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CHAPTER VI  
THE TOUNGOO DYNASTY 1531-1752

# BURMA UNDER THE TOUNGOO DYNASTY 1531-1752



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## CHAPTER VI

### THE TOUNGOO DYNASTY 1531-1752

**Tabinshwehti 1531-50.** The Shan migration into the plains (p. 125), a nightmare lasting two centuries, had now ended, but no overlord had emerged. Tabinshwehti was to restore the kingship. He was only fifteen, but the dice were loaded in his favour. The Shan irruption had driven the Burmese south to Toungoo, greatly increasing his man-power; he was in touch with Kyaukse, the richest area in Upper Burma<sup>2</sup> and the key to Ava; and to crown all, his opponents were Shans, a hill-race with a congenital incapacity for combined action.

The Burmese refugees around him included not only simple peasants who had fled in panic, but also men of mark who burned to regain their rightful pomp. He had the faithful lords of Toungoo who had watched him from his cradle, and Bayinnaung,<sup>1</sup> son of his wet nurse, the great comrade to whom he now gave his sister in marriage.

At his accession he decided to have his ears bored at the Shwemawdaw and nowhere else, and he accomplished this surrounded by armed retainers, under the nose of the Talaing king, whose men did not dare gainsay him.

In 1535 he started his career of conquest by attacking Lower Burma, probably because it was prospering on maritime trade and contained more loot than the north country. He reduced the western provinces, Bassein and Myaungmya, with little difficulty. When advancing on Pegu town he was opposed by the Talaing flotilla and a Portuguese craft which happened to be trading in the port; the Burmese drove off the Talaing war canoes and then overwhelmed the Portuguese, who died fighting single-handed.<sup>2</sup> The incident suggests, mismanagement or lack of morale on the part of the Talaings

<sup>1</sup> See note "Tabinshwehti and Bayinnaung" p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> *Stevens* II. 10.

who ought to have won easily seeing that they had the best war canoes and boatmen in the country, just as the Burmese had the best infantry and the Shans the best elephantry.

But in spite of several attempts, Tabinshwehti could not take Pegu city. Therefore he had recourse to stratagem. The Pegu king's ablest supporters were two commanders, whom he sent to Tabinshwehti with a letter asking for friendly relations. Tabinshwehti pointedly avoided referring to the letter but treated the envoys themselves with unusual honour. After their return he wrote a letter to them by name "When the matter you arranged with me is finished, I will give one of you Pegu and the other Martaban to rule over." The bearers of this letter had instructions to insult the Talaing *thugyis* by demanding food gratuitously and, having thus provoked a quarrel, to run away leaving the letter behind. They did so, and the Talaing *thugyis* forwarded the letter to their king, who at once, perceiving the two commanders to be traitors, put them to death.<sup>1</sup> Thus deprived of their best leaders, the Talaings lost heart, many of them deserted, their king fled to Prome, and Tabinshwehti entered Pegu without striking a blow in 1539.

He then attacked Prome. During the advance we get the first characteristic touch of his great comrade Bayinnaung; it is like a breath of new life after three centuries of mannikins. Bayinnaung's scouts stumbled across a greatly superior Talaing force on the other side of a stream. Other commanders would have promptly retreated, but Bayinnaung had already discovered, as every good leader discovers in a third-rate environment, that numbers do not matter, it is spirit that counts. He improvised rafts and put his men across the stream. Just before the attack he was handed a message from the king that if he found the enemy he should not engage them but wait for the main body. He sent back answer that he had already met and beaten the enemy. His attendant said "You have reported a victory before we have fought, the odds are against us, we shall probably lose, and think how the king

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* II. 201-2. This stratagem was the height of technique, and Mahabandula used it against his opponents in 1825, trying to make them get rid of a country-born in their service, to whom he wrote thanking him for information received and asking for more. They filed the letter, *Trant* 164.

will punish us then!" Bayinnaung answered "If we lose? Why then we die here, and who can punish dead men?" He destroyed the rafts after his men had crossed. His officers remonstrated, saying "The enemy are ten to one and we shall never get out of this alive if you destroy the rafts." "Just so," said Bayinnaung, "Friends, we have got to win now."

The attack on Prome failed because the tribes of Upper Burma, headed by the Ava *sawbwa*, came swarming down the river to help the besieged. Tabinshwehti had to return home. But his task was lightened by the death of Takayutpi (p. 120). On hearing of their king's death such Talaings as were still recalcitrant came in to pay allegiance wholesale. He treated them well, giving the men rice and clothes, and confirming the lords in their fiefs. Thus he now had at his back not only his Burmans but also the Talaing levies, under their own lords. Further, he engaged 700 Portuguese, with their ships, under Joano Cayeyro, one of the many Portuguese adventurers who now roamed over the East with his merry men, in great demand among the wrangling rajas; they brought muskets and light artillery, probably the first ever seen in Burma (p. 340).

In 1541 Tabinshwehti proceeded to complete his conquest of the Pegu kingdom by attacking its wealthiest town Martaban. The puny Portuguese artillery was useless against ramparts backed by earthwork, and he could not even get near the water side of the town because it was defended by seven Portuguese ships and a hundred men under a rival adventurer Paulo Seixas. The town repelled him with heavy loss but at the end of seven months it was famished and asked for terms. He would accept nothing but complete submission. The besieged lord would not agree and tried to seduce Joano Cayeyro, secretly sending him this letter:—

Valiant and faithful Commander of the Portuguese, through the grace of the King of the other end of the world, the strong and mighty lion, dreadfully roaring, with a crown of Majesty in the House of the Sun! I the unhappy Chaubainha [Sawbinnya], heretofore a prince, but now no longer so, finding myself besieged in this wretched and unfortunate city, do give thee to understand by the words pronounced out of my mouth, with an assurance no less faithful than true, that I now render myself the vassal of the great King of Portugal, sovereign

lord of me, and my children, with an acknowledgement of homage, and such tribute as he at his pleasure shall impose on me; wherefore . . . come speedily with thy ships to the bulwark of the chapel quay, where thou shalt find me ready attending thee, and . . . I will deliver myself up to thy mercy, with all the treasures that I have in gold, and precious stones, whereof I will most willingly give the one half to the King of Portugal, upon condition that he shall permit me with the remainder to levy in his kingdom, or in the fortresses which he hath in the Indies, two thousand Portuguese, to whom I will give extraordinary great pay that by their means I may be re-established in this state, which now I am constrained to abandon. (*Pinto* 296.)

Joano Cayeyro was not the king of Portugal's officer but a free lance, and hearing that the lord of Martaban had treasure enough to fill several ships, he wished to aid him in escaping. But his officers were jealous, and threatened to denounce him to Tabinshwehti, so he had to refuse.

In despair, the lord of Martaban allowed Paulo Seixas to depart, paying him off with a pair of bracelets which subsequently sold for a fabulous sum; and with him went his Talaing wife, his two children, and some of his men. But the seven ships remained and the town was far from taken. Tabinshwehti therefore accepted the proposal of one of his commanders, Smim Payu who, being a Talaing, was more expert than Burmans at water fighting. Smim Payu went up stream to Lagunpyin (? Lagun, twenty miles up the Salween river) with a numerous levy, felled huge bamboos by the thousand, and made them into rafts of two kinds. One kind contained jingals mounted on scaffolds higher than the walls of Martaban; the others were fire-rafts and came floating down the river with flames higher than a toddy tree. Fire rafts<sup>1</sup> presented no difficulty to ships of sufficient size to launch several boats manned by competent seamen, but Portuguese craft were tiny things, often only half decked with a single boat apiece, manned largely by Eurasians and slaves. Three of the defending ships slipped their cables and stood out to sea. The remaining four were either burnt or captured. The scaffold rafts, crammed with troops, were then brought alongside the walls and the stormers soon won a foothold.

The sack raged three days. The booty was superior to

<sup>1</sup> The Burmese used them in 1824, containing Pegu jars full of flaming oil. They were flung off and did no damage, see *Havelock, Snodgrass, Trant*.

anything previously taken in Burma, being the accumulated gold, silver, jewels, pepper, sandal and aloes wood, camphor, silk, and lace which filled the godowns of merchants of many races—Portuguese, Greek, Venetian, Moor, Jew, Armenian, Persian, Abyssinian, Malabari and Sumatran. The palace and town were burnt to the ground. The captive prince with all his family and followers, men and women, were cruelly exterminated in spite of a promise of good treatment. Scores of nobles were flung into the river with stones round their necks, and the remaining property of the merchants, mostly foreigners, was confiscated. Moulmein and the southern territory submitted as far as the Siamese frontier at Tavoy.

Tabinshwehti exercised his royal privilege of putting spires on the Talaing pagodas; to the Shwedagon he offered his queen and redeemed her with ten *viss* (36·5lb.) of gold. In 1542 he marched on Prome. The Upper Burma tribes came down to help it; Bayinnaung went a day's march north, defeated them in an ambush, and drove them back. The lord of Prome had already presented his sister to the king of Arakan and asked him for help against the rising Toungoo power; and the Arakanese sent a force through the Padaung pass and a flotilla along the coast. Bayinnaung sent a forged letter, as from the lord of Prome, to the Arakanese as they came out of the pass, and thus succeeded in ambushing them, after which they went home; their flotilla reached Bassein, heard of this defeat, and also went home. For these services the king gave Bayinnaung the rings off his own fingers, three layers of cushions on which to lie in state, and the appointment of *yuvaraja* (crown prince). After a five months' siege starvation set in at Prome, the besieged deserted in great numbers, and the town was mercilessly sacked, atrocities being perpetrated on children and ladies of rank, and hundreds of the defenders being crucified.<sup>1</sup>

Tabinshwehti had maintained a cart-track from Pegu to Toungoo; he now maintained one to Prome, said to be much the same as the present alignment. In 1544 the seven *sawhwas* (p. 109) attacked Prome but withdrew on the advance of Tabinshwehti who smashed their war canoes by gunfire, and

<sup>1</sup> See note "Pinto" p. 342.

permanently occupied central Burma as far as the north of Minbu and Myingyan districts. Three years previously he had been crowned at Pegu as king of Lower Burma, and now while halting at Pagan he was crowned as king of Upper Burma.<sup>1</sup> On his return he was crowned at Pegu in 1546 as king of both, using Talaing as well as Burmese rites. Only half his task was done, but the rest was sure, and men again beheld the glory of the ancient ritual; at last, after three centuries of sordid *sawbwas*, there was once more a king in Burma.

In 1546-7 he invaded Arakan. He had engaged a fresh batch of Portuguese under Diogo Soarez de Mello, well armed troops of good quality,<sup>2</sup> and these now accompanied him. The Burmese levies under Bayinnaung marched by the pass from Kyangin in Henzada district, clearing a track as they went; the Talaing levies went by boat round the coast, headed by the king himself and two Portuguese ships, but they suffered severely from weather on the way, the more so as the Talaings were no seamen. Sandoway was already in the king's hands, for its lord had paid homage in return for a promise that he would be given the throne of his nephew the king of Arakan. North of Sandoway the land and water forces united and continued their advance in conjunction, driving in opposition till they camped before Mrohaung. Their only chance of taking a walled town like Mrohaung quickly lay in surprising it when the defences were out of repair. But Arakan happened to have a king who, gauging Tabinshwehti's tendencies, had put his defences in good order (p. 140). The Burmese, unable to make headway, were glad to accept the intercession of the monks; and after the opposing leaders had met and conversed amicably, the invaders returned home.

They returned in haste because Siam, hearing that Tabinshwehti with all his valiant men was away in Arakan, had been unable to resist the temptation of raiding Tavoy. Tabinshwehti summoned the king of Siam to surrender his white elephants and meanwhile he prepared for an expedition<sup>3</sup> in the cold weather 1547-8. He recalled Diogo Soarez de Mello, who had taken leave from Arakan to serve against the

<sup>1</sup> *Phayre MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> *Couto III. i 17-20.*

<sup>3</sup> See note "Siamese Chronology" p. 343.



sultan of Achin and now returned with five other captains and 180 men. The Burmese hosts crossed from Martaban to Moulmein on a bridge of boats over which they could ride their ponies at a gallop. His Majesty's elephant was ferried across on a raft, but the other elephants were sent up stream where the fords were shallow; jingals were mounted on many of these elephants. The cannon were kept close to the king, and he moved in great state, surrounded by the choicest elephants, richly attired lords, and 400 Portuguese Guards whose morions and arquebuses were inlaid with gold, for they provided a bodyguard as well as artillery. Little Nandabayin (p. 179) the thirteen-year-old son of Bayinnaung, rode with the armies. Hundreds of workmen went ahead every day to pitch the wooden camp palace,<sup>1</sup> richly painted and gilded; and at each halt there was a *pwe* festival.

The advance was up the Ataran river, through Three Pagodas Pass and down the Meklawng river to Kanburi. Thence they struck at Ayuthia, driving in the Siamese at Yazathein (? near Intaburi), where the king of Siam risked himself in the press, and the queen, rushing up on her elephant to rescue him, was cleft from shoulder to heart by the lord of Prome; her sons advanced and carried off her body.<sup>2</sup>

But the Burmese could not take Ayuthia. The Siamese had cannon made out of the copper which was annually imported from China. The weakest part of the wall was defended by fifty Portuguese who elected one Diogo Pereira as their captain; Tabinshwehti tried to bribe them, but they treated the offer with derision, and one of the Siamese commanders, flinging open the town gate, dared Tabinshwehti to bring the money.

After a month the Burmese withdrew and tried to plunder Kampengpet, a wealthy town; but here again there were Portuguese who used flaming projectiles so that the guns had to be kept in shelter under damp hides. Tabinshwehti, saying the Siamese were devils who, when their own weapons failed, used new ones which had never been known since the beginning of the world, retreated, and it would doubtless have gone hard with him had he not captured the Siamese king's son, brother, and son-in-law in some open fighting. At once

<sup>1</sup> Stevens II. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Jones V. 162.

Siamese envoys came with red and green woollen cloths, *longyis*, and aromatic woods, offering friendly relations in return for the captive princes. Tabinshwehti released not only the princes but also his other prisoners and was thereupon left unmolested during his retreat *via* Raheng.

When conquering the Delta, Tabinshwehti had made no attempt to administer his new subjects through Burmese governors. Any Talaing lord who made timely submission could count on being left in his fief. Consequently from the first he had a large Talaing following. He left the beautiful buildings of the Talaing kings standing when he captured Pegu. Talaings had their full say in his councils, he took care to be crowned with the ritual of a Talaing king, and he gave way to the importunities of his Talaing princesses, letting them dress in their own fashion instead of the Burmese court dress. Finally, hearing an old prophecy that no king with a Burmese hairknot should rule the Talaing land, he bobbed his hair like a Talaing<sup>1</sup> and wore the diadem of a Talaing king.

But on returning from Siam he consorted with a young Portuguese and fell from kingly virtue. The feringhi was an adventurer who had set out from Malacca with seven ships and scores of junks to attack the sultan of Achin; being defeated, he fled with his remaining junks and 300 men to Martaban whose lord sent him under arrest to court. He rose to high favour through his skill in the chase with one of the wonderful new weapons—a fire-arm. The king went hunting with him and in admiration gave him a royal handmaid to wife. The feringhi taught his bride to cook feringhi dishes for the king to eat, and gave him juice of the grape to drink. The juice delighted the king's heart, so that he called the feringhi to where he sat on the throne and drank. Finally the feringhi prepared spirits with honey to sweeten them, and the king drank and lost his wits, respecting not other men's wives,

<sup>1</sup> The Talaings formerly cut their hair all on one pattern. They do not remember what it was but think it was as if a bowl were turned on the head and the ends evenly trimmed all round the rim. *Dalrymple* I. 99 in a passage dated 1759 says "The Peguers resemble the Malays in their appearance and disposition, though more industrious; they cut their hair, round before, and the back-part, from their ears to the crown of their head, is shaved in a semi-circle. The Burmese are darker in complexion than the Peguers."

listening to malicious tales, and sending men to the executioners. Bayinnaung remonstrated with him, saying, "This becometh not a king. It were well to reform"; but he answered "I have made friends with drink. Brother, do thou manage the affairs of state. Bring me no petitions. Leave me to my jollity." Sometimes he attended levees, sometimes he could not. Bayinnaung set the best officers to keep guard over him, and when order after order came to execute innocent men, he saw that no action was taken. Burmese, Shan and Talaing ministers waited on Bayinnaung asking him to take the throne. He answered "Brethren, gratitude and loyalty alike bind us to the king. What ye have said, say it to me alone, tell it not to others. The Lord in His wisdom saith that an evil man, though he live an hundred years, shall not avail against an upright man though he live but a single day. I will advise His Majesty, and if his mind followeth not what I say, then is it for you and me to render him faithful service. Let us hold no more unseemly counsel. Be not anxious but continue in your fiefs [p. 270]. Although, because of sin in a previous existence, the mind of our Sovereign Lord is infirm and he raveth, yet shall the realm not perish if we watch over and defend it." Thereafter he seized the Portuguese favourite, paid him off, set him on a ship, and sent him out of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Tabinshwehti went to live at Pantanaw in Maubin district in the care of Talaing chamberlains, and Bayinnaung went to deal with a rebellion headed by a monk, a bastard of the fallen Talaing dynasty, who, flinging off the robe, assumed the title of Smim Htaw, and occupied Dagon (Rangoon) and Dalla. Bayinnaung was soon chasing him through the Myaungmya and Bassein creeks. But some of the Talaing chamberlains, having sent away their loyal colleagues on a pretext, lured Tabinshwehti from Pantanaw into a jungle saying a white elephant had been traced, and there one evening his sword-bearers cut off his head;<sup>2</sup> they then slew the Burmese attendants, raised their compatriots at Sittaung, drove Bayinnaung's

<sup>1</sup> See note "The young feringhi" p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Age thirty-five. He is the Tabinshwehti Nat spirit, *Temple 64*.

brother out of Pegu, and set the leading chamberlain, Smim Sawhtut, on the throne.

BAYINNAUNG 1551-81. The fiefs of central Burma all shut their gates and never lifted a finger to help Bayinnaung; his own brothers and kinsmen tried to set up as independent kings in such important charges as Prome and Toungoo itself. There he was, a king without a kingdom, grappling with one Talaing rebel in the west while another sat on his throne in the east, his Burmese people looked on with folded hands, and his own brothers seceded.

At once he sent overseas for Diogo Soarez de Mello and the Portuguese who had rejoined their own people; they came promptly, brushing aside the Talaing rebels who tried to bar the creeks. Bayinnaung was overjoyed,<sup>1</sup> exclaiming "Ah, brother Diogo, brother Diogo, we two, we happy two, I on my elephant and thou on thy horse, could we not conquer the world together?" The levies with him were few but faithful, and he decided to march on Toungoo; it was the family home and there he could raise the Burmese against an opposition which was mainly Talaing and was based on their weariness of serving in the shambles of a Burmese warmonger. Having sworn in the headmen and lords from Dagon to Henzada, he marched up the Pegu river and past the Makaw pagoda at Pale. North of Pegu, Smim Htaw came out with his men, but Bayinnaung, "paying no more heed than a lion does to jackals," swept on his way and stockaded himself successively at Myogyi and Yebokkon near Toungoo.

He was joined by his queen who had escaped from Pegu and came in a palanquin. He sent for the men who had saved her, and some Mahomedans were presented to him; he exclaimed "I asked for men, and you bring me chickens! Go, bring me men." They brought him thirty-nine Portuguese whom the queen identified, and he loaded them with rewards.<sup>2</sup> He then moved to Zeyawaddy thirty miles away. Here he was joined by Shans, Burmans, and even eight Talaing

<sup>1</sup> *Couto* IV. i 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Stevens* II. 138, *Couto* IV. i 154.

ministers who had sickened at the new tyranny in Pegu. Smim Sawhtut was killed by a Portuguese bullet<sup>1</sup> in action against Smim Htaw who succeeded him; Talaings from Martaban itself, Smim Htaw's stronghold, came over to Bayinnaung, recognising character when they saw it. Toungoo deserted to him wholesale; he occupied it, forgave his brother, and was crowned.

He occupied Myede in Thayetmyo district where central Burma up to Sagu joined him, and he took Prome, his brother smashing in the town gate on his elephant. He tried to get Ava so as to have still more men at his back before attacking Pegu, but he failed, although its fugitive chief, Mobyé Narapati, joined him (p. 109). However, he had now sufficient men for the great venture, including not only Portuguese, Burmans, and Talaings but even some Mone Shan spearmen.

Under the walls of Pegu, just before the hosts met, he poured libation of water from a golden goblet, praying for justice on the right; the sky thundered and flashed with lightning in answer. Smim Htaw fought him in single combat till Bayinnaung, freeing his elephant, drew back and charged, breaking the tusk of his foeman's elephant and driving him off the field followed by all his men. He then sacked Pegu, killing men, women, children, and even animals.<sup>2</sup> Diogo Soares de Mello, after inducing him to spare the lives of some Portuguese who had fought for the Talaings, was mortally wounded in a brawl with the townsfolk, and then, holding the hand of a friendly lord *smim*, "for he needed a little hope, he confessed his sins and died."

Talaing opposition collapsed with the fall of Pegu. Smim Htaw could get few more followers, but he made a gallant fight, hunted as he was throughout the Delta. Many a jungle has its tradition of his hiding there (p. 120). South of Pyapon town a village bears his name, and south of that again at Myogon, on a pleasant little highland rising out of the rice swamp, amid many a fruit tree, are the remains of a tiny stockade which men say he once occupied. Sometimes he would catch the Burmese boats stranded at low tide in a creek, and wipe them out, sometimes he would surprise an outpost. But as the months passed, the inevitable end drew

<sup>1</sup> *Pinto* 441.

<sup>2</sup> *Couto* IV. i 136, *Stevens* II. 136.

nigh. His family fell into the hands of his hunters. He fled alone in a canoe along the coast to Martaban. Once they fell on him during the evening meal, but he escaped with a gash in the neck. At another time they found him asleep in a field, and actually seized him, but he slipped away leaving his clothes in their hands. He hid in the hills round Sittaung, poor and unknown till he took a village girl to wife and told her his secret; she guilelessly told her father who reported to the *talahkwan* (village officers). When he was captured,<sup>1</sup> Bayinnaung had him paraded through the jeering streets and put to a hard death. Thus ended Wareru's lineage.

Having regained the position from which he should have started, Bayinnaung set out on his career of conquest. The size of his armies varied with the area of his kingdom for the time being. At its maximum, when it included Upper Burma, the Shan states, and Siam, it supplied him with a mass levy approaching possibly one hundred thousand.<sup>2</sup> His efforts were on a bigger scale than had hitherto been known in Burma, at least up to the time of Tabinshwehti. The trivial fighting which had dragged on throughout the preceding two and a half centuries now gave place to the mass movements and the knock-out blows of a man who aimed at a decision. No excuses were accepted from the men under him. Long records of faithful service, and the ties of ancient friendship, were to be pleaded in vain by officers who failed; the least they had to fear was the instant deprivation of all their titles and property, and ruthless exile to some fever-stricken spot. As for the rank and file, the severity they suffered, under every determined leader of whom we have a record, was provoked by the fact that so many of the levies were like herds of cattle, and wholesale desertion was a commander's constant dread; the only way of keeping them together and bringing them to action was to use methods of frightfulness.

In 1555 Bayinnaung advanced on Ava. Half the levies went up the Sittang valley to Yamethin and thence eastwards; the other half went by the Irrawaddy in war canoes of many and strange shapes—horse, duck, crocodile, elephant, shark, dragon—led by Bayinnaung on a magnificent barge, shaped

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens* II. 137, *Pinto* 452-9.

<sup>2</sup> See "Numerical Note" p. 333.

like a brahminy duck, 134 cubits long. Ava fell at the first blow; her call for aid remained unanswered, as usual, by the other *sawbwas*, who bestirred themselves only after the town had fallen. Bayinnaung had little difficulty in occupying the country up to Bangyi in Monywa district and Myedu in Shwebo district. He returned home after leaving instructions for the cart track from Toungoo to Ava to be kept open.

In three campaigns, 1556-9, he reduced the Shan states Mohnyin, Mogaung, Momeik, Mōng Pai, Saga, Lawksawk, Yawnghwe, Hsipaw, Bhamo, Kale, Manipur, and some which are now in Siam—Chiengmai and Linzin (Viengchang). In 1562 he raided the Koshanpye towns up the Taping and Shweli rivers in Yünnan.<sup>1</sup> Later, Hsenwi and Kengtung sent propitiatory homage; he had no authority there but it pleased him to send white umbrellas and the five regalia to Kengtung. The suzerainty of Burma over the Shans dates from this time; the Pagan monarchy had controlled little more than the foot hills; even now, Burmese suzerainty was seldom more than nominal till the second half of the eighteenth century.

It is characteristic that while Bayinnaung was proceeding down the Salween against Chiengmai, his garrison in Mone was murdered and the bridge he had built across the Salween was destroyed by Mone, Yawnghwe, and Lawksawk. Revolts were chronic. In 1562, 1572, 1574-6 he was campaigning against such places as Mohnyin and Mogaung, wearing out his men in pursuits over snow-clad hills in the north. Finally the chiefs submitted, tired of starving in the wilderness. The Mogaung chief was exhibited for a week in fetters at the gates of Pegu; as for some scores of his principal followers, Bayinnaung, saying he was very merciful, refrained from executing them and sent them to be sold as slaves in the Ganges ports.<sup>2</sup>

As was invariably the case, the Burmese no sooner occupied an area than they exacted levies, and the Burmese Shans were at once employed against the Siamese Shans. The chiefs presented daughters to the harem, sent their sons, to be brought up in the palace, and paid periodic tribute; Momeik,

<sup>1</sup> See note "Pong and Koshanpye" p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> Doubtless Tamluk and Baleshwar. *Hmannan* III. 47, anachronist as usual, says Calcutta; but Calcutta did not come into existence till a century later.

the most valuable of all, paid rubies; Chiengmai paid elephants, horses, lacquer and silks. Everywhere Bayinnaung deported numbers of the people in order to populate his home land.<sup>1</sup> From Chiengmai he took artisans, especially her famous lacquer workers (p. 119); it is probably these who introduced into Burma the finer sort of lacquerware called *yun*, the name of the Yun or Lao Shan tribes round Chiengmai.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1556 campaign he went by barge as far north as Htityaing, Katha district, where his land levies crossed to the western bank; his queens and concubines accompanied him, worshipping together at the Shwedagon and the Shwehsandaw at Prome. At the Shwezigon at Pagan he made offerings to as many monks as there were years in his life, and on his return journey in 1557 he set up the great bronze bell, bearing in Pali, Burmese, and Talaing an inscription<sup>3</sup> every line of which breathes imperial pride in his conquests and in the steps he took to promote religion. In the 1557 campaign he did not return home direct, but after reducing Mone went down the Salween to reduce Chiengmai. He promoted religion thus:—

In Onbaung [Hsipaw], Momeik and the rest of the Shan country when a *sawbwa* died, following heathen doctrine men used to kill his slaves and the dear horses and elephants that he rode, and bury them in the grave with him. His Majesty forbade such evil practices. Moreover, seeing that religion was not firmly established, he built pagodas at Onbaung and Momeik, and dedicated lands to religion, and built monasteries of three stories with ten surrounding monasteries each at Onbaung and Momeik, and invited learned monks to abide there practising religion. The *sawbwas* with all their counsellors and captains listened to the preaching of the law four holy days a month, and learned virtue. His Majesty placed one half the scriptures at Onbaung and the other half at Momeik. (*Hmannan* II. 324. See note "Funeral Sacrifice" p. 343.)

Bayinnaung also discouraged foreign settlers' animal sacrifices, such as the *bakrid*, and abolished the custom,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See note "List of Captives" p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *FBRS* 1919 Morris "Lacquerware Industry of Burma" and 1920 Kyaw Dun "Lacquerware called Yun."

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished, but will appear in *Epigraphia Birmanica*.

<sup>4</sup> *Hmannan* II. 312, *Wawhayalinatta* 69. See note "Drink" p. 314.



previously in force among the people of the villages round Popa Hill (Pagan, Yuatha, Sale, Pahkange, Ngathayauk, Tuywindaing, Kyaukpadaung), of slaughtering white animals (buffaloes, kine, goats, pigs, fowls) to the Mahagiri spirit and festooning the shrine with their skulls; hitherto the kings had shared in such offerings, and hereafter they maintained public worship of the Mahagiri spirit, as of all other recognised *nats*, although it involved the use of intoxicants.

The king of Ayuthia, styled Lord of the White Elephants, had recently possessed no fewer than seven; their glory attracted white merchants from the end of the earth and brought Siam unprecedented prosperity; there could be no other cause, for in the days of his predecessors who had far fewer, there was less trade and European merchants had not come. He still had four, and Bayinnaung's soul was stirred to its depths at not having so many himself. He was considering not only his own glory but also the interests of his people: it was essential to their prosperity that he should acquire these elephants. Yet, saying he was a most religious king who abhorred bloodshed, he contented himself with asking for only one, and pointed out that Siam, having presented a white elephant to his predecessor Wareru, was bound by precedent to present one now.<sup>1</sup> Siam sent back the messengers with a refusal. Bayinnaung was deeply shocked but felt he could now fight with a clear conscience. His task was easier than on the last occasion (p. 159); then his brother had only the Delta and central Burma from which to draw levies, whereas now he had also Upper Burma and the Shan states from Mogaung to Chiengmai.

The campaign 1563-4 began with the capture of first Kampengpet and then Sukhotai. The huge host swarmed down on Ayuthia, suffering considerable casualties because of the Siamese and their feringhi gunners, but capturing stockades, war-canoes and three foreign ships. The city yielded quickly in quite unnecessary terror of Bayinnaung's feringhi artillery, which made a fearsome din. The terms were the surrender of the four white elephants, the captivity of the king and some princes as hostages, the presentation of a daughter, the cession

<sup>1</sup> It was not Siam but Chiengmai which had sent the white elephant to Wareru, see *Rāzadarit Ayedawpon*. See, however, p. 114.

of Tenasserim shipping tolls, and annual tribute of thirty war elephants. Bayinnaung left the Siamese king's son to rule as vassal with a Burmese garrison of 3,000 men. His loot included thirty crude images of men and elephants in bronze (p. 183). He deported thousands of the population<sup>1</sup> roped together in gangs with wooden collars; among them were actors and actresses, and it is probably these who introduced into Burma the songs and dances called Yodaya (Ayuthia). Returning victorious to Pegu,

Braginoco<sup>2</sup> entered the city in triumph, many wagons going before loaded with idols and inestimable booty. He came at last in a chariot with the conquered queens loaden with jewels at his feet, and drawn by the captive princes and lords; before him marched two thousand elephants richly adorned, and after him his victorious troops. He built a palace as big as an ordinary city. The least part of its beauty was rich painting and gilding; for the roofs of some apartments were covered with plates of solid gold. Some rooms were set with statues of kings and queens of massy gold, set with rich stones, as big as the life. He was carried on a litter of gold upon many men's shoulders, the reverence paid him more like a god than a prince. (*Stevens* III. 118.)

But Siam was not settled by the fall of Ayuthia. Till the end of the reign there were few years in which the royal armies were not campaigning all over the country from the northern Laos downwards. Chiengmai failed to send its levy to the 1563 siege and afterwards gave such trouble that its chief had to be kept at Pegu.<sup>3</sup> In 1567 Pegu was starving, and Linzin (Viengchang) failed to comply with a requisition for rice; indeed she was never really subject, and for many years her elusive chief led Bayinnaung a weary chase through trackless hills where his men were reduced to eating *thekke* grass and died in thousands of starvation and disease. Year after year there was cruel fighting against the Siamese stockades, against their war-canoes and flaming rafts. He usually succeeded in occupying towns, setting his puppet with a Burmese garrison on their little thrones, and dragging away the population, when it had not hidden in the jungle, to work as slaves in Burma if they survived the long march. But

<sup>1</sup> See note "List of Captives" p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese version of Baringyinaungsaw, a variant of Bayinnaung.

<sup>3</sup> He died in captivity and became the Yun Bayin Nat spirit, see *Temple* 65.

more than this he could not do, he could give no settled government to the surviving victims, and some of the chiefs, such as Viengchang, he never caught.

He generously allowed the captive king of Siam, who had become a monk, to return home on pilgrimage; no sooner had he arrived than he flung off the robe and so another siege of Ayuthia became necessary. It lasted ten months, 1568-9. The Burmese built earthworks higher than the walls, in order that the crude Portuguese and Mahomedan cannon might fire into the town, but the siege made no headway. The Burmese losses were so heavy that the men used to take shelter under the piles of their comrades' corpses. The troops sickened of the carnage, and officers were executed right and left for failure. In the town, the old king died, and his son was a fool who accepted the word<sup>1</sup> of the Burmese that they would withdraw if the best Siamese commander were surrendered to them as the cause of the war; the commander was surrendered, but the siege continued. Bayakamani, lord of Syriam, restrained his officers from hounding their men on to the walls, walls which were totally unbreached and could not have been taken even by modern regulars if armed only with swords. For daring to do this he was summoned into the presence. He had been Bayinnaung's comrade from youth up; it was he who fought in the howdah at Bayinnaung's side in the duel with Smim Htaw (p. 163); he was one of the chosen few whose images were deposited along with the king's in the Mahazedi pagoda (p. 172); but all this was nothing—he had dared to use discretion, and he was executed on the spot. His body lay exposed as a warning; his son came and mourned at its side—he was executed for daring to mourn, and his body also was exposed. The family slave, seeing the bodies of his dead masters lying like dogs, covered them with a cloth—he too was executed.<sup>2</sup>

But the town was never taken by storm. Though the besieged were short of food, they held their own until Bayinnaung used treachery, employing one of the hostages yielded by Siam four years previously. This person, Aukbya Setki, entered the town saying he had escaped from his

<sup>1</sup> Wood.

<sup>2</sup> *Hmannan* II. 437.

Burmese captors. The Siamese gave him high command and one night he opened the gates to the Burmese.

Had Ayuthia not fallen when it did, it would probably not have fallen at all, as the Burmese were suffering acutely in the rains, and soon afterwards a record flood inundated the whole country. Aukbya Setki was rewarded with the offer of a fief in Siam, but having some regard for the wholeness of his skin, he preferred to live elsewhere; he was made lord *binnya* of Dagon (Rangoon) and received the escheated property of officers who had been executed for failure. The king of Ayuthia had to come crawling into Bayinnaung's presence; he was carried off into captivity and fell ill on the way; Bayinnaung ordered the execution of ten doctors who failed to cure him, but in spite of such energy he died.<sup>1</sup>

The former king of Ayuthia, when living at Pegu in captivity, had been reasonably treated. Like the captive chiefs of Ava and Chiangmai, he was even accorded the privilege of living in a double-roofed house painted white. As in other mediæval countries, sumptuary regulations loomed large in the daily life of the people. Probably they were much the same then as they were within living memory. White umbrellas were restricted to the king and the Lord White Elephant alone. The *yvvaraja* (crown prince) and state dignitaries had gold umbrellas, twelve to fifteen feet high, and in number according to their rank. The number of stories to a house, its shape, the style of a corpse's funeral, the size, shape and metal of spittoons, betel-boxes, buttons, anklets, the length, cut and material of clothes, the patterns woven into them, the wearing of rings set with certain stones—these and a hundred such minutiae were the subject of innumerable regulations.<sup>2</sup> A man's rank or occupation could be told by a glance at his dress.

There is little literature in the reign. Dwe Hla, a royal concubine, was an authoress, and one Yazathara wrote a *paikson-yadu* poem read before His Majesty when the spire was raised on a pagoda. His Majesty's distinguished Talaing officer, the *wungyi* Binnya Dala, wrote the Razadarit Ayedawpon chronicle (p. 115). Nawadegy, whom the king brought with other deportees from Ava in 1555, had already been taken

<sup>1</sup> Jones VI. 268-9.

<sup>2</sup> Shway Yoe 402.

from Prome to Salin, Sagaing and Ava by the various chiefs who had turned each other out in the preceding decades ; for writing a poem on the gates of Pegu city he received his title Nawadegyí from the king ; under Nandabayin 1581-99 he accompanied the lords of Chiengmai and Prome in an expedition to crush rebellion at Thaugdut on the Chindwin river, and wrote some verse mentioning the event ; he wrote 400 *yadu*, and a song on the Ayuthia princess, sister of Bayinnaung's second son, the prince of Siam.

His Majesty introduced a measure of legal uniformity by summoning distinguished monks and officials from all over his dominions to prescribe an official collection of law books ; they prescribed the Wareru *dhammathat* (p. 111) and compiled the Dhammathatkyaw and Kosaungchok.<sup>1</sup> The decisions given in his court were collected in the Hanthawaddy Hsinbyumyashin *pyatton*. He also tried to standardise weights and measures, such as the cubit, tical, and basket throughout the realm (p. 49).

Styling himself the King of Kings, he governed only Pegu and the Talaing country himself, leaving the rest of the realm to vassal kings with palaces at Toungoo, Prome, Ava and Chiengmai. He regarded Chiengmai as the most important, having fifty-seven provinces ; these, like the thirty-two provinces of Pegu, were big villages. Chiengmai was a Shan state, not a kingdom, and when he spoke of having twenty-four crowned heads at his command, he was referring to *sawbwas*. Each of the twenty gates of his new city at Pegu was named after the vassal who built it, such as the Prome gate, the Chiengmai gate, the Toungoo gate, the gates of Salin, Dalla, Mohnyin, Tavoy, Hsenwi, Linzin, Tenasserim, Ayuthia, Martaban, Pagan—it was the men of Pagan who had to plant the toddy palms (p. 314) all along the walls and at the street corners.

As a model Buddhist king he distributed copies of the scriptures, fed monks, and built pagodas in Chiengmai, Koshanpye, and other conquered states ; at Ayuthia he spent Rs. 300 on pagoda building.<sup>2</sup> Some of these pagodas are still to be seen, and in later ages the Burmese would

<sup>1</sup> *Forchammer* " Jardine Prize " 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Hmannan* II, 376. Commodity prices are not on record, but the real value would be considerable.

point to them as proof of their claim to rule those countries still. He supervised mass ordinations at the Kalyani *thein* (p. 120). Following a royal custom, he would break up his crown and use its jewels to adorn the spire of a pagoda ; he did this for the Shwedagon, the Shwemawdaw, the Kyaiktiyo in Thaton district, and many a lesser pagoda. Again, as at the Shwemawdaw, he would build as many surrounding monasteries as there were years in his life at the time, fifty-two ; or he would bear the cost of ordaining a similar number of monks. After the 1564 earthquake, which coincided with his queen's death, he repaired the Shwedagon, and added a new spire. His chief foundation was the Mahazedi at Pegu, at which he enshrined a stone *thabeik* (begging bowl) of supernatural origin sent him in 1567 by some Ceylon kinglet, and the tooth (p. 173), with golden images of himself, the royal family, and such of the great officers of state as were in his inner circle.<sup>1</sup> In acting thus he was not only exercising his functions as Head of the Church, but also laying up merit for himself to atone for the bloodshed of his campaigns.

In 1555 he sent rich presents to the Tooth at Kandy in Ceylon and bought land there to keep lights continually burning at the shrine ; the craftsmen he sent beautified it, the broom made of his hair, and of his chief Queen's, swept it. In 1560 the Portuguese captured the Tooth and took it to Goa ; hearing this, Bayinnaung sent envoys on a Portuguese ship which happened to be in port, offering eight lakhs of rupees, and shiploads of rice, whenever needed, to provision Malacca, in return for the Tooth. The Portuguese viceroy viewed the offer sympathetically ; many of his men wished to be put on duty as escort for the Tooth to Pegu, and make money by exhibiting it on the way. Other Buddhist princes made offers. But the matter came to the archbishop's ears ; he went to see the viceroy ; he preached from the pulpit before the assembled court on Genesis xiv 21 "Da mihi animas, cetera tolle tibi." When the viceroy pointed out that his treasury was low, the archbishop accused him of being a freemason. At this terrible accusation the viceroy wavered. The matter was debated in full council. The priests said the accursed thing must be destroyed, idolatry must be blotted

<sup>1</sup> See note "Tula-dana" p. 328.

out; mere soldiers said, even if the Tooth were destroyed there was nothing to prevent Buddhists inventing a new tooth, calling it genuine, and worshipping that. But the priests were adamant. At Goa in 1561, amid solemn state, while the Burmese envoys gazed in frozen horror, the archbishop placed the Tooth in a mortar, ground it to powder, burnt it in a brazier, and cast the ashes into the river. But the Burmese envoys had scarcely reached home when the Tooth was back in Ceylon. It had slipped through the bottom of the mortar, mounted up into the sky, flown 750 miles to Kandy, and alighted on a lotus there.

Learning from the astrologers that he was destined to wed a Ceylon princess, Bayinnaung in 1574 sent an embassy with monks to demand her. The kinglet of Colombo had no daughter but he sent the daughter of a chamberlain whom he had treated as his own. He had nothing to do with the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy, but his chamberlain showed the envoys and monks, with great mystery under cover of night, a secret shrine before which they prostrated themselves in ecstasy, for it contained a piece of stag's horn which he said was the Tooth. They took the daughter to Bassein where she was received with bands of music and a great procession, and at Pegu she was inducted as a queen. They also reported the matter of the tooth to Bayinnaung who sent rich presents, and in return it was sent on a ship. In 1576 he went to meet it at Bassein in a great procession of magnificent canoes crowded with lords and ladies clad in court dress. He bathed ceremonially, scented himself, and bowed before the shrine. Princes waded into the river and bore it ashore at Pegu walking over the state vestments which the lords took off and spread before them. It was encased in a golden casket studded with the gems of Dammazedi and the kings of old, and of Momeik and of Ayuthia, the vassal kings, and finally it was laid to rest in the Mahazedi pagoda at Pegu. This was the day of days in Bayinnaung's life; his wide conquests, even the white elephants from Siam, faded into insignificance; he said "Heaven is good to me. Anawrahahta could obtain only a replica tooth from Ceylon, Alaungsithu went to China in vain, but I, because of my piety and wisdom, I have been granted this!"

The least he could do was to aid the Colombo kinglet against his foes, the other kinglets. He sent hundreds of his best invulnerables, Burman, Talaing, Siamese, and Shan across the sea to Colombo; there they speared cattle, ripped them open, and ate the raw flesh while the gore ran down their faces, a feat which so terrified the foemen that they submitted to Colombo.<sup>1</sup>

Hearing of the treasures which Bayinnaung had given to him of Colombo, the kinglet of Kandy sent messengers saying he had a genuine daughter and the genuine Tooth. But His Burman Majesty, seeing no reason to reopen the case, would not enter into controversy with such sceptics and dismissed them with thanks.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of his reign he exchanged missions with Bengal. One of these missions claimed to have met Akbar face to face. Akbar was probably the mightiest monarch in Asia, and his palace at Fathpur-Sikri was one of the wonders of the world. The Burmese envoys said they convinced him that their master's timber and gilt palace was equally magnificent; they returned in 1579, completely satisfied at the impression they had made, and the court of Pegu believed that Akbar was preparing to come and take shelter at the Golden Feet of the Lord of the White Elephants.<sup>3</sup> The Moghul records do not so much as mention a Burmese embassy.

Bayinnaung was organising an expedition to overwhelm Arakan, and his levies had actually occupied Sandoway, when he died in 1581 at the age of sixty-six, leaving ninety-seven children. His life was the greatest explosion of human energy ever seen in Burma. From his teens till his death he was constantly in the field, leading every major campaign in person. The failure of other kings who attempted the same conquests is the measure of his ability.

Unlike his successors, who lived in the backwoods, Bayinnaung lived in a seaport and came into contact with men from the outer world. The extent to which overseas traders flocked to the Delta indicates that his regulations were reasonable. European merchants coming from India first sighted Negrais, and saw there, as we see now, the superb Hmawdin

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 37.

<sup>2</sup> See note "Tootü and Invulnerables" p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> *Hmannan* III. 65-7.



pagoda<sup>1</sup> flashing on the headland, a landmark for a whole day's sail. They went up stream to Bassein and, turning east, passed through the Myaungmya creeks to Pegu. Those creeks were, at least on the main route, crowded with villages almost touching each other throughout the journey, a teeming hive of happy thriving people. There were certain minor exactions, such as the compulsory attendance of merchants to see the white elephants, when tips were exacted all round, and greedy courtiers took heavy toll of all wares; but customs officers, though strict, were not obstructive, and there was free export of commodities such as jewels and rice, a thing subsequently forbidden by the benighted kings of Ava. At Pegu overseas trade was in the hands of eight brokers appointed by the king; their fee was 2 per cent. and their business-like methods and honesty won the esteem of European merchants.

Bassein is scarcely mentioned, the chief ports being on the eastern side, Syriam, Dalla, Martaban<sup>2</sup> and above all Pegu itself where the merchants were allowed to have brick warehouses, by special privilege (p. 360). Dagon (Rangoon) was of no importance save for its great pagoda, surrounded by green fields and shady woodland. But the travellers never tire of describing Pegu—the long moat full of crocodiles, the walls, the watch-towers, the gorgeous palace, the great processions with elephants and palanquins and grandees in shining robes, the shrines filled with images of massy gold and gems, the unending hosts of armed men, and the apparition of the great king himself—

He sitteth up aloft in a great hall, on a tribunal seat, and lower under him sit all his barons round about, then those that demand audience enter into a great court before the king, and there set them down on the ground forty paces distant from the king's person, and amongst those people there is no difference in matter of audience before the king, but all alike, and there they sit with their supplications in their hands, which are made of long leaves of a tree . . . and with their supplications, they have in their hands a present or gift, according to the weightiness of their matter. Then come the secretaries down to read these supplications, taking them and reading them

<sup>1</sup> Gasparo Balbi admired it in 1583 (*Hakluyt* X. 150).

<sup>2</sup> *Hamilton* II. 63 says the Burmese conquerors (p. 156) sunk several ships full of stones in the entrance to Martaban so that only small vessels could enter and it did not count as a port in his day, 1727. But in 1568 it was still a port, for it had ninety Portuguese residents (p. 178).

before the king, and if the king think it good to do to them that favour or justice that they demand, then he commandeth to take the presents out of their hands; but if he think their demand be not just or according to right, he commandeth them away without taking of their gifts or presents. . . . He hath not any army or power by sea, but in the land, for people, dominions, gold, and silver, he far exceeds the power of the Great Turk in treasure and strength. (Year 1569, Cæsar Frederick, a merchant of Venice, *Hakluyt* X. 127, 125.)

These men saw the East in all her glory, such as we no longer see her. We have lost that vision and are the poorer. Yet we have lost it because we have grown richer. Our standards have altered. We no longer accept the pinchbeck and bone which even kings among our forbears were fain to wear as gold and ivory. Our Europe is no longer the little Christendom of Gothic times, living on the scanty produce of grey skies, trembling at every rumour of Saladin or the victorious Turk: she is sovran Europe who holds the East in fee, and the whole round world beside. We have come to know that all that glitters is not gold. These first voyagers did not know it; they came from evil-smelling walled towns, where folk dwelt in kennels and died like flies of epidemics caused by their own insanitation. To men who lived in the cold and changed their clothes but once a year, and went unwashed for months, the sunshine and the clean water, the children splashing all day in the creeks, the girls at the well, were one long delight. Ordure vanished quickly under the tropic sky, and instead of fetid narrow streets, and overhanging houses, they saw the airy spaciousness of Pegu city in its heyday, and wide ways sweeping out of sight towards the four main gates. Men who had wrung a fourfold crop, at best, from the hard northern soil, saw a miracle in rice with its forty-fold out-turn, and in the mango a rare and refreshing fruit. They did not stray inland or far from the capital, these simple sailormen; they saw little but the wealth of a kingdom heaped together on one man, the prince who peacocked it in his palace, and they took such vestures, such jewels, such pomp and circumstance, to be a type of the whole country.<sup>1</sup>

But the splendour was superficial. In spite of its sentimental appeal, the kingship was little loved. Bayinnaung and the princes risked their lives at the head of their men,

<sup>1</sup> See note "The Legend of the East" p. 344.

fighting conspicuously on elephants. Yet what was sport to them was death to the common people. Bayinnaung issued an unctuous edict, proclaimed by beat of drum from the head of an elephant, that no officer was to summon a man between June and September, the months of rice cultivation. But it is hard to see how officers could comply, for he never ceased requisitioning men for wars which frequently continued through the rains. The disorganisation caused by these wars was such that Pegu sometimes starved, as in 1567. Even the fertile Delta cannot grow rice without men to plant it, and they were not there to plant it, having all been dragged away on foreign service. Of those that went, few returned, for if battle casualties were great, the wastage from hunger and dysentery was even greater. Men were sick of being slaughtered. Even if they were not sent to fight, they were herded together and led away in one of the deportations which the kingship found necessary to re-populate ravaged areas.

At least once Bayinnaung had to hurry home from a Siamese campaign to deal with rebellion at his own capital. He had settled in the neighbourhood some twenty thousand captive Shans and Siamese. Talaings made common cause, and led them when they rose in 1564 and burned his city, including the old buildings of Dammazedi and his own magnificent edifices, such as the water pavilion. Worse would have followed had not the captive king of Ava rallied the lords and headed them in driving off the infuriated peasantry. Bayinnaung returned by forced marches from Chiengmai and, arriving near Pegu, saw the smoking ruins of the structures which had been his pride. Without stopping to enter, he marched straight on; in his fury he discarded the trappings of kingship and walked on foot with the men in his jewelled sandals.<sup>1</sup> At Dalla he rounded up the rebels. Numbering several thousand they were penned in huge bamboo cages, to be burnt alive according to immemorial custom. As usual, no provision was made for feeding them while under arrest, but Burmese, Talaing and Shan monks from the capital came out and fed them; nay more, they entreated His Majesty, and finally obtained the lives of them all save seventy ringleaders.

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* II. 387.

Bayinnaung made no distinction of race in appointment to office. His best commander was a Talaing, Binnya Dala. As his predecessors had doubtless done for ages, he entered into the *thwethauk* bloodbond (p. 339), a sacramental brotherhood of some round table as it were, with more than a score of his principal officers, and the list includes Talaings. They penetrated his entourage to such an extent that as often as not the word used by European travellers for a court grandee is *semini*, an italianisation of *smim*, the Talaing for lord. Such being his methods, he might have founded a national dynasty and reconciled both races. He failed to do so because he alienated human nature by his murderous wars. The brunt fell on Talaings; hence while at first they had followed him even against claimants of their own race because they believed he could give them settled government, at last the only ones who followed him were office-seekers and hardy spirits desirous of foreign loot.

The grandiloquent language which has been used about him disregards the fact that every other year or so throughout his reign he was hastening somewhere to fight and maintain himself in power. A ruler without an administration, he could not be everywhere at once, and no sooner did he turn his back than the chances were even that a rebellion would break out. Cæsar Frederick, the very man who in a moment of enthusiasm said that Burma possessed a greater power than Turkey, stultifies his own words by relating an incident which he witnessed: In 1568 some Portuguese at Martaban killed five of His Majesty's own runners in a brawl, and the governor could not arrest them because they were supported by all the other Portuguese who, to the number of ninety, marched defiantly through the streets every day with drums beating and colours flying. But any of the Grand Turk's governors in that age would have made short work of ninety Portuguese who resisted arrest.

Bayinnaung's campaigns were the price men had to pay for the unification of Burma. The squabbling chieftains of the preceding period had spilt blood in dribbles, continually irritating the sore; he made a deep cut and finished the operation. Thus far he succeeded. Beyond that he failed because he was

sterile, like his age—and it was the Age of the Renaissance. He was nothing more than a strong but evanescent personality, and the unity he gave was artificial; within a few years of his death it collapsed, and if it rose again and endured for another century and a half, this was not because he bequeathed a system, but because his immediate successors happened to be men of character, and the listlessness of the people prevented organised opposition.

His son NANDABAYIN 1581-99 choked with laughter on hearing from Gasparo Balbi, a merchant who came to Burma on business, that Venice was a free state without a king; the idea was so unintelligible as to be comic.

Nandabayin's son, the *yvvaraja* (crown prince), was married to his cousin; the pair had a squabble in the course of which blood was drawn from her forehead. She sent the blood-stained handkerchief to her father, viceroy of Ava, who promptly revolted, writing to the viceroys of Prome, Toungoo, and Chiengmai; but they forwarded the letters to the king. Suspecting some court grandees of complicity,

the King ordained that the morning following they should make an eminent and spacious scaffold, and cause all the grandees to come upon it, and then set fire to it, and burn them all alive. But to show that he did this with justice, he sent another mandate that he should do nothing till he had an olla or letter written with his hand in letters of gold, and in the meantime he commanded him to retain all the prisoners of the grandees' families unto the women great with child, and those in swaddling clothes, and so he brought them all together upon the said scaffold; and the King sent the letter that he should burn them, and the decagini [*thakin* = lords] performed it, and burned them all, so that there was heard nothing but weeping, shriekings, cryings, and sobbings; for there were four thousand in this number which were so burned, great and small, for which execution were public guards placed by the King, and all of the old and new city were forced to assist them; I also went thither and saw it with great compassion and grief, that little children without fault should suffer such martyrdom, and among others there was one of his chief secretaries, who was last put in to be burned, yet was freed by the King's order; but his leg was begun to be burnt, so that he was lame. (Year 1583, Gasparo Balbi, a merchant of Venice, *Hakluyt* X. 160. See "Numerical Note" p. 334.)

Having thus executed justice according to immemorial precedent, the king set out for Ava at the head of his host, riding an elephant whose harness was all gold and jewels, and bearing a Portuguese sword presented to him by the viceroy of Goa. Near Ava he and his rebel uncle, the lord of Ava, fought together on elephants in single combat. The king won, the Ava host collapsed on the spot, and the uncle fled with a following to Kanti on the upper Chindwin where he died while trying to get local support.

There was scarcely a year in which the king did not have to deal with rebellion from Mogaung in the north to Hmawbi in the south, or Moulmein which leagued with the vassal king of Ayuthia. The *yuvaraja* (crown prince) used Talaings for forced labour on his rice land, stored the crop, and made them buy from him alone. The king raised a Noble Guard, the Shwepye Horse, and then killed them. He dragged people from all over the country to populate Pegu. He branded<sup>1</sup> Talaings on the right hand with their name, rank and village; such as were too old for service he sent to Upper Burma, where he sold them in exchange for horses. To evade unending conscription, thousands took holy orders; he appointed bishops to make inquiry and unfrock many. Bassein revolted and the rebels after surrendering were all tortured to death; the surviving population there took to living in the woods where he could not find them.

He could not trust the great Talaing monks, and sent them away to Ava and the Shan states. He instituted a reign of terror among the Talaings, executing them wholesale, and he horrified all by killing the pariah dogs in Pegu town.<sup>2</sup> Talaings in large numbers fled to Arakan and Siam. Indeed it is from this time that their periodic migrations to Siam begin, migrations which lasted down to 1824 and were due to the sustained severity of the Burmese.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hakluyt* X. 213. A generation ago, in order to help their claim to Karenni, the Siamese tattooed each adult male on the forearm with their badge (an elephant) and a serial number.

<sup>2</sup> *Imannan* III. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Talaing excursions were so frequent that the kings of Siam used to appoint special frontier guards to watch for them, and to maintain granaries along their route. The Talaings addressed the king of Siam as "the Lord of the Golden *Pyathai*, the Righteous King of Ayuthia, the Haven of the Mon people, who on every occasion saved their lives." Martaban was their great rallying place, and

There is no reason to suppose that Nandabayin was not above the average of Burmese kings. The dynasty was not yet effete. From youth upward he had served with the armies and he still led them in person. But he was saddled with an impossible legacy. Bayinnaung could win an empire, but even himself could not have retained it, for the structure was inorganic. The one hope of keeping the country together was to evacuate Siam and retrench in every direction. But neither Bayinnaung nor his energetic son could see it. As there was no administration, the only method by which the king could control remoter areas was by fighting them periodically, a process which used up the only people he could really call his own, the population round the capital. There were not sufficient people left alive to till the soil there, and remoter areas would not send food. In 1596 a plague of field rats destroyed what little crop there was; they were of enormous size, and came from the west in such numbers that the royal retainers, though armed with swords and spears, failed to stop them, and they swarmed on to the city granaries. A terrible famine followed, and it was only one of a series. Large areas in Lower Burma became a desert.

Nandabayin might have held the rest of his kingdom, but it was Ayuthia that ruined him. She was now under the famous king Pra Naret, called the Black Prince because of his swarthy skin. Pra Naret had been ordered to bring a levy against the Ava rebellion, but came late, and finding the king had already reached Ava, proceeded to ravage the country round Pegu city, and returned home with thousands of prisoners from the country population.

By 1593 Nandabayin had made five inroads into Siam; each further reduced his remaining man-power, but none succeeded in taking Ayuthia. He could never put into the field more than a third of the number his father Bayinnaung had led, and a third was too few to surround Ayuthia, so that instead of the besieged it was the besiegers who starved.<sup>1</sup> Of the men who set forth, usually only half returned; and in one

thence the flight was either due east to Raheng, or south-east by Three Pagodas Pass, or south to Tavoy and then east to Kanburi. See *JSS* 1913 Halliday "Immigration of the Mons into Siam."

<sup>1</sup> Probably he could never raise 25,000 men, see "Numerical Note" p. 334.

campaign only a tenth, for the Menam river flooded the country for sixty miles around, and the Siamese streamed out of Ayuthia in war-canoes, spearing the Burmese as they swam. In the 1593 campaign the king's son, the *yuvvaraja*, was slain on his elephant in single combat with Pra Naret; the Burmese fled at the sight, and were once more cut to pieces in a long and terrible retreat.<sup>1</sup> After that there were no men left to invade Siam: it is Siam which invades Pegu.

The viceroys of Chiengmai, Prome, Toungoo, and Ava, and the great fiefs like Nyaungyan in Meiktila district, were held by brothers, sons, and nearest kinsmen. In 1595 the king, besieged in Pegu by the Siamese, summoned them to his aid. After setting out, his son, the prince of Prome, heard that the prince of Toungoo had already taken his levy to Pegu; instead of joining him there, he went off to capture Toungoo town. They were all the same in greater or less degree; none of them rallied to the king. Not only was government despotic, but even the despots could not unite. If the king was not satisfactory, they could have combined to set up somebody who was; but instead of trying to keep the country together, each was out entirely for himself.<sup>2</sup>

The clergy urged that the king must be deposed and that there was no religious objection, provided only that his supplanter placed him on a golden throne to be adored by the people as a divinity. The prince of Toungoo, first cousin to the king, wrote to Arakan proposing a joint attack on the king and a division of the spoil; he chose Arakan because it was furthest and after getting its loot would return home and not be a rival for the throne. The Arakanese shipped a force which occupied Syriam, marched inland, effected a junction with the Toungoo levies, and with them besieged Pegu in 1599. The garrison deserted wholesale. The king's eldest son went

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens* III. 120, *JSS* 1909 Frankfurter "Events in Ayuddhya 686-966," *Jones* VI. 325, *BPP* 1919 XIX Saulière "Jesuits on Pegu" 73, *Hmarnan* III. 97.

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful how far the concept of a kingdom had penetrated. In the chronicles, every adventurer who becomes independent (e.g. De Brito, p. 185, Gonna-ein, p. 211) is termed a king. At the Annexation of 1885 any pretender who succeeded in levying blackmail for a few miles round, as far as his eye could see, was styled a king. . . . two cousins arranged to march against the English by separate routes; one of them cut up a police outpost; instead of joining forces to attack the next headquarters, he perceived that he had annihilated the English, attacked his cousin and overwhelmed him.



over on a promise of good treatment and was promptly executed. The king gave himself up.

Hearing that there was a carcass, the king of Ayuthia came swooping down to see what he could get. Toungoo left the Arakanese to hold Pegu and himself returned home. The Arakanese burnt Pegu and hid themselves in the woods. He of Ayuthia therefore marched on to Toungoo saying "I worship Nandabayin as a god and wish to have his divine presence ever near me. Give him up." He of Toungoo replied "I also worship him as a god and will not give him up." The Siamese then besieged Toungoo; to drain the moat, they cut a channel, called Yodayamyaung, into the Paunglaung river. Meanwhile the Arakanese at Pegu waylaid the Siamese supply columns so that after a month the king of Ayuthia abandoned the siege of Toungoo and returned home, losing prisoners to the Arakanese ambushes near Pegu. But he received the allegiance of the country south of Martaban.

The Arakanese deported 3,000 households of the wretched Pegu folk and returned with a white elephant and a daughter of the fallen king for their royal harem; they also took brazen cannon and the thirty bronze images of Ayuthia (pp. 168, 268); and retaining Syriam they left it in charge of one of their Portuguese mercenaries, Felipe de Brito y Nicote. Mahadammayaza, prince of Toungoo, took away the Ceylon Tooth and stone *thabeik* begging bowl (pp. 172-3), and more than twelve caravan loads of loot, each consisting of 700 elephants and horses.

The fallen king did not live long, being hurriedly murdered one night. Bayinnaung's palace, his radiant buildings decked with the spoil of conquered kings, had gone up in flame during the Arakanese occupation. It was a pitiful ending. The misery in Pegu beggared description: some of it was due to the recent invasions, but much of it was there already, caused by decades of insane fighting abroad and the ruin of agriculture at home. Jesuits were visiting Burma at the time; they write:—

Yet now there are scarcely found in all that kingdom any men . . . for in late times they have been brought to such misery and want, that they did eat man's flesh and kept public shambles thereof, parents abstained not from their children, and children devoured

their parents. The stronger by force preyed on the weaker, and if any were but skin and bone, yet did they open their entrails to fill their own and sucked out their brains. (Year 1600, Nicholas Pimenta, *Hakluyt X*. 211.)

I also went thither with Philip Brito, and in fifteen days arrived at Syriam, the chief port in Pegu. It is a lamentable spectacle to see the banks of the rivers set with infinite fruit-bearing trees, now overwhelmed with ruins of gilded temples and noble edifices; the ways and fields full of skulls and bones of wretched Peguans, killed or famished or cast into the river, in such numbers that the multitude of carcases prohibits the way and passage of any ship; to omit the burning and massacres by this the cruellest of tyrants that ever breathed (i.e. the king of Arakan. Year 1600, Boves, *Hakluyt X*. 216).

The fall of Pegu is followed by sixteen years of petty states, Ava, Prome, Toungoo, Syriam, Chiengmai, and others even pettier: Some were held by Bayinnaung's sons, notably the lord of Nyaungyan, who held Ava, and dreamed of restoring the monarchy. He spent his life reducing Mogaung, Mohnyin, Bhamo, Mone, and Yawnghwe and actually succeeded in getting China to agree to extradite the fugitive Bhamo *sawbwa*,<sup>1</sup> an act which shows the final abandonment of the Chinese claim to overlordship in Upper Burma. The Chinese themselves admit that after 1628 Burma sent no more "tribute" missions.

The lord of Nyaungyan enclosed three acres near Ava with a wall, naming it Aungdinthazi; here every army on leaving the capital camped for the first day, trod the auspicious earth and made offerings to the *nat* spirits.<sup>2</sup> He held only the country round and above Ava and was actually on the march home from a campaign in Hsenwi when he died in 1605; his body, embalmed and propped up in its jewelled robes on the elephant, was taken home and buried beside his graceful Sandamuni pagoda at Ava.<sup>3</sup> During the funeral obsequies, when his body was half consumed in the fire, his son Anaukpetlun administered the oath of allegiance to all around.

<sup>1</sup> *JAS Bengal* 1837 Burney "Wars between China and Burma" 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Pa-lett* 43.

<sup>3</sup> *J BRS* 1915 Enriquez "Capitals of the Alaungpaya dynasty." He had a herald, Sithushwedaung, who wrote *yadu* verse.

ANAUKEPETLUN 1605-28 having all Upper Burma and the northern Shans at his back, found little difficulty in conquering the depopulated south. In a few years he had defeated his brothers and kinsmen who divided the states of Burma between them.

When he took Prome in 1607, and the defenders laid down their arms, the vanquished lord sat in solitary state on his throne, awaiting the end. But a little page persisted in standing by him with a sword in each hand, defying all comers. Anaukepetlun took the lad into his service, and he had a great career, dying full of years and honours as the *wungyi* Nandayawta, one of the four ministers of the Hluttaw Council.

In 1610 the king took Toungoo, carrying home to Ava the Ceylon tooth, the stone *thabeik* begging bowl (p. 183), two-thirds of the cattle, and many people, including all who had been deported to Toungoo from Pegu, Prome, and Ava.

Syriam alone remained outside his rule. Felipe de Brito y Nicote, the Portuguese mercenary left behind with fifty of his compatriots by the Arakanese at Syriam in 1600, spent some time in repairing the defences. Arakan, finding him going his own way, sent a flotilla to deal with him. He lay in wait for them at Hainggyi island (Negrais) with four ships,<sup>1</sup> and when they put in there he fell upon them at night and destroyed them, capturing the crown prince of Arakan who headed the expedition. He treated him chivalrously, waiting on him in person, but he exacted a heavy ransom before letting him go.

De Brito had started life as a cabin boy, but nothing succeeds like success, and he now sought official recognition, going to Goa in person. The Viceroy gave him his own niece in marriage, Doña Luisa de Saldaña, born of a Javanese mother; and he sanctioned most of his proceedings; when he did not sanction them, De Brito simply disregarded orders. He returned from Goa with some men and six ships, which were needed, for in his absence the neighbouring princes, Prome and Toungoo, beset Syriam, and Arakan also returned to the attack. For some years after his return these attacks continued. Once his works were burnt to the bare walls, and

<sup>1</sup> *Dinnyawadi Yazawinthit* 210.

on another occasion one of his ships, surrounded by swarms of Arakanese craft, blew herself up sooner than surrender.

But finally he was recognised by all around. His son received as bride the daughter of the lord of Martaban, who though tributary to Ayuthia was practically independent; thus he was allied with the only other important port in Burma. He was now a highly respectable person, the official Portuguese commandant of Syriam, and he built a church; he let his chaplains, two Jesuits,<sup>1</sup> convert the heathen, but cannot have enforced the process as drastically as was usual in Portuguese stations, seeing that he seems to have been liked by the people of the country, for a reason which is easily discernible: he gave them settled government.

His men consisted of a few score Portuguese with a number of Eurasians, negroes, and Malabaris. Most of his energy went in preventing smuggling; that is to say, in order to get his customs tolls, he kept ships cruising to prevent foreign craft from putting in anywhere in Burma save at Syriam. Syriam was already the chief port for the interior and now she became the only one. It made his fortune, but it disgusted the interior which had to pay increased prices on all foreign goods owing to such unprecedented customs efficiency.

Moreover, he did wrong in undertaking a regular campaign of pillaging shrines; thus he removed precious stones from the images, melted down the gold, beat it into leaf, and sold it.<sup>2</sup> He would even melt down the bronze bells<sup>3</sup> of pagodas to save the expense of importing metal for founding cannon. Finally, in 1612 he and the lord of Martaban sacked Toungoo, and having sacked it he proceeded to ally himself with its lord, Natshinnaung, against the king. The king was furious, for Natshinnaung was his cousin and vassal.

Scarce had he heard the news, when casting on the ground his gown and veil, he vowed to the idol Biay of Degu [? *paya* of Dagon], he would not enter within his gates till this quarrel was revenged. He marched with 120,000 men [p. 334], having put to sea 400 vessels of considerable strength, in which were above 6,000 Moors

<sup>1</sup> See note "The Catholic Mission" p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> *Hmannan* III. 118.

<sup>3</sup> When he removed Dammazedi's great bell (p. 119) from the Shwedagon, it sank in the stream. See *FBS* 1915 Furnivall "History of Syriam" 53.

of noted valour. . . . All that was without the walls of Syriam he burnt, but met with vigorous opposition at that place, notwithstanding De Brito was quite unprovided, having suffered most of his men to go to India, and being scarce of powder. . . . In this distress he sent a soldier to buy powder at Bengal, and he ran away with the money ; and having sent for some to the town of St. Thomas [Madras], they sent him none. . . . For want of powder there was no firing of cannon, they poured boiling pitch and oil upon the enemy. His number of men might suffice, having 100 Portuguese and 3,000 Pegues. De Brito sends out three ships against the fleet, in one of them all the men were slain, the two retired with all theirs wounded. The enemy began to undermine the works, and the besieged laboured much, but to small purpose. After the siege had lasted 34 days, De Brito sent to beg mercy, but was not heard. . . . The King of Arakan whom he had so grievously offended, sent 50 sail to his assistance, which were all taken by the besiegers. The King of Ava gives an assault, and they fought three days without intermission, the end of it was, that 700 of the besieged were slain, one Banna whom De Brito had always honoured having betrayed him, De Brito was taken, carried to the King, and by him ordered to be impaled, and set up in an eminence above the fort, that he might the better look to it, as the King said. He lived two days in that misery. His wife Doña Luisa de Saldaña was kept three days in the river to be cleansed,<sup>1</sup> because the King intended her for himself, but when she was brought into his presence, she turned on him with such scorn and courage that his desire for her beauty was turned to anger and he ordered her leg to be bored and sent her to Ava among the common slaves. . . . She was neither tall nor slender, but had that dash of beauty which is so dangerous in women, especially in the maid servants of Asia and Goa. . . . Francis Mandez and a nephew of his were treated as De Brito. Banna demanding a reward was soon torn to pieces, the King saying, he that betrayed the man who so much honoured him would never be true. Sebastian Rodriguez was cooped up with a yoke about his neck. At first the King designed not to spare any of the inhabitants of that place, but growing calm, he sent many slaves to Ava. Then passing by Martaban he obliged that King to kill his own daughter's husband, because he was De Brito's son, that none of the race might remain. This was the end of that man's avarice, who being naked a few years before, was raised to be worth three millions. . . . The enemy confessed they lost at that siege 30,000

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 9, 19, 173, 222 and cf. Esther ii 12. A queen bathed before her elevation, a king at his coronation, the king of Arakan using Ganges water (*Mansrique*, xxxii). In Siam also a ceremonial bath precedes any solemn change in status. Like the priest's *Lavabo*, it is a purificatory rite, unlike the Greek bath, which was a fertility rite (*Fraser "Magic Art" II. 162*). Mediæval knights, and till the seventeenth century the Knights of the Bath, had to bathe at initiation.

men. . . . Our Viceroy understanding the danger of Syriam, and thinking to relieve it in time, sent thither James de Mendoça Furtado with five galliots . . . he came to Martaban, where in the river he found a fleet of 20 sail, which after a sharp engagement fled, except 4 that were taken with some men, from whom he heard what had happened at Syriam, so that there was no need to go further. (Year 1613, *Stevens'* translation III. 191-4 emended from *Faria y Sousa* III. 238-9.)

The inner works at Syriam were brick, but the outer ones were a stockade, and the final entry was effected by pulling down three of the posts with ropes and grappling irons after they had been shaken by a mine.<sup>1</sup>

During the siege the defenders used hand-grenades. Natshinnaung was among them; he and De Brito once headed a sortie in person and when they returned, successful but both wounded, blood was streaming over De Brito's legs and boots. The king, wishing to separate the two, sent a letter promising De Brito terms if he would give up Natshinnaung; the bearer of the letter was led blindfold to where they sat together. De Brito—probably he could not read Burmese—handed the letter to Natshinnaung, and after hearing its contents he said to the messenger "Tell your master that we Portuguese keep faith. I have given my word to Natshinnaung and I cannot break it." The king captured a Portuguese galley, cut off the crew's ears, and sent one of the earless men to De Brito saying "Look at this, and think again whether it will profit thee to harbour mine enemy." Natshinnaung said "I am of Burmese race, yet never have I seen man so pitiless. Let me no longer be of his people, make me one of thy people"; and he received baptism from the white priest, De Brito standing sponsor. In happier years he had written verse on the *beinnyin-hnget* (kingfisher); those days were gone, and now, when the town fell, he asked to die with De Brito, saying "He is my brother. I plighted my troth to him and sealed it with the *thwethauk* blood-bond"; he was taken at his word.<sup>2</sup>

De Brito, a sample of the heroic scoundrels who built up Portuguese dominion in the East, was unscrupulous, like the

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Pawtugi Yazawin* 213-16, *YBRS* 1912 Furnivall "A Forgotten Chronicle." See note "Thwethauk and thissa-ye" p. 339.

princes against whom he was pitted. What the common people thought of him is shown by his nick-name Nga Zinga, meaning, in the patois of the seaports, "good man" (Panjabi *changa* = good). Beyond the fact that he had a good temper, we know little of his character; but a few years ago when people happened to examine a pagoda in Henzada district called Thida, they came across an inscription saying it was built by one Nandabhaya and his sister Supabhadevi, the children of an Arakanese lady, Sawthada of Launggyet, by the feringhi Nga Zinga, king of Syriam.<sup>1</sup>

Anaukpetlun spent a month at Syriam settling affairs. He sent the Portuguese captives into the interior (pp. 208, 349) together with the crews, mostly Mahomedan, of a few ships which were affiliated to De Brito and had returned to port thinking he was still there. Martaban and the country down to Ye in Moulmein district paid homage. He deported the leading families of Ye to live in the palace as hostages, and sent his brother to garrison the town. Its suzerain, the king of Ayuthia, at once drove him out but Anaukpetlun regained the town and tried to take Tenasserim, a wealthier port than Syriam. The Siamese were aided by 40 Portuguese who, desirous of avenging De Brito, put to sea with 70 slaves in four galliots and utterly defeated 500 Burmese craft with a loss of 2,000 men.<sup>2</sup> So in 1614 the king abandoned the siege of Tenasserim. But he retained Tavoy, and successfully interfered among his quarrelling kinsmen at Chiengmai, setting his nominee on its throne in 1615. In anger at the king of Arakan's demand for the cession of some islands on the border, he raided Sandoway, and then in 1616 he grew nervous.

Fearing his enemies the kings of Siam and Arakan should come to an accommodation with the Portuguese, he sent ambassadors to settle a peace with us [the Portuguese], excusing the killing of De Brito, offering to restore the prisoners he had taken, and to assist us against the king of Arakan, of whose great treasure he desired nothing for

<sup>1</sup>RSASB 1915 33. The pagoda was built in the year of his death. As they were old enough to build in 1613, they must have been born about 1590, long before De Brito came to Syriam. Not improbably Sawthada was a handmaiden in the Arakanese palace.

<sup>2</sup>Stevens ill. 197.

himself, but the white elephant. The viceroy accepted the ambassadors' proposals, and sent back with them Martin de Costa Falcam to ratify the agreement. He spent many days in soliciting an hour's audience; at length it was appointed at midnight, and he was led in the dark to a place where they ordered him to speak, for the king heard; he spoke and saw no king nor heard no answer. He signified the desire he had of seeing the king, and was ordered to wait his going abroad. He went out one day upon an elephant, and knowing Falcam waited in the street to see him, never so much as turned his eyes that way . . . so the ambassadors returned to Goa without concluding anything. (Year 1616, *Stevens* III. 255.)

The reason for his behaviour to the Portuguese envoy was that he had ceased to be nervous.

In 1619 he received in full Hluttaw court at Pegu envoys from Bengal, Achin, and the English East India Company in Madras.<sup>1</sup> They were greeted by noblemen in galleys with fifty oars a side, and were housed in accordance with their respective importance, the two Englishmen ranking lowest. The Englishmen came not to open trade but to recover the estate of one of their commercial travellers who, being in Chiengmai when the king captured it in 1615, was, together with his samples, taken away like all foreigners to Pegu, and though reasonably treated, had died. The English envoys spoke through a Portuguese slave of the king's; they found the governor of Syriam "in great state bedeckt, with jewels in his ears with gold rings, with rich stones on his fingers, being a white man and of very good understanding"; but they complained of having continually to give bribes, "for in this place there is nothing to be done or spoken, or any business performed without bribes," and they found it difficult to achieve any results, for although everyone from the king downwards made fair promises, none of these promises were kept.

The Burmese government had scheduled the deceased's estate and had collected some of his debts, but the king objected to returning them, saying that no English ships had ever come to his country, and until they did, and brought trade to his people, he would not give up the estate. Yet finally he gave it up, and sent the two envoys back with a letter written on palm leaf, asking for English ships to come and trade, and with the letter were a ruby ring, two mats, two betel boxes, and other presents.

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 108, *Purchas* 1006.



The envoys had been kept waiting six months under strict surveillance, while their money ran out and they were in mortal terror of the king who would not let them go, "for what men soever come into his country, he holds them but as his slaves, neither can any man go out of his country without his leave, for he hath watch both by land and water, and he of himself is a tyrant, and cannot eat before he hath drawn blood from some of his people with death or otherwise."

From about 1627 onwards both the English and Dutch East India Companies had branches in Burma under junior representatives. These branches were closed from time to time, and although profits were occasionally considerable, steady trade was impossible because of the disturbed state of the country. The English were at Syriam, Ava and Bhamo, the Dutch at Syriam, Pegu and Ava. Little trade was done and in 1677 both companies withdrew (p. 203).<sup>1</sup>

Anaukpetlun restored the monarchy and regained control from Tavoy and Chiengmai in the south to Bhamo in the north, including Kenghung and other Shan states which are now in Yunnan. At his death he was thinking of renewing the old adventure against Ayuthia. His methods were as drastic as those of Nandabayin; they were the methods of every energetic Burmese king. His people in delighted terror said he had only to wave his sword and the tide would stop.<sup>2</sup> Yet he had a gentler side; in 1622 he set up at his palace a great bell (p. 145) with an inscription in Burmese and Talaing which says that it was placed under a double roof where the sound could reach his ears and all who had a grievance could strike it and claim his attention. Among his courtiers was Zeyyayandameik (son of Thondaunghmu, p. 125), who had served the lords of Toungoo, writing a song on Natshinnaung (p. 188), and now wrote an adulatory ode on his new master, Natshinnaung's slayer.

After 1613 the king had practically deserted Ava; and it looks as if he intended to retain Pegu as the permanent capital, for in the year of his death he had the remainder of his household brought from Ava to Pegu. Among them

<sup>1</sup> A brick ruin at Old Bhamo, up the Taping river, used to be pointed out as the English factory site. See note "Dutch withdrawal" p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Hmannan* III. 193.

were ten ladies of his harem. His son, prince Minredeippa, had a liaison with one of these, the Kengtung *sawbwa's* daughter, and when concealment was no longer possible, the eunuchs told the king. The guilty pair confessed. His Majesty pointed out to the young man that what he had done was high treason and merited roasting alive. Fearing that this would actually happen, the lad collected a party of followers with sticks and knives, entered the king's room at night, and did him to death.<sup>1</sup>

**Minredeippa 1628.** At once the ministers summoned a general assembly of the court. Early action was necessary, and they took it: they elected the parricide to the throne. Their reasoning was that the king's brothers, his natural successors, were away campaigning in the Shan states—at one time they had gone as far as Kenghung, north-east of Kengtung—and the kingdom would be in turmoil before they could be recalled. Public morality apart, the reasoning was invalid, for young Minredeippa had not the wit to hold a throne, whereas his two uncles were mature men, each in command of an army, and the news reached them easily in nine days. So far from avoiding disorder, the decision of the assembly caused it. The country respected the uncles, for they were men of authority; it knew nothing of Minredeippa, and half a dozen governors took the opportunity to revolt. Deprived of support from Lower Burma, the two uncles had to waste sixteen months reducing the north country. Meanwhile they seized the families of the Upper Burma companies in the palace Guard, making the fact known in Pegu, and thus shaking the allegiance of Minredeippa's guards. He had not the courage to leave his palace and attack them. Town after town fell to them, and when they surrounded Ava, Minredeippa, foreseeing their success, decided to flee to Arakan; but his own followers, in disgust at his cowardice

<sup>1</sup>The king was called Anaukpetlun because he *died on the west side* of the river at Pegu.

and tyranny, seized him and sent a deputation to Ava asking Thalun, one of the uncles, to take the throne. He did so, and immediately on arriving in Pegu executed Minredeippa, sternly rejecting his plea to be allowed to become a monk.

THALUN 1629-48 was crowned with great ceremony at Pegu, surrounded by Burmese, Shan, and Talaing lords. But while he was still in the coronation palace, the men in charge of building his monasteries plotted with Moulmein Talaings and rushed the armoury. A few hundred Kaunghan (p. 347) of the Guard drove them out; they fled to Moulmein, held it in force for some time, and were executed in large numbers. This led to a Talaing exodus into Siam; envoys<sup>1</sup> were sent asking the king of Siam to extradite them, but he refused.

In 1635 the king was again crowned at Ava and moved the palace there. Thereafter it remains the capital. The Delta had lost its advantages now that the idea of attacking Ayuthia was dead, and Pegu ceased to be a seaport when, about 1600, the silting up of the river was complete. The proper site to move to was Syriam, but the court did not realise that the country's future lay on the seacoast (p. 249). The move to Ava signifies the abandonment of Tabinshwehti's dream of a national kingship. The attempted coalescence with the Talaings had failed, and the court relapsed into its tribal homeland, Upper Burma.

The king appointed as *yuvaraja* (crown prince) the brother who had loyally supported him in the march from the Shan states to the throne; but the brother died in 1647. In the same year the king's son Shintalok, abetted by Tavoy men in the household, seduced some of the Guard and drove his father out of the palace. He fled to a neighbouring monastery, and several hundred monks defended him with sticks until his other sons brought up armed men. It was a month before he could retake the palace, as the traitors had the cannon there. He had to improvise cannon out of *ingyin* wood (*Pentacme*

<sup>1</sup> JSS 1910 Ravensway "Translation of Van Vliet's description of Siam" 33.

*suavis*). Shintalok tried to fight his way out but was shot dead on his elephant. The defence collapsed and the rebels met their end under the elephants' feet. Elephants who knew their work would toss and worry a man for some time before despatching him, and the kings kept them especially for the purpose.

Hearing of this plot, the raja of Manipur raided Thaungdut on the Chindwin river, and a levy had to be sent there. But the reign was generally peaceful, and the king set himself to stabilise conditions after the terrible wars of his predecessors, which left the country anæmic for a century. The Delta had suffered most, and it is possibly the depopulation of Pegu which made the court return to Upper Burma. The return restored Kyaukse to importance, and Thalun proceeded to reconstruct its canal administration. He went further, overhauling the revenue administration of the whole country, and compiling the Revenue Inquest of 1638, the first in Burmese history (p. 269). How far he originated is uncertain, but if he did no more than restore the rough organisation which had been shattered, he would still be entitled to rank as one of the best kings.<sup>1</sup>

How destructive was the disorder which overwhelmed Burma is shown by the history of the Shwesettaw shrine in Minbu district. It was one of the holiest imaginable, for it contains (*sic*) two of Buddha's footprints. Yet during the sixteenth century, so great was the depopulation caused by the Siamese wars, so little was the intercourse with Arakan over the An Pass, the approaches to which include Shwesettaw, that even this famous spot was entirely forgotten. The king wished it to be found, and in 1638 the famous Taungbila *sayadaw* with several other monks visited the place, succeeded in finding the footprints overgrown with scrub jungle, and restored the shrines.<sup>2</sup>

The Taungbila *sayadaw* received from the king the title Tipitakalankara for his learning; he wrote Wethandayapyo a poetical version of the Vessantara *jataka* story of the Buddha, several Pali works, and Amedawpon, a collection of answers he gave to the king on questions of church and state; leaving the

<sup>1</sup> See note "Thalun's inquest, etc." p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Duroiselle* "Notes on the Ancient Geography of Burma" I. 26.

fine monastery built him by the princes, he spent the closing years of his life in solitude on Taungbila Hill near Sagaing. One of his pupils, Mundigotha, also was an author. The king's daughter, Shwehsindu, wrote a number of *yadu* verses, and the king himself kept under his pillow a golden casket containing a *paikson yadu* poem written for him by a monk, Shin Karavika; he admired it so much that he learnt it by heart for it began "May the fourfold power of the king, the god of men, shaded by the white umbrella, increase day by day and . . . ." Another monk, Shin Kumara Kassapa, who dwelt in the Minkyangdaik at Pakkangyi in Pakokku district, wrote Dhammarasipyo and Dhammayazapyo. Shin Thanhko wrote a poem on the royal elephant, and many songs, including one on prince Minredeippa (p. 192).

These are trivialities, but the work of the minister Kaingsa is of importance. His friend the Taungbila *sayadaw* suggested he should write a law-book. On proceeding to do so he was struck with the fact that the ancient lawgiver Manu is not mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures, which is natural seeing that he is a Hindu myth and has no connection with Buddha. As Manu's personality was unscriptural, Kaingsa discarded him, but as a law-book in his own name would carry no weight and it was necessary to have a halo of tradition, he induced the king to grant him the title of Manu. Then, in the name of Manu (p. 238) he proceeded to write the Manusarashwemin or Maharaja *dhammathat*, the first law-book written in Burmese. It is based on Bayinnaung's compilations (p. 171) and on the preceding Talaing *dhammathats*, but it substitutes Burmese ideas on, for instance, inheritance, for theirs, which were still largely Hindu.<sup>1</sup>

The king's principal foundation is the Yazamanisula (Kaunghmudaw) pagoda at Sagaing, sometimes called the "breast pagoda" owing to a silly ætiological tale; it is of Cingalese pattern. In it he enshrined a golden Buddha image of his own weight,<sup>2</sup> and Bayinnaung's Ceylon tooth and stone *thabeik* begging bowl (p. 185). It is surrounded by a palisade of stone posts, doubtless a descendant of those at the Bhilsa topes in Gwalior and of the forest of taller columns which

<sup>1</sup> Forchammer "Jardine Prize" 77.

<sup>2</sup> See note "Tula-dana" p. 328.

surround the dagobas at Anuradhapura in Ceylon ; each post is six feet high and eight inches in diameter, with a little cup hollowed out of the side at the top so as to contain oil lights ; in former days the pagoda seems to have been gilded,<sup>1</sup> and at night it must have been an imposing sight, with the little lights from 802 posts flickering on the huge golden dome. The slaves dedicated to it were Shan captives from Chiengmai, Anan and Hmaingpun.<sup>2</sup> When seeking an auspicious time for raising the spire, the king was told there was none, the omens showed he would die, and his son would raise the spire. He threatened to burn the soothsayer with all his family if he survived the appointed day, but he did not survive it, and the spire was raised by his son.

PINDALE 1648-61 is called Ngatatdayaka because he built the Ngatatkyi shrine in Sagaing district, containing a very large sitting Buddha image.

When the Ming dynasty 1368-1644 of China was overthrown, Yung-li, last of the Ming race, was pressed down by weight of numbers into Yünnan, fighting gallantly. Here he maintained himself for some years. In his extremity he levied requisitions on Hsenwi and some of the border towns such as Maingmaw<sup>3</sup> which, finding the burden excessive, suddenly exhibited great loyalty to Burma. The king therefore sent levies which took hostages and prevented the exactions from coming further south. Near Têngyüeh in 1658 Yung-li's armies made their last stand for the old cause and were defeated ; he sought refuge at Bhamo, asked its *sawbwa* to intercede for him as he wished to take refuge in Ava, and he sent a hundred *vis* of gold (365 lb.) to the king. The king said Yung-li could be sent up if he were properly secured. The *sawbwa* knelt when communicating these orders to Yung-li, for he was an emperor,

<sup>1</sup> There were traces of gilding in 1855, *Yule "Mission"* 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Parlett* 3.

<sup>3</sup> Forty miles E.S.E. of Bhamo town. These frontier states often paid nominal tribute to both sides, cf. *Yule "Mission"* xiii.

and sent him and his family with their 700 disarmed followers by barge to Ava, their horses going overland.

Yung-li paid homage and was allowed to live with his followers at Sagaing, but they were virtually prisoners, and the remnant of the Ming armies, hearing of their plight, tried to rescue them. Infinitely worse was the plague of freebooter armies which had broken out in China during the change of dynasty. These swarmed through the provinces from Ssüch'uan downwards, but one of their chiefs who had set up as king there was killed and they soon learnt by bitter experience that it did not pay to plunder the Manchus. They looked for easier prey, occupied Mone and Yawnghwe, defeated a Burmese army at Wetwin near Maymyo, and took Taungbalu and Tada-u close to Ava, inflicting severe loss on the Burmese, many of whom were drowned by the weight of their harness when fleeing across the Myitnge river. They plundered the villages, killing men, carrying off women and burning monasteries, while the monks fled in terror to the woods. At length they were driven away from Ava by the help of the feringhi gunners, with the loss of a chief who was killed by a jingal-shot from the walls, and they retired to Mone. Yung-li was pitifully apologetic and explained that all this was done without his authorisation. For the next three years the Chinese continued to build stockades under the walls of Ava, and ravaged Upper Burma from Yawnghwe, occupying Wundwin in Meiktila district. The population took refuge in the western uplands to avoid massacre. The Chinese raided Pagan, drove off every Burmese army and even captured some of the princes.

The king ruled over much the same area as Bayinnaung and had the same resources at his disposal. Bayinnaung would have found a speedy remedy; he would have marched a large force and exacted such reprisals that no Chinaman would have dared show his face across the frontier for a generation. But the king was spiritless and commanded no real following outside his homeland.

The lord of Martaban,<sup>1</sup> indeed, started out with 3,000 men to aid Ava, but the Talaings had no heart in the business and deserted on the march. The punishment for desertion was

<sup>1</sup> *Samuel Smith* 13-16.

burning alive in batches. Their indignant kinsmen rose, fired Martaban, drove the Burmese out, and went off into Siam, 6,000 souls in all, including families and prisoners. The frontier guards reported to the king of Siam who sent lords *smim* to greet them, men of their own race who had long since been settled in Siam. He granted gracious audience to their eleven leaders in the palace at Ayuthia, and allotted them lands.

Taking advantage of a lull in the inroads of the Chinese, the Burmese retaliated by invading Siam, hoping to get if not these Talaings at least substitutes for them. They received no help from their Chiengmai lieges, who, finding Ava powerless, had already made overtures asking Siam to aid them in case of attack from the Chinese freebooters in the Shan states. The Burmese advanced by the Ataran river and Three Pagodas Pass in Moulmein district towards Kanburi stockade. But they never reached it, being severely repulsed, and in their retreat they were ambushed in the passes. Such of them as were not left on the ground ended their days in slavery to the Siamese.

The Talaings had fled into Siam because they well knew they were too weak to stand against Burmese vengeance. Thus, though there is some excuse for the king's failure to get levies from the Delta, there is none for his failure to get its rice which could easily have been brought up stream. He needed that rice, for Kyaukse, the granary of Upper Burma, was in the hands of the Chinese. But he sat with folded hands while they roamed the land at will, the crops could not be sown, the city granaries ran low, and the Guards and palace staff were plunged into mourning by the massacre of their kinsmen in the villages. They could get no food to eat, and finally they found that the royal concubines had cornered what rice there was and were selling it at iniquitous prices. The king exercised no control, and when they appealed to him, he mournfully said he could not help them. They approached his brother Pye who at once marched on the palace. The king in his inner chamber, hearing the drums, sent his eunuchs<sup>1</sup> to see what was toward. They told him, and he ran to hide while the queen with her son aged eight and grandson

<sup>1</sup> Natural defectives. The Burmese do not mutilate.



aged four remained on the couch of state. Pye and his men entered the palace, cutting down some twenty men and women. Pye said "Brother, I wish thee no harm, but these things cannot be. Many a time have the ministers called me, and now I must do as they say." The queen entreated him, saying "Be king but spare our lives. We will end our days in religion. Let the children become monks." But Pye shook his head, saying "When have our family been monks? They will only throw off the robe. Yet will I do you no harm, remembering the oath I swear to our father." He kept them in a royal house, sending them food daily. But after a few weeks the court said "There cannot be two suns in the sky," and he drowned<sup>1</sup> the king, the queen, and their little son and grandson in the Chindwin river. The shrine they had set up north of the town to the Yazapita *nat* spirit was also destroyed, for it had plotted evil.

PYE 1661-72 was troubled in heart over these terrible events and after summoning the monks and listening to the law he said to them "I had no wish to be king, but the ministers and captains insisted that they had no refuge but me. Even as the Lord himself is bound by his clergy, so must I hearken to the voice of my people." The monks did not gainsay him, for he spoke the truth. They represented the public conscience, and every good king strove to win their approval.

He held an investiture, giving his uncle the right to ride in a palanquin and bestowing golden swords, fiefs, titles and privileges on many, including merchants; the most precious title, *Thettaawshe*, conferred on one person only, meant "he to whom the king grants long life," for its holder, alone of all men, was exempt from being put to death out of hand. Travellers<sup>2</sup> have often described the dignity of the Burmese court when, through the great hall with its golden pillars, amidst audible silence, while every head, as far as eye could

<sup>1</sup> See note "Royal Drowning" p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> *Wayland* I. 254. The title *Thettaawshe* was conferred e.g. in 1659, 1672, 1683 (*Hmannan* III. 269, 294, 306).

see, was bowed to the ground, the king would stride along in solitary grandeur, his vestures stiff with gold and jewels, holding in his hand a gold-sheathed sword. Scenes such as this lingered in the imagination of the people, who felt that far away from their poor little huts, above the dulness of their lives, rose the Golden Palace, enshrining their king amid magnificence such as they had never dreamed of save in a fairy tale. Men live largely by sentiment, and that sentiment was satisfied to the full in the mystery and splendour of the kingship.

King Pye stopped profiteering among the harem women, so that his Guards did not have to go without food for three days at a time as under his predecessor; but otherwise his success was not perceptibly greater. The Siamese, with Martaban, Tavoy and Chiengmai levies in their army, raided Syriam and Pegu, carrying off the population in crowds.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese ravages continued with undiminished intensity. The court suspected Yung-li of complicity and the king decided to summon all his 700 followers to the Tupayon pagoda at Sagaing (p. 100), administer the oath of allegiance, and scatter them in small parties in different villages. They would not go unless the *sawbwa* of Mōng Si in north Hsenwi, whom they trusted, was allowed to accompany them. At the pagoda they were surrounded by royal troops and the *sawbwa* was being taken away from them when, suspecting treachery, he seized a sword from one of the Guards and laid about him. The Chinese did likewise. Thereupon musketeers of the Guard mowed them down and the survivors were executed to a man by the king's order. The king sent Yung-li a reassuring message with meat and drink but reproached him for his retinue's conduct, and Yung-li said "They did wrong and were punished. I owe thee my life and ask only to be left in peace."

In time the Chinese freebooters wore themselves out and the iron hand of the Manchu dynasty fell on the remnants. In 1662 the Yünnan viceroy came with 20,000 men and, halting at Aungbinle in Mandalay district, sent a herald summoning the king to surrender Yung-li or take the consequences. This was the pass to which things had come through lack of judgment in admitting Yung-li and lack of manhood in repel-

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Smith 22-30.

ling the Chinese. The king called a council ; he pointed out that in 1446 the Burmese had surrendered Thonganbwa (p. 99), in 1601 the Chinese had surrendered the Bhamo *sawbwa* (p. 184), and it was therefore in accordance with precedent to surrender Yung-li. The ministers agreed and, disregarding the solemn fact that Yung-li had been admitted to allegiance, they delivered him up to meet his doom.<sup>1</sup>

The king was succeeded by his son NARAWARA 1672-3 who died young. Before the breath was out of his body his sister, some eunuchs and some ministers prevented all communication between the inner and outer palace and proceeded to choose a successor. They went through the list of the dead king's brothers, objecting to one that he drank, to another that he was overbearing, and thus by a process of elimination there remained only a blameless cousin called MINREKYAWDIN 1673-98. Having made him sit on the throne, they announced the king's death and administered the water of allegiance. Two of the princes objected and were immediately led away by the executioners. After that, everyone loyally drank the water. Perhaps the new king was really the best choice ; perhaps he was a puppet for those who chose him : they figured in his first honours list.

A fortnight later a kinsman rushed the palace with some companies of the Guard who had not been won over by the clique, but they were all cut down. The Byedaik Privy Council Chamber was red with their blood, and the entrances to the palace roof were choked with their corpses, as some of them tried to take refuge on the roof. The survivors were dealt with according to precedent. Men remembered the horror of those days, and the executions that followed ; they told how the palace halls were haunted by the ghosts of the slain.

The reign produced one historical work, the *Jaṭapon*, which gives the horoscopes of the kings of Burma and is of great importance because its dates are more reliable than those

<sup>1</sup> See note " Yung-li (Kuei)," p. 352.

of other histories. Every three years or so the garrisons would be relieved in foreign stations, such as Martaban and Chiangmai. Occasionally a petty Shan revolt would be crushed, or a *sawbwa* would abscond to Yünnan which would give him up ; the court had a way of appointing its favourite of the native family who had lived at court over the head of the natural heir, and this would cause trouble. A foray would occasionally be made into Ayuthia. In 1695 a minister from Ayuthia deserted with five elephants and a hundred men and took service under the king. Or some of the foreign deportees would revolt, as the Siamese did at Salin in Minbu district in 1680. Sometimes a member of the royal family would have to be drowned. But these are the normal events of any reign.

European trade centred in Siam and Malaya at places such as Mergui (p. 189) which, save under Bayinnaung 1551-81, was in Siamese hands till 1765. The Portuguese ceased to count after 1641 when they were expelled from Malacca by the Dutch, but there is still a colony of their descendants, with high-sounding names they cannot pronounce, round the Catholic church at Mergui. The merchants of Golconda carried the India trade thither ; the king of Siam and his minister, Phaulkon, a Greek, wishing to oust them and get the carrying trade for their own ships, employed interlopers, i.e. Englishmen independent of the East India Company. Thus Burneby figures as Governor of Mergui among the seven commissioners appointed by the king of Siam in 1686 to administer the port and province, and Samuel White, another of the commissioners, was Port Officer 1683-7. But the East India Company depended for its security on the king of Golconda and persuaded their principal shareholder, James II., to claim Mergui in 1687. It could have been seized without great ill will on the part of the townfolk had not some of the English held a banquet aboard a ship in the harbour, getting dead drunk, and firing broadsides at every toast, broadsides which, if you please, were loaded with ball. The townfolk took reprisals, killing some sixty other English who were ashore.

James II. was also actuated by a desire to forestall Louis XIV. Four companies of French infantry built a fort and garrisoned Mergui during 1688 by arrangement with the

king of Siam who played off the European nations against each other. The name French Bay, on the eastern side of King Island, the largest island in the Mergui group, commemorates the fact that it was for a few years about this time the rendezvous of French warships. With the death of the Siamese king and the murder of Phaulkon in 1688, the Siamese ceased to favour the French, and in any case the French before long had no energy to spare for the Farther East.

After 1687 the English continued to trade in Mergui to a certain extent. The Dutch remained predominant; they had the tin monopoly but based their trade on Malacca, and Mergui declined. Sea piracy was everywhere rampant, some of the worst rogues being European renegades, especially Dutchmen. After 1765 Mergui declined still further by passing into the hands of the Burmese whose control spoilt the overland route to Ayuthia.<sup>1</sup>

The French Compagnie des Indes had a branch at Syriam in 1688; its existence, though interrupted at times, lasted nearly a century.<sup>2</sup> The Burmese tried to make the English re-establish the branches which had been closed (p. 191); the go-between was a half-caste Portuguese, and as the English would never trouble to send a proper representative the proposal fell through, although in 1688 the governor of Syriam himself wrote asking them to settle there. A few years later the king received in his gardens at Ava the following, brought by Fleetwood and Sealey who prostrated themselves nine times in the *shihko* position as they approached him:—

“ Letter from the Nathaniel Higginson Esqr etc Governour of Fort St George to the King of Ava.

To his Imperiall Majesty, who blesseth the noble City of Ava, with his Presence, Emperour of Emperours, & excelling the Kings of the East & of the West, in glory & honour. . . .

The fame of so glorious an Emperour, the Lord of Power & Riches, being spread through the whole Earth, all Nations resort to view the splendor of your greatness, &, with your Majesty's Subjects, to partake of the blessings, which God Almighty has bestowed upon your Kingdoms, above all others; your Majesty has

<sup>1</sup> *JBR* 1917 Furnivall “ From China to Peru ” and his “ Samuel White, Port Officer of Mergui ”; *Anderson* “ English Intercourse with Siam. ”

<sup>2</sup> See note “ French and Shipbuilding ” p. 353.

been pleased to grant especial favours to the Honorable English Company, whose servant I am ; & now send to present before the footstool of your Throne, a few Toys, as an acknowledgment of your Majesty's goodness ; which I beg your Majesty to accept, & to vouchsafe an Audience to my Servants, & a gracious Answer to my Petition.

I humbly pray your Majesty's fountain of goodness to continue your wonted favours to the Right Honourable English Company . . . & pray your Majesty to give me leave to send a Factor, next Monsoon, to reside at Syriam. . . .

About 3 Years ago I ordered Bartholomew Rodrigues, Master of a small Sloop, called St Anthony and St Nicholas to go from Acheen to Bengall, laden with divers Commodity's ; . . . the said Sloop was fortunately arrived within your Majesty's Kingdoms, & calling there for Wood & Water, your Officers not knowing who she belonged to, had taken care, by your Majesty's Order, for the safe keeping of the Sloop & Cargoe . . . I have now sent this by my Factors, Edward Fleetwood and James Lesly, & humbly pray your Majesty to cause Bartholomew Rodrigues & his People, & that Sloop & Cargo, to be delivered to my said Factors. . . .

Severall Englishmen, who, in former Years, have been in your Majesty's Kingdoms, & have obtained liberty of returning, doe declare the greatness of your Majesty's glory. If there be any now remaining under the misfortune of Captivity, I humbly beg your Majesty wili please to grant their liberty, that they may spread the fame of your Majesty's splendid Greatness, from the rising Sun to the setting Sun.

Adrian Tilbury, a Merchant of this place, was my Servant for many Years, He made a Voyage from hence to Martaban & there dyed ; his Widow hath acquainted me, that your Majesty's Governours have according to the usuall Justice of your Majesty's laws, secured his Estate, being a Stranger. I humbly beg your Majesty will be pleased to order the same to be delivered to my Factors, for the use of his Widow & Orphan. . . .

And if your Majesty will grant me leave to build a small Ship, or two, I will send my People the next Year for that purpose.

Your Majesty's most humble  
and Devoted Servant  
Nat. Higginson.

Dated in Fort St George  
the 10th Sept. 1695."

This English version of the letter was the office copy. The issue copy which went to Ava was in Portuguese, because the slaves whom the king kept at Ava as interpreters were half-caste Portuguese.

As Tilbury was an alien dying intestate his estate had

escheated to the crown ; the Company did not object, for it was their own custom, and the property would be restored on cause being shown (p. 190). But the rest of the letter, stripped of diplomatic phraseology, constitutes an indictment. Governor Higginson offered to re-open the branch at Syriam, not because he wanted it but because the king of Burma wanted it. The king wanted foreigners to trade in his ports, and since the English would not come he waited till a ship, *St. Anthony and St. Nicholas*, affiliated to them, strayed into his ports, and then seized her in order to attract their attention.

Indeed seafaring men tended to give Burma a wide berth. There were better markets at Malacca, Achin, and Tenasserim, and at these places foreigners received good treatment. . They had reason to doubt the treatment they would get in Burma. No skipper likes paying his crew all the wages due when giving them liberty to go ashore in a foreign port ; he likes to retain a balance lest they should desert, and in some navies he is bound by regulation to do so. But the governors of Burmese ports had a way of insisting that crews should be paid in full before landing, and then encouraging them to desert. If a sailor married a woman of the country, the governor would claim him as a Burmese subject, alleging that the husband takes the wife's nationality. A shipmaster could not get his men back, or if he did he had to pay the Burmese officials for each man they returned. It was the king's regular policy to retain every foreigner he could (p. 349). If a ship was driven on to the coast by weather the Burmese government, regarded her as a windfall, confiscated her, and enslaved the crew. They argued that under their law anyone who saved another from drowning had the right to possess him as a slave, in the same way a weather-beaten ship owed her life to the port which gave her shelter, therefore the prince of that port had a right to seize her. Nay, if a ship merely touched at a Burmese port for water without being expressly consigned there, she was seized and the crew enslaved on the same reasoning.<sup>1</sup> But here as in so much else the harshness

<sup>1</sup>Year 1755, *Dalrymple* I. 191 ; year 1781, *Sonnerat* (1806) III. 49 ; year 1782, *TP* 1890 Cordier "Les Français en Birmanie" 199, 205 ; year 1808, *Sangermano* 61, The custom continued until the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, *Crawford* II. app. 13.

of the rulers was mitigated by the humanity of the monks: if the distressed mariner wandered into a monastery he was safe, for the monks would bind up his wounds, feed him, clothe him, and send him as if in sanctuary with letters of commendation from monastery to monastery till he could reach Syriam, there to await the chance of some passing ship.<sup>1</sup>

The orders passed by the Burmese court on Governor Higginson's letter were that the restoration of a ship and crew, though contrary to all law and precedent—"it is such as has never yet been granted"—would be conceded as a special case on the understanding that the Company reopened its branch at Syriam; the Company was granted its former site, with dock space, and a rebate of one-third off the customs duties, which were usually 10 per cent. *ad valorem*, exclusive of heavy perquisites. Two years later neither the ship nor the crew had been restored, and Governor Higginson had to send a second mission under Bowyer in 1697 with exactly the same objects.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to export teak, rice, and saltpetre. In practice he was allowed to export teak, but in theory it was prohibited, rice was allowed only in sufficient quantities to feed a crew, and the very idea of allowing the export of saltpetre was so unthinkable that the ministers could not even mention it to His Majesty.

The English factory was established at Syriam in 1709 and lasted till 1743 (p. 213). They imported fire-arms for government, piece-goods, hats and other European wares, areca, and coconuts from the Nicobars; they exported ivory, lac, pepper, cardamum, beeswax, fur, cutch, any amount of raw cotton and silk, together with such jewels, silver, lead, copper, iron, tin and earth-oil as could be got in spite of the prohibition. Moreover, they were allowed to use as much teak as they liked for building ships at Syriam and they built many, the favourite type being brigantines of 40-50 tons.

<sup>1</sup> Year 1727, *Hamilton* II. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Documents relating to the Fleetwood-Sealey and Bowyer missions are at *Dalrymple* II. 337-405. An Armenian at Ava warned Fleetwood not to make presents to the reigning beauty in the palace, as a prince who had recently done so was punished.



SANE 1698-1714, son of his predecessor, built the Manaung pagoda in Sagaing district. In 1707 he sent levies to raid Sandoway. In 1703 deserters from Ayuthia and in 1709 from Viengchang took service at Ava owing to some quarrel with the king of Siam.

The authors of the reign are Yazathuriya, minister of land revenue, and two monks, Shin Zinarama and Shin Aggathamala; the last dwelt at Shwekyetyet and his supporter, the Twinthin minister, would never bring him to the king's notice lest worldly success should spoil him. They wrote verse and commentaries.

TANINGANWE 1714-33, son of his predecessor, built the Lawkamanaung pagoda at Ava. At his accession his uncle, lord of Pagan, rebelled and fled to the hills east of Pegu. In 1721 the first Christian missionaries landed; the king gave them presents for the Pope.<sup>1</sup> In 1724 Mg Kala compiled the Yazawingyi chronicle; it is an important work, based on earlier sources, and similarly large portions of its own text are incorporated *verbatim* in the narrative of the *Hmannan Yazawin*. In 1725 Chiengmai revolted against grinding Burmese taxation and successfully resisted recapture, although the king ordered molten silver to be poured down the throats of officers who had taken bribes from the rebels and failed in their duty.

MAHADAMMAYAZA-DIPATI 1733-52, the son of his predecessor, had a minister, Padethayaza, who had written verse in the two preceding reigns and now proceeded to do so on one of the royal princesses and on the Siamese embassy (p. 214); he accompanied the king to Pegu in 1752 and died at Syriam. In 1736 the Shinhla image (p. 48) at Sagaing

\* \* <sup>1</sup> See note "The Catholic Mission" p. 345.

was stolen; His Majesty therefore executed the primate and a Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

Manipur though tributary to Burma under Bayinnaung 1551-81 had gone her own way since his time. In 1647 and 1692 the raja had raided Thaungdut on the Chindwin river, but these were only the ordinary border forays such as Arakan and Siam were always making, and, on the other hand, in 1704 he presented a daughter. But under Gharib Newaz 1714-54 Manipur became a thorn in the side of Upper Burma. The country was famous for its ponies, and in those days every man, however humble his rank, possessed two or three.<sup>2</sup> Polo, played forty a side, was universal and made them all expert horsemen. They now came raiding Upper Burma. They started in 1724 by saying they would present another girl to provide company for the one presented in 1704. But when three hundred lords, ladies and attendants from the Ava court came to escort her at the mouth of the Yu river in the Upper Chindwin district, they were met not by a tame princess but by wild horsemen who carried them all away captive into Manipur. The Burmese sent an expedition in revenge, but it was ambushed in the swamps near Heirok, south-west of Thobal, and losing heavily retreated in haste. In 1735 the Manipuris came to Myedu in Shwebo district and carried off loot, cattle, and a thousand people, mainly descendants of De Brito's Indians (p. 348). In 1737 they killed two-thirds of a royal levy sent to oppose them, including the commander, who was drunk,<sup>3</sup> and swept down to Tabayin in Shwebo district, burning everything they met. In 1738 when the king garrisoned these two places and Mingin in the Upper Chindwin district against them, they simply cantered past, camped at Thalunbyu west of Sagaing, burnt every house and monastery up to the walls of Ava, and stormed the stockade built to protect the Kaunghmudaw pagoda (p. 195), slaughtering the garrison like cattle in a pen and killing the commandant, a minister of the Hluttaw Council; the old door-leaves of the pagoda's eastern gateway show a gash made by the sword of Gharib Newaz when he was forcing an entrance.

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 376. See note "Capital Punishment" p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Pemberton* 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Hmannan* III. 377. See note "Drink" p. 314.

One reason why the Manipuris raided Burma was that they had just been converted to Hinduism by preachers who said that if they bathed in the Irrawaddy river at Sagaing all blessedness would attend them. Indeed, their chief Brahman insisted on coming to Ava himself in 1744 in order to convert the Golden Palace, but he fell ill and died after staying a month, and his suite of lesser Brahmans then returned home.

The Manipuris raided again in 1740 but in 1741 they sent an envoy with a jacket for the raja's kinswoman who had been presented to the Ava harem in 1704; he also brought complimentary presents for the king, whose orders were that his presents should be sent in at once and then he should be kept waiting a month before being granted an audience or seeing the princess.<sup>1</sup>

In 1749 Gharib Newaz came on his last raid, thinking "If there is an opportunity to fight, I will fight; and if there is not I will present a daughter." On reaching Ava he found the Burmese forces so numerous that they stretched from Shwekyetyet to Londawpauk; moreover, during the night his standard was blown down, a terrible portent; always celebrated for his royal wisdom, he now perceived that this was not an occasion to fight, and instead he presented his twelve-year-old daughter who accompanied him.

The Manipuris were occasionally troubled by Burmese levies, but usually did as they liked. Living in an obscure valley, knowing nothing of the outer world, they thought themselves heroes, able to take their pleasure of Burma when they willed. They did not realise that Burma was several times the size of their country, that they were laying up for themselves a frightful vengeance, and the only reason vengeance never seemed to come was that Burma happened to be under an incapable king.

Mahadammayaza-dipati, king of Burma, angered at his commanders' failure to repel the Manipuris, used to expose them in the sun with a sword on their necks, saying "If a failure like this comes to my golden ears again I will chastise you with my sword." Neither he nor his predecessors since 1648 ever took the field in person. In short, the kingdom was doomed. There is no parallel between Indo-China and developed states where the king's personality matters little, because there is a

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 385.

large middle and upper class to galvanise the nation into life. Majestic and complex though the machinery of administration seemed to a simple people, it was ineffective. Character and intelligence were rare, because the instinct of self-preservation drives a despotism to cut off the heads of the tallest lilies in the Tarquin way.

Where society is sound, families possess vitality for centuries, witness such houses as the Cecils and the Lowthers who are now leading their people for the fourth century. But in Burma no reigning family lasted three centuries or retained its vigour for more than three generations. One reason is the large-scale harem system which convention fastened on the monarch. Great kings did not transmit their character but shattered the mould, producing quantity at the expense of quality. The Burmese commoner chose as wife an equal, to be his helpmate; they shared their daily life, its common toil and interest; their children grew up under the care of an equal man, an equal woman, gaining the benefit of a father's as well as a mother's example. But the Burmese king did not choose his wife: he married his half-sisters, and his innumerable lesser wives were not chosen on consideration, to be the noble mothers of children, but were taken on caprice, as distractions. The little prince grew up amid jealousy and intrigue, his mother was often an inferior, and he developed not in the free atmosphere of an equal man and woman, acquiring character from each, but in purely feminine surroundings which his august father seldom entered.

The state to which things had been allowed to drift is indicated by the fact that although fire-arms had been known in Burma since the sixteenth century, the king now had so few that the Manipuris thought he had none.<sup>1</sup> The monarchy was like over-ripe fruit, ready to fall at the first touch, and, as invariably happened at such times, there was a crop of *minlaung* pretenders. Rumours of them were even more plentiful, and dacoity was rampant everywhere. In 1742 a thousand people fled to Arakan, complaining that there was drunkenness in the palace and famine in the villages; and others followed them over the passes in the next decade.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pemberton 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Dinnyawadi Yasawinthisi* 230-4.

A colony of Gwe Shans<sup>1</sup> at Okpo near Madaya, Mandalay district, disliked the king because he taxed their *kunthibin* areca palms at four annas a tree;<sup>2</sup> the present rate is less than one pie, and four annas in those days was something like four rupees to-day. They set up one of their number, Gonna-ein, as pretender, and Talaing deportees at Madaya joined them. They built a stockade, swept the Burmese out of the locality, went raiding into Shwebo district, and would even venture to attack the retreating Manipuris. On one occasion a number of them were captured by the Burmese, who treated them well, hoping to dissuade them from sending to Pegu for help; they were released, and went away saying they would win over their comrades to pay homage; they returned in strength, found the Burmese holding high festival, and cut them to pieces.

The king had continued to hold the Delta since the sixteenth century. But although he could sometimes rely on raising a levy there, his troops were usually raised in Upper Burma, and it looks as if he had comparatively little to do with Lower Burma, for places there are scarcely mentioned in the recurrent bestowal of fiefs, and the honour lists include few Talaings. The kings kept control of the Irrawaddy highway, of Pegu town, and of Syriam which produced valuable customs revenue, but inland, away from the river banks, Lower Burma was probably left to its own devices. It gave little trouble because the Talaings took generations to recover from the depopulation of the sixteenth century wars. When they did recover, and re-peopled the wilderness, trouble began.

It started at Pegu, which the Talaings regarded as divinely appointed to be a royal seat. Burmese taxation there was iniquitous; the very looms were taxed, and women were taxed for suckling their children.<sup>3</sup> Yet the Burmese governor imagined he could become independent among the people he oppressed. Hearing that Ava was beset by the Manipuris, he proclaimed himself king of Pegu in 1740, executed all who refused to drink the water of allegiance, and marched on Syriam. On the march his officers murmured against him, so he arrested

<sup>1</sup> See note "Gwe" p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Oral tradition. It was an impossible assessment, but the administration was reckless in its arithmetic and also liked to pitch assessments high in order to allow a wide margin for squeezing. See pp. 335, 360.

<sup>3</sup> *Sayadaw Athwa* III. 139.

their families, the usual proceeding for preventing desertion, as men hesitate to desert when they know their families will be burned or buried alive. But on this occasion instead of stopping desertion it led to the officers killing him. The king's uncle came from Ava, exterminated the dead man's family and followers according to precedent, and set up a new governor. But as the new governor executed the wrong people wholesale for alleged complicity in the late rebellion, the people killed him, and there was a general Talaing rising. They massacred the Burmese of every age, sex and condition in such places as Martaban and Syriam.

Meanwhile some Gwe Karens<sup>1</sup> outside Pegu town, hearing that a *minlaung* pretender was about to appear, proceeded to identify him in the person of one of their own monks, who, being a son of the former rebel lord of Pagan (p. 207) was of the Ava house, but had been brought up among the Gwe Karens. The Talaing leaders agreed, and he was raised to the throne of Pegu as **Smim Htaw Buddhaketi 1740-7**. The chief of Chiengmai presented him with a daughter, and heaven itself seemed to sanction his elevation, as he had an elephant which, if not white, was at least spotted. His strongest supporter was Binnya Dala who, as Master of the Elephant Stables at Pegu, had helped him to the throne and presented him with a daughter. They soon held Prome and Toungoo towns and all the country to the south, but received little help from Martaban and Tavoy. In 1742 they started raiding annually up the Irrawaddy river as far as Ava. They had the advantage of possessing some fire-arms with a few renegade Dutch and half-caste Portuguese adventurers.<sup>2</sup>

The Burmese usually offered resistance but seldom ventured to carry the war into the Delta because they were liable to be recalled against the Manipuris; they did indeed reoccupy Syriam in 1743, but the Talaings found them all drunk and drove them out with heavy loss.<sup>3</sup> In 1745, when occupying Hsinbyugyun, Minbu district, the Talaings found themselves starving because their supplies failed to come up the river and their ravages had laid waste the surrounding country. Fearing to be harried during their retreat, they wrote to the Burmese,

<sup>1</sup> See note "Gwe" p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Symes 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Hmannan* III. 386. See "Drink" p. 314.

who lay at Pagan-Nyaungu, "Your king is related to ours. This warfare is unnatural and bringeth the world to ruin. Let our king and yours speak together as becometh kinsmen, and the land will have peace." The prince commanding the Burmese returned answer "You speak of your pretender at Pegu as kinsman of our king; but a monkey on a tree, though he dress in man's clothes, is not a man." The Talaings then made good their retreat to Pegu.<sup>1</sup>

When sacking Syriam in 1740, the Talaings had respected the property of the East India Company's branch (p. 206), and Smim Htaw Buddhaketi even wrote to the manager pointing out the cruel provocation which had compelled his people to revolt against the Burmese; he gave the English every privilege, but now in 1743, when he again expelled the Burmese, he suspected the English of sympathising with them and burnt the factory to the ground.<sup>2</sup> After that, the mainland was not good enough, and feeling insecure, the Company withdrew to Negrais island at the mouth of the Bassein river. They did indeed keep shipwrights and a branch at Syriam, but their headquarters were in a fortified post constructed in 1753 at Negrais, with moat, glacis and cannon, for in the condition of the country men could not sleep quietly at nights save behind fortified walls. The Burmese could not understand that a sea-faring race prefers a base in the sea, and the court saw in the choice of ground clear proof that the English were hatching some plot in a remote fastness (p. 240).

On returning from Europe in 1743 Gallizia, the Catholic bishop, found it impossible to reach Ava in the prevailing anarchy, and instead took his clergy to Pegu where the Talaing king received them well. In 1744 the Ostend Company was expelled from Bankibazar. As the English had just left Syriam, there was a vacancy there, and if the king of Pegu refused facilities it was always possible to bring in the Burmese and claim a settlement in reward for re-instating them. So the Ostend Company fled in six ships to Syriam where the governor in justifiable alarm sent bishop Gallizia aboard to ascertain their intentions. The bishop prevailed upon the commander, Chevalier de Sconenville, with several of his officers, to accompany him to Pegu. There the commander

<sup>1</sup> *Hmannan* III. 386-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Dalrymple* I. 101-6.

could get no orders on his application, the court saying that the king was in the country and nothing could be done till his return. Meanwhile the bishop found that the Talaings were arranging to massacre the party; he warned them and they all tried to escape in boats to Syriam. But the banks swarmed with Talaings who killed them, including the bishop and two of his priests. Only four men escaped to reach the ships, which made off.<sup>1</sup>

In the Talaing rising of 1740, the Burmese governors at Martaban and Tavoy tried to raise their districts and march on Pegu; but instead their districts rose against them and slew every Burman within reach. Unable to return to Ava, the two governors, with a combined retinue of 300 souls, fled to Ayuthia where the king of Siam entertained them hospitably. Hearing this, the king of Ava sent grateful acknowledgments in 1744 by envoys bearing presents—gilded lacquer goblets, bowls and dishes, raiment with rich borders, earth-oil, imported piece-goods, a canoe, and robes for a queen. At Ayuthia the envoys would not prostrate themselves before the *thenapati* (commander-in-chief) or the senior ministers, saying that as bearers of royal letters they could not do so until they had first prostrated themselves before the king; and the king of Ayuthia upheld them on the point. In return he sent envoys to Ava with gilded lacquer goblets, dishes and betel-boxes, velvets and silks of dragon pattern, a royal barge, and a letter on gold leaf; the letter was enclosed in caskets of ivory and crystal studded with rubies, wrapped in velvet and tied with gold cord, and it was borne on the back of an elephant. The Siamese envoys came in the cold weather 1745-6 and owing to war conditions they kept to devious routes through the teak forests all the way; on reaching Upper Burma they found the Talaings again in possession at least as far as Hsinbyugyun in Minbu district and fearing for themselves, they spread rumours that they were the advance guard of a Siamese army coming to help Ava. The Talaings therefore retreated to the Delta and the envoys entered Ava. After being kept waiting a necessary time, they were granted audience.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bigandet* 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Hmannan* III. 389, *Samuel Smith* 96-8. The majesty of a Burmese king was demeaned by promptitude. The rule at court was to avoid noticing foreign envoys until they had been kept waiting long enough to feel insignificant, see p. 290.



Smim Htaw Buddhaketi was a gentle soul and the people loved him. In spite of his precarious position he spent most of his time hunting elephants in the forest; after all it was necessary to procure a proper white elephant in order to prove himself a proper king. He was such a long time away that his ministers ventured to suggest he should return and see to state affairs. Instead of complying, he had his harem sent to his elephant camp at Sittaung in Thaton district. Moreover, he was an astrologer, and now perceived that his horoscope was bad. Therefore, lest his people should be dragged down with him, he avoided the throne. His lords were compelled to return as the Pegu court threatened to deal with their families according to precedent, but he himself with ten elephants and 300 followers went to Chiengmai. Finding no refuge there, he went to Ayuthia where the king confined him and sent him to China on a junk. But the junk landed him on the west coast, and he went to Yünnan. As Yünnan did not want him, he wandered through the Shan states, nowhere finding a welcome till finally he came to Chiengmai again and was allowed to stay.

Meanwhile the court at Pegu set up as king first a monk, Neko, and then, after a few days, **Binnya Dala 1747-57**. He was crowned with great solemnity, and addressing the assembled court said that Buddha had prophesied greatness for Pegu, Bayinnaung had made her mighty, and now he would restore her greatness. He appointed his younger brother *yuvvaraja* (crown prince) and made Talaban *thenapati* (commander-in-chief).<sup>1</sup>

In Upper Burma, the constant raids by the Gwes and Talaings of Madaya-Okpo and by the Pegu levies resulted in the ruin of agriculture. Feeling unsafe, men deserted their fields, and Talaings or dacoits burned whatever little crop was left.

These years are an object lesson in incompetence. The troops did little but run away. Before long the same men were to carry all before them because they had found leaders; those leaders were there now, waiting to be used, but an effete despotism had not the means of selecting them.

In 1750 the king sent an elephant, a golden model of a pagoda, and other homage presents to Yünnan asking for help;

<sup>1</sup> *Sayadaw Athwa III*, 141.

the Yünnan viceroy sent an officer with an armed escort to report on the situation at Ava but he sent no help. Sometimes the Talaings would reach Shwekyetyet north of Ava. Finally at the end of 1751 they occupied Kyaukse, the one place which could have replenished the city's empty granaries.

The king sat in his palace and left everything to his uncle, Toungooyaza, appointing him joint king. Toungooyaza led the field levies against a Talaing force under the *yuvaraja* (crown prince) which came up the Irrawaddy river, but the Talaings drove him in and invested Ava. The defenders grew so weak with hunger that they could hardly lift their weapons. The Talaings were on the point of returning home when they learnt this from deserters, and in April 1752 they forced their way in, sacked the city, and burnt it to the ground. Crowds of captives, including the royal family, were deported to Pegu. Some of the royal princes escaped during the sack and fled to the Shan country; none of them stayed and tried to raise the waiting north. The solitary exception is Toungooyaza; it was he who raided Syriam in 1743 and had commanded against the Manipuris for decades; while being taken down the river to Pegu he escaped in disguise as a fisherman, went to Mogaung and there, trying to collect men, he died within the year, not an able man, but at least a faithful servant.

The Talaings sent out detachments to administer the water of allegiance to all villages. A few weeks later the *yuvaraja* left Talaban with one-third of the forces to garrison Ava, and withdrew with the rest to Pegu as there was some fear that Martaban and Tavoy might bring in the Siamese. But no potential danger from Siam could equal the actual danger from northern Burma. The evacuation, before the Talaings had penetrated the country north of the city, was a capital error. The Ava dynasty was played out, but there was nothing to show that the Burmese people were played out. The *yuvaraja* had ample warning, even if he did not possess the soldier's instinct: a detachment sent to administer the water of allegiance to a village called Moksobomyo was cut to pieces. He was angry, and when handing over to Talaban he said "You will have to make an example of that place, Moksobomyo, or whatever they call it."