

# INTERCOURSE BETWEEN BURMA AND SIAM.

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As recorded in Hmannan Yazawindawgyi.

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The following is a continuation of the translation by Luang Phraison Salarak ( Thien Subindu ) of the history of the intercourse between Siam and Burma, as given in the Hmannan Yazawindawgyi of the Burmese. The previous instalment was given in Volume XI, Part 3.



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## CORRIGENDA.

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Page 16, footnote 20—for နိဗ္ဗာန်ဝိသုဒ္ဓိ read နိဗ္ဗာန်ဝိသုဒ္ဓိ

Page 21, footnote 1—for Kainghun, read Kyainghun.





## I.

### INTRODUCTION.

About two or three years after the capture of Ayudhya, the Burmese forces were kept very busy in repelling the invasion of the Chinese. The trouble with the Chinese arose about two years before the fall of the Siamese capital, out of some misunderstanding between Chinese merchants and Burmese officials in the towns on the trade route between China and Burma. According to Hmannan history the Chinese invaded Burma four times, suffering a defeat every time. Having to utilize all the available forces against the Chinese, King Sinbyushin could not possibly attend to affairs in Siam, although he must have been aware of the efforts that were being made in the newly conquered territory, to set up a new dynasty and throw off his nominal sway. Perhaps it was his intention to treat Siam as a conquered province with a viceroy or a governor in charge; at least, his order to raze the city to the ground and to bring away the King and the royal family to Ava, gave colour to the supposition that such was his intention. But owing to the pressure of the Chinese, he was unable to carry it out; because to have governed a country like Siam as a conquered province, would have required the assistance of a large military force to maintain the authority of the civil administration. Just about the time of the fall of Ayudhya, the King of Burma could neither spare any of his forces, nor think out a scheme for the civil administration of the conquered territory, which would suit the local conditions and the traditions of the country, and be acceptable to an alien people. But there can be no doubt that Burma could not possibly have held Siam as a territorial accession, for the reason that the Siamese loved their independence too dearly to submit to a foreign yoke light-heartedly, and the Burmese were too inefficient to govern a foreign country equitably and well. Although the Burmese system of administration was irreproachable in principle, it invariably became, in practice, a handle for oppression, in the hands of not over scrupulous provincial governors, who were responsible only to the central authority in the capital, which consisted of the King and his council. The control of this central authority varied in the inverse ratio to the distance of the province from the capital; and as Ayudhya was the farthest province, this control would be the least, and the viceroy or governor would be able



to do what he liked, undeterred by any fear, except perhaps by that of being recalled too soon. The events narrated in this and the subsequent papers clearly show the impossibility of holding Siam in subjection to Burma. Moreover, the siege and the eventual capture of Ayudhya may be regarded as marking the period at which Burma reached its zenith of military power and political influence; it maintained this height for about a third of a century, after which it gradually declined, and as the result of a short-sighted, arrogant, and uncompromising foreign policy, province after province was wrested away, till the remnant of the Burmese kingdom was finally absorbed in the British Indian Empire towards the close of A. D. 1885. As regards Siam, the fall of Ayudhya was a notable event indicating the period of the lowest depth of political decadence and military inefficiency into which it had gradually drifted, since the close of the glorious days of the famous King Pra Naresuan. Siam, on the other hand, did not remain low for long, but steadily rose in power, especially after the accession to the throne of the first King of the present dynasty, and by dint of prowess in arms in the earlier periods, and by the adoption of a broad-minded and far-sighted policy in diplomacy in later periods, it has been able to maintain its independence up to the present day.

### THE TRANSLATION.

The Chinese invasion of Burma must have had some disturbing effect on the provinces of the "Twelve Panas," the country of the "Lu" people and the conquered territory of Zinmè. The disturbance in these provinces, especially in the former which was on the Chinese border, must also have been serious, because King Sinbyushin thought it necessary to despatch a force of twenty regiments consisting of 200 elephants, 2,000 horse, and 20,000 men under the command of Wungyi Maha Thihathura, in Thadingyut 1128 (October, A.D. 1766.) This was only a few months after the return of the Burmese forces from the Chinese frontier, where they had successfully repelled the first Chinese invasion. Nothing is mentioned about the exploits of this force in the provinces to which they were ordered to go; the next mention of it is of its having marched through the "Lu" country of the "Twelve Panas" and of its co-operating with some other Burmese forces in a fight against 50,000 Chinese, at a place called Taunggyi to the north-east of Theinni. This Chinese force was the



remnant of an army of 250,000 men and 25,000 horse, which invaded Burma the second time; it was defeated and compelled to make a hasty retreat back to Chinese territory. As this second Chinese invasion took place in Pyatho 1128 (January, A.D. 1767), that is, only three months after the expedition against the "Twelve Panas" and Zimmè had left the capital, it was very likely that that expedition was countermanded, and the expeditionary force ordered to veer round and proceed direct to where the other Burmese forces were fighting against the Chinese. It might have reached the "Lu" country, but it could not possibly have done anything there. The fact that the Hmannan history is entirely silent of what it did there, is significant and supports the supposition made above. This expeditionary force, together with the other Burmese forces with which it co-operated, returned and reached the capital on Monday the 9th of waning Kasôn 1129 (May, A. D. 1767).

In Nadaw 1129 (December, A.D. 1767), the Chinese again invaded Burma the third time, with an army said to contain 600,000 men and 60,000 horse, under two generals, entering Burma by way of Theinni,<sup>1</sup> which they captured and occupied. Half the army with one of the generals in command marched towards the Burmese capital via Thibaw, driving the Burmese forces before them, for the Burmese were unable to make a stand against the overwhelming numbers of the Chinese, who penetrated to within two or three marches of the capital. The Burmese, unable to fight the main army, adopted the tactics of attacking the lines of communication and the columns conveying transport of food, provisions, and munitions, of seizing the supplies on the way, and stopping further supplies from reaching the main army in front; and so successfully did they do this, that the different Chinese divisions soon found themselves cut off from their bases and from one another and without food and provisions. Simply by these tactics the Burmese compelled the Chinese army to retreat, and in the end were successful in driving their enemies back again to their territory. The disadvantage of having a huge attacking army with weak forces on the lines of communication was made apparent in this third invasion of Burma by the Chinese.

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<sup>1</sup> ดูพระราชนิพนธ์พงศาวดารเดิม ๓ หน้า ๕๖ แต่คำให้การชาวอังวะ ฉบับพิมพ์ พ. ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๑๑.

Just over a year after the close of the third Chinese invasion, the King of Linzin whose capital was at Sandapuri presented his daughter to King Sinbyushin, in acknowledgement of the suzerainty of Burma.<sup>2</sup> Along with the princess, were sent 500 elephants and various other presents. She was accompanied by her brother, uncles, and nobles. To welcome her and her entourage, His Burman Majesty sent up the Dôttawadi river, to a place called Nyaung-ni-bin-seik, several royal barges, one of which, gilded at the prow and stern, was for the use of the princess, and of the rest, some were for carrying the presents and some others for the use of the Linzin nobles. These barges were towed by a large number of smaller boats propelled by men with paddles. The party of welcome consisted of high Burmese officials and ladies of the court who were adepts in the art of the toilet, dress, and decoration. The whole party landed from the barges on the bank of the Myitgnè, not very far from the city, where spacious temporary buildings had been erected for their reception, and a halt of three days was made there. While staying at this halting place, the Burmese nobles and their wives were presented to the princess. Thence she was conveyed to the palace in a gilt palanquin, with great ceremony, entering the city wall by the Môttama gate on its eastern face, and passing through the principal streets of the city. On the 9th of waning Wagaung 1131 (August, A.D. 1769), the Linzin princess was formally presented to His Burman Majesty, together with the 500 elephants and other presents sent by her father. She was given the title of Papawadi, honoured with the rank of a queen, and accommodated in a separate residence for herself. She enjoyed much of the royal favour and was very frequently in attendance on His Majesty.

In the same year the Chinese invaded Burma, the fourth time, with an army alleged to contain 50,000 horse and 500,000 men. To repel this invasion His Majesty of Burma sent a force of 100 elephants, 1,200 horse and 12,000 men by land under the command of Amyauk Wun Nemyo Thihathura, marching along the west bank of the Eyawadi river (Irrawady); and a force of 50,000 men by water

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<sup>2</sup> ดู พระราชพงษาวดาร เต็ม ๓ หน้า ๓๔ แด คำ ให้ การ ชาว อังวะ ฉบับพิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๓๒ ตอนปลาย.



under the command of Wungyi Maha Thihathura, who was also the commander-in-chief of the whole expedition. Two regiments under the Sawbwa of Momeik and Kyawdin Yaza were sent along the east bank of Eyawadi; their strength is not mentioned, but it could not have been more than 200 horse and 2,000 men. The several incidents of the fighting both by land and by water, as well as the siege fighting, are given in great detail in the Hmannan history, and the Burmese are credited with having defeated the Chinese in every encounter against overwhelming odds. The Chinese were at last compelled to sue for peace, and Wungyi Maha Thihathura, apparently against the wishes of his principal officers, and evidently without any authority from his Sovereign, granted the request of the Chinese generals and concluded peace, taking the whole responsibility on himself. At a conference held on Wednesday the 15th of waxing Nadaw 1131 (December, A. D. 1769), between the Burmese and Chinese generals and officers, the treaty of peace was signed,<sup>3</sup> and five days later, the whole of the Chinese forces left Burma, being escorted to the frontier by some of the Burmese forces, who followed about a cannon shot behind the rear of the Chinese.

Information of the conclusion of peace together with presents of hats, fans, knives, and various kinds of cloths given by the Chinese, was sent to the capital by Wungyi Maha Thihathura, in the charge of Yannguthiri Nawrata. On receipt of the information His Majesty was very angry with his generals and officers, saying that they had, after accepting presents offered by the enemy, practically let the whole Chinese army consisting of 50,000 horse and 500,000 men escape into Chinese territory, when it was well within their power to capture them all and bring them to the capital as prisoners of war. He commanded that the presents brought in should not be taken into the royal treasury, and that the wives of all the generals and officers concerned should be made to carry them on the head and exposed to the view of the public at the western gate of the city. This royal command was carried out to the very letter, no exception being made even of the wife of Wungyi Maha Thihathura, who was the chief

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<sup>3</sup> ดู พระราชพงษาวดาร เต็ม ๓ หน้า ๕๖ และ ๕๗ และคำให้การชาวอังวะ ฉบับพิมพ์ พ. ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๑๒.



queen's own elder sister. For three days the innocent wives were thus ignominiously punished for the fault of their husbands.

In spite of what is recorded in the Hmannan history, where incredible feats of daring, prowess, and tactical ingenuity were ascribed to certain men, leaders, and attacking forces, it is very doubtful whether the Burmese army could compel the surrender of the whole of the Chinese forces and bring them as captives of war to the capital, as was so easily imagined by His Burman Majesty; especially as, according to the figures given in the history, the Chinese outnumbered the Burmese to the extent of at least six to one. Judging impartially the circumstances which led up to the conclusion of peace, namely, the numerical superiority of the Chinese and the probabilities of the results of the various encounters between the opposing forces, apart from what was recorded in the Burmese history, even though to the advantage of the Burmese, it would appear that Wungyi Maha Thihathura showed great foresight and no ordinary diplomatic skill in getting peace concluded on terms most honourable and distinctly advantageous to the Burmese.

Yannguthiri Nawrata returned to camp with the sad news of His Majesty's anger and the punishment awarded to the wives of the generals and officers. As long as this anger existed in His Majesty, it probably meant no less than death to Wungyi Maha Thihathura and his officers. Knowing this too well, they dared not return to the capital for fear of meeting the worst, and they therefore decided to march to Manipura, the Sawbwa of which had been giving some trouble, and, after subduing that recalcitrant Chief, to make their way homewards. They hoped to appease their Sovereign's anger by success in that direction. Accordingly, on the 5th of waxing Pyatho 1131 (January, A. D. 1770), they started on this new expedition, and overcoming all resistance on the way, reached the capital of Manipura; but as usual with the Chief of this troublesome little State, he escaped to the hills and forests. The Burmese did not trouble to pursue him, knowing full well that it would be futile to do so. They returned homewards bringing away with them a large quantity of booty and a great many prisoners, including some of the Chief's family, and arrived at the Burmese capital on the 12th of waning Tabaung ( March ) of the same year. They were mistaken in their belief that they would easily obtain pardon from their Sovereign. His Majesty was not at all

disposed to pardon them and he ordered that all the generals and officers should be deported out of his kingdom. Nominal effect had to be given to His Majesty's command by making Wungyi Maha Thihathura and his officers stay in a field on the east bank of the Myitngè river, thus separating them from the land on which the capital stood. Maha Yazathingyan and Thiri Ôktama Zeyathingyan, two of the ministers, tried to intercede on behalf of the unfortunate officers, by saying that Wungyi Maha Thihathura and his officers had been consistently brave, courageous, and self-sacrificing in every encounter with His Majesty's enemies; nothing could be said in disparagement of their courage and self-sacrifice in the expedition against the Chinese, but having to attend to many engagements at different places, they had, for once, shown a lamentable want of judgment, for which they deserved a lenient treatment. His Majesty was not only obdurate, but ordered that the two well-meaning nobles should be deported also and made to join their comrades for whom they had been bold enough to intercede. It was not until a month after, that all were pardoned and allowed to return to their homes.

In Tabodwè 1133 (February, A.D. 1772), there arrived in Ava the daughter of the Chief of Sanpa Pathet together with two hundred elephants and various other presents, in the charge of the Chief's relatives and nobles, having been sent by the Chief as a token of his submission to King Sinbyushin. A temporary rest house was built near the Myitngè river where the guests were made to halt. Then on the 5th of waxing Tabodwè, the princess, together with the two hundred elephants and other presents, was conveyed to the capital with the same ceremonial pomp as in the case of the welcome of the Linzin princess from Sandapuri, and presented to His Burman Majesty.

About a month after the arrival of the princess from Sanpa Pathet, the King of Sandapuri sent a report<sup>4</sup> to King Sinbyushin, that not long after the capture and destruction of Yodaya, Paya Tet-thin, Governor of Mè Tet, collected an armed force, and having built a city and palace at Ban-gauk, about two days' journey from the

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<sup>4</sup> ดู พระราชพงษาวดารเดิม ๓ หน้า ๕๖ แต่คำให้การชาวอังวะฉบับ  
พิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๑๓.



city of Yodaya and not far from the sea, established himself as King ; and also that the other towns in northern Siam not only showed signs of disquiet, but were openly aggressive towards Sandapuri. King Sinbyushin took immediate action and dispatched a force of twenty-two regiments under the command of Myinzugyi Wun or Myin Wun Nemyo Thihapate consisting of 500 horse and 7,000 men, of whom half were Kathès and half Burmese, with orders to requisition the co-operation of all the governors and Sawbwas on the east bank of the Thanlwin river, of the whole armed force of the fifty-seven provinces which comprise the Kingdom of Zinmè, and of the auxiliaries from Sandapuri. The combined army was then to march on to Yodaya. This small force of Burmese and Kathès left the capital on Sunday the 15th of waxing Tabaung 1134 (March, A.D. 1773).

The Governor of Môttama, Min-yè Min-hla-uzana, having died, the Governor of Pagan,<sup>5</sup> Mingyi Kamani Sanda, was transferred to the charge of Môttama, Myeik, and Dawè, and ordered to march to Yodaya via Tayaik, there to co-operate with Nemyo Thihapate in the operations against the newly established King.

Nemyo Thihapate and his small army made the necessary arrangements with the governors and Sawbwas on the east bank of the Thanlwin river and in Zinmè territory, and marched on to Sandapuri to dispel, by a display of armed force, any signs of disaffection and disloyalty. In this they were evidently successful, as peace and quiet seemed to prevail everywhere on the approach of the Burmese.

Although the presence of a small Burmese army seemed to have suppressed feelings of disaffection and disloyalty, the administration was not at all running smoothly. A difference arose between Thado Miudin, the Burmese Governor or Commissioner of Zinmè, and the principal local officials, of whom Paya Sapan <sup>6</sup> was the chief, regarding their respective powers and privileges. Paya Sapan, Paya

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<sup>5</sup> ในพระราชพงษาวดารเดิม ๓ หน้า ๖๗ บรรทัด ๑๑ ได้ว่าปกันหฺนุเจ้าเมืองเมะระตะมา คำว่า "ปกันหฺนุ" แปลว่าเจ้าเมืองญาคาม.

<sup>6</sup> พระยาจำบ้าน ดูพระราชพงษาวดารเดิม ๓ หน้า ๖๘.



Thanlan, and Paya Thinlôn of Zinmè together with Kawila,<sup>7</sup> the native Governor of Lagun, went over to the Burmese capital to represent the matter to His Burman Majesty. They obtained His Majesty's orders that they were to enjoy all the powers and privileges they had formerly enjoyed according to local custom, and that Thado Mindin should exercise his authority only in the same way as other Burmese provincial governors used to exercise authority in accordance with ancient custom. Apparently this vague order without any attempt at defining precisely what were the powers and privileges of each contending party, did not remove the existing differences and friction, nor did it prevent fresh ones from arising. On their return to Zinmè, Paya Sapan sent his young brother Nè-maung to present His Burman Majesty's written order at the court of the Burmese Governor. Thado Mindin held that, being a royal command from His Majesty, it should not have been presented by a deputy, and sent messengers to call upon Paya Sapan to present it in person. This request the Zinmè nobleman refused to comply with. Thado Mindin was apparently determined to enforce compliance, and accordingly sent an armed band to compel Paya Sapan to attend his court in person. The Lao nobleman was equally determined in his refusal, and in the altercation and fighting that ensued Nè-maung was killed; the Burmese Governor's men also suffered in killed and wounded and were obliged to withdraw. Paya Sapan sent his family to some concealed place of safety, himself went to Sandapuri, and having explained fully to Nemyo Thihapate what had happened, remained with the Burmese Army.

Not long after the arrival of Paya Sapan in his camp, Nemyo Thihapate returned to Zinmè and made preparations for the march to Yodaya. He ordered Paya Sapan and Kawila to accompany him with their following and to march in the van. Thereupon, Thado Mindin requested the Burmese general to deliver up Paya Sapan and Kawila, alleging that they were disaffected and would not serve the Burmese loyally and that they would in time be a source of danger to the peace and security of the Burmese sway over those parts of the territory in which they had great influence. Knowing the quarrel between the Burmese Governor and the local nobles, Nemyo Thihapate refused

<sup>7</sup> พระยาภาวดี. ดู พระราชพงษาวดาร เดิม ๓ หน้า ๗๐

to give them up, giving the excuse that it was necessary to retain their services in the army as they were the only persons able to control the contingents supplied by them. He ordered them to join the vanguard of the Burmese army and march on ahead. News of the breach between the Burmese Governor and the local officials had already reached the Burmese capital, and about this time orders from His Burman Majesty arrived calling Paya Sapan and Kawila to the capital. Thado Mindin accordingly sent messengers to the Burmese general demanding the delivery of Paya Sapan and Kawila, this time backed up by no less an authority than a command from their Sovereign. Again the general refused to deliver them up, giving the following reasons:—that according to the generally accepted rules and beliefs in the movements of troops at the commencement of an expedition, when once the vanguard had pitched its camp, it is unpropitious to withdraw it, even if the camping ground were subsequently found to be unsuitable; any movement made must be a move forward and not backward; that Paya Sapan and Kawila having already marched in the van on a most propitious day, they should not be re-called; that they had not committed any criminal offence and their presence at the Burmese capital was ordered by His Burman Majesty solely on account of the ill feeling existing between them and the Burmese Governor, and because of His Majesty's anxiety to prevent them coming into open conflict; that the governors of the fifty-seven provinces of Zimmè territory looked upon Paya Sapan as their leader, and were guided by his action whether to be loyal or disloyal; that it was to the interests of the Burmese and for the success of the expedition to win them over by kind treatment and secure their good will and co-operation. The Governor of Zimmè held a different opinion, that Kawila and Paya Sapan would never be truly loyal and serve the Burmese honestly and whole-heartedly, and that they were certain to raise their hands against the Burmese. He sent an armed force to call the two nobles in the van of the Burmese army. The result was a fight between the adherents of the nobles and the Governor's men, in which the latter were worsted and forced to return, losing many killed. Thado Mindin thereupon seized the wives and children of the two nobles and sent them under a guard to the Burmese capital, with the messengers who brought His Burman Majesty's order. Paya Sapan and Kawila received information of the action taken by the Governor; they then promptly marched back day and night, rescued



their wives and children, and went off to Yodaya.<sup>8</sup> There they told Paya Tet-thin, the King, that the Burmese Governor and the Burmese general were not on good terms, that the governors of the fifty-seven provinces were in a ferment, and that the time was most opportune to go and capture Zimmè, and requested him to avail himself of the opportunity. Paya Tet-thin saw his chance, and marching quickly with a force of about 40,000 or 50,000 men, defeated Nemyo Thihapate who was driven back through Maing-hin<sup>9</sup> to Monè.<sup>10</sup> Paya Tet-thin then turned his attention to Zimmè town which soon fell to him, the Burmese Governor being compelled to retire to Kyaingthin.<sup>11</sup> The King of Yodaya then placed Kawila in charge of Lagun, Kawila's nephew Kun Kyaw in charge of Pa-thiin, and Paya Sapan in charge of Maing-lin.<sup>12</sup> He then returned to Yodaya, leaving a force of 3,000 men under the command of Paya Takan to garrison Zimmè, with orders not to leave the town until there was no sign of the Burmese army coming by that way. Thus the short-sighted policy of the Burmese Governor, his want of tact and adaptability, and his uncompromising conduct brought ruin to the Burmese designs for the overthrow of the power of Yodaya, which had again risen after its recent downfall.

The newly appointed Governor of Môtama, Mingyi Kamani Sanda, arrived at his headquarters in due course. He sent a message to Mingyi Zeyathu, who was Governor of Dawè, that he brought orders from His Majesty to mobilize the forces in Môtama, Byeik,<sup>13</sup> and Dawè and to co-operate with Nemyo Thihapate, who had already left the capital to come down to Yodaya with the forces collected from the towns on the east bank of the Thanlwin and those levied in Zimmè territory. He requested Mingyi Zeyathu to march by way of Peik-thalauk with all the forces available in Byeik and Dawè, while he himself would march via Tayaik with the forces raised in Môtama. Having called up all the able-bodied men capable of bearing arms, and

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<sup>8</sup> ดู พระราชพงษาวดารเดิม ๓ หน้า ๖๘ และ ๗๐ และ คำให้การชาวอังวะ ฉบับพิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๓๓ และ ๓๔

<sup>9</sup> เมืองหาง      <sup>10</sup> เมืองหน่วย      <sup>11</sup> เชียงแสน      <sup>12</sup> เมืองดอง ?

<sup>13</sup> The same as Myeik เมืองมะริด



commandeering the best elephants and horses, he sent Binnya Sein<sup>14</sup> in advance with a force of 2,000 men, probably composed of all Talaings (Mons) on the route to Tayaik. When this advance force reached a place called Zami, three days' march from Môtama, the military officers of Mingyi Kamani Sanda seized the families of the men who formed this force and tried to extort money by threats of violence. The families sent information of their plight to their parents, husbands, and kinsmen in the army. On receipt of the information Binnya Sein and the Talaing soldiers were very angry and bitterly complained that they undertook to serve in the van of the expedition with the hope of procuring peace and security for their wives, children, and kinsmen. Saying that they had no enemies in front and that their enemies were really in the rear, Binnya Sein and his Talaing officers and men, with one accord, marched back day and night and fell upon the Burmese Governor and his officers, who had to run for their lives and seek refuge in the town of Yangôn. Binnya Sein and his infuriated Talaings, reinforced by another thousand men, followed their Burman oppressors to Yangôn and attacked the town. The defence of the town was on the point of giving way, when some of the Burmese officers in the towns in the delta of the Eyawadi river, conspicuous among whom were Myan-aung Bo, Pyanchi-Yêgaung-Kyaw, and Talizi Bo, organized a force from the reverine towns and came to the rescue. The Talaings quickly withdrew, and, headed by Binnya Sein and Yazadewa, such of them as were able and ready to emigrate went away to Yodaya. This exodus of Talaings from Môtama is one of the principal immigrations of Talaings into Siam and is mentioned in the Siamese history<sup>15</sup>.

When King Sinbyushin knew of what had happened to his forces in Zimmè and Môtama, he got a force of 61<sup>16</sup> regiments, consisting of 2,500 horse and 35,000 men and, putting Wungyi Maha

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<sup>14</sup> พระยาเจ่ง ดุพระราชมงษาดาร เด่ม ๓ หน้า ๖๗ แด ๖๘ แด คำให้  
การ ชาวองวณบับพมพ พ. ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๓๔

<sup>15</sup> ดุพระราชมงษาดารเด่ม ๓ หน้า ๖๘

<sup>16</sup> In the original, 63 regiments were enumerated, although the total is given as 61 only.

Thihathura in command of it, despatched it to Yodaya by way of Mottama and Tayaik, on the 5th of waxing Tazaungmôn 1136 ( November, A.D. 1774 ).

The famous pagoda in the town of Yangôn had fallen into disrepair ; it had been highly venerated by generations after generations of Burmese, who fervently believed that eight hairs of Gotama Buddha were enshrined in it. King Sinbyushin had the repairs made, and having beaten into leaves forty-seven viss and thirty-five ticals weight of gold, a weight equal to that of his body, he had the pagoda gilded from top to bottom. He also made a new seven-tiered "ti" or umbrella, and a new spire with a vane attached, to be placed on the pagoda. The vane was said to be made of gold weighing two hundred and seventy viss of gold, and studded with fifteen thousand and thirty-eight precious gems of various kinds. To place this almost invaluable spire and "ti" on the shrine, he went down the river, accompanied by his queens and concubines, sisters and children, in superbly gilt barges towed by gilt paddling canoes. His Majesty and the whole entourage were guarded by armed men in boats decorated with figures of various kinds of animals, disposed of in the front and rear, on the right and left. The "ti" was put by itself on a barge which was decorated with the figure of a Garuda bird ; this barge towed by six canoes, led the whole procession which must have presented a scene most magnificent and gorgeous. In addition to this spectacular effect of gold and colour, the whole river resounded with various kinds of music played during such state processions. A land force consisting of twelve regiments under the command of Min-yè Zeyakyaw also accompanied the King, but the strength of the force is not stated in the history. From the usual formation of Burmese regiments this force probably contained 1,200 horse and 12,000 men. His Majesty left the capital on Sunday the 8th of waxing Pyatho 1136 (January, A.D. 1775) and, after calling at Pagan and Pyi (Prome) to worship the famous pagodas in those places, arrived at Yangôn on the 1st of waxing Tabaung (March) following. On the 15th of waxing Tabaung, the religious ceremony was performed of dedicating the "ti," which was afterwards put on the pagoda by mechanical contrivances. He left Yangôn on the 5th of waxing Kasôn 1137 ( May, A. D. 1775 ) and returned by water, arriving at the capital on the 5th of waxing Wagaung (August).

Before his return from Yangôn, King Sinbyushin executed the



deposed King of Pegu (Hanthawadi), together with the unfortunate King's younger brother, Upayaza, and son Nga Ta. The only reason for the execution given in the history was that the deposed King had uttered words improper or unbecoming, which probably means that he had offended His Burman Majesty by an unguarded speech.<sup>17</sup>

The land force of twelve regiments under Minyè Zeyakyaw which accompanied the King to Yangôn was ordered to join the army

17 The most likely reason for this execution is given in the "Statement or deposition of a native of Ava" at page 15 of the edition printed in Buddha Era 2458 (คำให้การชาวอองวะฉบับพิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๑๕) as follows:—

“ครั้นนั้นมอญกับเสนาบดีลงมาขณัฏฐครอญ ณ เมืองย่างกุ้ง มอญระ  
จิงให้ถามตะเถงว่า ตัวคิดการประทุษร้ายทางนี้ ใครรู้เห็นเป็นใจด้วย  
ตัวบ้าง ตะเถงว่าพระยาหงสาวดี พระยาอุปราชาผู้น้อง มีหนังสือให้  
คนถือมาถึงข้าพเจ้ากับพระยาเจ่งให้ชักชวนกัน แต่บรรดาสมิงรามัญ ทัง  
ปวง จับเอาบรรดาพม่านายไพร่ซึ่งอยู่ในเมืองเมาะตะมะฆ่าเสีย แล้วให้  
ยกกองทัพต่อเอาเมืองย่างกุ้งขึ้นไปจนถึงเมืองอองวะ กรมสอบพระยา  
หงสาวดี พระยาอุปราชา รับเป็นสัตย์ มอญระจิงสั่งให้เอาพระยาหงสาวดี  
พระยาอุปราชา พระยาตะเถง ไปประหารชีวิตเสีย”

Translation of the above: “At that time Mong Ra accompanied by his ministers came down to put up an umbrella and was at the town of Rangoon. Mong Ra had Tala Kaeng questioned as to who were his accomplices in raising this revolt. Tala Kaeng said, ‘Phya Hongsawadi (the King of Hanthawadi) and his brother Phya Uparaja sent a letter by a messenger to me and Phya Chaeng to induce all Smings and Ramans to capture and kill all the Burmese officers and men who were in Mawtama (Martaban) and then to raise a (Talaing) army, capture the town of Rangoon, and march to Ava.’ On questioning Phya Hongsawadi and Phya Uparaja, they admitted that it was true. Mong Ra therefore ordered the execution of Phya Hongsawadi, Phya Uparaja, and Phya Tala Kaeng.”

In the History of Siam (พระราชพงษาวดารฉบับพระราชหัตถเลขาเดิม ๓ หน้า ๗๘) it is stated that the deposed King of Hanthawadi was at Ava and that orders were sent up for his execution. This is evidently wrong as the Hmannan history distinctly says that the execution was carried out in Rangoon.



under Wungyi Maha Thihathura, in the operations against Yodaya. This force came up with the Burmese invading army at a place called Kyauk-taga,<sup>18</sup> not far from Tayaik. The Siamese must have been fully aware of the invasion, as they were not far from Tayaik. They were informed by the Karens and Laos inhabiting that part of the country, of the approach of the Burmese. The Siamese commander-in-chief, whose name is not given in the Burmese history, but who evidently knew the topography well and possessed the necessary knowledge of strategy, concealed the greater part of his forces at a place called Sakadan, disposing them on both sides of the road which, at that point, presented difficulties to a force on the march. He then sent Bra Thiri (Phra Sīri) with about a thousand men to Tayaik to lure the Burmese into the ambush.

When Wungyi Maha Thihathura became aware of the presence of the Siamese at Tayaik, he proposed to send the Bo of Satpyagôn<sup>19</sup> to attack the enemy and rout them, with a force of 3,000 men drawn as follows:—1,000 men from the forces under Min-yè Zeyakyaw, 1,000 men from Min-yè Yannaung's command and 1,000 men from the Wungyi's own command. Min-yè Zeyakyaw disapproved of the proposal, saying that it was very likely that the Siamese would strongly contest the difficult passage with a large force as they were aware of the numerical strength of the Burmese, and thus nip the invasion in the bud; and that it would be most inadvisable to send the Bo of Satpyagôn with only a small force to attack the enemy. He offered to attack the Siamese with the whole of the forces in his command. Wungyi Maha Thihathura overruled Min-yè Zeyakyaw's objection, giving as the reason for his doing so, that as Tayaik was only a narrow passage and as it was very hard to get provisions there, they would first reconnoitre with only a small force. Min-yè Zeyakyaw said he offered his suggestion as he was afraid of a reverse to the Burmese arms at the commencement of an encounter with the enemy; and if the general commanding the expedition would not take counsel he could not help it; but as regards the order to supply a thousand

<sup>18</sup> แปลตรงว่า ประตู ศิลา

<sup>19</sup> ฉบับกรุงโบ ดูพระราชพงษาวดารเล่ม ๒ หน้า ๒๗๕ ในคำให้การชาว  
อังกะระฉบับพิมพ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๕๘ หน้า ๓๓ ชื่อเขียนเป็น ฉบับกรุงโบ

men from his command he said he was afraid that the men would feel sorry to be placed under another officer, and therefore if the general still thought fit to take his men, he himself ought to be put in command of them. On this Wungyi Maha Thihathura detached 1,500 men from his own command and another 1,500 men from Min-yè Yannaung's and placing the 3,000 men under the Bo of Satpyagôn, despatched them to Tayaik. Apparently the Bo of Satpyagôn was chosen on account of his previous experience of Siamese tactics, as he had distinguished himself in many an encounter with the Siamese forces. At the same time the general submitted a report to the King at Ava to the effect that, on the receipt of information that the Siamese were massed at Tayaik to dispute the advance of the Burmese, he ordered Min-yè Zeyakyaw to march to Tayaik, but the latter refused to obey orders. Min-yè Zeyakyaw became aware of the report submitted by the Wungyi, and, having already heard rumours of the illness of the King, withdrew his troops and returned to Môtama, saying he preferred death in the capital to service under a Wungyi who was trying to get him into trouble.

The Bo of Satpyagôn and the 3,000 men under him came in contact with the Siamese at Tayaik, who, according to pre-concerted plan, gradually fell back, drawing the Burmese behind them. The Bo of Satpyagôn, who was present at the capture of Ayudhya and whose experience it had been to rout the Siamese at every encounter, was over-confident of success and under-estimated the strength of the enemy and the generalship of their leader. Failing to take the necessary precautions, he pressed hard on the gradually retreating Siamese till he got to Sakadan,<sup>20</sup> when he and his 3,000 men were completely hemmed in by two forces concealed thereabouts, at a place devoid of water. Wungyi Maha Thihathura became aware of the plight of the Bo, the result of his own want of foresight and the Bo's rashness born of over-confidence. He sent Min-yè Yannaung with only 4,000 men to rescue the entrapped troops, but this handful of men was of no avail against a force of 20,000 Siamese. The Bo and his men dug hard

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<sup>20</sup> According to คำให้การชาวอังวะ this "Sakadan" is เขานาแก้ว in Rajburi district. Vide pages 15 and 16 of คำให้การชาวอังวะ See also พระราชพงษาวดารฉบับพระราชหัตถ์เลขาเดิม ๓ หน้า ๘๓ et seq.



for water, but as they were located on a parched, barren ridge of a strip of high ground, their energy was wasted, and water could not be obtained. Thirst rendered them quite weak and helpless and they fell into the hands of the Siamese.

After this disaster to the Burmese troops, Wungyi Maha Thiha-thura, whom the Hmannan history began to call Athi Wungyi,<sup>21</sup> submitted a report to his sovereign to the effect that Min-yè Zeyakyaw refused to obey orders and returned with his troops to Môtama, saying that His Majesty had died and that the Prince of Amyin had ascended the throne; he also mentioned the total loss of Satpyagôn Bo and 3,000 men in an encounter with the enemy at Sakadan. On receipt of the report, King Sinbyushin ordered that Min-yè Zeyakyaw and all the officers serving with him should return to the capital, and a fast despatch boat was sent down to convey His Majesty's orders to the commander, who had been guilty of a serious military offence. He was still at Môtama when he received the orders and he and his officers returned marching overland. When they arrived at Sittaung, Min-yè Zeyakyaw, with his three principal officers, Nyaungchedauk Bo, Shangyi Bo, and Tabèza Kala Bo went on ahead with a following of 3,000 men, leaving the rest of the troops to follow up leisurely. When they reached Mingan village, fresh orders from His Majesty arrived with Kaledaw Wun and Yè-hle-taik Wun that Min-yè Zeyakyaw and all the officers under him should be placed under arrest and taken to the capital under guard. Accordingly, Min-yè Zeyakyaw and seventy others were taken to Ava under arrest. On their arrival, King Sinbyushin had Min-yè Zeyakyaw brought into his presence, and asked him whether it was true that he returned from the expedition against Yodaya, because he heard that a new King had ascended the throne. Min-yè Zeyakyaw replied that owing to the ill-treatment of Athi Wungyi, he returned to His Majesty to seek redress. His Majesty in reply said that if Athi Wungyi reported about him he should have submitted a counter report, and should not have withdrawn his troops at all. He ordered the imprisonment of over seventy officers of

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<sup>21</sup> The <sup>๕</sup>อะแซหฺวันกิ of the Siamese history. In fact Wungyi Maha Thiha-thura is better known by the name of <sup>๕</sup>อะแซหฺวันกิ throughout พระราชพงษาวดาร and คำให้การชาวอองวะ



Min-yè Zeyakyaw's troops, while the principal offender himself was degraded and deprived of his title and called by his personal name Nga Hmôn, like any other ordinary individual. About twenty days afterwards, Shangyi Bo, Nyaungchedauk Bo, and Tabèza Kala Bo and ten others were executed, and Min-yè Zeyakyaw and the rest of the officers were ordered to be conveyed under arrest to Athi Wungyi, for him to punish them in whatever manner he liked to. The Wungyi, however, most magnanimously pardoned them all, only requesting them to fight and defeat the Siamese forces at Sakadan. They undertook to attack the enemy on the night of the very day they were set at liberty; and just before dawn of that night Min-yè Zeyakyaw with 3,000 men stealthily got into the camp of the Siamese, and tried to create a panic, by vociferous shouting, by attacking furiously and setting fire to the tents, sheds, etc. within their reach. They were successful in their attempt, as the Siamese thought, in the darkness of the night, that a large Burmese force had made a surprise attack, and entered their camp as well as surrounded it. There was a panic among the Siamese, who were probably suddenly awakened from their slumber, and they made a hasty retreat from Sakadan. Min-yè Zeyakyaw then returned to the main Burmese army, taking with him all the arms and war material left behind by the Siamese. The Athi Wungyi said that, although the enemy had retreated from Sakadan, it would not be advisable to march to Yodaya by that route, as it would be very difficult to get provisions; that already the army was suffering from want of sufficient provisions and the sick-roll was unusually large. He proposed to withdraw the army to Môtama to recuperate during the rains, and as soon as the rains ceased, to march to Yodaya via Yahaing (Raheng), by which route he expected to get provisions more easily. The proposal was approved of by all, and the whole of the Burmese army withdrew to Môtama.

After King Sinbyushin's return from his trip to Yangôn to put the "ti" on the famous Sandaw or Dagôn pagoda, no event of any importance occurred at the Burmese capital, his energies being for the time directed towards the building of pagodas and monasteries. Only three months after he had performed, with sumptuous feasts and great rejoicing, and numerous gifts to Buddhist monks, the dedication ceremony of a pagoda and a monastery which he had built at Sagaing, a town on the right bank of the Eyawadi opposite Ava, he was



taken ill, while residing in a palace surrounded by water, built outside the northern gate of the city. On the night of Sunday the 9th of waning Nayôn 1138 (June, A.D. 1776), his condition became serious and he was removed in a closed golden palanquin to the palace in the city where he expired at dawn. The ministers in attendance informed his son Min-yè Hla, Prince of Sin-gu, who ascended the throne and assumed sovereign authority at sunrise on Monday the 10th of waning Nayôn.

King Sinbyushin, who assumed the regal title of Thiri Pawara Thudama Mahayaza Zaneindadipati ( Siripavara sudhamma mahārājā janindādhpati), was born on Sunday the 13th of waxing Wagaung 1098 (August, A.D. 1736). At the age of twenty-seven years and four months he ascended the throne, and after reigning twelve years and six months, died at the age of thirty-nine years and ten months.

SIR ARTHUR P. PHAYRE'S ACCOUNT OF  
THE CHINESE INVASION OF BURMA AND THE  
BURMESE INVASION OF SIAM.

Origin of war  
with China.

A series of petty misunderstandings on the frontier of China had led to an invasion of Burma from that country. In the spring of 1765 a Chinese merchant named Loali arrived on the frontier, coming by the Momien route, with a large drove of oxen laden with merchandise. In order to cross the river Tapeng, he wished to construct a bridge at the village Nânba, and applied to the governor of Bamoa for permission to do so. The merchant, annoyed at the delay which occurred in attending to his application, uttered some words in his own language which were interpreted to the governor as being disrespectful. The governor sent him to Ava as a prisoner. The authorities there released him, and gave orders that he might build the bridge and pursue his vocation. On returning to Bamoa, where his merchandise had been left, he complained that some of the packages had been opened and a portion of the goods abstracted, and he demanded compensation. The officials replied that his own men had remained in charge of the bales, and they refused to inquire into the complaint. Loali then departed, and, on arrival at Momien, complained of the treatment he had received. He went on to the city of Yunnân, where the governor received his statement and noted the facts. Soon after another dispute took place at a distant point of the frontier. A Chinese merchant named Loatârî arrived, with several followers, at a mart in the territory of the Shân state of Kyaingtun, and there sold goods on credit.<sup>1</sup> Payment was refused by the purchaser, a quarrel arose, and in the affray which ensued a Chinaman was killed. At that time the Soabwâ of Kyaingtun was in Ava. The Sitkê, who was the next in authority, received the

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<sup>1</sup> Captain W. C. M'Leod heard the same story when at Kyaingtun in 1837. See his Journal, p. 60.



complaint of the merchant, who demanded that either the manslayer or a substitute, to be made responsible for the crime, should be delivered up to him. The Sitkê replied that he would give the amount of fine payable according to Burmese law in such cases. The Chinese merchant refused this offer, and left for his own country. He proceeded to the city of Yunnan and complained to the governor. Some Shân nobles and a nephew of the Soabwâ of Kyaingtun, who had offended the Burmese government, were at this time refugees in that city. They excited the Chinese officials to demand satisfaction with a threat of making war should it not be given. The general of the frontier petitioned the Emperor, who ordered that Kyaingtun was to be attacked and justice enforced. A document was posted at a ford on the Tâloa river, <sup>1</sup> making a formal demand that the homicide or a substitute should be surrendered. No reply having been sent to this summons, a Chinese army advanced and surrounded the town of Kyaingtun. The Soabwâ of Kyaingtun had joined the invaders. An army had marched from Ava in December 1765 to support the Sitkê of Kyaingtun. It was under the command of Letwêwengmhu. He approached the town and forced the Chinese investing army to retreat. It retired towards the Mêkong river, and in a combat there the Chinese general was killed. The chief of Kyaingtun now made his submission, saying that he had been coerced by the Chinese. A garrison was placed in Kyaingtun and the bulk of the Burmese army returned to Ava.

Chinese army  
appears at  
Kyaingtun.

April, A. D.  
1766.

The king of Burma, viewing with alarm the state of his relations with China, determined to place a garrison at Kaungton, a town on the Irâwadi, a few miles

1. This is the name given to the river in the Burmese history. It is however the name of a town on the Melem or Melâm river, fifty-four miles north of Kyaingtun on the road from that town to Kainghun. Kyaintun is still a large thoroughfare for Chinese traders going to the Shân states west of the Salwin, M'Leod's Journal, pp. 59 and 65,

Chinese invasion  
by the Momien  
route.

below Bamo. This precautionary measure had not long been adopted when it was reported that a large Chinese army had appeared on the frontier near Momien. It marched into the Burmese territory and took up a position at the Mwêlun mountain, which lies to the south of the Talo branch of the Tapeng river. The army of invasion was under two leading generals, Ying Khun Târeng and Hseng Tâ Loareng. The Burmese garrison at Kaungton was reinforced and the stockade strengthened. The commander there was Balamenhteng, a bold and active officer. The plan of the Chinese generals appears to have been to occupy Bamo; to advance from thence on Ava; and to collect boats in order to gain command of the river Irâwadi. At the same time they appear to have been in communication with the Soabwâ of Mogaung, who was disaffected towards the Burmese king, and from whom they might receive important assistance. The Burmese Government, though knowing the general objects of the invaders, had not been sufficiently on the alert, and with the Siamese war on their hands, to support which constant reinforcements were required, must have felt a difficulty in raising men. But though attacked by so powerful an enemy, they met the invader with a determined spirit which deserves high praise.

The Chinese generals, in pursuance of their plan, detached from their position at the Mwêlun mountain a column under Rengsutâreng by the Mowun (Muang-wan) route to Bamo. A division was also posted at the intermediate position of Thinzanwêlim to keep up the communication with the headquarter army. At Bamo the commander built a stockade on the bank of the river, and leaving there a part of his force in garrison, pushed on to Kaungton. Balamenhteng had, with unwearied diligence, strengthened his post, and being well supplied with fire-arms, awaited the onset of the enemy with confidence. The Chinese commander made desperate efforts to capture the post, but



failed, suffering a heavy loss of men, and finally drew off. But success here was of too much importance for the enterprise to be abandoned, and he entrenched himself in a camp near the fort waiting for reinforcements.

The king of Burma had dispatched a force by water up the Irâwadi under Letwêwengmhu to proceed to Bamo, while a column under Wungyi Mahâ Sithu marched by the western bank of the river on Mogaung. These bodies started from the capital about the middle of January. Letwêwengmhu on the way up, hearing that Kaungton was invested, threw some reinforcements and a supply of ammunition into the place from the river force. He then sent a division to Bamo, which attacked and carried the Chinese entrenched position there. With the bulk of his command he remained in observation on the west bank of the Irâwadi, while by his superior flotilla he held command of the river. He next attacked the Chinese entrenched post near Kaungton and forced the garrison to retire on the fortified position at Thinzanwêlim. He followed them up and dislodged them from that position, inflicting upon them a heavy loss in men, arms, and horses. They retreated to Mowun. The Chinese invaders had now been driven from the posts they had occupied on and near to the Irâwadi, south of Bamo, and had lost the boats they had collected for operations on the river.

Burmese measures  
of resistance.

A. D. 1767.

The corps under the command of Mahâ Sithu, by a rapid march reached Mogaung before the Chinese could arrive. He made such arrangements for the defence of the town as time allowed. He then advanced to meet the invading force, which, under Hsengtâlcareng, was marching by Sanda in a north-westerly direction to a point on the Irâwadi in order to cross that river. The Chinese commander had no boats and took post at Lisoa hill, arranging means to pass to the right bank. Mahâ Sithu did not allow

Operations at  
Mogaung and in  
the north.

him time for this, but marching from Mogaung, crossed the Irâwadi to the left bank, and sent on a reconnoitring party of five hundred musketeers. This party fell in with a body of a thousand Chinese horsemen. The musketeers retired to a mountain defile. The Chinese cavalry followed headlong, and, cooped up in a narrow pass blocked with boulders, sustained a heavy loss from the fire of the musketeers. The Burmese commander, finding the Chinese position on the Lisoa hill too strong to be attacked in front, halted on the Nânmyin stream, and sent two divisions to circle round it right and left. This movement was concealed by the thick woods, and the Chinese general, leaving one-third of his force on the hill, marched to attack the Burmese on the Nânmyin. The force left on the hill, supposing the enemy to be only in front, and to be held in check by their main body, was careless, and allowed itself to be surprised and cut up by the two Burmese divisions. The main body of the Chinese under Hsengtâloareng retired hastily to Sanda. Mahâ Sithu then took post with his whole army at Muangla, which would enable him to intercept the retreat of the Chinese to their own country. He had conducted the operations successfully, but being ill, was now succeeded in the command by Letwêwengmhu. The Chinese army was suffering from want of provisions. The main body, which had originally been posted at the Mwêlun mountain, had been reduced, by continued requisitions to supply reinforcements, to a small number; and this, with the remnant of the division under Hsengtâloareng, retreated to the Chinese territory.

Chinese main  
army retires from  
Burma.

Burmese generals  
return to Ava.

At a late period of the campaign a Chinese column had appeared on the Thinnî frontier, and menaced the capital by that route. This column was attacked on two sides: by a force under Mahâ Thîhathura, marching from Kyainghun, where he had held command during the Siamese war; and by the troops



of Letwêwengmhu moving down from the north. The invading column was driven back, and the two victorious generals arrived in Ava with the captured guns, muskets, and prisoners, early in May. The eight Shân states in the basin of the Tapeng river, which had for centuries, though not continuously, been included in the Chinese empire, were now reunited to Burma.

A. D. 1767.

The Chinese generals had grossly mismanaged the campaign. They divided their forces into detached bodies which could not support each other, and thus exposed them to be separately attacked and overpowered. The late appearance of an isolated column at Thinnî was not likely to retrieve failure elsewhere, and the movement itself was feebly made. The Burmese commanders, with inferior numbers in the field, skilfully took advantage of the blunders of their opponents. They are entitled to great praise for their energetic defence of their country against an invader who not only had a numerical superiority in the field, but enjoyed the repute of former conquest and long acknowledged ascendancy. But the Burmese history, which states the original number of the enemy to have been 250,000 men and 25,000 horse, greatly exaggerates the strength of the invaders.

The emperor of China, Kienlung, a competent civil administrator, but no warrior, was determined not to allow what he considered a petty barbarian power, successfully to resist the armies of the son of heaven. To the dismay of the Burmese king, towards the end of the year a Chinese army, more numerous than that which had invaded the country in the previous year, crossed the frontier and advanced to Thinnî. It was under the command of two generals, the emperor's son-in-law, Myinkhunrè, and the emperor's younger brother, Sutâloarè. This was the main army of invasion, and smaller columns, intended

Third invasion  
by the Chinese,  
A. D 1767.

apparently to divert attention, were marching, one on Bamoa by the route south of the Tapeng river, by way of Thinzanwêlim, and a second on Momeit, by the route south of the Shwèlè river.

The main army entered Thinnî without opposition. The Soabwâ at once submitted, and furnished whatever the enemy required from him. The Chinese generals commenced the construction of a stockade to the south-west of the town, as a dépôt for stores and station for reserves.

Burmese armies  
meet the invaders,  
A. D. 1767.

An army under Mahâ Sithu left Ava about the middle of December to oppose the main body of the invaders. It marched by Thonzè and Thîboa, the object being to operate on the front of the Chinese. A second army under Mahâ Thihathura marched two days later, taking an easterly route to oppose the same body, by intercepting their supplies and circling round to attack them in rear. A column under Letwè-wengmhu also marched north to oppose the invaders advancing by the valley of the Shwèlè on Momeit.

When the army under Mahâ Sithu had advanced beyond Thîbca they encountered the Chinese under Myinkhunrè. The invaders were far superior in numbers and the Burmese were defeated. Mahâ Sithu then retreated down the line of the Myitngè. Considerable alarm prevailed in the city, but the king was undaunted, and calmly issued his orders for defence.

The column under Mahâ Thihathura marched by the route south of the Myitngè. The Chinese army drew large supplies of provisions from the country east of the Salwîn, and had a dépôt in a stockade at Lashô, west of that river. This stockade was taken and many convoys intercepted. A detachment was also sent, which occupied the Taku ferry on the Salwîn, where a large number of laden horses and mules were captured. Mahâ Thihathura with his main body pushed on to



Thinnî, where the Chinese general, Sufâloarè, commanded in the stockade. The Burmese entered the city and the Soabwâ fled to the stockade. The Chinese garrison soon became straitened for provisions—the arrival of which had been intercepted—and the Burmese commander cut off their water supply. The Chinese soldiers began to desert. The general, a younger brother of the emperor, according to the Burmese history, seeing only death or surrender before him, committed suicide. The garrison, utterly disheartened, ceased to make resistance, and the Burmese entered the stockade. The Burmese general, leaving a garrison in the place, marched without delay on Thiboa, in order to operate on the rear of Myinkhunrè.

Burmese victory.

That Chinese general had not followed up his first success with vigour. In his march on Ava, which he hoped to enter, and so close the war, he found the Burmese army under Mahâ Sîthu in position at Lun-kâpyingyî. About the same time he heard of the defeat and death of his colleague. This news made him irresolute. The Burmese general, dreading the anger of the king, and burning to retrieve his former defeat, made a night attack on the Chinese. It was successful; and Myinkhunrè, abandoning the line by which he had advanced from Thinnî, retreated to Taungbaing. There he took post on a hill. Mahâ Sîthu followed him up, and was soon joined by the victorious column of Mahâ Thihathura. The Chinese general now made no further attempt to carry out the original object of the invasion, but retreated precipitately from Burmese territory. The invading divisions which had marched against Bamoa and Momeit had effected nothing, and retired by joining the main body under Myinkhunrè. By the middle of March the last of the enemy's troops had been driven across the Salwîn, and the Burmese generals returned to the capital.

The Chinese retreat to their own country.

A. D. 1768.

But Burma had to struggle once more against the attack of a powerful and persevering foe. It was with

Fourth invasion by the Chinese.

a heavy heart that the king again prepared to resist invasion; for the dreaded omen of the great national pagodas being rent by earthquake seemed to portend coming disaster. Vast treasures were lavished in repairing damage to the *hti* or crowns of the *Shwezìgun* at *Pugân* and of the *Shwè Dagon* at *Rangoon*; while in these shrines were deposited gold and silver images in thousands, in hope that the threatened vengeance of the invisible powers might thereby be averted.

Hardly had the solemn ceremonies with which these offerings were presented been completed, when the governors of *Bamoa* and *Kaungton* reported the appearance of a powerful Chinese army on the frontier. It was commanded by three principal generals, whose names or titles, as given in the Burmese history, are *Sukunrè*, *Âkunrè*, and *Ywunkunrè*. They moved down the valley of the *Tapeng* to the *Yoayî* mountain, where they halted and detached a division under *Hsengtârî*, to march on *Mogaung*. In an adjoining forest they felled suitable trees, which were shaped into planks, and were then conveyed to a suitable spot higher up the *Irâwadi*, where boats were to be built. They had brought many carpenters for this service, and the duty of carrying out their orders was entrusted to *Loatârî*, with an adequate force at his disposal. Having made these arrangements, the three generals proceeded on towards *Bamoa*.

To meet this formidable invasion the king sent an army under the master of the ordnance, *Thihathu*, which left *Ava* in the last week of September, and marched on *Mogaung* by the west bank of the *Irâwadi*. A second army, of which *Mahâ Thihathura* was commander-in-chief, moved in boats up the river, designed to meet the invaders at or near *Bamoa*; while the elephants and the cavalry, under the *Momit Soabwâ* and *Kyoateng Râjâ*, marched north by the east bank of the river,

A. D. 1769.



The Chinese plan of operations was generally similar to that of the campaign of 1767. The three generals, marching in the direction of Bamoa, did not enter that town, but constructed a strong stockade at Shwèngyaungbeng, twelve miles east of Kaungton. Ywunkunrè was left in command there, while the other two generals proceeded with the bulk of the force to invest Kaungton. Balamenghteng commanded there. The Chinese generals made many attacks on the place, both from the land side and from the river face, by means of the boats they brought down the river. Balamenghteng well sustained the reputation he had gained, and the Chinese were repulsed with great slaughter.

Mahâ Thihathura had been somewhat slow in his movement up the river, but at length he reached Tagaung. He sent on a division in light boats to throw reinforcements of men and ammunition into Kaungton, which service was effected, and many of the Chinese boats were destroyed or taken. A Burmese officer, Sânhlâgyi, built a stockade on the river bank below Kaungton, while the remainder of the division occupied an island on the west bank opposite Kaungton. The Chinese had now lost command of the river. Mahâ Thihathura, continuing his progress by river from Tagaung, joined the division on the island, directing operations from that station, and keeping his own force as a reserve to be used when required. The elephants and cavalry, with a strong division under Letwèngmhu, who now took command of this column, continued marching by the east bank on Momit, there to await further orders. The commander-in-chief also sent a column under Tingyâ Mengkhaung to the east bank of the river above Bamoa, to cut off supplies coming to the Chinese force, which was still investing Kaungton, on the land side. The column under the Letwèngmhu marched boldly on towards Kaungton, and defeated a Chinese detached

force sent against it. Tingyâ Meng Khaung, approaching from the north, was equally successful in an attack on him. The result of these engagements was, that the Chinese generals Sukunrè and Akunrè fell back on their line of retreat by the Tapeng with half the force, while the remainder were compelled to withdraw into the great stockade at Shwèngyaungbeng. The division under Hsengtâri, which had marched on Mogaung, did not reach that town, and was held in check on the east of the Irâwadi by Thihathu.

Letwèwengmhu now combined the several divisions which were on the east of the Irâwadi to attack the great stockade. The assault was made simultaneously on the four faces of the work, and was successful. The Burmese forced an entrance, but, from the great extent of the works, they were unable to prevent the escape of the Chinese general, Ywunkunrè, who, with those of his men not killed or disabled in the attack, fled and joined his two colleagues. Several more boats belonging to the Chinese were now destroyed, and the Burmese having taken immense stores of arms, powder, and lead, were enabled to arm several battalions more efficiently than they were before.

The Chinese  
generals sue  
for peace.

The commander-in-chief, Mahâ Thihathura, now took measures to complete the discomfiture of the invaders. He sent several thousand fresh men across the river, and established his own headquarters on the eastern bank. The Chinese generals, discouraged by defeat and straitened for provisions, determined to negotiate, in order to secure an unmolested retreat. They addressed a letter to Mahâ Thihathura, in which they attributed the war to misunderstanding caused by the intrigues of the Soabwâs of Thinnî, Bamoa, Mogaung, and Kyaingyun. They proposed that these officials, then in Chinese territory, should be exchanged for the Chinese officers who were prisoners, and that the relations of the two countries should be



established as they were before the war. Mahā Thī-hathura called a council of his principal officers and asked their opinion. They replied that the Chinese had invaded the country with a vast army, evidently intending to conquer it. The enemy had been defeated, and were now surrounded like cows in a pound. In a few days they would be still more helpless from hunger, and the officers unanimously recommended that no terms should be granted. The commander-in-chief observed it was true that the Chinese had wantonly invaded their country, but China was a powerful empire, and could send even more men than the vast hosts which had already appeared. If these men now at their mercy were destroyed, the quarrel between the two countries would be perpetuated, and great evil would result to future generations. He therefore considered it advisable to come to a settlement with the Chinese generals, and should the king disapprove of this course, on him alone would the blame rest. The council did not oppose this wise resolution, and a conciliatory reply having been sent to the letter of the Chinese generals, and preliminaries having been agreed to, fourteen Burmese and thirteen Chinese commissioners, appointed by the commanders-in-chief of both armies, met in a temporary building near to Kaungton. A document styled "a written contract of settlement" was drawn up and agreed to by all present. It stated in general terms that peace and friendship were to be established as of old between the two great countries, and the gold and silver road, or commerce, to be open as before; presents were exchanged between the commissioners of both nations, and, in accordance with former custom, it was agreed that letters of friendship were to be sent every ten years from one sovereign to the other. The question of boundary between the two countries, which had formed a subject of correspondence, was not mentioned in the document, nor was the surrender of the Soabwās and prisoners inserted therein.

A convention for peace, friendship, and commerce agreed to, December 13, 1769.

The Chinese appear to have still had some boats in their possession at the time of the negotiations, but no distinct arrangement regarding them had been come to. After having used the boats to convey stores to Bamo, they burnt them, instead of giving them up to the Burmese, as was expected. This act gave rise to some sharp altercation, but the Burmese general contented himself with remonstrating. The remnant of the invading army retired by the route of the Tapeng river, watched or escorted by a Burmese corps. Thousands of Chinese soldiers died in the mountains of fatigue and hunger.

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The king disapproves the convention made with the Chinese generals.

THE invading army having retired, the Burmese general dispatched to the capital a report of his proceedings, and forwarded the presents which he had received from the Chinese commanders. Hsengbyusheng, indignant that the enemy had been allowed to escape, rejected the offerings, and ordered the families of the principal officers of the army, including the wife of the commander-in-chief, to remain kneeling at the western gate of the palace, bearing the presents on their heads. For three days and nights they were unnoticed, after which they were allowed to withdraw. But when Mahâ Thihathura returned to Ava, he and the principal officers were banished from the city for one month. From China no direct communication as to the convention was made; but Chinese caravans began to arrive according to former custom, and the Burmese court allowed trade to go on as formerly.

War against Siam.

When the Burmese army was recalled from Siam to oppose the Chinese invaders, the general, Thihapatè, carried away the members of the Siamese royal family, who had fallen into his hands. There then arose in Siam a man named Phayâ Tâk, said to be the son of a Chinaman, who gathered round him a body of armed men and, attacking the retreating Burmese, inflicted



on them severe losses.<sup>1</sup> Having gradually increased his followers, he assumed the title of king, brought several of the Shân states again under Siamese dominion, and for greater security for the future, established his capital at Bangkok. He next conquered Viang Chang, called also Chandapuri, then the capital of the principal state of Laos, on the Mekong. Later, a Burmese force occupied Zimmè, where Thadô Mengteng was appointed governor. When the opportunity appeared favourable, Hsengbyusheng determined to recover what he had lost in Siam, and an army under Thihapatè marched to Zimmè. The general there assembled the contingents of the Shân chiefs, and proceeded to Viang Chang, the king of which state had implored protection against the Siamese. The Burmese governor of Zimmè, by his contemptuous treatment of the Shân chiefs, had roused their indignation, and three of them, whom he intended to forward as prisoners to Ava, fled from the territory. He next disputed the authority of the commander-in-chief, Thihapatè, who was on his march into Siam proper. The general was obliged to halt, partly from want of due support from the governor of Zimmè and partly from the determined front shown by the Siamese troops. Meanwhile disasters threatened to paralyse the Burmese operations at other points. The governor of Martaban, Kâmani Sânda, had embodied a force, composed principally of Talaings, intended to move by Tavoy and Mergui. After a few days' march the Talaing troops mutinied. Kâmani Sânda with difficulty escaped, and, escorted by a body-guard of Burmese soldiers, retired to Martaban. Not venturing to remain there, he fled to Rangoon. The Talaing mutineers under Binya Sin followed him up and besieged the stockade. They failed in an attempt to storm it; and as a Burmese army under the governor

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<sup>1</sup> Bowring's Siam, vol. i. pp. 58-60; also vol. ii., Appendix A, pp. 349-363.

of Myânaung began to appear, they withdrew, and returning to Martaban, fled into Siam with their wives and children. Hsengbyusheng now raised an army of thirty thousand men, composed of Burmese and northern Shâns, to which Mahâ Thihathlura was appointed general. He moved down to Martaban, prepared to march on the capital of Siam.

Expedition to  
Manipur and  
Kachâr.

These extensive preparations to recover lost ground in Siam did not interfere with the king's design to extend his dominion toward the north-west. Under the pretence that the ruler of Manipur had repaired the defences of his capital since they had been destroyed by Alaunghprâ, an army was sent, which not only ravaged that state, but pushed on into Kachâr, and thence northwards across a high mountain-range into Jaintia. The invaders suffered immense loss, but the Râjâ of Kachâr had to submit for the time. The remnant of the Burmese army returned home after two years, having gained no advantage to the empire.

The king goes to  
Rangoon.

Middle of Decem-  
ber, A. D. 1774.

While this predatory excursion was still in progress, the king determined to go himself to Rangoon, both to be nearer to the scene of operations against Siam, and to place a new hî or crown on the great pagoda, Shwè Dagun. This was a religious act, which by force of its own merit might bring the reward of victory, and it was hoped would favourably impress the Talaing people. The king left Ava and proceeded in grand state down the Irâwadi. The deposed king of Pegu and his nephew, who had remained prisoners for fourteen years, were led in the royal train. Hsengbyusheng, delaying on the way while he worshipped pagodas at Pugân and Prome, only reached Rangoon after a progress of three months. He adorned the great pagoda with a magnificent golden jewelled crown, and after this display of religious zeal, the captive king of Pegu was with a mockery of justice



put on his trial before a special tribunal. He was declared guilty of having excited the Talaing people to rebellion and was publicly executed. Hsengbyusheng April, A.D. 1775. after this cruel deed set out to return to his capital.

Mahâ Thihathura, having many difficulties to overcome in preparations for the campaign, did not commence his march from Martaban until the close of the rainy season. The route he selected lay eastward, so as to gain the upper waters of the Menâm. He reached Rahaing with little opposition from the Siamese. Dissensions among officers of high rank, now the curse of the Burmese armies in the field, soon broke out. The second in the command, Zêya Kyo, protested against the plan of operations, and returned to Martaban with a portion of the troops. Mahâ Thihathura persevered in his march. He was successful in occupying Pitsalauk and Thaukkatai, but suffered a severe defeat from the Siamese, and was compelled to make an ignominious retreat towards the frontier.

Unsuccessful invasion of Siam.

In the midst of these disasters Hsengbyusheng died at Ava, and was succeeded by his son Singgusâ at the age of nineteen years. He was determined to put an end to the Siamese war. But Zêya Kyo by court favour was allowed to return to the army, and having succeeded in a skirmish with the Siamese, was considered to have atoned for his mutinous conduct. The armies in the Upper Menam and in the Zimmè territory were ordered to withdraw from the Siamese territory, where they no longer could remain with safety. Several officers suffered death for alleged misconduct before the enemy, and Mahâ Thihathura was disgraced and deprived of his office of Wungyi.

Death of Hsengbyusheng. Succession of Singgusâ, June, A.D 1776.

## II.

## INTRODUCTION.

Contrary to the wishes of Alaung Mintayagyi that those of his sons who survived him should succeed to the throne in order of their seniority, King Sinbyushin was succeeded by his son, Prince of Singu,<sup>1</sup> although at the time there were four sons of Alaung Mintayagyi still alive, namely, Amyin Min, Badôn Min, Pakan Min, and Pindalê Min. The Burmese history does not say that King Sinbyushin openly expressed the wish that his son should succeed him, in preference to any of his brothers, but most probably he did make the ministers in attendance upon him understand that such was his wish. In this case paternal love must have outweighed filial duty, and in the absence of a well recognized rule of the right of primogeniture, succession to the throne according to the wishes of the last deceased king has, more often than not, resulted in bloodshed; at least such had been the case in the history of the kings of Burma.

## THE TRANSLATION.

Only six days after the accession of Singu Min to the throne, he ordered the execution of his half-brother the Prince of Salin or Salinza,<sup>2</sup> in a manner customary in the case of persons of the royal blood, for conspiracy against him, or for entertaining improper schemes, as it is euphoniously expressed in the usual style of the Burmese historian. This unfortunate young prince was a son of the daughter of the King known as Hanthawadi-yauk-min.\* Several high officials also suffered death as being accomplices of the prince.

The first thing that the new King did in matters military was to order the recall of all the forces under Wungyi Maha Thihathura operating against Yodaya and those under Myin Wan Nemyo Thiha-

<sup>1</sup> จิงกูจา ราชบุตร คุพระราชพงษาวดาร เล่ม ๓ หน้า ๑๒๖ แต่  
คำให้การชาวอังวะ หน้า ๑๖.

<sup>2</sup> แดงจา ผู้น้องพระเจ้า จิงกูจา คุในที้แห่งเดียวกัน แต่คำให้  
การชาวอังวะ หน้า ๑๗.

\* Vide Siam Society Journal Vol. VIII. part II. page 103,



pate operating against Sandapuri and Zimmè. The latter had suffered a severe reverse and been obliged to fall back on Monè.

Wungyi Maha Thihathura with his force of sixty regiments remained at Môttama during the rains of the year 1137 ( A. D. 1775 ), and at the close of the rains in Thadingyut (October), he marched via Yahaing and captured Yahaing, Peik-Tônkyaw, Thaukkatè, Tani, Thuwunkalauk, and Peikthalauk.<sup>3</sup> He was confronted by the forces under the King of Yodaya at the junction of two rivers. The Siamese tried to envelope the Burmese, but in the night, the Burmese general sent a force under Pyanchi-Yègaung-kyaw to the rear of the Siamese. In the ensuing engagement, personally conducted by the Wungyi himself, the Siamese forces were compelled to retire. Pyanchi-Yègaung-kyaw, Pakan Bo, and Kyaw-Kathu were ordered to press the pursuit and keep in touch with the retreating enemy, while the Wungyi himself would follow in the rear. At this stage, orders recalling them reached the Wungyi, and he sent messengers in different directions to recall the three commanders who had gone in pursuit. One party came up with Kyaw-Kathu at a village a little to the north of Kundaw Intaung.<sup>4</sup> The Pakan Bo was overtaken by another party at a junction of two rivers. The messengers who were sent after Pyanchi-Yègaung-kyaw failed to meet the commander and returned without having accomplished their mission. The leader of the party was therefore executed. Fresh messengers were sent in several directions, and they also failed to find the commander. Wungyi Maha Thihathura had to return without Pyanchi-Yègaung-kyaw and the detachment under him. This commander must have been too eager in his pursuit. The Burmese history says that he was surrounded several times by an overwhelming force of Siamese, but he succeeded in breaking through the cordon every time, and made his way to Akyaw, Linzin, thence to Zimmè and from there to Ava.

The forces under Myin Wun Nemyo Thihapate rested for a time at Monè, after their retreat from Zimmè. Then with the intention of joining Wungyi Maha Thihathura, they made their way towards Môttama. The messengers conveying the orders recalling them, overtook them at Sittaung and they all returned, reaching the capital in the year 1138 (A. D. 1776).

<sup>3</sup> ดุพรวราชพงษาวดาร เต็ม ๓ หน้า ๓๐๐ แถดต่อไป. <sup>4</sup> ข้างทอง?

The new King performed the "Rājābhiseka" or coronation ceremony, on Monday the 15th of waxing Pyatho 1138 (January A.D. 1777), and assumed the title of Maha Damayaza (Mahā Dhammarājā.) This title he subsequently amplified into Maha Damayazadiyaza (Mahā Dhammarājādhirājā). But in this paper it is more convenient to call him Singu Min, by which name he is also known among the Burmese, while Sir Arthur Phayre called him Singgusā.

On the same day that the coronation ceremony was performed, a force of 1500 horse and 15,000 men in 8 regiments under the supreme command of Amyauk Wun Nemyo Thihathu was despatched to go and capture Lagun and Pathin.<sup>5</sup> The Hmannan history does not mention any more about this force sent to northern Siam, and it is not known what it did and when it returned.

Singu Min apparently did not trust his four uncles, Amyin Min,<sup>6</sup> Badôn Min,<sup>7</sup> Pakan Min,<sup>8</sup> and Pindalè Min,<sup>9</sup> but at first he dared not do any harm to them and contented himself with limiting their personal attendants to twenty-five men each, and restricting their movements. But in Tawthalin 1139 (September, A.D. 1777) he ordered the execution of Amyin Min for conspiring against him<sup>10</sup>; several prominent men were also put to death for aiding and abetting the Prince of Amyin. In Kasôn 1140 (May, A.D. 1778) he sent Badôn Min to go and stay at Sagaing, Pakan Min at Pin-ya, and Pindalè Min at Ywathitkyi.

Wungyi Maha Thihathura, who had distinguished himself in repelling the invasions of the Chinese, but who, in one way or another, showed himself to be a poor disciplinarian and a bad strategist in the invasion of Yodaya, was unfortunate enough to incur the displeasure of King

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<sup>5</sup> ดูพระราชพงษาวดาร เดิม ๓ หน้า ๑๒๖.

<sup>6</sup> อะเมียงต๊ะแซง }

<sup>7</sup> มะคัง }

<sup>8</sup> ปะคานต๊ะแซง }

<sup>9</sup> แปงตะแต }

<sup>10</sup> ตัดคำให้การชาวอังวะ หน้า ๑๗.

ดูคำให้การชาวอังวะ หน้า ๑๗ แดพระราชพงษา

วาท เดิม ๓ หน้า ๑๒๖.



Singu Min, for some reason not mentioned in the Hmannan history. In Nayôn 1139 ( June, A. D. 1777 ), he was removed from the rank of of Wungyi ( Minister of first rank ),<sup>11</sup> and his daughter who had been raised to the rank of Queen of the Northern Palace, with the title of Thiri Maha Mingla Dewi (Siri Mahāmangalā Devī), second only to the Chief Queen, and who had hitherto been a favourite, was degraded and sent back to her father. The Queen of the Middle Palace, who enjoyed the title of Thiri Maha Nanda Dewi (Siri Mahānandā Devī) was raised to the rank of Queen of the Northern Palace, and her elder sister was created Queen of the Middle Palace, with the title of Maha Mingala Sanda Dewi (Mahāmangalā Candā Devī), and her younger sister was also raised to the rank of a Queen, called Queen of the Western Palace, with the title of Thiri Sanda Mahe (Siri Candāmahe). The degradation of the daughter, and the disgrace of the father, taking place about the same time, and the promotion, almost simultaneously, of the Queen of the Middle Palace, as well as the favours and honours conferred on her sisters, are very significant ; but the real reasons for such sudden changes will be found only in the secret history of the Court of Burma, if there be such a work, or in the diary of some court diarist of the time. One may, however, venture to guess that it was, very probably, one of those not infrequent court intrigues, arising out of jealousy and other frailties of human nature, especially feminine human nature, and resulting in the downfall and ruin of one and the uplifting and triumph of another. In this instance, it is very likely that the fault of the daughter reflected on the father, who was punished for no other reason than that of being the father of one who was imprudent enough to fall foul of a dangerous and probably scheming rival, and to incur the serious displeasure of His Majesty. At least, subsequent events would seem to favour this supposition, because the Wungyi and his family were practically deported to Sagaing, and not long after, the daughter, who had ranked second in His Burman Majesty's estimation of the fair sex, was ordered to be drowned in the river.

King Alaung Mintayagyi's eldest son, the Prince of Dabayin who ascended the throne on the death of his father with the title of King Thiri Thudamayaza (Siri Sudhammarājā), but who is commonly known as King Naungdawgyi (the eldest brother), left by his chief

<sup>11</sup> ดูคำให้การชาวอังวะ หน้า ๓๗.

queen, a son named Maung Maung.<sup>12</sup> Ignoring the claims of the surviving sons of Alaung Mintayagyi, this youthful prince had as much, if not better, right to the throne than his cousin King Singu Min. Towards the close of the year 1141 (A. D. 1780), he must have come under the suspicion of his cousin, as he was ordered to go and reside at the village of Paungga. Probably he was given the privilege of enjoying the state share of the revenues derived from the village, as he was known subsequently as Paungga<sup>ga</sup>, (eater of Paungga).

The youthful King now busied himself in building or repairing monasteries and pagodas and having them most superbly gilded. But his religious zeal did not prevent him from indulging in youthful pleasures and amusements. He surrounded himself with young courtiers and ministers, and nobles of tender age, who were probably more eager to enjoy life than to attend to affairs of State. Surrounded by such young and inexperienced men, he took to indulging in intoxicating drinks, and in course of time, the days in which he was completely under the influence of liquor greatly outnumbered those in which he was sober enough to be able to attend to important business. Very few of his young courtiers, including ministers, and personal attendants, were sober men. Even his guards could not be relied upon to remain sober while on duty. The young King amused himself with his young courtiers in gambling, cock-fighting, fishing, hunting, &c, knowing no regular hours, and turning night into day, and day into night.

In Nadaw 1143 (December, A. D. 1781) he raised his half sister Mingin Myoza (eater of Mingin town) who enjoyed the title of Thiripapa-dewi (Sīripabhādevī) and who was a grand-daughter of Hanthawadi-yauk-min on her mother's side, to the rank of a queen. She was the sister of the young Prince known as Salinza who was executed soon after the young King ascended the throne; although she did not then share the fate of her brother, she was, nevertheless, degraded and made to reside outside the precincts of the palace, practically neglected and uncared for. The ups and downs in the court life of the Burmese royal family certainly afford an interesting study of

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<sup>12</sup> มังหม่อง หรือ มงหม่อง คุพระราชพงษาวดาร เต็ม ๓ หน้า  
๑๗๓, ๑๗๔ แต่คำให้การชาวอังกะระ หน้า ๑๗.



the fickleness of fortune and the capriciousness of an untutored autocratic mind.

As usual with one in pursuit of pleasure, King Singu Min must have found monotony unbearable. Therefore, he was always on the move, either to perform his devotions at some sacred shrine or to celebrate the dedication ceremony of a new monastery or a new pagoda, either to attend the catching of wild elephants or to amuse himself with a pleasure trip to some place outside the city. On his return from such journeys, he very seldom returned to the palace within the city, but passed his time in a floating palace outside the city gate, called Man-aung gate, on the north side of the city. On Saturday the 5th of waning Tabodwè 1143 (February, A. D. 1782) he went on a pilgrimage to the Thihadaw pagoda, some distance up the river to the north of the capital, accompanied by his mother, sisters, and queens.

Maung Maung, son of King Naungdawgyi, a youth still in his teens, being just over eighteen, who had been kept at Paungga village, took advantage of his cousin's absence from the capital to usurp the throne. The Burmese history says that he had been scheming to carry out this usurpation for some time previously ; but considering his tender age and his total lack of capacity to grasp and realize the new situation created by the attempt to overthrow the reigning sovereign, it is more likely that he was made a tool in the hands of those whose ambition it was to be in power and whose intention it was to benefit themselves by the inexperience of a young prince, who had just as good a claim to the throne as their king *de facto*. Having collected his adherents, he came to Ava on the night of Tuesday the 8th of waning Tabodwè, that is, three days after Singu Min had left the capital. About midnight they approached the city and told the guards at Man-aung gate, that the King had returned in advance of his entourage in a fast boat. Since the time he took to drink, Singu Min had been in the habit of presenting himself at the gates of the city at all unreasonable hours and demanding immediate entrance. The head guard, therefore, thought that it was one of those drunken whims of the King to return to the palace at such time of the night. He had the gates opened, and Maung Maung and his men thus gained entrance into the city. The chosen guards of the "red gate" which was the principal gate of the palace enclosure were deceived similarly and for the same reason. When the party gained the throne room,

messengers were sent to all the ministers, nobles and officials who were on duty at the time, at various places within the palace enclosure, such as the supreme court, council chamber, the inner gates of the palace, &c., to attend on the King immediately. These men thought it was one of those many occasions on which His Majesty had imbibed too freely, and not knowing the reason for which they were summoned, hastened to the throne room with all despatch. Only when they had all assembled in the court-yard in front of the throne room, they found out they had been deceived, but then it was too late. They were overawed and compelled to remain there till dawn, when they all had to take the oath of allegiance to Maung Maung. According to arrangements previously made, several of Maung Maung's men who were in the city a day before Maung Maung arrived took charge of all the city gates that very night. All the gates were closed, and preparations made to defend the city in case of attack. People living round about the city were taken into it; all the houses on the approaches of the city were pulled down; and all kinds of obstacles for elephants, horses, and men, such as hurdles, bars, spikes, thorns, &c, were laid down on the ground cleared of the houses.

Maung Maung probably feared that his uncles would give trouble; more probably he was advised by those who carried out this revolt to make his position secure by confining them. He sent messengers to where they had been made to reside by Singu Min, and requested them to come and live in their old residences in Ava. Some of the nobles and ministers who were degraded and disgraced by his cousin were recalled and reinstated; of these, Wungyi Maha Thiha-thura was one.

One of the officials on duty in the palace on the night that Maung Maung entered it, discovered that the individual who had entered the palace was not the King himself, but he had no time to find out who he was. He managed to slip out of the palace and fortunately succeeded in passing one of the gates, where there was great confusion caused by the usurper's adherents trying to get inside in large numbers. He went straight to Singu Min and informed him of what had taken place in the palace. But it was only a few days afterwards that full information of what had occurred in the capital was obtained from an adherent of one of the ministers in the King's entourage, who had hurried to his master to convey the news.



Singu Min made arrangements to regain admission into the city and dispossess the usurper of the throne. But unfortunately all his arrangements miscarried. As a last resource he decided to go into Chinese territory and ask the assistance of the Chinese Emperor; accordingly, he proceeded up the river Eyawadi together with his mother, sisters, and queens, accompanied by such adherents as were with him then. Even in this last hope he was to be disappointed, as the officers and men of the small force he still had gradually deserted him on the way up. When he reached a place called Sanpèngo, still a long way from the Chinese frontier, there were not sufficient men left to tow his barge. At this stage such of his ministers as had remained with him, advised him to return to Ava and trust to his luck. To this he readily agreed, and proceeded down the river, to return to the capital where he could scarcely hope to receive any other treatment than that usual in the annals of Burma.

Although Maung Maung had gained possession of the throne, his position was far from secure. His personal attendants, mostly men from the village where he had been virtually a state prisoner, were too eager to take advantage of their sudden rise to power and temporary good fortune, by dispossessing all and sundry residing in the capital, of their valuables and possessions.<sup>13</sup> The discontent caused by the rapacious and overbearing conduct of these unscrupulous attendants must have been very considerable, as a few wise and far seeing ministers and officials took the liberty to warn the new King of the danger that would arise from such abuses and advised him to stop them. They also warned him of another source of danger, namely that his three uncles were still alive, and that every one of them was entitled to become King; and moreover they were all men of great ability and experience. To make Maung Maung's hold of the throne secure, his advisers saw no other way than that of putting them all to death. But it was not an easy matter to carry it out, as there were people who would willingly support their claims to sovereignty. The first step these advisers took to attain their end was to get hold of all the principal men who were assigned as retainers of the three surviving sons of Alaungpaya, during the time of their father and of their two brothers who had ascended the throne. These retainers were called up

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<sup>13</sup> คำให้การชาวกรุงฯ หน้า ๑๘.



to the capital, on the pretence that they were to be attached to their respective masters, whereas in reality they were to be kept in close confinement. This artifice was not sufficient to hoodwink the three sons of Badôn Min, the eldest of the three surviving sons of Alaungpaya. These young princes who were in close attendance on their cousin found out the real intention in calling up the principal retainers of their father and uncles. They gave timely warning of the impending danger to their father, who consulted his brothers as to what steps they should take, pointing out that their lives were in danger. Badôn Min's eldest son recommended immediate action to forestall the plans of those who were trying to bring about their destruction ; he said the time was opportune as the attention and energies of the court party were still directed towards capturing Singu Min. This recommendation was supported by Pindalè Min as well as by the others, and it was resolved to take a counter stroke and seize the throne. A priest whom Badôn Min had been supporting was asked to examine the prince's horoscope, make thorough astrological calculations, and find out the auspicious moment for the execution of this counter stroke. The calculations showed that the afternoon of that very day, Monday the 14th of waning of Tabodwè 1143 (February, A. D. 1782) coinciding with the birth-day of Badôn Min, was most auspicious, and it was therefore decided to put the scheme into execution at once. The struggle that ensued between the usurping party and the palace guards could not have been a serious one, as Maung Maung was captured that very evening and forthwith put to death.

Maung Maung, also known as Paunggaza, was born on Thursday the 6th of waxing Thadingyut 1125 (October, A. D. 1763) ; he seized the throne from his cousin at the age of eighteen years and four months, and before he could have really known what sovereignty meant, being probably a mere puppet in the hands of scheming courtiers, was dethroned on the 7th day of his Kingship, for which short-lived honour he paid very dearly with his head.

Three days after the deposition and death of Maung Maung, those who were engaged in the pursuit of Singu Min arrived with him, his mother, sisters, queens, and personal attendants. Singu Min, his four queens, and several of his attendants and adherents were executed at once. This unfortunate King, whose regal title was Maha Damayazadiyaza (Mahā Dhammarājādhirājā), was born on Monday the



12th of waxing Kasôn 1118 (May, A. D. 1756), became King in succession to his father, on Monday the 10th of waning Nayôn 1138 (June, A. D. 1776), at the age of 20 years and 1 month, reigned for about 5 years and 8 months, and met an untimely death at the hands of his uncle. The Burmese historian says that King Maha Damayazadiyaza was very liberal in making donations for religious purposes, and gifts or rewards to his attendants, that the commencement of his reign was prosperous and quiet, and that he went wrong only when he took to drink.

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SIR ARTHUR P. 'PHAYRE'S ACCOUNT OF  
THE SAME NARRATIVE.

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Death of Hseng-  
byusheng. Suc-  
cession of Sing-  
gusâ, June, A.D.  
1776.

In the midst of these disasters Hsengbyusheng died at Ava, and was succeeded by his son Singgusâ at the age of nineteen years. He was determined to put an end to the Siamese war. But Zêya Kyo by court favour was allowed to return to the army, and having succeeded in a skirmish with the Siamese, was considered to have atoned for his mutinous conduct. The armies in the Upper Menam and in the Zimmè territory were ordered to withdraw from the Siamese territory, where they no longer could remain with safety. Several officers suffered death for alleged misconduct before the enemy, and Mahâ Thihathura was disgraced and deprived of his office of Wungyi.

Plots against  
Singgusâ.  
Palace seized by  
conspirators.

Singgusâ, suspicious of plots, put to death a younger brother of his own, and also his uncle, the fourth son of Alaunghprâ. The fifth son, then known as Badun Meng, an astute prince, was sent to live at Sagaing, where he was closely watched. The son of Naungdoogyi remained. Maung Maung, who was a child at the time of his father's death, became an object of anxiety to the court party as a probable tool in the hands of conspirators. He had been brought up in a monastery, and was now placed in the village of Phaungkâ, where it was supposed he would be less dangerous than elsewhere. The king seemed to be satisfied with the precautions taken against conspiracy, and wearied with the monotonous life in the palace, all warlike expeditions being suspended, made frequent pilgrimages to distant pagodas. He was accustomed to leave the palace, and return suddenly after an interval without warning. A conspiracy, which was joined by several influential men, was formed against him, and was supposed to be secretly supported by Badun Meng. This plot was formed on the plausible



ground that if the rule of succession in favour of the sons of Alaunghprâ were departed from, then the son of the eldest, Naungdoagyî, had the best claim. As possession of the palace is the chief manifestation of right to the throne in Burma, the frequent absences of Singgusâ soon offered a favourable opportunity to the conspirators. The young king had gone with his chief queen, his mother, and sisters to worship at a pagoda about fifty miles up the Irâwadi. The young prince, Maung Maung, came suddenly at midnight to the palace gate, and his followers demanded admission for the king. The guard at the outer gate admitted the party without delay. At one of the inner gates the guard resisted, but was overpowered. The prince at the head of his followers gained possession of the palace, and forced the high officials in charge therein, to swear allegiance to him as king. In the morning several men of rank, old servants under former kings, being summoned, arrived at the city and were appointed to office. Mahâ Thihathura took command of troops to defend the palace. The Badun Meng and other members of the royal family came to the capital, and remained apparently passive.

About 8th  
February, A. D.  
1781.

Singgusâ was at this time at a village about fifty miles distant. The next day he heard of the event. He at once, with all his retinue, crossed the river to Singgumyû, intending to march down to the city. Hearing later that the whole of the capital had turned against him, he retired farther north to Sanpênago. There his retinue gradually left him, and at last the crews of the royal boats deserting, he was left with only a few followers and his own relations.

In the palace, the Atwen Wuns, ministers for personal affairs, quickly came to the conclusion that the boy Maung Maung was utterly unfit to rule. All who had abetted the conspiracy looked to the Badun Meng as the fittest to occupy the throne. He, prepared for the occasion, at once referred to the declara-

Succession of  
Bodoahprâ.

March. A. D.  
1782.

tion of Alaunghprâ on his death-bed, that his sons should succeed him according to their seniority. Already he had collected a body of armed men, and found no difficulty in entering the palace. Maung Maung, after a six days' reign, was seized and put to death. He was only eighteen years of age. Badun Meng was forthwith proclaimed king. He assumed various titles afterwards, especially that of Hsengbyu Mya Sheng, but is now usually known as Bodoahprâ. The unfortunate Singgusâ, and those who remained with him, were sent to the city as prisoners. and all, including children and attendants, were ruthlessly burnt to death.