

TRADITIONAL INSTALLATION OF SHAN SAWBWAS (SHAN CHIEFS) IN MYANMAR MONARCHICAL TIME

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ABSTRACT

Shan Sawbwas (Shan Chiefs) were the creators of Myanmar's politics together with the Burmese in the Monarchical time. It is not possible to left out their role, standard and abilities to build a strong Myanmar Empire. We have to keep in view not only the prevailing political conditions but also the power of Shan Chiefs. In the administration of Shan States, the traditional chieftainship was accepted by the King. He always exercised the right of nominating heirs from among the Chiefs' families. The Chiefs were entrusted to rule over their subjects by their own free will. When a new King ascended to the throne, the envoys were sent to the Away Alan, far away and distant places under the Chiefs like Sawbwa, Myosa (Town Headman) and Tat Paung Za (Chief of Troops) to administer the oath of allegiance to these Chiefs. In some cases the local Chiefs were brought to the capital to administer the oath. The genealogy of Sawbwas (Hpwa Yoe) and lineage of leaders (Kyi Yoe) were checked through the Officials of central court. Besides there were the Chiefs termed to be Hnit Hpet Kyun, vassals of both sovereigns, Myanmar and China. They all together shaped to build a stable administration in the Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

The research paper named “Traditional Installation of Shan *Sawbwas* (Shan Chiefs) in Myanmar Monarchical Time” focuses on both tradition of appointing Shan *Sawbwas* and the allegiance of Shan *Sawbwas* to the Burmese Kings. An analysis is based upon five distinctive themes of

- (1) The Beginning of Relationship
- (2) Organizing Shan States
- (3) Administrative Procedure
- (4) Installation of Shan *Sawbwas* and
- (5) The Status and the role of Shan *Sawbwas*.

Traditional Installation of Shan *Sawbwas* (Shan Chiefs) in Myanmar Monarchical Time

The Shan State forms the eastern portion of the present The Republic of the Union of Myanmar between latitudes 19° 17' and 24° 13' north, and longitudes 96° 10' and 101° 11' east, having an area of about 60,155.277 square miles (155,801.4 sq.km).¹ From the reign of King Anawrahta (AD.1044-1077) onwards the two peoples of Burmese and Shans are closely associated with each other. Anawrahta received homage from several Shan *Sawbwas*.² The Maw Shan Empire (Maw Empire) was founded early in the 13th Century. Mogaung was the center of the Maw Shan Empire. The power of Maw King was so immense over Momeik, Nyaung Shwe, Moby, Yatsauk, Legya, Tigit, and KengTaung in 1223.³

With the decline of Maw powers in 1412, Maw Empire was destroyed by King Hanthawaddy Hsinbyushin (1554-1581) popularly known as Bayinnaung in 1563. Before this *Ko ShanPyi*⁴, the Chinese Shan States, were reduced in 1562. Kengtung also became a tributary state of Myanmar in the same year. Later, Hsenwi (Theinni) took refuge under Bayinnaung. From that time onwards all Shans came to be part of Myanmar Empire. Although the Shans had their own Chiefs, they all were the vassals of Burmese Kings.⁵

¹Sai Aung Tun, *History of the Shan States from its Origins to 1962*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2009, p.31 (Henceforth: Sai Aung Tun, 2009)

² Sao Saimong Mangrai, *The Shan States and the British Annexation*, Data Paper: Number 57, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1965, p.47 (Henceforth: Sao Saimong Mangrai, 1965)

³*A Tribute to Than Tun on His 80th Birthday*, Yangon, San Yaung Shain Sarpay, 2003, p.108 (Henceforth: *A Tribute to Than Tun*, 2003)

⁴Mongmau, Hsikwan, Mongna, Sanda, Hotha, Latha, Mowun, Kaingma and Monglem

⁵*A Tribute to Than Tun*, 2003,198

In founding Myanmar Empire, Myanmar Kings tried to organize the whole Myanmar Empire under one rule. The Myanmar's frontier town especially in the Shan States were under the administration of the royal government through the local chiefs of *Sawbwa*, *Thaywibwa*, *Myosa*, and *Ngwekhunhmu* under the supervision of the Myanmar officials stationed at their capitals.

Shan Chiefs had the right to rule over their subjects independently without any interference of the Burmese Kings. Since Shan Chiefs were vested an autonomous powers to rule over their subjects, their role and their status were very important in Myanmar's politics. In other words they were the creators of Myanmar's political history together with the Burmese.

The Royal Order of 31 May 1817 stated that the general administrative works for Shan States were circulated by the following officers of the Kingdom.

<i>Bohmu Mintha</i>	Prince Commander
<i>Sitke</i>	Regimental Officer
<i>Gaung</i>	Ward (Chief)
<i>Ngwekhunhmu</i>	Silver Revenue Collector
<i>Sawbwa</i>	Shan Chief
<i>Thaywibwa</i>	Lesser <i>Sawbwa</i>
<i>Htiyan Nanyan</i>	Vassal
<i>Myosa</i>	Shan Town Officer
<i>Shwekhunhmu</i>	Gold Revenue Collector
<i>Thugyi</i>	Headman of Town or Land Tract or Village Tract or Village
<i>Kalan</i>	Administrative Officer
<i>Away Myowun</i>	Town Officer in Frontier or Far Away Territories
<i>Amat (Dawbaya),</i>	Shan town or village Chief in Shan States (or) Lesser
<i>Hein,</i>	Officers
<i>Htamong,</i>	
<i>Kyawt</i>	
<i>Kyemmong</i>	Heir Apparent (Elder son of <i>Sawbwa</i>)
<i>Nakhan</i>	Liaison Officer
<i>Tat Paung Za</i>	Shan Chief of several villages or Shan Chief of Shan Armed Men
<i>Za Baung Za</i>	Chief of Shan villages
<i>Tat Hmu</i>	Guards
<i>Tat Ok</i>	Guards
<i>Kin Daing</i>	Leaders of Guards
<i>Taik Saray</i>	Clerk of the land tracts
<i>Myowun</i>	Town Officer
<i>Saray</i>	Secretary ⁶

⁶ (a) *Zambudipa Oksaung Kyan*, Than Tun (ed), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005, p. 172 (Henceforth: *Zambudipa*, 2005)

(b) Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Six, A.D.1807-1810, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1987, pp.viii-ix (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1987)

(c) Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Ten, Epilogue, Glossary and Index, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1990, 46-7, 50 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1990)

The Myanmar's administrative systems practiced in the areas of Shan States were laid down by the central government. Traditionally Shan *Sawbwas*, *Thaywibwa*, *Myosa* and *Ngwekhunhmus* were directly appointed by the Kings. The administration was implemented by the ministers, *Bohmu-mintha*, *Sitke*, *Nakhan*, and *Saray*. They all were appointed to the provinces under the charge of *Sawbwas*.⁷

The *Myosa* and *Tat PaungZa* do not have to deal direct with central administration. They are under *Sawbwa*. Ministers of central administration did not direct with the subordinates of a *Sawbwa*. They sent their instructions directly to *Sawbwa*. *Sawbwa* was also considered a King and he had to follow the ten virtues of a King.⁸

In the regions of Shan State, west of the Ayeyarwaddy River, the way officers and *Amat*, *Hein*, *Htamong* and *Kyawt* were directly appointed by Burmese Kings. In the areas east and west of the Thanlwin River, *Sawbwa*, *Kyemmong*, *Myosa*, *Shwekhunhmu* and *Ngwekhunhmu* were directly appointed by Burmese Kings and the lesser officers called *Amat*, *Hein*, *Htamong*, *Kyawt* and the way officers were appointed by the *Sawbwas* and *Myosas* according to their own will.⁹

The *Sawbwas*, were local and usually hereditary chiefs. The larger Shan States were always governed by *Sawbwas* who were local and usually hereditary Chiefs. Each state had Burmese representatives, assisted by Burmese garrisons. Sometime Burmese representative or garrison interfered in the local Shan affairs. In this situation, the Chiefs rebelled against Burmese officers stationed in their States.¹⁰ The rebellion did not intend to revolt against the central administration or to stop the whole Burmese administration in their States.

It is required to trace the status and the role of Shan *Sawbwas* in Myanmar's administrative cycle and the deeply impact of *Sawbwa* in Burmese administration. The *Saohpa* (*Sawbwain* Burmese) was head of state. *Sao* is the Shan word for ruler, lord, king, master, or prince; *hpa* means sky. Thus *Saohpa* means Lord of the Sky.

⁷Sai Aung Tun, 2009, 111

⁸Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Five, A.D. 1788-1806, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, p.59 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1986 b)

⁹*Myanmar-min Oakchoke-pon Sadan Hnit Bodaw Phayagyi Ei Yazathat Hkaw Thou Ameintdawtangyi* (A Treatise on Myanmar Kings' System of Administration and the Royal Order of King Bodawpaya) Part. IV, Yangon, Ministry of Culture, p. 112 (Henceforth: *Oakchoke-pon*, IV)

¹⁰ Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma*, London, The Cresset Press, 1962, p.422 (Henceforth: Dorothy Woodman, 1962)

The *Saohpa* had the right to rule their subjects as their own free will. The *Saohpa* held all powers and he was a sole ruler over their subjects. In analyzing the maintenance of a good tradition based on mutual respects of each others, the respect of the Chiefs of the Shan States to the King is required to present first. The tradition is never one sided. It is effective in turn.

Customarily homage (*Kadaw*) was paid to the King and the Chief Queen three times in the year at the *Myenan* (Earth Palace). These three *Kadaw* days were the *Hnit-thit Kadaw*, homage at the beginning of the Burmese year (in April); the *Wa-win Kadaw*, at the beginning of Lent (in July); and the *Wa-gyut Kadaw*, at the end of the Lent (in October). On new year's day and the first of lent, as a rule, only the Princes, Ministers, and Officials in the Royal city took an oath of fealty to the King. The end of lent was fixed as a great homage day. In which day and then all Princes, Ministers, officers of State, the Shan *Sawbwas*, and the governors of districts from all parts of the Kingdom came to the capital city to render vows of allegiance.¹¹

Another tradition accepted by the provincial Chiefs was a sending of their sons to the court. The sons or brothers of the ruling *Sawbwas* were always kept at the court of Ava, not only as hostages for the good behavior of the Chiefs of the State.¹² This measure was significant feature of relationship between the central government and the provincial Chiefs. On the other side, the sons or brothers of the Kings were not placed under those provincial Chiefs. The tradition should be in turn or it is not for one sided only. The effective supports of Shan *Sawbwas* play an important role to achieve a stable administration for the central government. Therefore they were customarily selected and officially appointed by a royal proclamation.

In analyzing the tradition of appointing a new *Sawbwa*, the procedures for the investiture of a new *Sawbwa* in all the Shan States were the same way. Firstly the Royal Order for bestowing a town to a newly appointed *Sawbwa* was issued. It was another version of investiture order for a new *Sawbwa*. In order to know about to whom was appointed as a *Sawbwa*, a royal proclamation was first issued by the central government to the *Hluttaw* (Administrative Centre).

¹¹J. George Scott & J.P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part.I, Vol.II, Rangoon, The Superintendent, Government Printing, Burma, 1900, pp.92,94,98, (Henceforth: Scott, 1900 b)

¹² J. George Scott & J.P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part.I, Vol.I, Rangoon, The Superintendent, Government Printing, Burma, 1900, p. 281 (Henceforth: Scott, 1900 a)

Traditionally three Appointment Letters had to be passed by the *Hluttaw*. The first one was for the investiture *Sawbwa*. The second was for the *Hluttaw* and the last one for the *Shwe Taik* (Royal Archives) to save it.¹³ An appointment to an office was made by a *Cakhywan*, Thin Palm Leaf with one end tapering to a point, written by specially assigned senior clerk.¹⁴

The newly appointed *Sawbwa* submitted his application letter to the *Hluttaw* in order to receive the recognition of the King for his insignia of rank and title. In his letter he stated that he hopes to accept the royal regalia offered by the King and to get a permission of exacting dues and taking share from selling and buying or producing anything in his land.¹⁵

Traditionally when a new *Sawbwa* or *Thaywibwa* was to be appointed, he was summoned to the royal capital to administer the oath of allegiance. The King confirmed the legitimacy of subordinate Chiefs as the rulers of their states along with Royal regalias and titles. The insignias offered to the *Sawbwas* were not the same in each other. Among the Shan *Sawbwas*, the insignias of the two *Sawbwas* of Kengtung and Keng Yone (Kenghung) were the great. When a new King ascended to the throne, the capital city sent an information letter to those two *Sawbwas*. The arrangements for paying an oath of allegiance to them were also made by the court. Therefore the two *Sawbwas* of Kengtung and Keng Yone (Kenghung) were the most favourable *Sawbwas* of Myanmar Kings for that they were given special privileges, and offered with special insignias.¹⁶

Some of the Shan Chiefs took the King's palace as a model to build their own *Haw or Hawnan* (Royal Residence), and adapted and practiced the court ceremonies of the Royal court at the capital city to gain prestige in the feudal world of the Shan Chiefs.¹⁷ For instance, Thibaw *Sawbwa* was allowed to build a brick enclosure wall which around the *Hawnan*. He was loyal, honest and earnest in the service of King Mindon (1853-1878).¹⁸

¹³ San Shwe, *Shan-Myanmar Relations during late Konbaung Period (1819-1885)* M.A. Thesis, Department of History, University of Yangon, 1992, p.6 (Henceforth: San Shwe, 1992)

¹⁴ Than Tun, 1990, 47

¹⁵ *Oakchokpon*, IV, 155-6

¹⁶ Wungyi Thiri Uzana, *Loka Byuha Kyan: Inyone Sadan* (A Treatise of Myanmar History), 2001, pp.90,93 (Henceforth: Thiri Uzana, 2001)

¹⁷ Sai Aung Tun, 2009, 112

¹⁸ The Orders for the appointment of Thibaw *Sawbwa* with the title of *Kambawza Rahta Maha Wuntha Thiri Pavara Thu-Dhamma Raza* and the royal regalia offered him, White *Parabaik* of the Chief of Thibaw-Ohnbaung, *Parabaik Manuscript, MS.* Edited by U Maung Maung Tin, K.S.M, A.T.M, Cultural Museum of Taunggyi, Taunggyi, Southern Shan States (Henceforth: *Thibaw Parabaik*)

A good example for the installation of Shan *Sawbwa* is the appointment of Thibaw *Sawbwa* by King Mindon in 1866. A new *Sawbwa* was appointed with the title of *Kambawzarahta Mahawuntha Thiripawara Thudhamma Yaza* by the Royal Order of 21 October 1866.¹⁹ The central court made arrangements to appoint a new *Sawbwa* of Thibaw. The newly appointed *Sawbwa* had to attend *Hluttaw* (Administrative Centre) to receive the Royal order for him.

On 29 October 1866, the two responsible persons Clerk Naymyo Yaza Kyaw Khaung and Shan *Than Taw Khan*, Officer to receive envoys from Shan Land, Naymyo Thiri Kyaw Htin came to the tent of *Sawbwa* and they took the *Sawbwa* of Thibaw to the *Hluttaw*. The *Sawbwa* stood up in his appointed place. The way liaison officers (Liaison Officers for Provincial Towns) have to take the *Sawbwa* to the proper place in *Hluttaw*.²⁰

The *Sawbwa* climbed up from the left stairs and entered into the *Hluttaw*. *Nayya Cha Thway Thauk Gyi*, usher took lead the *sawbwa* to sit the proper place in *Hluttaw*. The *Sawbwa* was allowed to sit in *Hnar Yaung Kham*, the vestibule of a *Hluttaw*. The room lies in the northwest of the pillar of *Kun Zin*, Distinguished place within the most central four pillars of *Hluttaw* building, before the place of all ministers.²¹

To receive the investiture order, *Nayya Cha Thway Thauk Gyi*- usher took the *Sawbwa* to sit behind the seat of *Amaint Taw Rey Than Taw Khan*, the Royal Scribe. Shan *Than Taw Khan*, Envoys from Shan Land, took lead the *Sawbwa* to sit in the front role near the seat of *Wundauktawmin* (Next in rank and status to minister).²² The saying words of the King were translated into messenger's words. He then read out the saying words of the King. An extract will be given below:

"The most glorious King, the lord of life orders that you shall be appointed *Sawbwa*. Keep always in your mind that the gratitude of a glorious King. Please act always as the good and righteous *Sawbwa*. Take care your subjects and give them prosperity. Please concert with your subordinate town officers to administer your state. This you must always do". The saying words of *Sawbwa* were also translated into Burmese by Shan *Than Taw Khan*, Envoy from Shan Land. After that the *Sawbwa* was allowed to sit for a while in his seat. Finally the *Sawbwa* was allowed to return to his former tent.²³

¹⁹Thibaw Parabaik)

²⁰Thibaw Parabaik

²¹Thibaw Parabaik

²²Thibaw Parabaik

²³Thibaw Parabaik

The new *Sawbwa* had to observe the following four principle rules.

- To collect customary dues with justice
- To keep for the development of the city
- To fix reasonable taxes on his subjects
- To take responsible for the development of social and economic life of the people.²⁴

The royal regalias were offered to the Thibaw *Sawbwa* by one line order on 26 October 1866 and the royal title of *Maha Dewi* (Queen) was conferred to his spouse.²⁵ The insignias of rank had to be correctly used and any discrepancy would be punished. On the other hand, the King did not like people of high position taking undue advantage of their status.²⁶

Some of the Royal regalia offered to the Thibaw *Sawbwa* by King Mindon were: Royal white umbrella with thirty-six golden banyan leaves of three tiers adorned in gold at the canopy and pinnacle and the gilded shaft is five cubits (2.5 yards) long; Distinctive headgear worn by Shan royalty adorned in fifteen gold pedals and fifteen neen tree leaves; Sheath of a Royal dagger in white adorned with rubies on the metal rings, each of the two ends of it's golden handle is also adorned with a ring of precious stones; The gold foot-weary slippers, Yak tail fly-whisk with a golden shaft decorated with precious stones, Royal sash with fifteen rings and a necklace decorated with rubies in the middle and precious stones in the fringe; Royal throne in front of the court, three cubits wide, painted in reddish color; Royal throne in front of the *Haw* is three cubits tall and four cubits wide, adorned with gold; Royal seal; Couch with head- rest decorated in golden color; *Hawnan* (Royal Residence) with spire and Walls of a *Haw* in brick, 150 tas (1050 cubits), with four gates.²⁷

After preparing for the investiture ceremony, the responsible persons appointed by the *Hluttaw* entered by *Rwe Toauyu* (East entrance to the palace stockade) Gate and they all together went to the *Sutaung Pyi* Pagoda. The newly appointed *Thaywibwa* and nine town officers of Shan land had to kneel down in silent on the flat ground of the Pagoda.²⁸

²⁴Thibaw Parabaik

²⁵Thibaw Parabaik

²⁶Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Three, A.D. 1751-1781, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1985, p.xii (Henceforth:ThanTun, 1985 b)

²⁷Thibaw Parabaik

²⁸*Oakchoke-pon*, IV, 158

Five ranges of weapon were placed on a stand position in a glazed bowl filled with water. And then a person named Nga San Win, the usher and the newly appointed *Thaywibwa* had to stand up and hold it in their hands. Burmese envoy Naymyo Thiri Sithu read out the letter of allegiance in Burmese language. The newly appointed *Thaywibwa* had to speak the same words followed by Burmese envoy as exactly as he read out. The *Yuan Than Khan* (Envoy from Shan Land) also read out the letter of allegiance in Shan language. The said two letters were burnt to ashes in a *mogyo* bowl.²⁹

In order to get the water of allegiance, the ashes were turned into liquid with water in a glazed bowl. The ashes water was stirred up with five ranges of weapons. Lastly the water of allegiance was poured into a gold bowl adorned with rubies. The new *Thaywibwa* had to drink it.³⁰ After the ceremony, they returned to the former place (Palace) in order. When they reached the outer part of the Red Gate, the new *Thaywibwa* and nine town officers of Shan land kneeled down on the ground and *Shikoed* (paid homage) to the place where the Royal Palace located. This was done thrice by new *Thaywibwa* and nine town officers of Shan land.³¹

At the Royal Palace, the new *Thaywibwa* and nine town officers of Shan land were allowed to stay at the north east vestibule, north of *Hluttaw*. For a while they were allowed to return to their former residence. This in brief is the ceremony of drinking water of allegiance to *Thaywibwa* of Kenghung.

The Shan Chiefs were autonomous rulers of their States to manage their own internal affairs. They wanted to free from the interference of the King or any one from the central government. They have absolute power to rule over their subjects.³² According to the arrangement of seating priority at the audience, Kenghung and Kengtung have taken the lead after Theinni.³³ When there were probably disputes on succession of hereditary positions of *Myosa* and *Sawbwa*, the present Chief was also placed in his own position. It was stated in the Royal Order of 2 October 1845.³⁴ According to the Royal Order of 29 May 1850, the appointment orders for Keng Yone Gyi (Kenghung) *Thaywibwa* and Mong Hli *Sawbwa* were sent to *Sitke* to inform to those newly appointed Chiefs.³⁵

²⁹*Oakchoke-pon*, IV, 158

³⁰*Oakchoke-pon*, IV, 158

³¹*Oakchoke-pon*, IV, 158-159

³²Sai Aung Tun, 2009, 116-117

³³Sao Saimong Mangrai, 1965, 58-9

³⁴Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Eight, A.D. 1819-1853, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988, p.233 (Henceforth:Than Tun, 1988 b)

³⁵Than Tun, 1988 b, 279

A new Chief was traditionally appointed by Royal proclamation under one of the following circumstances.

- (1) Petitioning for the succession of *Sawbwaship* by the legitimate son of the deceased Chief
- (2) Petitioning for sending a new one in time of political unrest
- (3) In case of rebellion

The first reason was an appointment of a Chief in a vacant place of late *Sawbwa*. When each *Sawbwa* died, it is necessary to report such occasion and to petition for succession to *Sawbwaship*. This was done by the legitimate son of the deceased Chief. According to the report of the legitimate son of the deceased Chief, a new *Sawbwa* was appointed by Royal proclamation.³⁶ In appointing new *Sawbwa* the traditional Chieftainship was accepted by the King.

A good example was the appointment of Keng Yone Gyi (Kenghung) *Thaywibwa* in October 19, 1878. Myosa and Officers of the Lu Se Hnit Panna, twelve Districts of Lu, Kenghung, petitioned for appointing a successive Chief. He was the son of former *Uparaja*, Heir Apparent, of Kenghung. The State was in close of China. Therefore the vacancy was filled with a new one as soon as possible.³⁷

The Third reason for the appointment of a new *Sawbwa* was a rebellion which directly against to the King. For instance, Nyaung Shwe *Sawbwa* revolted against the central government in December 27, 1600 and Keng Hkaung *Sawbwa* revolted against in November 1624.³⁸

Revolts against the central authority took place in the Shan States over the question of appointing *Thaywibwa* of Kenghung by the Royal court against the nominee of Kengtung Chief. In this situation the *Sawbwa* of Kengtung executed the Myanmar political officer in 1882. The revolt was based upon the personal character. A successive *Thaywibwa* was appointed without approval of the Kengtung *Sawbwa*. Therefore Kengtung *Sawbwa* and his forces marched on Kenghung to depose the Myanmar nominee and appoint a new one in accordance with his own will.³⁹

³⁶Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Seven, A.D. 1811-1819, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988, p.20 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1988 a)

³⁷ Than Tun, *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, Part Nine, A.D. 1853-1885, Kyoto, The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1989, p.241 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1989)

³⁸*History of Myanmar Chronology* (From pre-history to 1945), Part.I, Naypyidaw, Historical Research Department, 2009, pp.101,108 (Henceforth: *Myanmar Chronology*, 2009)

³⁹Sai Aung Tun, 2009, 127

The King checked the lineage of the Chief and confirmed to appoint the Chief of a State. In Burmese the terms *Hpwa Yoe*, the genealogy of *Sawbwas* and *Kyi Yoe*, lineage of leaders were checked by the King's Officials to the provinces. A good example was the check of lineage in a Shan town. On 12 May 1601 and 17 May 1601 Sanda Thiri and Nanda Pyinna, *Myin Zi* (Leaders of Horsemen), were sent to find out the lineage of leaders in Upper Shan area.⁴⁰ This fact was also supported by the Royal Order of 6 February 1806. It is stated that a true descendant of Let Mong *Sawbwa* was appointed as a Chief over five Karen Headmen and nine Lawa Headmen in Let Mong.⁴¹

During the Monarchical time, the three terms of voluntary submission showed the glory and the greatness of the King over his subordinate Chiefs. A rebel Chief himself would be offered three terms for voluntary submission to the King. The terms were *Seesein Ma Pyak*, property safe, *Asak Ma Thay*, Life unmolested, and *Ney Ra MaNeint*, position secured.⁴² In this situation, a Chief seems to have received a former position of rank and right. As a King, he never executed him and a rebel was pardoned.

Another significant tradition was the appointing new Chief by the approval of both monarchs of Chinese and Burmese. The provinces of Mong Hli Gyi (Mong Hli) and Keng Yone Gyi (Kenghung) are considered to be part of the Burmese territory though the Chinese also considered them to be theirs. Since these provinces lay between Burmese and Chinese, they paid their homage for both sides. Their Chiefs are therefore termed as *Hnit Hpet Kyun*, vassals of both sovereigns. Therefore an appointment of a Chief must be approved by both monarchs.⁴³

According to the inscription of Thibaw *Sawbwa* erected in *Thienkone* Pagoda, Thibaw, it indicates that the Thibaw *Sawbwa* himself was a good and loyal to the king. The inscription shows that the great gratitude of Myanmar King was praised in it. It clearly states that the heart of Thibaw *Sawbwa* was full of joy and tenderness and he pleaded with great honour and admire to his Lord. The inscription also shows that he was a good ruler of his state by justice.

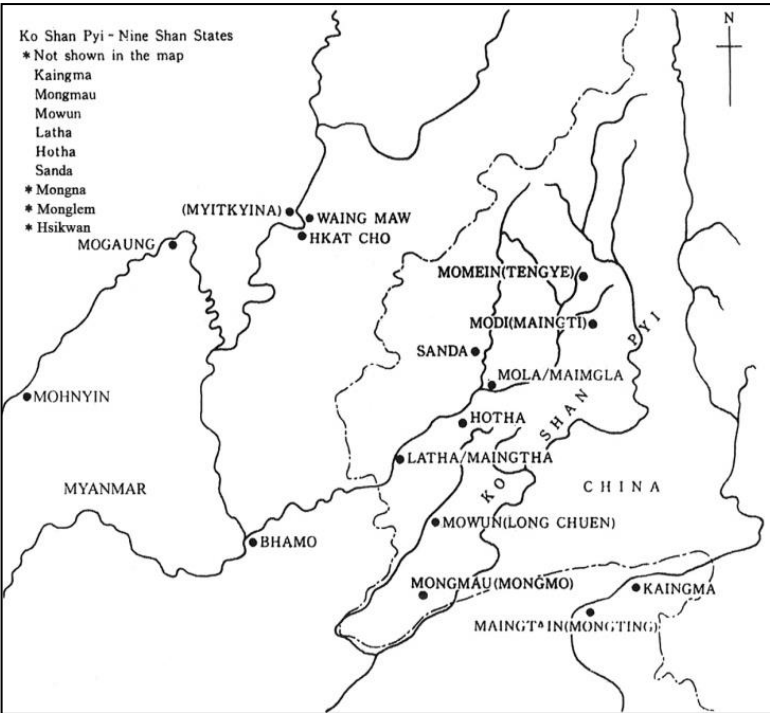
⁴⁰*Zambudipa*, 2005, 162, 164

⁴¹ Than Tun, 1986 b, 190

⁴² Than Tun, 1990, 48

⁴³ Than Tun, 1987, 33

Therefore, from consideration of the reasonable account that is found in this inscription Thibaw *Sawbwa* maintained a good relationship between the royal court and the Shan Chief. He was considered a loyal *Sawbwa* to the Myanmar King.⁴⁴ In sum the cordial relationship was established between the Myanmar Kings and the Shan Chiefs in the monarchical time.



Sketch Showing *Ko Shan Pyi* (Nine Shan States)

Source: *Zambudipa*, 2005, xvi

⁴⁴The Inscription of Theingone Pagoda, Thibaw, Northern Shan State

**Some of the Royal regalias offered to the Thibaw Sawbwa by King Mindon
(Sources taken from *Thibaw Parabaik*)**

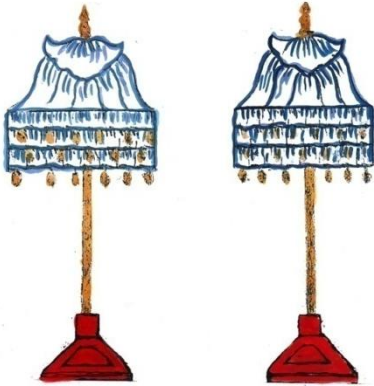


Figure 1. Two Royal white umbrellas



Figure 2. Couch with head-rest

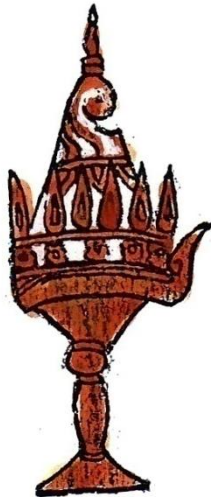


Figure 3. Distinctive headgear

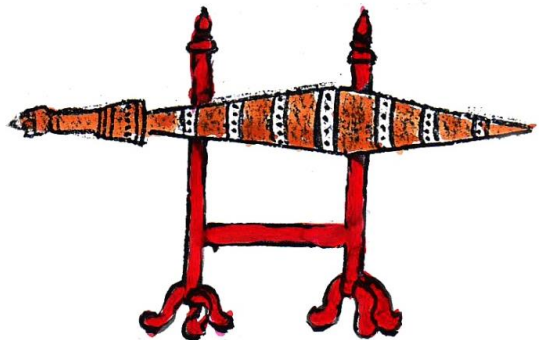


Figure 4. Sheath of a Royal dagger

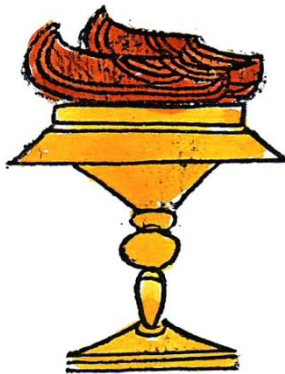


Figure 5. The gold foot-weary slippers

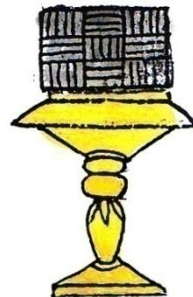


Figure 6. Royal seal

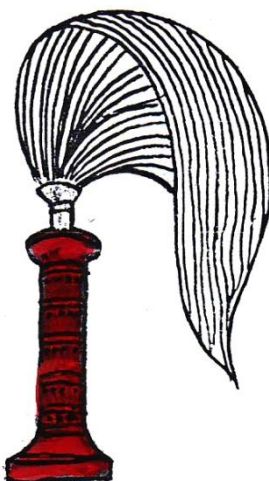


Figure 7. Yak tail fly-whisk

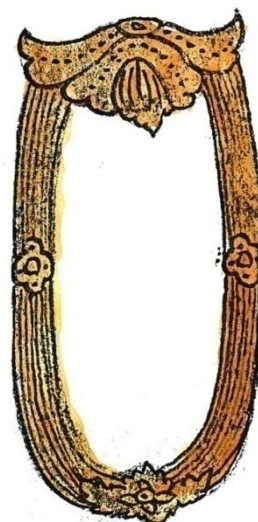
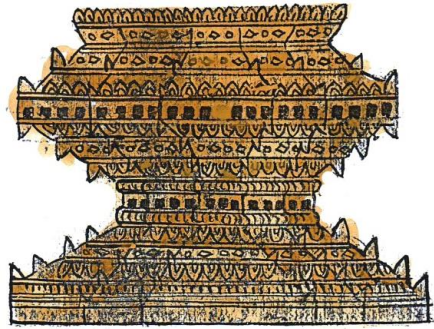


Figure 8. Royal sash with fifteen rings



**Figure 9. Royal throne
in front of the court**



**Figure 10. Royal throne
in front of the *Haw***



**Figure 11. *Hawnan*
(Royal Residence)**

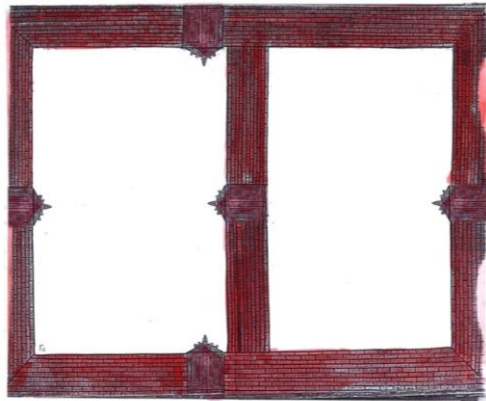


Figure 12. Walls of a *Haw* in brick

CONCLUSION

Based on a good tradition, we can assess the pattern of relationship between Burmese Kings and Shan *Sawbwas*. The relationship between two monarchs was peace and amity. Both sides maintained a reciprocal good friendship between them. Actually Shan States was not a “Vassal States” and also it was not an “Occupied States” of Burmese Kings. Really it is an “Organizing States” of Burmese Kings. The administrative system of Shan States was said to be “The Federal System Administration”. They stood on the way which leading to a formal diplomacy. Therefore both sides practiced the tradition-base-political theory to achieve a United Kingdom. The organizing States seldom freed from Burmese Kings but it was a short time.

Burmese Kings respected the customs of appointing Shan *Sawbwa*, *Thaywibwa*, *Myosa* and *Ngwekhunhmu*. Their power was so immense in their administrative area. Shan Chiefs were loyal, sincere and earnest in the service of Burmese King. The Shan *Sawbwas* endeavored to maintain peace and stability in their state. They acted as a good and righteous King in accordance with ten kingly duties. In return Burmese King recognized their autonomous right and offered them along with royal titles and royal regalia. Both Monarchs of the Burmese and the Shans respected the sovereignty and integrity of a Myanmar Kingdom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term "Sovereignty and integrity" (*Gati Thitsa* in Burmese) is a front role to establish a strong United Myanmar Empire with the strengths of all national races together lived in Myanmar Empire.

A good tradition was maintained by both monarchs of Burmese and the Shans. Burmese Kings achieved a great support of Shan *Sawbwas* to circulate the central administration. The unity has proved invaluable historical heritages of Myanmar Empire. Moreover unity enables to open a new historical page.

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