third, with Bayinnaung himself leading it, marched along the west bank of the Irrawaddy until it reached Bhamo. At Bhamo they built a bridge for the elephants and horses to cross over the Irrawaddy river and from Bhamo they marched on to Mong Mit. Before arriving in Mong Mit the Shans launched an attack. After an initial Shan success, the Burmese defeated the Mong Mit forces and the Mong Mit ruler fled to Hsipaw pursued by Burmese forces (UKII:261). Another Burmese column attacking Hsipaw was initially overwhelmed by the Shans, but after what by chronicle

standards was a fairly lengthy battle Hsipaw was defeated and taken. While Bayinnaung resided in Mong Mit, the so-called Mong Mit united army composed of the governors of Mo-la, Mo-wan, and Saga-taung came to submit to the Burmese with gifts and an oath of loyalty (UKII:262).

The Mong Mit sawbwa fled by elephant and horse taking with him all his sons and wives to join forces with the Hsipaw sawbwa, but when he reached a place called Pan-nya he learned of Hsipaw's defeat and remained there. The Burmese eventually found him and, after a short resistance, the Mong Mit sawbwa surrendered. Mong Mit was given to the Hsipaw sawbwa's grandson, the governor of Maing-lon, to govern. He was given a seal to govern Mong Mit with because he came to submit himself. He was also given back his sons, wives, father-in-law, and mother-in-law from Hanthawaddy who had all been captured when Singu, ruled by Paw's son, was taken. They were ordered to pay tax every year in the form of rubies, gold, silver, sheep, musk deer, and horses. Hsipaw was given to the governor of Thonse to govern together with the seal of the king's right hand and all the equipage required by a sawbwa. Bayinnaung then called all the divisions of his expeditionary forces to meet together at Mong Mit (UKII:263).

After the victories at Hsipaw and Mong Mit, Bayinnaung instituted reforms in the Shan religion to bring it into conformity with Burmese practice. The narrative of the Burmese chronicle does not state whether these Shan states were practicing Buddhism or not and this remains an open question (Daniels, 2000, 74-80). In 1555 a similar sort of religious reform or purification had even been carried out at Pagan in the Burmese heartland to rid the area of spirit worship and animal sacrifice at Mount Popa (UKII:254). In Hsipaw and Mong Mit and almost the whole Shan states there were said to have been "wrong practices" [Meik-sa-deik-ti] like killing the elephant and horse ridden by the sawbwa and the slaves loved and highly valued by him and burying them together with the dead sawbwa. When Bayinnaung learned of these practices, he had them stopped. Since there were no learning centers for Buddhism, he built one pagoda in Hsipaw and another one in Mong Mit and made offerings of land, materials, and supplies to support them. In Mong Mit he built a temple that was surrounded by ten small buildings to teach Buddhism in. Here they asked monks and virtuous persons who

were well-versed in Pali Athakata (commentary on the original Pali text composed by the Rahandas) and Nika (supplementary to the inspired commentary of the Rohandas) to stay there. Starting from the sawbwa, all of the Shan generals, ministers, and leaders had to undergo instruction in Buddhism regarding the five duties binding on all creatures, the five great commands, and the eight duties that are to be performed by all people on days of worship. They underwent three to four months of training. They kept half of the Buddhist scriptures in Hsipaw and half in Mong Mit. The leaders of the soldiers had to warn the people in both the towns and villages to undergo instruction about religion for from three to four months. As regards to the usage of measures such as one "tin" (basket), "kwe" half a basket, "hseit" quarter of a basket and measures such as "tsaroot" a measure of capacity equal to two "Pyees", and weights such as "mu", "pe", "kyat", "ta-se", "viss", etc. all these had to made to conform to the standards of the capital (UKII:264). Bayinnaung sent the Hsipaw and Mong Mit rulers with all their families to the capital Pegu in the south.

After putting affairs in order at Hsipaw and Mong Mit, even though the rainy season was fast approaching, Bayinnaung and his ministers decided to march north to Mong Yang and Mogaung rather than south to Mong Nai and Yawngghwe (Nyaungshwe). Mong Yang and Mogaung were chosen first for they had "caused a lot of trouble and destruction upon the whole northern part of Burma." Mong Yang had once conquered and occupied the throne of Ava and had been engaged in warfare with the Chinese for twelve years (i.e. The Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns, 1436-1449) (UKII:265).

Early in 1556 (BE 918) Bayinnaung marched north from Mong Mit. When they arrived to the place called Ti-kyit they built a pontoon bridge for elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, soldiers, and their leaders to cross over the river. When they heard of the Burmese approach, the Mong Yang and Mogaung rulers gathered together their forces and hid in the forest to the north of Mong Yang building stockades there to resist the Burmese from. The Burmese quickly overcame these Mong Yang defenses and encamped near the town called Maing-naut. Shortly afterwards, the Mogaung sawbwa is said to have betrayed the Mong Yang sawbwa, handing him over to the Burmese and blaming their collective resistance on his stubbornness. Bayinnaung is said to

have forgiven both of them. The Mogaung sawbwa was given back his own town together with the right hand seal of the king. The king took away two sons, one daughter, one nephew, and one niece of the Mogaung sawbwa to be with him always. They were ordered to pay annual taxes like gold, silver, amber, sheep, musk deer, satin, Tibetan bulls, and horses. Mong Yang was given to the governor of Tabayin named Zaloun who had joined with Bayinnaung in the south and who had provided help in capturing Mong Yang and Mogaung. He was given the full regalia of a sawbwa and his son and daughter had to remain with the king. In-kind taxes consisting of gold, silver, sheep, musk deer, ducks, horses, and saddle clothes had to be given annually when magistrates sent by the king came to collect them. The sawbwa of Mong Yang, after taking an oath that he would remain faithful to the king, was given the town called Nun-sein-kan-meit to govern. By naming the son of the Mong Yang sawbwa "Mo-lon," he was given Tabayin to govern. One of his sons and one of his daughters was to remain with the king always (UKII:266).

As he had done in Hsipaw and Mong Mit, Bayinnaung instituted religious reforms in Mong Yang and Mogaung to bring Shan religious practice into conformity with Burmese practice. They also asked monks knowledgeable in Gandadurat (Wipanadurat or Wipatana, "a kind of wisdom which enables the possessor to make extraordinary discoveries" Judson's Dictionary) to reside there and teach Buddhism. By copying Buddhist scripts (Pali Athakata) they kept one copy in Mogaung and another in Mohnyin. As regards to measuring and weighing, they instituted the standards used in the Burmese capital. In 1557 (BE 919) Bayinnaung marched back to Ava and after staying there for seven days he marched southwards to the capital at Pegu (UKII:267).

Re: Ming Shi-lu 10 November 1528

The Ming Annals entry for November 10, 1528 is both an intriguing and confusing primary source document for the early sixteenth century that warrants further scrutiny. References to the Shan states and Ava hint at significant political developments, but a close analysis of the entry shows that the events referred to were spread over several years, sometimes decades before 1528. The

entry even begins with a statement to this effect: “the native yi...wrangled and fought feuds among themselves. This went on for years...”

References to kings of Ava show that the Chinese court was looking at Burmese history on a quite a different time-scale than that of the actual events: “...the grandfather of the Ava-Burma royal family member Mang Qi-Sui was extremely loyal, but he became involved in disputes and thereby met his death,” and later, “Mang Qi-sui is to be shown great compassion and assistance. He and Si Zhen are both permitted to inherit their respective posts” (MSL Nov 10, 1528). “Mang Qi-sui” is a transliteration into Chinese of “Min-gyi-shwe” (literally: “great-king-gold”) referring to the king of Ava Shwe-nan-kyaw-shin Narapati or Narapati II (1502-1527), taking the first syllable from his title. Although this Ming Annals entry is dated 1528 and Narapati became king of Ava in 1502 and actually died in 1527, the recognition of a ruler by Ming China did not have to be “anywhere near when he assumed the ruling post, particularly when links were so infrequent” (Wade, personal communication, 22 Sep 2005). As for the reference to Narapati II’s grandfather, “grandfather” in the original Chinese can actually refer also to great-grandfather or even great-great-grandfather (Wade, personal communication, 22 Sep 2005). Ava’s succession had since Narapati I (r. 1442-68) been lineal father to son, but Narapati I had inherited the throne from his brother (Harvey, p. 366). Tin Hla Thaw (1959, 151) reconstructs this genealogy from inscriptional evidence. Given these facts, the reference to Narapati II’s grandfather could refer to either Narapati I or Thihathura (r. 1468-82). Of these two kings Narapati was the king who had extensive relations with the Chinese during the Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns (1436-1449). Evidence for close relations between Narapati I and Ming China 75 years before this entry in the 1440’s exists in Chinese sources (Liew Foon Ming, 1998, 198; Ward, 2004, 16), the Burmese chronicle (UKII:82), and Burmese inscriptions (Tin Hla Thaw, 1959), so Ming court references to the “grandfather” as being “extremely loyal” are probably references to Narapati I, the great-grandfather of Narapati II. The comment that “he became involved in disputes and thereby met his death” most probably refers to the circumstances surrounding his death which had nothing to do with Shan or Chinese political relations at all. Narapati died as the result of a

complicated domestic quarrel at the court of Ava which is related in great detail by the Burmese chronicle (UKII: 90-93). So to summarize, MSL Nov 10 1528 takes a different more large-scale view of Burmese history mixing recent events with events that occurred 75 years ago in a sort of timeless past.

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