

GREAT LORDS OF THE SKY: BURMA'S SHAN ARISTOCRACY



BURMA'S SHAN ARISTOCRACY by Sao Sanda Simms

AHP 48

GREAT LORDS OF THE SKY:
BURMA'S SHAN
ARISTOCRACY

SAO SANDA SIMMS



*This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved husband,
Peter Simms, who believed in me.*

Also by Sao Sanda Simms

The Moon Princess: Memories of the Shan State.

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NOTES

Every effort has been made to obtain permission from contributors for the use of their materials. I apologize for any errors or omissions and would be grateful if notified of corrections that should be incorporated in future editions of this book.

Apologies are also due for any misidentification of persons. Many of our elders with fading memories were unable to tell us who was who, and others have passed away. Consequently, unintentional mistakes may have been made. To rectify any further wrong labelling, I appeal to all concerned to help identify our ancestors. Please go to saohpa.org and submit changes that you deem necessary.

FAMILY TREES

Many Shan dynasties go back centuries, but for the Family Trees in this book, the charts begin from the late nineteenth and twentieth century for convenience and easy recognition. The numbers I, II, III, IV, and V represent generations. Children are shown as II1 for the first child, II2 for the second child, and so on. Ensuing generations are indicated by, e.g., II1, II2 and III1, III2 and IV1, IV2, and so on. Multiple wives of the princes are shown as IWife1, IWife2, IIWife1 and IIWife2, and so on. Wives and children are shown as for example, in the Hsipaw Family Tree:

First generation	I Sao Kya Kai/Sao Hkun Hseng Saohpa No.85
First generation Wife1	IWife1 Meiktila Supaya, sister to King Thibaw (married 6 wives)
Second generation Child1	II1 Sir Sao Hke, Saohpa No.86, (married 24 wives, only 4 wives are shown here)
Second generation Wife1	II1Wife1 name unknown
Third generation Child1	III1 Sao On Kya, Saohpa No. 87
Third generation Wife1	III1Wife1 Sao Thunanda, Mahadevi of Hsipaw
Third generation Child2	III2 Sao Kya Nyunt m. Sao Kwang Tai, Kengtung Saohpa
Second generation Wife2	II1Wife2 name unknown
Third generation Child1	III1 Sao Ohn Mar

SPELLINGS

Variations in spelling have not been changed especially for family trees, e.g., Khun/Hkun, Htun/Tun, Long/Loang, Hseng/Seng, Ohn/Ong/On, Mong/Murng/Merng, and so on. An effort has been made though to standardize spellings for the names of the princes, towns, and states.

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FAMILY PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Baw, Hopong, Hsahtung, Hsahmong Hkam, Hsenwi, Hsipaw, Kantarawadi, Kengtung, Kesi
 Mansam, Kokang, Laikha, Lawksawk, Loi Long, Mong Kung, Mong Lun, Mong Pawn, Mong Nai,
 Mong Nawng, Mong Yai, Namhkok, Pangmi, Pangtara, Pwehla, Samka, Tawngpeng, Yawnghwe,
 Ywangan

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	American Baptist Mission
AFO	Anti-Fascist Organization
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
AA	Arakan Army
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asia Nations
ATM	<i>Ahmudan gaung Tazik ya Min</i> , ATM Medal for Good Work (as a civil servant)
AVG	American Volunteer Group
BIA	Burma Independence Army
BL	British Library, London, England
BNA	Burma National Army
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIE	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
DSI	Defense Services Institute
DSO	Distinguished Service Order (British military decoration)
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organizations
FSS	Federated Shan States
HMG	His Majesty's Government/Her Majesty's Government
ICS	Indian Civil Service (ICS)
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
KCIE	Knight Companion of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KDF	Kokang Self-Defense Force
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist, also White Chinese)
KNLP	Kayan New Land Party
KNU	Karen National Union
KPLA	Kokang People's Liberation Army
KRF	Kokang Revolutionary Force
KSM	<i>Kyat thaye zaung shwe Salwe ya Min</i> , highest Burmese honors title created by the British
MEC	Myanmar Economic Corporation
MEHC	Myanmar Economic Holdings Corporation
MIS	Military Intelligence Service
MNDAA	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army
MTA	Mong Tai Army
NDAA	National Democratic Alliance Army
NLD	National League for Democracy
NSH	Noom Suik Harn 'Young Warriors'
OBV	Oxford Buddha Vihara
PDP	Parliamentary Democracy Party
PLA	Peoples Liberation Army, Chinese Communist
PNA	Pa-O National Association (<i>pa-ah-ma-sa</i>)

PNF	Palaung National Front
PNO	Pa-O National Organization (<i>pa-ah-ma-ha</i>)
PRP	People's Revolutionary Party
PSLO/P	Palaung State Liberation Organization/Party
PVO	Peoples' Volunteer Organization
PWD	Public Works Department
RAF	Royal Air Force
SCA	Shan Cultural Association
SCOUHP	Supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SHRE	Shan Human Rights Foundation
SNDP	Shan National Development Party
SNLD	Shan National League for Democracy
SNUF	Shan National United Front
SSA	Shan State Army
SSAE	Shan State Army East
SSA(N)	Shan State Army North
SSHPO	Shan State Hill People's Organization (<i>ya-at-sa-nya-pha</i>)
SSIA	Shan State Independence Army
SSK (1943)	<i>Shan States and Karenni, List of Chiefs and Leading Families</i> (1943)
SSNA	Shan State National Army
SSNLO	Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization
SSPLP	Shan State People's Liberation Party (<i>ya-pa-la-ha</i>) (U Tun Aye)
SSPO	Shan States People's Organization
SSPFL	Shan States People's Freedom League
SSPP	Shan State Progressive Party
SSUP	Shan State Peasant' Union (<i>ya-at-la-sa</i>)
SSWC	Shan State War Council
SSYL	Shan State Youth League
SUA	Shan United Army
SURA	Shan United Revolutionary Army
TDM	<i>Thuye gaung ngwee Daya min</i> 'Silver Sword for Bravery Award'
TNA	Thai Northern Army
TNLA	Ta'ang National Liberation Army
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPO	Union National Pa-O Organization
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
USSPO	Union of Shan State People's Organization
UWSA	United Wa State Army
WNC	Wa National Council
WNO/P	Wa National Organization/Party

CONTENTS

NOTES <5>

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS <7>

CONTENTS <9>

THE AUTHOR <15>

MAPS <17>

- Map 1: Political Divisions, Union of Burma, 1948 <17>
- Map 2: Location of Shan States, 1939 <18>
- Map 3: Resources of the Shan Plateau <19>
- Map 4: Major Ethnic Groups of Burma <20>

PREFACE <21>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT <23>

PART ONE: BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE: THE EARLY PERIOD <26>

- The Shan Plateau <26>
- Migrations <27>
- The Early Ava Court <28>
- Differences <30>
- Mutual Respect <32>
- The Limbin Confederacy 1886 <33>
- British Annexation <34>
- Under the British <36>
- Changing Times <36>

CHAPTER TWO: BRITISH RULE <41>

- The Watershed 1922 <41>
- Burma Round Table Conference 1931-1932 <43>
- Federated Council of Shan Chiefs <45>
- The Feudal Lords <47>
- The Privy Purse <48>
- Contentment? <50>
- Some Progress <51>

CHAPTER THREE: THE INTERIM <58>

- A Storm Approaches <58>
- Enter the Japanese <58>

- Japanese Occupation <60>
- Distrust <63>
- Return of the British <64>
- SCOUHP 1946 <68>
- Attlee-Aung San Treaty <69>
- Anti-feudalists <70>
- Namkham U Htun Aye <73>

CHAPTER FOUR: PANGLONG AND AFTER <77>

- The Panglong Agreement of 1947 <77>
- Committee of Inquiry 1947 <79>
- Tragedy <80>
- Constituent Assembly <81>
- Selecting a President <82>
- Insurgency <84>

CHAPTER FIVE: TEN LONG YEARS <91>

- Disenchantment <91>
- To Secede or Not, 1958 <93>
- Tatmadaw's Soft Approach <95>
- The 1959 Abdications <96>
- New Elections <97>

CHAPTER SIX: WITHOUT TRUST <103>

- The Federal Proposal <103>
- U Tun Myint <105>
- No Compromise <107>
- The Coup d'etat 1962 <110>

PART TWO: GUARDIANS OF THE SHAN PLATEAU

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE NORTHERN SHAN STATES <121>

- Hsipaw State <121>
 - Fate Unknown <121>
 - Hsipaw State <123>
 - The Saohpa Long <124>
 - Strained Relations <126>
 - Japanese Occupation <127>
 - The Tabaung Festivals <128>
- Hsenwi State <140>
 - Hsenwi Saohpa Long <140>
 - Japanese Disapproval <141>
 - Flight to Safety <142>
 - Shan-Kachin <144>
 - Burma Road <145>
 - Dr. Gordon Seagrave (1897-1965) <146>
- Mong Yai State <155>

- A Kingdom Lost <155>
- Hsenwi Divided <155>
- Mong Mit State <164>
 - An Accomplished Prince <164>
 - The Saohpa Long <165>
 - Japanese Occupation <167>
 - Rubies <168>
 - Teak Forests <169>
- Tawngpeng State <176>
 - The Palaung/Ta'ang <176>
 - Tawngpeng and its Saohpa <177>
 - The Namtu/Bawdwin Mines <180>
 - Not for Export <181>
 - Tea: a Drink or a Salad? <182>
 - An Episode <183>

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE EASTERN SHAN STATES <193>

- Kengtung State <193>
 - Largest Mong <193>
 - Mangrai Descendants <194>
 - Kengtung Saohpa Long <195>
 - Close Ties <197>
 - Tai Khun and Tai-Lu <198>
 - The Kuomintang (KMT) <199>
- Mong Pan State <216>
- Kokang State <219>
 - Into the Fold <219>
 - The House of Yang <220>
 - The Next Generation <221>
 - Jimmy Yang <222>
 - The New Order <224>

CHAPTER NINE: THE INNER SHAN STATES <233>

- Isolation <233>
- Mong Nai State <234>
 - Once Powerful <234>
 - Massacre <234>
- Laikha State <242>
 - A Gracious Host <242>
 - A State of Many Names <243>
 - A Learned Abbot <245>
- Mawkmai State <250>
 - A Charismatic Prince <250>
- Mong Nawng/Mong Nong State <255>
 - Separated from Hsenwi <255>
 - Privy Purse <255>
- Mong Kung State <262>

- Appointed Saohpa in 1928 <262>
- Mong Hsu State <271>
 - Actively Involved <271>
 - Mong Hsu Rubies <272>
- Kesi Mansam State <274>
 - Warrior Princes <274>
 - Outstanding Career <276>
- Tai Shan Resistance <282>
 - Noom Suk Harn <282>
 - The Golden Triangle <285>

CHAPTER TEN: THE CENTRAL SHAN STATES <292>

- Yawnghwe State <292>
 - The Saohpa Long <292>
 - Hands-tied <294>
 - Yawnghwe Founded in 1394 <295>
 - Enter the British <297>
 - Phaung Daw U Poy <299>
 - Inle Needs Saving <300>
- Mong Pawn State <316>
 - An Able Statesman <316>
 - The Mong Pawn Dynasty <316>
 - The Kyemmong <318>
- Hsaitung State <325>
 - Remarkable Prince <325>
 - Advocating Unity <326>
 - Untimely Death <328>
 - The Pa-O <328>
 - Restlessness <330>
- Lawksawk State <337>
 - Saohpa of Stature <337>
 - Japanese Courtesy <338>
- Samka State <345>
 - Ancient Samka <345>
 - A Devoted Buddhist <345>
- Loi Long/Pinlaung State <352>
 - Mountainous Region <352>
 - Combating Insurgents <353>
- Nawngmawn State <356>
 - Sao Htun Yin <357>
- Namhkok State <359>
- Wanyin/Banyin State <363>
- Hopong State <364>
- Sakoi State <367>
- Mong Pai State <369>
 - Mong Pai Amalgamated <369>

- Moby Narapati <369>
- Attempt at Progress <371>

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE MYE LAT STATES: THE MIDDLE LANDS <373>

- Experimental Stations <375>
- Hsahmong Kham State <376>
 - Arrival of the Danu <376>
 - Defended the State <377>
 - Politically Involved <378>
- Pangtara/Pindaya State <384>
 - Pindaya Caves <384>
 - Becomes Saohpa <385>
- Baw State <391>
 - Baw le-hse-le-ywa <391>
 - An Important Link <391>
- Pwehla State <394>
 - Rulers of Note <394>
 - Promoted a Jemadar <394>
- Pangmi/Pinhmi State <399>
 - Head Prefect and Kyemmong <399>
- Ywangan/Yengan State <405>
- Kyong State <411>

CHAPTER TWELVE: SHARING THE PLATEAU <413>

- The Two Wa States <413>
 - Introduction <413>
- Mong Lun/Mong Lon State <415>
 - A Wise Ruler <415>
 - Eastern Special Region No. 4 <417>
- Northern Wa States <419>
 - UWSP and UWSA <420>
- The Karenni/Kayah State <421>
 - Three Karenni States <421>
 - Kantarawadi <423>
 - Bawlake <424>
 - Kyebogyi <425>
 - Becomes Kayah State <425>
 - Karenni's Wealth <427>
- Diverse Communities <435>
 - Tribes and Kinships <435>
 - Troubled Relationships <436>
 - Akha <437>
 - Lahu <438>
 - Lisu <438>
 - Tai Neu <439>
 - Diversion <439>
 - Muong Sing to Luang Namtha <439>

- First Encounter <440>
- Tiger Women <442>
- Sign Language <443>
- A Holy Man <443>

EPILOGUE <450>

- Presidency <450>
- Panglong Agreement and Federalism <451>
- Ethnic Issues <451>
- Conclusion <453>

APPENDICES <454>

- Appendix 1: The Panglong Agreement 1947 <455>
- Appendix 2: Sao Harn Yawngghwe's Account <457>
- Appendix 3: Sao Shwe Thaike's Letter, 1960 <463>
- Appendix 4: Letter from Saohpa Sir Sao Mawng, 1926 <464>
- Appendix 5: Letter Showing Shan Concern, 1947 <465>

TABLES <466>

- Table 1: Land area and money: the Shan States in 1939 <467>
- Table 2: Approximate dates of reigns of rulers from British Annexation in 1887 <469>

GLOSSARY 472

REFERENCES 474

THE AUTHOR¹



Sao Sanda was born 20 October 1928 and grew up at the Yawnghwe Court, in the Shan States. When she was six years old, she was enrolled in an American Methodist School in Kalaw. During the three years of Japanese occupation, she lived in one of the Inle Lake villages.

In November 1947, Sanda accompanied her parents, the Saohpa of Yawnghwe and the Mahadevi, to the wedding of the then Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip in London. Afterwards, Sanda stayed in England for her further education, attending Girton College, Cambridge, where she read Anthropology. This is where she met her future husband, Peter Simms.

In late 1956, they drove overland in a Land Rover, from London to Rangoon arriving three months later. Once settled, Peter worked at Rangoon University and Sanda at the Burma Broadcasting Service.

Continual political upheaval in the country resulted in the end of democratic rule and the military in charge in 1962. They were then forced to leave their home in Rangoon never to return.

They moved to Laos where they both became journalists and began a peripatetic life traveling in Southeast Asia. In 1987, they returned to Europe and lived in France and in the UK and became writers.

Peter passed away in 2002 and Sanda began writing her memoirs, *The Moon Princess*, which is an entirely personal account of her life - growing up in the Yawnghwe Court, attending the

¹ Bangkok, 2011 (Simms Collection).

American Methodist School, the Japanese occupation, the return of the British, her further education in England, and meeting Peter Simms and their marriage in Bangkok.

Having written about the Yawnghwe family, she felt a need to write about the other States and their princes and to learn about their families. Consequently, she has written *Great Lords of the Sky, Burma's Shan Aristocracy*, which is a commentary of events in the Shan State from the time of the Bamar monarchy to 1962, when the military coup took place. It reveals how the ruling princes coped under the different regimes up to the devastating period of military rule.

The past is explained in order that the present political situations may be understood and resolved amicably between the Bamar government and the ethnic nationalities, hopefully leading to a true federal union for the country.

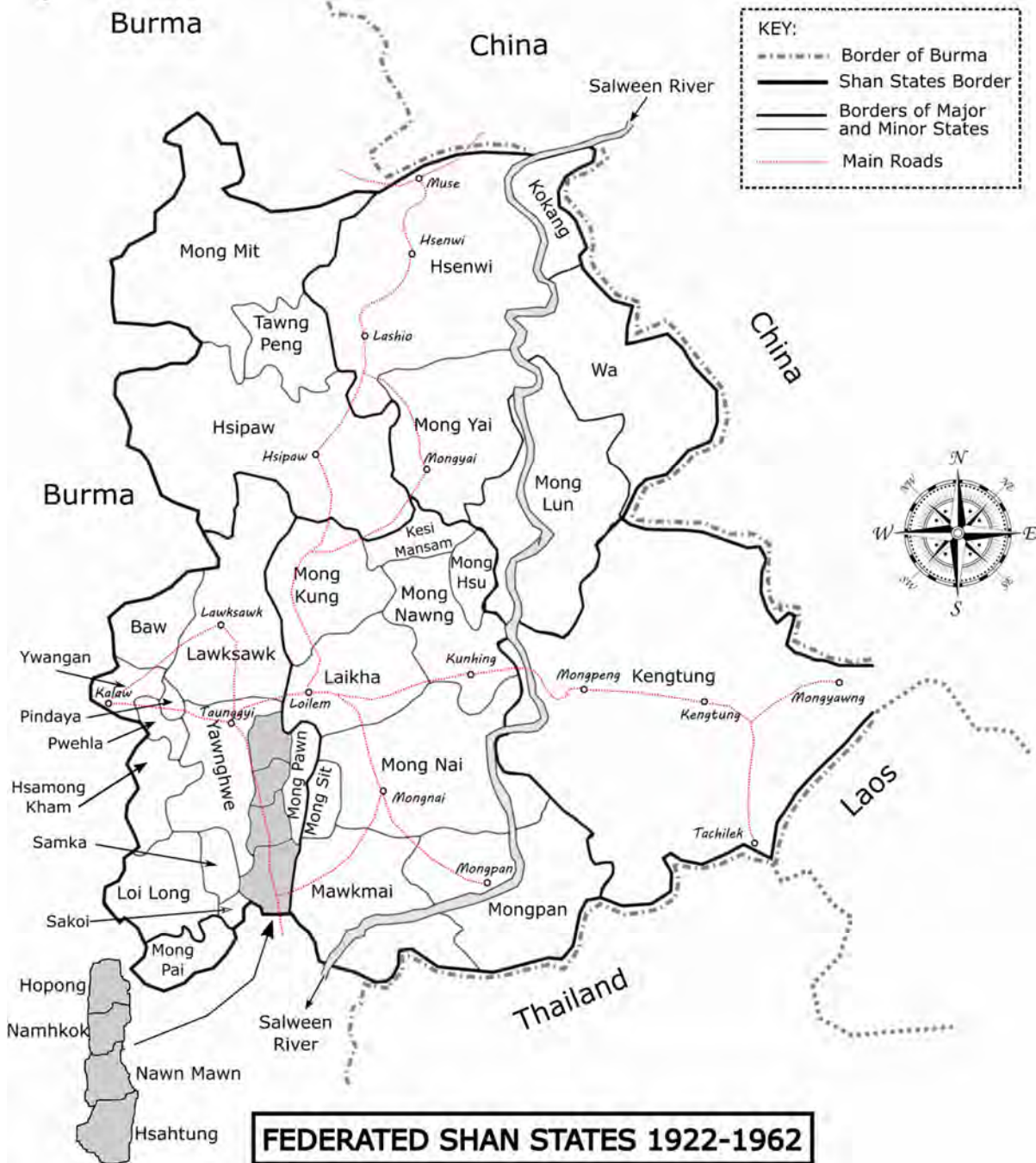
MAPS

Map 1: Political Divisions, Union of Burma, 1948.²



² Map of Burma, from Tinker (1957), reproduced with the permission of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This version has been edited.

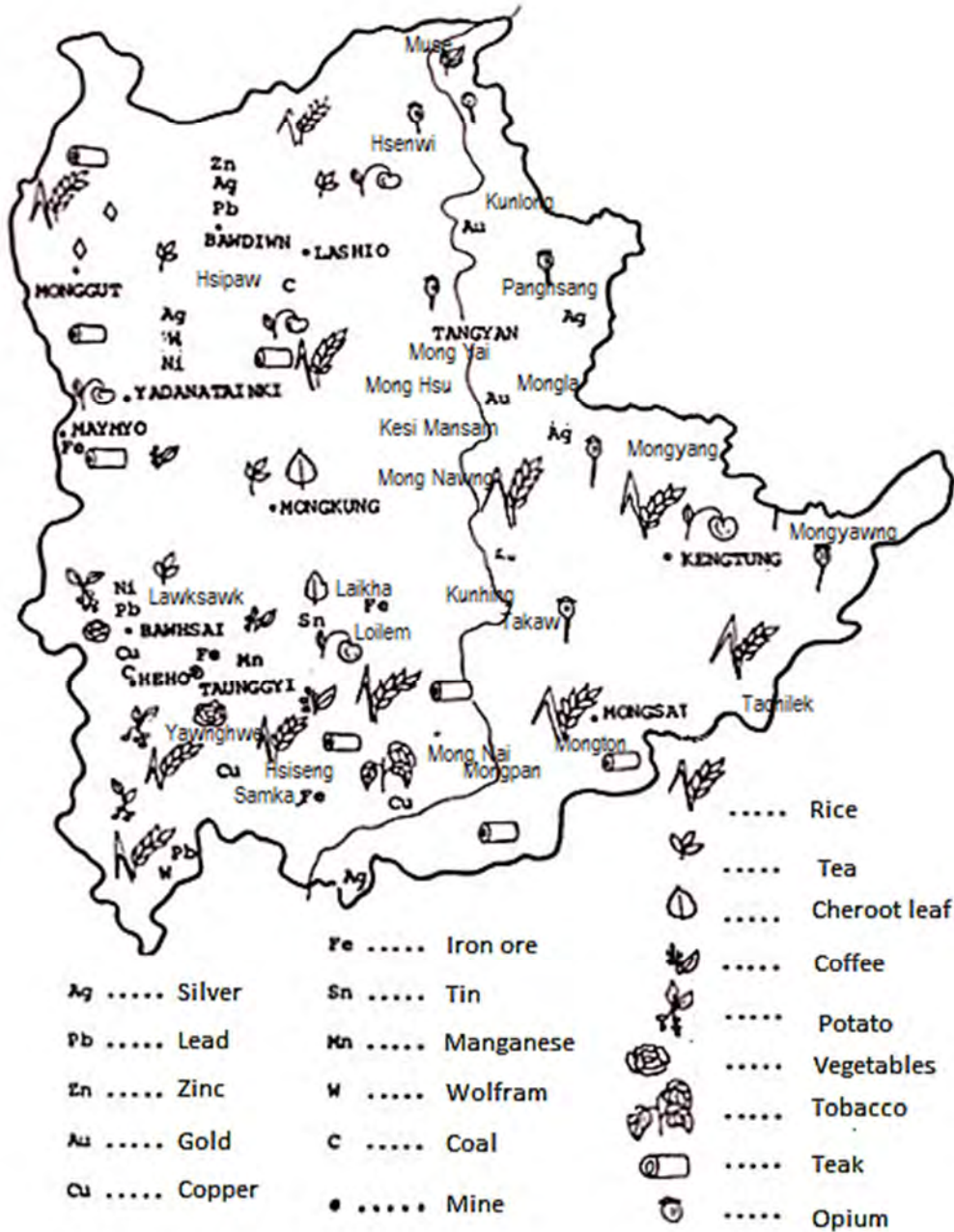
Map 2: Location of the Shan States (1939).³



³ This map was given to my husband, Peter Simms, in 1959/1960. It gives state and town names in the Shan language, not in Burmese as is found presently. Victor Ong redrew the map using a loose map at the back of *Burma Handbook* (1943) and from a map issued by the Commissioner's Office, Taunggyi, Federated Shan States in the 1940s.

Map 3: Resources of the Shan Plateau. Distribution of minerals and agricultural produce on the Shan Plateau with selected towns.⁴

Resources of the Shan Plateau


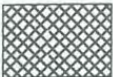




⁴ Adapted by the author from a map in *Historical Facts about the Shan State* (1986).


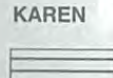
Map 4: Major ethnic groups of Burma.⁵

MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BURMA

TIBETO-BURMAN

-  Burman
-  Chin
-  Kachin
-  Rakhine
-  Other
1. Naga 2. Lahu
3. Akha

BURMAN AND MON-KHMER

-  KAREN
-  4. Pao
5. Kayan
6. Karenni


KAREN AND BURMAN



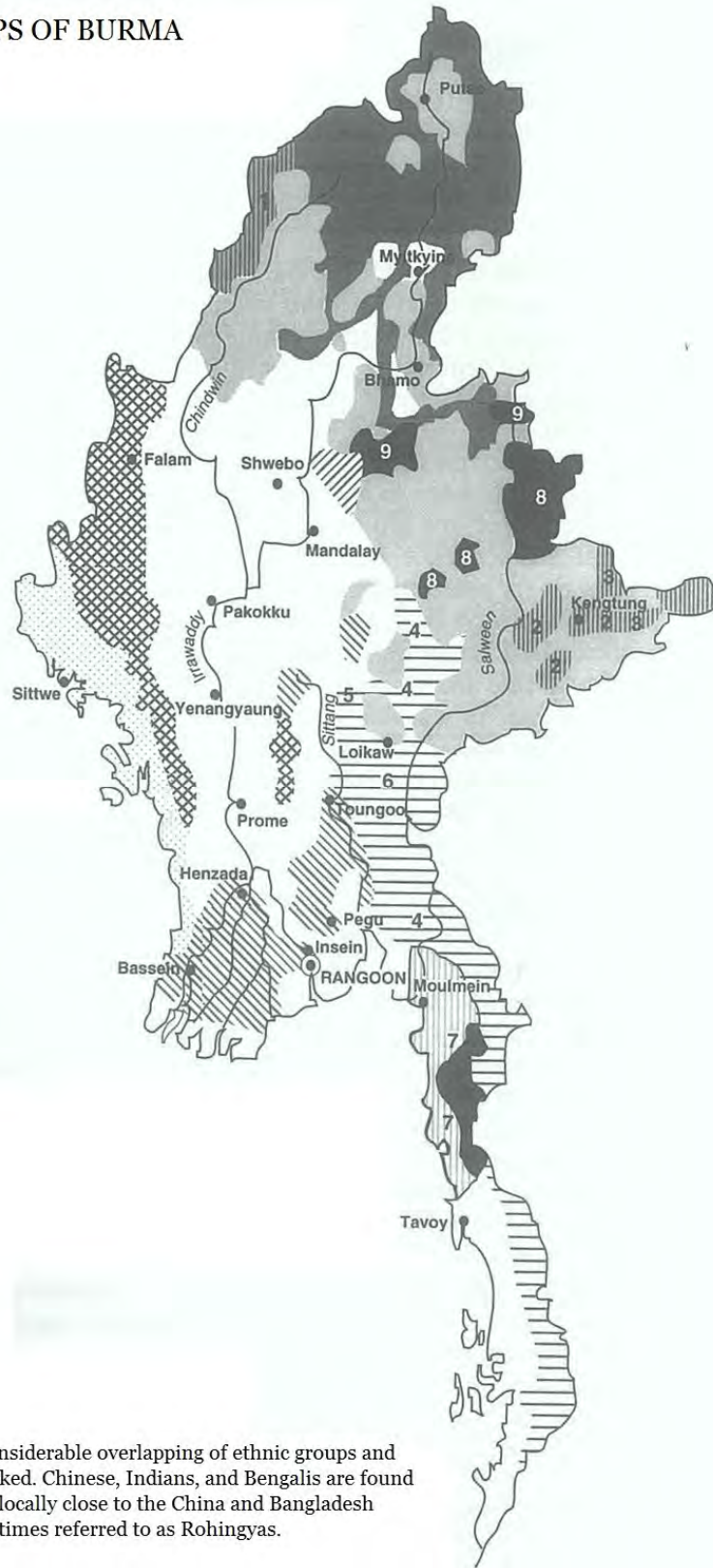
TAI

-  Shan

MON-KHMER

-  7. Mon
8. Wa
9. Palaung

BURMAN AND SHAN



All areas are approximate. There is considerable overlapping of ethnic groups and many smaller sub-groups are not marked. Chinese, Indians, and Bengalis are found in towns throughout the country and locally close to the China and Bangladesh borders. Muslims in Arakan are sometimes referred to as Rohingyas.

⁵ Original by kind permission of Martin Smith from Smith (1999:xix). This is an edited version of the original.

PREFACE

After finishing *The Moon Princess*, I realized that there was still much more to learn, understand, and write about the Shan Plateau - the massif that forms the eastern part of Burma - and its people. Many had to face and live through difficult problems in the complex situation that continues to exist in the Shan State. Not all is known of our grandparents' and parents' experiences in the era they lived, or about their ultimate struggle in the early 1960s when they attempted to create a better Shan State for their people.

I then decided to write *Great Lords of the Sky: Burma's Shan Aristocracy* from a Tai Shan perspective that would deal with the different times in the Shan States over a period of one hundred years or more up to the military coup in 1962. The book, divided into two parts, is about the Shan Plateau and its princely rulers, the *saohpa long* the 'great lords of the sky'.

Part One charts chronological events that shaped the Shan States. It considers the *saohpa's* relationships with the earlier Burman monarchy, the British government, the Japanese conquerors, the return of British administration, Independence in 1948, the intervening years, and finally the military coup in 1962.

Part Two gives accounts of the lives and work of the thirty-four princely rulers, who ruled each for varying years, from the British period through to Burma's independence and abdication of their powers. Photographs and family trees of members of the princely families provide insight into Shan culture as well as a historical perspective of the Shan Plateau.

Ever conscious of the sensitivity of relationships between the Burman/Bamar and the Shan and other ethnic nationalities, I explain the complex situation that existed then of those tense years with a view to better understanding contemporary difficulties. Those eager for progress and democracy for the country must remember that peace is essential. This book is an attempt to recount those times that were both agreeable and disagreeable. By no means scholarly or political, this book, is a personal commentary on the history of the Shan States.

•••

For several years, I had wanted to travel home. In fact, I had considered returning ever since my husband, Peter Simms (1925-2002) passed away. The years went by, but it still did not seem feasible to visit. Then elections in 2010 delivered a new civilian government and after Christmas 2011, I made my first visit back in a half-century. My second and third trips back to Rangoon and the Shan States followed in 2013 and 2014.

During those visits, I was astounded to see happy smiling faces of people living seemingly normal lives without worries. The five-day markets were packed with goods as people jostled about. Yet, I knew that many had lived through the past dark decades with experiences of despair and sadness.

Much had happened and circumstances had changed, and most people seemed to have survived by meeting challenges as they arose. Their maxim was that life had to continue regardless of what happened. Family and community duties were foremost. They had to attend to such daily occurrences as births, *kham san* 'ordination ceremonies', weddings, and funerals. On holy days, it was elders' responsibility to visit Buddhist monasteries to offer food to the monks and to listen to sermons. Annual festivals such as Phaung Daw U (explained later) were conducted as best they could. Life continued at its own pace.

I was glad to see much happening nationally. For example, in Taunggyi, the capital of the Shan State, there was the active Shan Literature and Cultural Association with a library where the

Tai Shan language was taught and many cultural activities were held. There was also a Culture Museum, where university students came to study. Nine miles outside Rangoon in an ancient Shan village there was a library where Tai Shan was also being taught. It was encouraging to see these efforts being made by both the young and old to keep Shan culture and heritage alive.

I then realized that, though I may not have understood all that had and was happening, I was glad to have written this book before the past decades of my life were forgotten, and history completely rewritten. Though some Burmese names were used for Shan names such as Nyaungshwe (for Yawnghwe) and Thibaw (for Hsipaw) in the days before World War II, many more names have been changed into Burmese since then. I have used mostly Shan names in the hope that they may survive.

Fortunately, I located material including photographs for this book. However, there appeared to be few written records of the past hundred years or so, as many had been destroyed. Older people who were still alive and could recall happenings of those past years and who might have told me more, were afraid to speak out, as they still lived in fear.

What I witnessed assured me that writing this book was the right thing to do. Although there were limits to what I could record, I have written of the past and the epoch of our parents who struggled in their own way to achieve a better life for the younger generations. Generally, the book goes no further than 1962, but to understand existing situations and happenings of the recent past, certain accounts have been included.

Among the many changes I found was that the name of the country Burma as I used to know it, had been changed to Myanmar. The military regime was responsible for the transformation in 1989. The people became known as Bamar or Myanmarese. Since the latter name is seldom used in writing about the people, Burman and Bamar have been used intermittently. As the book is about the period before 1989, I use Burma.

My aim in writing this book is to explain the current state of affairs in the Shan State and acquaint readers with the Tai Shan and other ethnic peoples who share the Shan Plateau. Only with an awareness of the past, can the present complexity of the situation in the Shan State be better understood. Much of this book concerns all those who inhabit the Shan Plateau, but the focus is on the Tai Shan.

We often hear that Burma has rich national resources and is ripe for development but, as I point out, much of these natural resources lie on the Shan Plateau. The rape of its forests for its precious timber, exploitation of its rivers for hydro-electricity for export, and manipulation of minerals by unethical means by greedy companies over the past decades are only too familiar. Hopefully, future enterprises will be replaced by concerned operators who will work out fair deals and implement decent practices about the environment and welfare of the local people.

Now in the twenty-first century, the continued Burmanizing of Tai Shan and other nationalities seems insensitive and unjustified. For decades, the Tai Shan and other peoples have suffered civil war and human rights abuses. In this new climate of change, it is time to begin relinquishing preconceived attitudes towards ethnic nationality peoples. Great adjustment will naturally be needed before trust and confidence can be regained in these relationships.

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Since most of the photographs are nearly a century old, there is no knowing what their provenance might have been or when they were taken. These photographs have been reproduced in good faith and where the source is known, it has been acknowledged.

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Though my work may be incomplete, I have done my best to provide a brief background of

past decades of Shan States and the Shan Plateau for future generations of Tai Shan and others, interested in Shan affairs. I owe much to those who have made suggestions and criticisms, but in the end, I alone must be responsible for errors that occur in the text or any affront caused by my views and opinions.

Sao Sanda Simms
Bromley 2015

PART ONE

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE: THE EARLY PERIOD

THE SHAN PLATEAU

The map of Burma shows a horseshoe of high mountains surrounding an area of lowland along the great Irrawaddy River that flows down from the Himalayas to the Andaman Sea. Within these mountain regions and high plateau live some of the main ethnic groups - Tai Shan, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, and Rakhine (Arakan). There are also communities of other, diverse peoples. The area these ethnic nationalities occupy makes up about seventy percent of the entire country. The Burman/Bamar, Mon, and Karen live on the lowland plains and along the Irrawaddy River Valley that was known as Burma Proper.

To the east of Burma Proper lies the Shan Plateau, an immense tableland of limestone and crystalline rocks, covering a land mass of 58,000 square miles that is almost a quarter of Burma's total area. Known as the Shan States, it covers an area greater than England and Wales combined, and lies on a fertile plateau between Burma to the west, China to the north, Laos to the east, and Thailand to the south. A portion of the mighty Upper Mekong River forms a natural boundary between the Shan States and Laos and, further down, with Thailand before it turns and flows into Laos itself.

The swiftly flowing Salween River runs through numerous deep gorges down the length of the Shan States to the Andaman Sea. The Salween, like the Irrawaddy and Mekong rivers, originates high up in the mountains of the Himalayas. Poppies have been grown for decades around this surrounding rugged border area - the Golden Triangle - where the Mekong meets China, Laos, and Thailand.

The average elevation of the Plateau is over 3,000 feet with local variations in topography. The Shan Plateau is deeply dissected by the gorges of the Salween and its tributaries that generally run north to south. Towards the west, the land is less hilly, becoming dry flat valleys. The sixty to one hundred inches of rain enjoyed annually on the Plateau together with the altitude provide both dense jungles and forests in which vast numbers of temperate plants flourish.

The forests of the Shan Plateau range from the tropical evergreen kinds-- historically the habitat for elephants, rhinoceroses, bison, and tigers - to mixed deciduous, less dense forests with bamboo. The sub-tropical and temperate evergreen forests of pine and other species such as oak and chestnut are generally found 3,000 feet above sea level. It is at this height that natural teak, which prefers high altitude, grows in abundance scattered among species of other valuable wood and bamboo.

For centuries, it has been recognized that much of the Shan Plateau's land surface is rich in natural resources including mineral ores such as antimony, chromium, coal, copper, diamond, precious gems, gold, silver, lead, manganese, natural gas, nickel, iron, tin, tungsten, mica, fluorite, marble, wolfram, and zinc. Other natural resources of the Plateau include precious gems such as rubies, sapphires, and jade.

There has always been an economic imperative to exploit these natural resources, and over the years, various enterprises have worked these different mines. Ideally, future development projects, regardless of their nature and location, will be carried out responsibly and their benefits will be shared equally by the people of the Shan Plateau.

MIGRATIONS

The temperate climate of the Plateau has attracted various peoples from the colder climes of the north. Migration of the Tai from China, and other groups, has been ongoing for centuries. The Tai were the largest group, making their way from as early as the ninth century. Historians, linguists, and scientists studying DNA offer different theories on the origin of the Tai.

In terms of migration routes, while some believe the Tai originated in the region around Guangdong, near present day Hong Kong, an older, generally accepted theory is that the Tai were forced to leave north China and, moving southwards, settled around Erhai (Tali) Lake in the present-day Dali Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Here they formed the largest group in the Nanchao Kingdom. Later, the Tai dispersed to the contemporary Shan States, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and as far west as Assam. Those who remained in Yunnan are called Dai.

The Tai peoples are culturally and linguistically similar, regardless of where they live. Someone with a basic knowledge of Tai can easily travel around Thailand, especially in the north, and in Laos without becoming lost or hungry. For example, the words for "eat," "sleep," "water," "rice," and many other basic words are the same, with slight pronunciation differences.

When the Tai Shan settled on the Shan Plateau they formed *mong/muang*, each with their own ruler. *Mong* is a Tai Shan word that translates as 'kingdom', 'principality', or 'state'. Each *mong* had an autocratic, independent ruler and only worked together as a group when forced to defend themselves. There were often cross-border alliances. When one ruler needed help, another came to his rescue. This usually happened when their kingdoms were in danger of attack from superior forces. The kingdoms continued to exist only at the price of constant armed defence against their larger neighbors.

The hereditary ruler was known as *saohpa/saohpa long* in the Tai Shan language. The former translates as 'lord of the sky' and the latter as 'great lord of the sky'. *Sawbwa*, the term used by the Bamar, was adopted by the British. The *saohpa's* heir, known as the *kyemmong*, was usually an eldest son or a brother.

The prefix *sao* translates as 'prince' or 'princess'. However, being a patriarchal society it was only the children of a prince who were permitted to have the title of *sao*. Children of princesses were not entitled to a *sao* title, if she married a non-titled man.

The *mong* was administered through the *hkun mong*, who was generally a relative of the *saohpa*. He looked after the districts within the *mong*. Beneath the *hkun mong* was a *heng* who oversaw a group of villages. Other, lower ranking officers assisted in running the *mong*. They all owed allegiance to the *saohpa long*.

The title *hkun mong* was substituted later by the Burmese word *myosa* that was given to a 'lesser ruling prince'. The post was awarded to a male relative. For instance, the husband of my father's elder sister held the title Myosa of Indein and was responsible for the districts within Inle. A younger brother, the Myosa of Heho, oversaw the districts east of Yawnghwe. The *myosa* title was later used for many of the rulers of smaller Shan *mong* and *ngwegunhmu*, the next grade down. These terms were originally introduced into the Shan feudal system in the days of the Burman monarchy. *Myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* were Burmese words meaning, respectively, 'eater of town' and 'silver revenue person in charge'. Originally, a major duty of both the *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* was to collect taxes. Later, state officials were responsible for collecting taxes within the *mong* from the inhabitants.

Mong names may cause confusion, since *mong* is used as a prefix in some places such as Mong Yai or Mong Nai, but not in others, as for instance Hsenwi (renowned for making frequent attacks against its neighbors), Kengtung, and Yawnghwe. In earlier times, the Tai Shan kingdoms of

Mong Nai and Kengtung nearest the Lao and Siamese borders were well known in the Tai world. The same was true for Hsipaw and Yawnghwe that shared their western borders with ancient Burma.

There were no political boundaries in the old days. Traditionally rivers, the Mekong for example, formed the borders. Today's boundaries were drawn by the British and French colonists. With no real borders, many ethnic communities other than the Tai Shan moved freely. Later, however, these ethnic groups found themselves in Laos, Thailand, and Yunnan. This was after the British annexed Upper Burma and arbitrarily drew boundary lines, and the French had established a protectorate over Laos.

THE EARLY AVA COURT

Around 1253, when the Kingdom of Nanchao fell to Kublai Khan (1215-1294) the Tai Shan and other ethnic groups fled south from China. They settled along the fertile valleys of the Irrawaddy and other rivers, and founded the Ahom Kingdom (Kingdom of Assam, 1228-1826) along the Brahmaputra River, and into early Siam.

While the Pagan Dynasty (1044-1287) became weaker and finally collapsed in 1287, three other kingdoms emerged, founded by three Tai Shan brothers near Kyaukse. Their capitals were in Pinya 1312, Sagaing 1315, and Ava 1364. Of these three kingdoms, the Ava Dynasty was the longest and most distinguished with nineteen kings reigning over a period of nearly two centuries from 1364-1555. They had their own administration and ruled their kingdoms per their own laws.

During the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries there were two Tai kingdoms, that of Ava on the plains that had frequent contacts with the Bamar/Burman and the other, the Tai Mao Kingdom on the Shan Plateau, had little or no relations with the Burman courts. It was composed of Mong Yang (Mohnyin in Burmese) in the Kachin Hills, and Mong Gong (Mogaung) that covered all Upper Burma north of Shwebo. Such states as Mong Mit, Hsenwi, Hsipaw (Ongbong), Mong Pai, Mong Nai, Yawnghwe, and Kengtung were the original areas of the Shan States. The Tai rulers of Hsenwi, Mohnyin, Myinsaing, Kengtung, Matarban, and Viengchan (Linzin), gained status when they were recognized as individual *mong* by China in the fourteenth century.

According to various histories, from earliest times, there were countless intrigues and infighting at the different courts, which often led to internecine wars. Tai Shan, who were influenced by the Burman of Upper Burma, were soon fighting other Tai Shan territories in the south. The latter were allied both to the Mon and to Siamese royalty. There were also conflicts with the Tai Shan *saohpa* from the present-day Shan Plateau.

Once free people, the Tai Shan on the Plateau found themselves subdued by their own Tai Shan kings who began collecting taxes from their 'mountain' brethren. Afterwards it became customary for the Tai Shan rulers to continue paying their dues to succeeding monarchs. Today, claims have been made that paying tribute demonstrates that Bamar monarchs had suzerainty over the 'Shan Sawbwas' and thus the Shan States belonged to Burma.

In 1364, there were further migrations when the Tai Mao of Mogaung descended on Sagaing and Pinya and people fled south to Toungoo to avoid being captured and taken back to the Plateau.

During the Ava period of Tai Shan rule (1364-1555), there was intermingling through intermarriage, war, and occupations among different groups, especially between the Bamar and Tai Shan on the plains. Previously, the Bamar had subdued the Mon, who were in the country before them and had consequently absorbed much Mon culture and tradition. In turn, the Pagan Court's etiquette and traditions, a mixture of Bamar and Mon cultures, were closely copied by the Tai Shan courts.

Brahmins, who originally came from India, officiated in the functions of the Tai Shan courts, choosing, together with the *hsala*, the medicine-man-cum-astrologer, propitious days for rituals, and then officiating at the rituals. Some of the regalia and paraphernalia, and administrative matters, were duplicated in the Tai Shan princely courts. There was also influence from the Pagan era.

Throughout the Ava period there was fighting, often in attempts to expand power and to gain control of the Tai Shan upland. Men from the highlands were regularly recruited to fight. Tai Shan soldiers, with sacred tattoos covering much of their bodies, were considered good fighters and were sent to the frontline. The practice continued with Bamar kings such as Bayinnaung (r. 1551-1581) and Alaungpaya (r. 1752-1760) who used Tai Shan soldiers in their wars against Tai kingdoms such as Lanna, Lang Xang, and Ayutthaya.

Each *saohpa* was responsible for recruits, most of them untrained, ordinary villagers, from their own states who were handed over to the monarchs whenever they were needed.

Out of the succession of Shan kings, there was one particularly notorious king, usurper Thohanbwa (r. 1527-1543), who killed off his rivals. Because Buddhist monks were respected and liked, he also had them killed in fear they would plot against him. These actions did not endear him to his people. Thus, when Moby Narapati, an outsider ascended the throne in 1546, there was some hope for a better ruler. He was the son of the Hsipaw Saohpa who had originally been sent to rule Mong Pai but had been uprooted to become the penultimate king of Ava. Moby Narapati (1546-1552) only ruled for six years and proved to be a weakling.

During the Toungoo Dynasty (1486-1752), two fierce Bamar kings, Tabinshwehti (r. 1531-1550) and Bayinnaung (r. 1551-1581), exerted their power. By 1555, the Tai Shan Kingdom of Ava was no more, having been conquered by King Bayinnaung. The next equally powerful Bamar monarchs were of the Alaungpaya/Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1885). Their first capital was Shwebo (1752-1765) and the last was Mandalay (1857-1885).

In 1604, the Chinese armies invaded, crushing the supremacy of the Tai Mao Kingdom. Although the *mong* continued to survive, they each had to learn to defend themselves as best they could.

Until the arrival of the British, many pockets of Tai Shan and their respective rulers remained, including Singkaling Hkamti and Wuntho (Wintho) in Sagaing District. Outside the Shan Plateau, these states were administered under ministerial Burma. Although subdued and depleted, descendants remain who are proud to be Tai Shan.

Though China claimed suzerainty over Burma, from as early as the twelfth century, it was never quite clear who paid tribute to whom. Presents and missions were exchanged as tokens of friendship when the countries were not warring against each other, but it is unclear as to whether they were accepted as tribute. Tai Shan rulers on the Shan Plateau were occasionally caught in the middle and found themselves paying tribute to both China and Burma. Much depended on which country was the more powerful at any moment. Regardless, the many *mong* during that period were often battlegrounds between Chinese and Bamar rulers.

Frequent switching of loyalties created instability for the citizenry who fled from one kingdom to the other, hoping to find a better life. There was, however, little respite since each ruler eager for power and glory, was prepared to go to war to achieve control over more land and people. This led to the downfall of the Shan kingdoms.

As the power of the Bamar kings grew, so did their influence. The Shan, Bamar, and Mon peoples became increasingly intermixed in the plains. Many cultural traits were shared. Gradually much of the Shan and Mon cultures was absorbed within a dominant Bamar culture.

DIFFERENCES

Despite mingling of cultures, the Tai Shan on the Shan Plateau managed to retain their own distinctive traditions and language, which are very different from the Burman/Bamar. Nevertheless, having lived together for years within the confines of the same country, certain aspects of the Bamar culture have been assimilated chiefly through Buddhism.

In the days of kings and queens and even after, some Bamar viewed the Tai Shan as being different from themselves. As an example, early in his reign my paternal grand-uncle, Sir Sao Mawng the Saohpa Long of Yawngghwe, offered the post of Chief Minister of Yawngghwe State to the Burman, Thakin Kodaw Hmaing (1876-1964). The *thakin*, with whom Sir Sao Mawng had become acquainted was caught by surprise and was adamant in his refusal to accept the post, saying he had no wish to serve under a foreign ruler.

This incident illustrates that in those days, the Burman and the Tai Shan were understood to be of different races. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing became a much-revered leader of the peace movement in the years before Independence. He was co-founder of one of the first political movements in Burma, the Dobama Asiayone 'We Bamar Association', formed in the early 1930s. Two factions later emerged. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing led the larger and more influential faction that became Komin Kochin 'One's Own King, One's Own Kind'. When the elite Thakin movement was formed in 1936, Thakin Kodaw Hmaing, Thakin Aung San (1915-1947), and Thakin Nu became members. *Thakin* 'master' 'lord' indicated a desire to be master of one's own country. Thakin Kodaw Hmaing advocated internal peace and gained widespread support, and in 1954, at the age of seventy-eight, was awarded the Stalin Peace Prize.

Buddhism, the common religion, has played a major role in cementing relationships between the Tai Shan and the Burman. Buddhism has also helped spread the Burmese language. Most Buddhist prayers and recitations are in Pali, and sermons given by renowned Buddhist monks often were, and continue to be, in Burmese. Devotees of the Shan States and other regions of the country visit notable Buddhist sites such as the magnificent site of Pagan, the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, and other renowned pagodas all of which are in Burma Proper. Furthermore, all Buddhists, regardless of ethnicity, celebrate many major Buddhist festivals such as Thingyan 'New Year Water Festival' in April and Thadingyut 'Festival of Lights' in November. In this manner, Burmese became the common language from early on.

While no accurate census has been taken since 1941, in that year it was estimated that Burman/Bamar constituted approximately sixty percent of the population with various minority ethnic groups making up the rest. The term 'Burmese' generally refers to anyone who is a Burmese citizen such as for example, a Tai Shan. It is reasonable to consider, that with so many intermarriages over the years, what proportion of the sixty percent remain pure Bamar? The latest census would give more details.

Even into the present, young Tai Shan entering Bamar areas, especially in cosmopolitan Rangoon, have quickly learned that they must pretend to be Burmese to avoid being ostracized. For instance, they must speak Burmese without a provincial accent and for the men, to don the *longyi*, a kind of sarong. In this manner, Tai Shan and other ethnic groups have moved down to the plains to seek better jobs and for the education of their children. Gradually they become partly accepted and though they intermingle with their Bamar hosts, they remain outsiders.

However, one speculates when peace and democracy return and some form of sensible and amicable settlement is agreed upon between the major ethnic nationalities and the present regime, what will the reactions be of the Bamar? Will problems arise when it is realized that there are now large numbers of non-Burman who share their lives. Some may never have thought that they shared

their country with people different from themselves apart from the more obvious Indian and Chinese. Mary Callahan writing on this subject, rightly observed that:

In the current environment it seems unlikely that ethnic Burmans - most of whom have never had access to reliable information about the plight of Karen, Kokang, Shan, or other minority groups have developed little in the way of cross-empathy - will be content to give up university places, officer commissions, or other opportunities to recruit from ethnic-minority groups (2003:226).

In general, previously most foreigners, except for business people, government workers or missionaries, made little conscious effort to find out more about the Tai Shan. Westerners living in the capital, Rangoon, had little interest in the Tai Shan or of other ethnic groups. The common view was that the Tai Shan lived in the Shan States and were less civilized than the Burman. In fact, many foreigners looking at Burma politically, economically, or socially often assumed that Burma's population was homogenous and tended to take for granted that anyone living in Burma was Burman/Bamar, since generically all people living within the country were known as Burmese.

Nowadays, there is more curiosity and more knowledge, while tourism has opened ethnic regions for those interested in travelling around the country. Reports from newspapers of fighting that goes on between the non-Burman armies and the Tatmadaw, and about the negotiations of the Peace Process have kept people informed of the arising political situation. There is still though a dominant notion that everyone living in the same country, a country called Burma, must be Burman, that there is no real difference between the different groups. With Burmese, the main spoken language and broad adoption of much Burmese culture, it has become even more challenging to explain the differences between the various nationalities.

In former days, the Tai Shan living near towns along the main railway line and major routes, such as Thazi and Meiktila, spoke varieties of the Burmese language. These were their own dialects as spoken in Yawnghwe or Taunggyi, with strong Tai Shan or Intha accents. Today, they may speak the Burmese language with less dialectical inflection. Nevertheless, in the interior there was little or no Burmese spoken, but only the Tai Shan language or that of diverse communities who had their own languages.

In recent years, many Bamar residents have come to live in Taunggyi, through the army. Taunggyi has always had a multi-racial society although Burmese seems to have been the dominant spoken language. On the other hand, people from country areas moving to Rangoon find themselves overwhelmed and very soon their children no longer speak Tai Shan, nor care to learn it. Although forming a Tai Shan community they have gradually adopted the Burmese way of living. Do they question their identity? Are they now part of the dominant Bamar culture or do they retain regional loyalties?

In earlier times, the Burman generally considered all ethnic nationalities as 'people of the hills', uncouth and uncultured. However, when it pleased him, a Burman was always happy to consider a Tai Shan his equal, calling him 'brother' and declaring "We are all the same, all Burman together."

In the 1950s, even U Nu (1907-1995) in one of his earliest speeches as Prime Minister claimed that Shan, Kachin, Karen, Chin, Mon, and Bamar were all born of the same mother, which was a convenient propaganda line. In his dealings with the Tai Shan, U Nu must have recognized that there were indeed differences between Bamar and Tai Shan.

Burma has attracted tourists because of its geographic beauty and the diverse population. In the early days, travellers to the remote hills and valleys were explorers and missionaries and, later,

British officials who wanted to survey the land they had conquered. They knew that Burma was inhabited by different peoples, which contemporary tourists are just discovering.

For reasons of their own, many political writers and scholars have chosen to represent all inhabitants of Burma, making little distinction between the Burman, the Chin, the Karen, the Kachin, and the Tai Shan. While it may be difficult for outsiders to understand why the Tai Shan and other ethnic nationalities wish to maintain their identities, they are in fact no different from Burman who are proud of being Burman/Bamar and want to protect their own identity. The diversity of languages, tradition, and culture of each is their birthright and surely cannot be arbitrarily changed.

There have always been, and are presently, some thirty diverse communities living on the Plateau, each with their own language and culture, yet intermingling with and assimilating Shan culture to some extent. Of the major groups living on the Shan Plateau were/are the Danu, Intha, Kachin, Khun, Lahu, Padaung, Palaung, Pa-O, Taungyo, and Wa. During the era of feudal rule these different peoples were tied to one another through shared religion and politics. Although most of the princely rulers were of Tai Shan stock, there were other rulers who were of Danu, Khun, Kokang, Padaung, Palaung, Pa O, and Wa heritage.

The Tai Shan who were cultivators lived along the fertile valleys while others lived in the surrounding hills. The traditional community systems continued to flourish among the different ethnic groups and co-existed, often across different sub-state borders. Living side by side meant that these communities benefitted when there were good times and suffered the hard times along with the Tai Shan.

In contemporary Burma, politics have become increasingly "ethnicized," a trend that has accelerated since the country's independence. In addition, the hardships suffered during the past decades, plus the relentless push by the Tatmadaw to enter further into the Shan Plateau and onto the homelands of these communities, has strengthened their resolve to defend their own territories and interests. It has ultimately led to people taking up arms in defence of their own families and homes against the Tatmadaw, considered as an intruder on their homeland.

Certain ethnic nationalities have changed their names to ones they feel represent them more accurately, and have chosen to use terms such as Pa-O for Taungthu, Ta'ang for Palaung, and Kayan for Padaung. However, so as not to cause confusion, the old names are used in this book, except when mentioning political and armed organizations

In the twenty-first century, the ethnic nationalities that were once relegated to the background, to a footnote in history, have now emerged into the foreground. They are conscious of their political status in today's Burma and recognize that they have an equal right to play a role in changes taking place, as in the all-important ongoing Peace Process and political discussions, and in the democratic development of a country professing true federal union.

MUTUAL RESPECT

While the monarchs of various dynasties from the Irrawaddy Plains and the Tai Shan princes may not have liked or trusted each other, they had maintained mutual respect. Although there was a great deal of bullying from the more powerful, each accepted a certain responsibility towards the other. The reign of King Bayinnaung in the sixteenth century is a good example. He subdued the Tai Shan, and tribute had to be paid, but he left the rulers in place recognizing that they were different from the people he ruled.

Subsequent Bamar kings accepted that they could never administer a land of forests, hills, and plateau ideally suited to guerrilla warfare. Consequently, even the most bellicose exercised only

limited control through their own administrators and a scattering of Burman garrison troops in the major *mong*. Maintaining these garrisons was the responsibility of the *mong*, which were hard pressed to feed an extra 200 to 300 men. Soldiers of the present Burman army stationed in the Shan villages act in the same manner, expecting the villages to feed them, while taking from them whatever they want.

In addition, taxes were imposed upon villagers by their local rulers, to fill the royal coffers of the Bamar kings. When these tax demands were not met, the princes were given a hard time. They were called to the Mandalay Court and imprisoned or demoted and replaced. However, the *saohpa* were not always docile men obeying the reigning monarch's every command. They often rebelled against unjust Burman monarchs. Sometimes the princes managed to free themselves from this remote control, though there was always a penalty to pay for outright revolt.

When revolt did occur, *saohpa* of neighboring *mong* were called upon by the Mandalay Court to form an army and attack the rebel ruler and his *mong*. Confronting such a strong force, the rebel usually lost all and his *mong* was laid waste. The defeated prince, if he had not been taken captive or killed, and had managed to escape, would wait for an opportunity to retaliate. In this way, the princes kept at war with each other.

The princes who had participated in stamping out the rebellion were rewarded by promotion to a higher rank of the ruling elite, or new *mong* were created especially for them. The favored were showered with gifts, sometimes including young maidens as concubines. In this way, the smaller *mong* got absorbed and the larger ones got dismantled. It was a policy the Burman monarchs exploited well. Wars made enemies of the princes and kept them apart.

With little time to fraternize, the *saohpa* were thus prevented from ever coming together to oppose the King's commands. Over time, the Tai Shan princes began to loath this manipulative control. These oppressive times were not pleasant for the Tai Shan rulers nor for their peoples.

The Bamar kings also exerted control by taking members of the ruling princely families as hostages, and forcing them to live at their courts. The prettiest of the Tai Shan princesses would be taken into the king's household as one of his consorts. This was welcomed by some *saohpa*, as it gave them a more favored position. But there was no mercy given if her father failed to offer the annual 'gifts', or was foolhardy enough to rebel. When such an occasion arose, the alliance could not be saved. Torture, imprisonment, or even execution, awaited the poor, hapless princess. There are many stories of such occurrences sometimes told as historical accounts, sometimes embroidered into mythical tales.

THE LIMBIN CONFEDERACY 1886

A major rebellion carried out by a group of Shan princes, known as the Limbin Confederacy took place just before and during the time of the British Annexation of Upper Burma and the Shan States (1885-1887). It was when the reigns of Bamar monarchy ceased and British rule began in Burma.

King Mindon (1814-1878; r 1853-1878) was a keen scholar and a devout Buddhist. He was well-liked by the Shan *Saohpa* and was considered a good king by his subjects and by the British who dealt with him. When King Mindon passed away there was much in-fighting and a palace coup that saw all members of the royal family and ministers of influence brutally killed. In fear of competition from other members of the royal family, it was not unusual to remove possible rivals when there was a change of kings. However, in this case both King Thibaw (1858-1916; r 1878-1885) and Queen Supayalat (1859-1925) were particularly vicious and thorough.

The Tai Shan princes could no longer tolerate the new king because he had maltreated and

humiliated them. King Thibaw was feared for his sadism and irrational behavior. The confusion that followed the death of Mindon Min gave the princes an opportunity to rebel. A group of *saohpa* initially instigated by the Saohpa of Kengtung, decided to take up arms and to find an alternative Konbaung monarch of their choice to replace Thibaw. As the plan moved along, they chose Prince Limbin, a minor Burman prince, to head their movement and to become the future monarch. Prince Limbin had managed to flee from the earlier massacre at the Mandalay Court and had made his way to Rangoon, which had been in British hands since 1824, where he felt safer. He was allowed to live there and given a small pension by the British. In about 1885, having accepted the Saohpa' offer he moved to Kengtung. Here, the so-called Limbin Confederacy, also known as the League of Shan Princes, was declared (Yawnghwe 1987:74).

Sao Kwan Tai, Saohpa of Kengtung, was the leader of the conspiracy. He was joined by three prominent southern princes whose houses were related to each other - Sao Hkun Kyi of Mong Nai, Sao Weng of Lawksawk, and Sao Hkun Hti of Mong Pawn. They each had personal reasons for opposing King Thibaw. Other *saohpa* were also invited to join in the overthrow of the much detested Thibaw.

The idea was simple. They would march on Mandalay, de-throne King Thibaw, and install Prince Limbin as the new king. In return, 'King Limbin' would revoke the existing heavy taxes imposed on the princes and not interfere in Tai Shan affairs in the future. The *saohpa*, on the other hand, would swear allegiance to Limbin every three years. The princes' plan sounded fine but the real situation grew complex. This uprising coincided with the beginning of the British annexation of Upper Burma and the Shan States. It was also when both Hsenwi in the north and Kengtung in the east defied the king's supremacy. The formation of the Limbin Confederacy forced many princes to take sides and fighting soon broke out between those who were for and against the confederacy.

By the end of 1885 the British had occupied Mandalay and had sent King Thibaw and his Queen into exile to India. The arrival of the British on the Shan Plateau and the failure of the Limbin Confederacy created alliances and divisions between the *saohpa*. A few, such as Yawnghwe and Hsipaw, quickly submitted to the British. Other princes were slower to do so. A few fought on, but were soon subdued. Many princes later blamed the two senior *saohpa* for having so quickly declared their allegiance to the British Crown without resistance.

BRITISH ANNEXATION

At the time of British annexation in 1886, there were over forty *mong* that varied in size and population. Many of their capitals had the same name as their *mong*, e.g., Mong Nai and Mong Pawn, while Hsipaw or Yawnghwe did not have the prefix. Finding this too confusing, the British opted to call the various *mong* 'states', thus grouping them into the Shan States. For convenience, 'state' will be used instead of *mong*, unless referring to the period before British colonization.

With the annexation of Upper Burma in 1887, the Shan States automatically became part of the British Indian Empire. Even at this early stage, the British may have begun to realize that they had conquered a nation of several races and that the diverse communities were not going to be easy to deal with. Therefore, it was likely considered wiser to leave things as they found them while gradually consolidating their policy and position. Consequently, Burma Proper/Ministerial Burma was formed and ruled separately from the Shan States and the Frontiers (Scheduled) Areas.

By 1888, the major Tai Shan princes had been persuaded to accept the simple form of *sanad* that included the acknowledgement and guidance of a British superintendent to rule their states less autocratically. From then to 1897, the princely rulers were left with virtually all their powers,

including the collection of revenue. Only in criminal cases involving a European or an American did the superintendent have charge of the case. In civil cases, the *saohpa* had jurisdiction, even over British people.

Administratively the Shan States came directly under the general control and supervision of the Governor of Burma, while Burma Proper had its own ministerial government. This dual control by the British meant that at no time did the government of Burma Proper rule over the Shan States.

Could the Shan States be considered part of Burma because dues were paid to Bamar kings? On the other hand, how could they be part of the Burman kingdom, when Bamar kings lacked complete control of all the Shan States? There were no formal boundaries to include them until the British drew up international boundaries in their own interests and included the Shan States within the borders of the country they had conquered now defining it as a single country.

A positive of British annexation was that the Tai Shan princes continued ruling in keeping with customary law with each *mong* being an autonomous unit. The *mong* stopped quarrelling between themselves and ceased their intermittent wars with Tai neighbors. The conquerors may have been surprised at the ease with which the *saohpa* submitted to the British Crown and that no loyalty was shown towards the Bamar monarchy. The fact was the *saohpa* and the Tai Shan people themselves had had enough of the domineering, harsh behavior of the Bamar. They were glad that that there was no longer a Burman monarch to rebel against. The princes now found themselves at peace.

In the beginning, British rule was easily accepted. The princely rulers felt they were being treated fairly and the British interfered less in their affairs than had the Court of Mandalay. They enjoyed this new experience under the protection of the great imperial power. Early on, pending a decision on the status of the princes by the British government, the princes were treated with courtesy and enjoyed a position on par with the Indian maharajas being addressed as Maharaja Sawbwagyi (Appendix 5), although this was soon abandoned.

A daunting question for the British involved protocol. Were the princes to be treated as royal highnesses, placing them high up in the hierarchy? Could their status be lowered? The British were in a quandary. If the *saohpa* were accepted as being higher in rank than the British officials who had to deal with them, then that would make it more difficult for the British to control the princes. It could easily lead the princes to think of themselves as being superior to the British officials and that was exactly what the British did not want. In the end, it was decided not to accord the higher status to the *saohpa*, and the two remained on equal footing.

Then the princes found that the colonial attitude towards them began changing. There was inconsistency in the way the *saohpa* were treated. In some cases, British officials were decidedly rude and disrespectful to the princes. British supervision and limited freedom must have humiliated the older *saohpa* and made them indignant.

At their first encounter, the British and the Shan princes must have found each other strange. In their smart uniforms, bristling with arms, British officers exuded authority and efficiency. On the other hand, many of the princes were no longer young, but were dignified, stern looking men who had known wars and hard times. They had never met foreigners before but had heard of them. They soon recognized that the British with their guns were strong and powerful, which was proved by the fact that any Shan resistance was swiftly dealt with.

UNDER THE BRITISH

From 1894-1896, when the boundary lines were agreed upon by the British, Chinese, French, and Siamese, some Shan *mong* found their villages and families divided and their allegiance now owed to a new power. For example, in the region north of the Mekong, adjacent to British Kengtung where Keng Cheng and Keng Hung (Kiang Hung) were situated, Keng Hung became part of China and was renamed Jinghong. It is now the capital of the Xishuangbanna (Tai, Sipsong Panna) Dai Autonomous Region.

Keng Cheng first became part of China, but later was handed over to the Siamese. The French objected and in the end, it became French and eventually Mong Sing, in Laos. In 1955, Mong Sing still had ancient Shan Buddhist *wat*, monasteries, and stupas or pagodas, with Tai Shan families living there (Simms 2008).

Present day Mae Hong Son Province, on the borders of Thailand and the Shan States, was once part of Maukmai State, which became Siamese upon demarcation in 1894. It lies high up among mountains and forests, the range of mountains forming natural boundaries with its neighbors. Its secluded position has for the moment kept modern development and tourists at bay, allowing the Tai Shan community there to continue preserving their culture and heritage.

There are many hill peoples who also live in the province - the Akha, Hmong, Yao, Lahu, Lisu, Karen, and Padaung/Kayan people, famous for their "giraffe neck" women. Some fled here from the Shan Plateau and from Laos to escape hardships.

One area not included within the territory of British Burma was the Wa State, a stretch of some 200 miles over mountainous terrain. It was not demarcated. It was an area north of Kengtung known as Wa Territory and belonged to the "tame" and "wild" Wa. The former, known as Mong Lun, became British, while the latter was incorporated within the Shan State only in 1948, after independence was granted.

During these negotiations, China ceded Kokang, lying next to Hsenwi State, to the British. Around the same time some Shan *mong* along the new border, adjoining Hsenwi to the north, became part of Yunnan. There were over twenty such Shan-Chinese *mong*, including the better known Mong Mao, Chefang, and Mangshih. The inhabitants are known as Tai Neua 'Upper Tai' in Tai Shan or Shan Tayok 'Shan Chinese' in Burmese.

Identifying Tai Shan groups or for that matter, other ethnic peoples, is difficult as each may be called a variety of names depending on whether they are in the Shan States, in Laos, Thailand, or Yunnan. For instance, since British annexation in 1886, the Tai Shan became known as the generally accepted Shan. In Thailand and Laos, the Shan are known as Tai Yai.

As mentioned earlier, rivers formed natural borders, e.g., the Mekong River divides the Shan Plateau from Laos on the eastern side and from Thailand along the southeast. Today's boundaries, however, are the making of the British and French colonialists. Unfortunately, the Burman still believe and assume that there was a boundary for the whole country in the days of the Bamar kings. Certain politicians continue to believe there were borders that included the Shan States, but this is incorrect.

CHANGING TIMES

The Konbaung Dynasty ended with the annexation of Upper Burma. The British exiled King Thibaw and his Queen to India. The Bamar were shattered at the loss of their monarchy and with it, the destruction of their traditions and long standing administrative system. It was a shock to find

themselves no longer their own masters but part of the British Empire of India and ruled by the British.

Almost immediately a series of disorders began, largely blamed on the fact that the army of the former Konbaung Kingdom had been dispersed without surrendering their arms. Groups of armed men began attacking British outposts, while armed dacoits roamed the countryside. Were these outbursts motivated by patriotism or vengeance? Such unrest became difficult to control. The law-breakers knew the territory and jungle paths well, enabling them to easily evade their opponents. The newly arrived British forces, mainly Indian soldiers, with little knowledge of the terrain found it hard to pursue their quarry effectively, however, when they were successful, the culprits were dealt with fiercely and sometimes without mercy.

The Bamar people, having lost their king and queen, were more sympathetic towards the law-breakers than those trying to maintain law and order.

Some years later in 1908, in a burst of nationalism the Young Men's Buddhist Association was formed by a group of young men, many of whom later became important politicians. Protests against British rule continued and, by the early 1920s, even the Buddhist monks, who had great influence on the laity, joined in demonstrating against the British. They soon became the cornerstone of subsequent disturbances, giving support and encouragement to a growing nationalist movement.

On the Shan Plateau, with the Court of Mandalay gone, the *saohpa* no longer feared Bamar domination. They and their subjects then began living peacefully side by side with the Burman, each attending to their own affairs. In the days of British rule communication between them was largely confined to trade and they tended not to bother each other. Little did the inhabitants of the Shan State realize what was in store for them once the Shan Plateau became open to one and sundry.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Shan princes and princesses from the Southern Shan States who attended the 1903 Delhi Durbar. (1903; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



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 Some Shan Princes from Southeast of Shan State were meeting {Durbar} in India

Yawnghwe Saohpa with his entourage, sitting with an Indian dignitary in Delhi (1903; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Princes at Mandalay: Seated L-R: unknown, Mong Sit, Maukmai, Lawksawk, Mong Nai, Kengtung, Yawnghwe, Laikha, Mong Pai, Mong Pan, and Mong Pawn (1900s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



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เจ้าฟ้าไทใหญ่หัวเมืองต่างๆ เมื่อครั้งเข้ามาประชุมที่เมืองมณฑล Some Sao Pha of Shan State were meeting in Mandalay

Shan State Council of Saohpa from both the Northern and Southern Shan States. Some of the older princes such as Kengtung Sao Kwang Tai Intaleng, Yawnghwe Sir Sao Mawng, Hsipaw Sao Ohn Kya, and Lawksawk Sao Hkun Suik were present (March 1923; Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Durbar 1923. The governor meets princes of the Northern and Southern Shan States including most of the *saohpa*, *myosa*, and *ngwegunhmu*. L-R seated: Princes Tawngpeng, Hsipaw, Yawnghwe, Governor Sir Harcourt Butler, Kengtung, Mong Nai, and Mr. Thornton. Those standing behind from L-R are numbered (8) Hsenwi official, (9) Kesi Mansam, (10) Hsahtung, (11) Banyin, (12) Hopong, (13) Pwehla, (14) Namhkok, (15) Kantarawadi, (16) Bawlake, (17) Maukmai, (18) Mong Kung, (19) Mong Pan, (20) Mong Hsu, (21) Mong Mit (behind Butler), (22) Mong Nai, (23) Mong Yai, (24) Mong Nawng, (25) Lawksawk, (26) Loi Long/Pinlaung, (27) Mong Pawn, (28) Bawnin, (29) Sakoi, and (30) Samka (1923; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



In front of the Shan Chiefs Council Office, Taunggyi, several princes and British officials (1924; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



CHAPTER TWO: BRITISH RULE

THE WATERSHED 1922

After annexation in 1887, the Shan States and Ministerial Burma were ruled jointly with India, as part of the British-Indian Empire. From the very beginning this strategy did not please the Bamar who demanded separation from India with eventual self-rule leading to complete independence.

On the other hand, the Shan princes had little idea of what to expect in their dealings with their conquerors, the British officials who, in general, were stiff and reserved in all their official contacts with the princes. However, the princes were fortunate to find a few exceptions, take for instance the journalist Sir George Scott (1851-1935), who later joined the Colonial Office. He had first come to Yawngwe at the time of the annexation in 1886 as an assistant superintendent. With tact and diplomacy, he greatly assisted in securing the allegiance of the *saohpa* during the pacification of the Shan States. In 1890, he was sent to Bangkok as a political officer to head the Border Commission to map the boundaries between Burma and Siam on the southeastern frontier. The aim of the exercise was to decide where best to form a buffer state

The friendly and curious Scott got on well with people he worked with and was liked by many of the princes. When he later returned to Yawngwe, he invariably won over the elderly *saohpa* with his enthusiasm and sincerity, each respecting the other.

Scott displayed his organizational skills and efficiency when he took a group of Shan *saohpa* in 1903 to Delhi, for the Coronation Durbar of King Edward VII (1841-1910) and Queen Alexandra (1844-1925), as Emperor and Empress of India. Their Majesties did not attend; instead the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon (1859-1925), officiated at the grand ceremony.

It is difficult to imagine the logistics involved in arranging trains from the Shan States to Rangoon, steamers to Calcutta, and then trains on to Delhi. This grand entourage included not only the *saohpa* and their many wives, but their retinue of maids and pages as well. There were howdahs and caparison, and carriages to organize. It was important to ensure the princes had all their regalia for the procession on the great day. What a headache it must have been shepherding the princes and their wives around in what was to them a very foreign city. Scott certainly had stamina and patience and, for these qualities, he has to be admired.

Lady Scott (1868-1955) recounts one incident in which the British officials wanted the princes to wear patent leather shoes and black socks on their travels, but had a hard time persuading the Yawngwe Prince to give up his "bedroom slippers" (Mitton 1936:309). Another incident was when Princess Tip Htila of Kengtung, who accompanied the party, lost a bundle of her jewelry, which her maid had accidentally tipped overboard into the river.

Sao Nang Tip Htila, a sister of the then Kengtung prince, had an effervescent personality and charmed everyone she met with her wit and cheerfulness. In her younger days, she had travelled widely and had been twice married. She was later to become a successful trader and a capable administrator, a rarity among women of her day. She was much admired by most Westerners who met her, especially Sir George Scott and Maurice Collis, who were amazed at her capabilities.

During the first thirty years or more of British rule, life went on slowly in the Shan States. In many ways, what happened in Burma Proper hardly affected the Shan, but on-going political unrests in Burma Proper were soon to affect the princes. The Shan States at that time were divided into six Northern and twenty-six Southern states, the result of many smaller states having been incorporated into the larger ones. The largest in area with some 12,000 square miles was Kengtung State. The

smallest was Kyong, with only twenty-four square miles.

By 1922, the British government had rearranged and further reshaped the Shan States and subsumed the Northern and Southern States into the Federated Shan States. The formation of the Federation gave the British breathing space before seriously considering what to do with the Shan States, when both British India and Burma Proper were given self-government.

A main feature of the Federation was a centralized budget that covered expenditure on public works, medical care, administration, forestry, education, agriculture and, to a small extent, on police expenses. Several states contributed between twenty to thirty-five per cent of their revenue, which came from forest products, minerals, and other taxes. To facilitate its governance, a British Commissioner, as the Governor's representative, headed the Federated Shan Chiefs Council assisted by two superintendents and an assistant superintendent.

An advisory council of princes, with no legislative powers, was consulted in connection with new Acts for the Shan States, and also discussed the budget. It formed a sort of sub-province with finances distinct from those of Burma Proper, and under a separate form of administration. The six, monthly meetings with the Governor became important as they gave the princely counsellors a direct channel to express their views.

Although the British had imposed restrictions through the Federation and there was a reduction of their powers, the *saohpa*, for the moment, found the arrangement tolerable and accepted the new rulings.

To reassure the princes, Sir Harcourt Butler⁶ on his visit to Taunggyi in 1924 told them: "It is my desire that you should remain real rulers in your own state and that the Federation should not interfere with your position as such more than is necessary to secure to your advantages of joint interest and action"(M/3/252 BL).⁷

A report on the working of the Federation for the period 1922-1933 showed that:

Federation and the Federal Council have therefore fulfilled their primary mission in evolving a more or less unified Shan State providing a common meeting ground for chiefs where in regular and formal conference they could discuss matters of common interest and represent their views to government (M/3/252 BL).

These changes were necessary for the British to gain tighter control over the princes. In turn, the *saopha* considered that giving up some power was worth the protection gained from the British, mainly because it would keep the Bamar from interfering in Shan affairs. But this did not mean the British were viewed without suspicion. There was apprehension in not knowing what the British might next impose upon them. It was a complex situation. The princes may have ruled as they were entitled to, but they ruled under supervision of the colonial masters. There were many tugs-of-war between the colonial officials and the princes and among the princes themselves.

The British officials had initially been put in charge of the princes to guide them in their administration and to bring them into the twentieth century. Despite problems and prickly situations, certain early British administrators tried to help the *saohpa* by becoming involved in their state affairs.

To achieve some understanding of the ruling princes and their subjects, British officials serving in the Shan States were required to make extensive tours around their states and to write

⁶ Sir Spencer Harcourt Butler (1869-1938).

⁷ M/3/252 BL. M = Records of Burma Office; M/3 = Burma Office Annual files 1937-1945; M/4 = Burma Office Annual Department Files 1946-1948, the number in the middle refers to file number; and BL = British Library.

detailed reports. These annual reports covered the financial, economic, and social positions of the different states and gave an overview of events during the year. Personal accounts of births and deaths, and political and general situation of the *saohpa* and their families were also included. These reports formed the basis for action in support of, or against any ruler. Although not an easy task, some officials carried out their duties admirably and conscientiously, though some were not that concerned.

It was reported by the Commissioner that since the inauguration in March 1923 of the Federated Council of Shan Chiefs by His Excellency, the Governor, things were running smoothly. All the *saohpa* had attended the first council meeting, but for one who was ill. From 30 March to 6 April the princes worked to pass the budget for 1923-1924 and act on other matters, including loans from Federal Funds to princes for the building of *haw*, their palaces.

In the annual report of 1923 the Commissioner, HA Thornton of the North-East Frontier Division, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, Home and Political Department, noted that the *saohpa* were not all together at ease with the creation of the Federation as it restricted much of their original feudal powers.⁸ At any rate he hoped that tactful treatment and patience on the part of the superintendents would help in decreasing these uncertainties. He also believed that once the Council was in full working order the princes would begin to realize its importance.

Despite his fears, Mr. Thornton was encouraged by the first meeting of the Council. The *saohpa* showed a real sense of public spirit and responsibility. He was pleased with their work.

Perhaps such co-operation showed that there was now some understanding between the old princes and their British administrators. But as one might expect, there were still those princes who were dissatisfied about their positions and the fact that they were no longer as free to rule as previously.

BURMA ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE 1931-1932

In 1931-1932, a Burma Round Table Conference on the issue of Burma's Separation from Imperial India was convened in London. The British Government was committed to giving both countries some form of self-government at an unspecified future date. Apart from the Burman/Bamar, those attending the conference from Burma Proper included Anglo-Burman, Indian and Chinese who had been born and raised in Burma, and representatives from the Shan States.

Although the Shan princes were invited only after protesting their initial exclusion, their subsequent invitation to the Round Table Conference was the British Government's first acknowledgement of Shan importance internationally. At the preliminary talks, Sao Khin Maung, (1882-1938; r. 1906-1938) the Saohpa Long of Mong Mit and Sao Shwe Thaike (1894-1962; r. 1927-1959), the Saohpa Long of Yawnghwe attended as observers. The former was a senior prince from the north and the latter was from the south.

Sao Khin Maung grew up in the early British period and was educated at the Baptist College in Rangoon. He was awarded both the KSM (Kyat thaye zaung shwe Salwe ya Min) and the CIE (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire) and was well thought of by the British. The KSM was the highest of the Burmese honor titles created in those early days by the British. The insignia was, at that time, a chain of nine gold strands connected by patterned gold discs and worn over the shoulder like a bandolier. The governor had the prerogative of conferring the honors on behalf of His Majesty, the King. Later the chain was turned into a medal and became known as the King's

⁸ Report on the Administration of the Shan States and the Karenni States for the year ended 30 June 1923.

Service Medal.

Later Sao Khin Maung was replaced at the Round Table Conference by the Saohpa Long of Hsipaw, Sao Ohn Kya, who together with Yawnghwe Saohpa attended the Conference as representatives of the Shan States accompanied by two observers, Sao Hom Hpa, Saohpa Long of Hsenwi; and Sao Kwang Tai of Kengtung, soon to become *saohpa*.

The Prince of Wales opened the Round Table Conference with encouraging words. Later, Lord Peel, the Chairman, pointed out that Britain recognized that there were difficulties ahead since Burma was made up of majority and minority communities with different interests, and with differing degrees of political development. Although it was understood there were differences, one of the Burmese delegates Tharrawaddy U Pu (1932:59) stated:

We wish to protest against the unfair and unjust selection of delegates to the conference...My friends the Sawbwas are Burmans, but they have been made to identify themselves as a minority party. They claim their own rights...The Burmans have lost their country and now they are threatened with minority rule...(Burma Round Table Conference, Proceedings. 1932).

The Bamar felt that the British should not have made a distinction between themselves and the Shan as it had encouraged the Shan princes to feel they were important. The statement from the Burman delegate surprised the princes and deepened the existing chasm between the Burman and the Tai Shan.

During the conference, representatives of all the different groups living in Burma presented their views and aspirations for the future of the country with each confirming that they sought equal status, and would make efforts to work together towards a common goal. The leader of the Tai Shan delegation, Sao Ohn Kya, Saohpa of Hsipaw⁹ (r. 1931:45) declared:

First and foremost, it should be clearly stated that the Shan States desire to retain their separate entity...Our future relationship with the new Burma will, it is our hope and trust, remain one of friendliness and goodwill. Our common interests and interests of the Empire as a whole demand that we should work hand in hand. There may be points arising at a later stage that will require the common consideration of both Shans and Burmans as far as mutual relationship is concerned; but the internal and domestic affairs of the Shan States are a matter in our opinion, and with the concurrence of this Conference, that should be dealt with by His Majesty's Secretary of State.

The conference revealed the reservations ethnic representatives held about their relationship with the Bamar. The question at the back of their minds was "How much can they be trusted?" Thirty years on they were to find out that their fears were not unfounded.

The *saohpa* felt that since they had come under British control through treaties with individual princes, they had not been colonized unlike Burma Proper, and therefore, had the right to demand autonomous status. The princes had always emphasized that: "Burman ministers must not interfere with Shan affairs...Chiefs liked the Burmans as friends but not as masters" (M/3/485 BL).

The *saohpa* trusted assurances given by the Secretary of State that any decisions regarding a new constitution concerned with the separation of Burma from India, would not be decided without the Federation of Shan States being "consulted in respect of any change that might affect their interests" (M/3/485 BL). This assurance was good enough for them.

⁹ Ibid.

The result of the Round Table Conference was the Government of Burma Act of 1935, which provided Burma with a constitution and two chambers for Parliament. In 1937, elections for representatives took place. For the first time a Bamar prime minister was elected, but this did not entirely satisfy the Bamar politicians. In the Shan States, a Standing Committee of Council of Chiefs was formed composed of six representatives who were elected by the Council. It gave them the possibility of dealing directly with the Governor.

The implementation of the 1935 Act further reduced the powers of the *saohpa* but for the time being, the Act was considered acceptable. Neither the rulers nor the Tai Shan people themselves were ready to take the great step forward towards an independent country, which the Burman strongly advocated. The princes still had faith in the British, believing that the Shan States had a chance in the future of attaining Dominion Status within the British Empire.

However, unbeknown to the princes, men of the Burma Office in Britain were already determining the future of the Federated Shan States and Burma Proper arguing that "union between the Federation and Burma proper was a goal to be reached" (Maule 1993:345). The Burma Office had been established in April 1937 when Burma separated from India under the 1935 Burma Act. A Secretary of State had jurisdiction over both the Burma and India Offices.

Meanwhile, back in the Shan States there was growing concern about the relationship between the assistant superintendents and the princes. Discussions continued between the bureaucrats on how best to consider the *saohpa* and, therefore, how to treat them. There had to be a code of conduct, but other than saying that British officials had to show more respect to the princes, there was no official ruling. The British were keen to keep the princes on an even footing and thought this could best be done by showing personal interest and making real contact with the princes.

The Council meetings provided the vehicle allowing contacts to be made, with British officials being seen to be at home in their states. The princes were glad to be dealing with the higher officials directly in Taunggyi, the administrative center. They appreciated both the official and social contacts at these Council meetings and were enthused at being allowed to participate in the Council's administration. Initial objections from the *saohpa* to the Federation gradually dissipated as the princes became more satisfied with their participation.

By all reckoning, the Federation was taking shape, and both the British and the princes agreed that there was no immediate urgency to push through plans for development in the Shan States. As it happened, they mistakenly thought they had time to let things evolve gradually.

FEDERATED COUNCIL OF SHAN CHIEFS

The British Commissioner assumed the role of President of the Federated Council of Shan Chiefs. This worked well, as the princes much preferred having the British in charge than being subordinate to another *saohpa*. Each prince believed he was equal to the other. This stubborn and egocentric outlook proved to be a major obstacle to their unification under one leader to create a strong Shan State.

Did the princes of my father's generation feel that not one of them could become leader because of their similarities? They were nearly of the same age, went to school together, became friends, served in the British Indian army, and became a *saohpa* within a year of two of each other.

Having accepted the Federated Council of Shan Chiefs, the princes of my father's generation considered themselves fortunate to have Philip Fogarty (1885-1942) as their Commissioner (1938-1942) just before the Japanese war. Fogarty was well-liked and considered the best Commissioner and President they had had so far. He offered friendship and displayed great diplomacy. Apart from

offering friendship, at the Council meetings Fogarty was very diplomatic giving the princes opportunities to put forward their ideas, to discuss problems, and encouraging them to take an active interest in what was happening in the different departments of the various States.

His benign attitude towards the rulers is evidenced by his comments to Maurice Collis (1889-1973) that the princes were "coming along nicely" and that "they can now tell good champagne from bad" (Collis 1938:19-20). Following a tour around the Shan States with Fogarty, Collis wrote a sympathetic book about the Shan, *Lords of the Sunset*.

The title may have been chosen from the name the Burman monarchs had given the *saohpa*; the princes were known as the *newin bayin* which translated from Burmese to mean sunset king'. On the other hand, the princes called themselves the *nedwet bayin*, the 'sunrise king'. The former was rather an ill-omened name for the Shan princes; which showed how much they were looked down upon by the Bamar.

At Mong Mit, where he met other princes, Maurice Collis (1938:180) describes my father and others as being vivacious: "Yawnghwe had a fighting look, Tawngpeng was jolly and Hsenwi roguish."

On the tour with Fogarty, Collis was surprised to meet a number of Tai Shan princesses who were educated and modern in their outlook. One or two became nurses at Dr. Gordon Seagraves's (1897-1965) hospital in Namkham.

Fogarty's remark that the *saohpa* were 'coming along' was a fair statement, since from the early years of colonization up to 1939 when World War II broke out, things were indeed evolving slowly in the Shan States.

All the same there was a simmering disapproval from the *saohpa* who indicated in their complaints that some of the serving British officials were not sufficiently knowledgeable about Shan customs and culture. Many had been brought in from other services in Burma Proper or elsewhere and came with pre-conceived notions that made it difficult for them to appreciate or adjust to the Shan and the administrative system of the Shan States.

Many of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) officers were young, inexperienced, and sometimes unsympathetic. They ruled, making little distinction between the Indian, the Burman, and the Tai Shan. Without awareness of sensitivity to the differences, their relationship with the *saohpa* would have been difficult.

It was necessary for experienced British administrators to provide advice and guidance to ensure good relationships and smooth administration. The officials were reminded that they were no longer dealing with the older generation of princes, but contemporary princes who were English educated, had travelled abroad, and were actively interested in the economics and politics of the country. They were cautioned that the princes needed be treated carefully and should be handled sympathetically – that they should advise and not command. Nevertheless, there were prejudices and the *saohpa* felt that some British officials tended to overstep the mark. The princes continued to be closely supervised and if found to diverge from the rules, a young English, Indian, or Burman officer could chastise them with sharp words.

All communication from the princes to the governor and vice versa had to go through their respective superintendent. Similarly, if a deputy wanted to contact a prince he also had to go through his superior. The princes were asked to correspond in Burmese and not in Shan, claiming it was difficult to find translators proficient in Shan. It was not clear why they did not communicate in English, since many of the princes by that time had knowledge of the English language.

While the young British officers were touring, and finding out what was happening in the states under their care, few *saohpa* ventured out to meet their subjects or listen to their problems. It was thus unsurprising that villagers complained about their rulers. Some even demanded the

dismissal of one or two of them, never having even seen them. The usual complaint was that the taxes collected were never used for villagers' needs, but went straight into princely pockets. These few princes became the target of the up and coming young Tai Shan politicians who were on the lookout for any wrongdoing by the feudal rulers.

Pocketing the common state taxes was not the only criticism. There was concern also about what happened to taxes collected from gambling tables at local festivals known as *poy* in Shan and *pwe* in Burmese. These gambling events, held once or twice annually in each state, produced much needed revenue for the State Treasury. Many villagers enjoyed gambling at these festivals, where fortunes were made or lost. The anti-feudalists and young Shan politicians condemned the princes for allowing gambling at the *poy* in the first instance, and then for not plowing back the revenue immediately into the services of the state. Additionally, the *saohpa* were criticized for their luxurious lifestyles and their many wives.

Over time, new recruits to the Colonial Office became better attuned to their role in managing the Shan princes, having been carefully chosen and trained for the purpose. It seemed that given time, the *saohpa* with the help of these sympathetic British officials might have brought about some progress to the Shan States.

From 1939, onwards the *saohpa* would find that they were no longer in the backwaters and wilderness of the encroaching modern world. The more they became involved in politics, the more they became vulnerable to attacks from political antagonists, mainly anti-feudalists. The changes that came about during the later years were to completely transform the destinies of the *saohpa* and alter the make-up of the Shan States.

THE FEUDAL LORDS

The *saohpa* or the *saohpa long*, the feudal princely rulers of the Shan States, were very different from each other. The princely rulers of the northern part of the Shan Plateau, which was rich in mineral resources and teak forests, were predictably wealthier. They were also the senior *saohpa long* having been established from early days. The four or five large ancient states in the southern part of the Plateau made up the bulk of the Shan States. In addition, there were smaller inner states and others on the western side of the plateau, known as the Mye Lat.

Predictably, there were good rulers respected by many and others who were considered unable to rule satisfactorily and, therefore, generally disliked. Before considering the lives of the various princes, it is important to consider others' perceptions of them and balance these against actual conditions.

Over the years, numerous opinions have been expressed about the ruling princes and the feudal system. For example, Hugh Tinker in late 1956 wrote an article entitled "Burma's Northeast Borderland Problems" in the *Guardian*, a local English magazine, published in Rangoon saying that:

The prince is regarded as the first of the clan, and loyalties are cemented by marriages among the leading families. By a process of aggression or alliance a Shan state might attain real importance, but power was largely dependent upon geography... But geography has been less accommodating to most of the Shan princes whose states are more like the estates of the knights and barons of medieval Europe.

Dr. Edmund Leach expressed another point of view saying (1964:215):

Conceptually the *saohpa* is a divine king, an absolute monarch... The monarch lives apart from the

world in his sacred palace (*haw*). In this palace he lives a life of luxury and indolence surrounded by a vast harem of wives and concubines.

These descriptions reflect the confusion and misunderstanding about the status and role of the *saohpa*. Were they like the knights and barons of medieval Europe or more like a divine king, an absolute monarch? Were they fabulously rich? Were they truly wicked?

The peace that prevailed during British times enabled the previously warring princes to concentrate on making themselves more comfortable. The princes of the larger states built grand second palaces of brick and mortar in the European style. Their older palaces constructed of wood and plaster with many tiered roofs in the Bamar tradition were mostly used on ceremonial occasions.

The poorer princes, while only able to build large houses of wood and bamboo, maintained dignity by designing the *haw* or palace in the tradition of the Mandalay Palace with many tiered roofs and a spire.

As far as I can recall, many of the princes in recent times did not seem to lead a life of luxury and indolence, although in earlier times before annexation there may have been princes who, relatively speaking, did live lavish lives. However, they certainly lived better than ordinary people: they owned horses and even cars, travelled, and the princesses dressed in silk and wore sparkling jewelry.

While a prince may well have been wealthy he had numerous obligations to fulfil as well as privileges. It was expected that, regardless of its size, each state paid all expenses out of its own budget, including ceremonial expenses commensurate with the prince's position. Many of the ceremonial expenses, as well as the social and personal costs of running the establishment and education for his children, had to be met out of the princes' own pockets.

The court officials and administrators were usually relatives of the *saohpa* or commoners who had married into the family, thus forming a large but tight unit wherein any wealth was contained. The extended family and kinship system included the in-laws of in-laws. In this way, many of the princes of different houses became related to each other. Nepotism was widely practiced.

The Tai Shan *saohpa*, not unlike the kings of Burma and Siam, and Mughal Emperors of India, had several wives. Some were princesses from neighboring states. These alliances were political unions creating greater ties between the houses, which then helped each other during times of war. In some cases, wives were presented to the princes by parents who hoped to benefit from the union, while yet others were women the prince fancied.

THE PRIVY PURSE

Regarding the question of the princes and their personal wealth, my brother, Tzang Yawnghwe (1987:83), explains a *saohpa's* financial responsibilities:

Out of this (the Saohpa's ten per cent allowance), monthly salaries for judges, ministers, officers, clerks, policemen, guards, some categories of teachers, upkeep of religious institutions and edifices, expenses of local administration, and jails and court-houses had to be met. The prince was given an allowance (about ten percent), from which he had to support numerous relatives, the palace or manor, entertain state guests, donate to monasteries, monks, bright students, pay his personal retinue and staff, and meet other obligations expected of a prince.

A prince's personal allowance varied from state to state depending on the revenue the state

received from commercial enterprises, gambling, and opium. In general, the allowance was ten percent of the net revenue after thirty-five percent of the gross had been contributed to the Shan States Federation. Some states paid less to the Federation; for example, Kengtung paid 27.5 percent. Each state received monthly allowances, which were adjusted in accordance with their state revenues. Thus, the smaller group of states in the Mye Lat generally received less and had to be subsidized by the Shan Chiefs' Council.

It was this disparity of wealth that led to the northern states being top among the hierarchy of ruling princes. As one would expect, those who had wealth had power, and therefore had advantages over others with less. In some ways, the northern states began to look down upon the many smaller states of the interior and the south. On the surface, relationships were polite and superficially friendly but were less than satisfactory. Such an atmosphere nurtured envy and jealousy, resulting in power struggles that undermined unity.

Did the strong feelings of distrust and suspicion experienced by many Tai lead to the traits of pride and arrogance found particularly in these earlier ruling families? In the past, princes vied with each other to show who was more powerful and greater. Energies were devoted to campaigning against the other Tai Shan princes, leaving themselves little time to consider major threats from neighbors, notably the Burman/Bamar.

The upkeep of position and status involved having a certain amount of money that had to be obtained somehow. In the early days, whatever came into the State Treasury belonged to that prince. But later, with British supervision, much of what came into the Treasury was designated as state money and so other means of raising revenue had to be found.

In the British administrative report, *Shan States Manual* for 1925,¹⁰ an item warned traders about lending money to princes, stating that the British Government would not be responsible for recovery of debts incurred by Shan chiefs, unless the debt incurred had the explicit sanction of the governor. It went on to explicitly declare "Persons who lend money, or sell goods on credit, to Shan Chiefs do so at their own risk, and may find difficulty in recovering sums due them."

This statement gives an idea of the financial position these smaller states were in. Many were struggling, but so as not to lose face they had to keep up appearances and obligations, which meant borrowing money from time to time. There were also times when taxes collected from villagers went straight into the princely pockets. This meant that little if any was used for the welfare of the population. Local people complained and there were incidents when they refused to pay taxes to the ruler.

A prince was generally not punished for a misdemeanor, unless it was of the order of murder, insurrection against the British authority, or misappropriating state funds. Such "inadvertent embezzlement" was strongly criticized by British officials and a few princes were sent off to live in Taunggyi under the eye of the Superintendent until the debts were paid off.

Later, Tai Shan politicians, instead of attacking the individual wrong doers, tended to blame all *saohpa* generally, which gradually led to serious ruptures between the feudal rulers and their subjects.

¹⁰ V/27/244/16 BL.

CONTENTMENT?

The five years from 1935 to 1940, were peaceful years in the Shan States, with some semblance of prosperity. From 1935, the Federated Council of Shan Saohpa began slowly consolidating and working together, with each of them sharing many of their common problems. In fact, much was achieved through the various committees in areas such as education and public works. The *saohpa* were delighted to be taking a more active role in the administration of the Federation.

At this point neither the Burma Office nor the British Government gave any indication of what was in store for the Shan States. In giving the impression that they were on their side, the authorities led the Tai Shan and the *saohpa* to believe that they would be kept separate from Burma Proper. But all along, the British were wondering how to change the Tai Shan point of view on amalgamation with Burma Proper.

In March 1941, Governor Archibald Cochrane was prompted to write to the Secretary of State (M/3/252 BL) saying: "It is clear that there can be no separation of the Shan States from the rest of Burma; on the other hand, it is clear that the Shan States will never - or at least for many years to come will not - consent to share their fortunes with the Burma of the plains."

Although they had known the Tai Shan position from the very beginning, the British had had a policy of uniting Burma Proper with the Shan States and other ethnic areas. They were simply waiting for the right moment to inform the *saohpa* of their intentions. In the meantime, schools and hospitals were built and tarmac roads appeared, providing better transportation and communications between the major towns in the Shan States.

At the same time, the *saohpa* who took over from their royal fathers were beginning to enjoy a certain freedom and prosperity that their forefathers had never experienced. They could build new and second palaces for themselves, many in a western style, often guided by notable European architects. For some, money was no object, but for others, keeping up with the "Joneses" was not easy.

For example, when in 1928 Chrysler Corporation shipped their Plymouth car to Southeast Asia a few years after it was launched, it became an immediate success with many of the princes. They bought these sleek luxury motorcars for prestige; only the large Plymouth car was considered suitable for their status.

The princes and families also took cruises to Hong Kong and Singapore. Their children were sent off to convents and Methodist schools for their education; some were even sent to India and England as boarders.

The princes seemed to enjoy new western ideas, such as becoming Free Masons and members of the Rotary Club. They must have been intrigued by the Free Masons rules and trappings, which resonated with their own conventions and rites. Belonging to such a fraternity provided an opportunity to meet other people of like minds, whatever their nationality, on equal terms. At these meetings, they could discuss and express their views and opinions without prejudice.

My father was one of the many *saohpa* who was a Free Mason. He attended their monthly meetings at the Federated Shan States Lodge in Taunggyi, which had formed in 1927 under the United Grand Lodge of England. The first United Grand Lodge of England was founded as early as 1847 in Burma, and stopped functioning in 1981. During its existence, there were some seventeen District Grand Masonic Lodges in Burma of which six or seven were up-country, including in the Shan States. The oldest was the Star of Burma Lodge, which was warranted in 1853.

In 1896, the Grand Masonic Lodge of Scotland established its first Lodge in Rangoon, and was aptly named Lodge of Peace and Harmony. Five others were later founded, including one in Namtu, Northern Shan States in the heart of the British mining community, named the Tawngpeng

Lodge. The last, founded in 1931, was Lodge Ady in Insein. Following restrictions imposed by the military regime in 1985, both the English and Scottish District Grand Lodges were either held in abeyance or erased.

In 1929, Rotary Clubs were opened in Thayetmyo and Rangoon and then ceased to function around 1940 and 1941 during the Japanese occupation. After the war, only the Rangoon club continued its activities. Since the organization was open to everyone, it brought together business and professional people and was a good meeting place for all whose interests were in humanitarian and charitable works, both locally and abroad. It gave the younger princes entry into a world of commercialism and western society, an exciting outlook onto a new world.

In Burma Proper, as in the Shan States, British influence through government and mercantile communities was growing and expanding. In administration, Indian Civil Service personnel, as well as others from the professional classes moved in to work with the British. In the economic sector, the large British companies took charge of the natural resources and commercial outlets. The *chettiers*, the Indian money lenders, and the large Chinese organizations of rice traders, were becoming permanent fixtures.

Typically, when white families moved into towns and cities, they lived away from the local people, preferring to form their own society with their own clubs and entertainment. Those born of mixed marriages often worked this to their advantage, insisting they were "white" and demanding to be treated as such. This attitude did not endear them to the Burman. Authors George Orwell, in *Burmese Days*, and Maurice Collis, in *Trials in Burma*, both wrote about this period. The British were overpoweringly British, imperialist, and autocratic. At that time, the whites were unwilling to accept a non-white into their social circles, such as the Pegu or the Sailing Clubs; segregation was strictly practiced. Educated Burmese found this period fundamentally wrong and unbearable.

There was, however, less segregation in the Shan States. British families kept to themselves but overall, on social occasions, people tended to mix happily. In Taunggyi and other administrative towns such as Kalaw and Lashio, there were weekly parties and dances to which members of the *saohpa* and local professional families were invited. It was through these gatherings that the western ways of life were introduced. There was a long way to go in understanding each other, but at least it was a beginning.

SOME PROGRESS

The administrative center, Taunggyi, a quiet hill station, once under the jurisdiction of Yawnghwe State was about twenty miles uphill from Yawnghwe Town. Established as an administrative center or a notified area from the early days of annexation in 1894, it was to become the capital of the Shan State.

In the early 1920s and 1930s, before the Japanese occupation, Taunggyi came alive whenever there was a *darbar* or a major conference of the princes. The town would be bustling with people and noise and an influx of motor cars creating traffic jams. Taunggyi filled up, not only with the *saohpa* and their families, but also with their retinues who moved completely from their various capitals to their Taunggyi palaces. There were many gatherings of relatives and friends, and official parties given by the Commissioner (Simms 2008). It was an exciting time. Everyone was determined to enjoy themselves, especially the women, who dressed in beautiful silks and adorned themselves with rubies and sapphires.

During these few days, shops in the town increased their profits as the princely families filled up their cars with goodies, such as tinned groceries, cases of beer, Vat 69 and Johnny Walker

whiskies for the men, and fashionable items for the women. These were usually delicate Indian silken stoles with gold and silver thread woven into the fabric and many kinds of brightly colored cotton material often manufactured in Manchester, used for the long *sin* or *longyi* 'skirt'. The white flimsy lawn material for the *ingyi* 'jackets', worn on special occasions, was quickly snapped up by the princesses. The few shops existing at that time were like Aladdin caves full of all kinds of trinkets and beautiful things.

As early as 1902, the School for the Sons of Shan Chiefs, which became commonly known as the Shan Chiefs School, was founded in Taunggyi. It was, as the name suggested, set up to educate the young sons of princes and ministers of state and to teach them a standard of behavior. When it first opened, everyone was keen to learn the English language and the English way of life and manners. Even married older sons with their retinue were permitted to attend this boarding school.

In 1951 after the war, the Kengtung Prince, Sao Sai Mong Mangrai, and his wife Daw Mi Mi Khaing (1916-1990) became involved. Both renowned authors, the former was from Kengtung and wrote books on the Shan States. His Burmese wife's books focused on both Burmese and Shan societies. They observed that the standard of teaching and scholastic achievements had declined at this once much respected Shan Chiefs School. It had been converted into a public school and renamed Kambawza College with Mi Mi Khaing as its principal. All was not lost though, for there was still a certain amount of *esprit de corps* in sports where high records were still achieved.

In these early times, the princes supported schools and hospitals subject to their revenues. For instance, in Yawngghwe, in addition to the state school that only went up to the middle grades, there were others including the *phongyi kyaungs*, the monastery schools. So, overall there was a good level of education. The convents and other Christian schools provided the higher education facilities, while students had to go to either Rangoon or Mandalay for a university education.

Fortunately, there were now roads linking major places. Provided by the British and maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD) these tarmac roads ran through main towns connecting them to the next capital of a State. But within the states the roads were often unpaved unless funds were found from sources other than from the State Treasury. Unfortunately, these roads did not extend out to the areas beyond the road links to remote villages. Consequently, for the villagers walking or a bullock cart were the only means of travel. It was only the princes and the rich merchants who could afford motor cars.

Also unlike the townspeople, these villagers had no shops within easy reach and instead depended on the five-day bazaars when they could buy supplies and meet up with friends. During these occasions, they were also able to present petitions, seek an audience with the *saohpa*, or see relevant administrators with their problems.

Similarly, while hospitals and medical care existed, not everyone enjoyed their facilities. Living miles away from these services villagers most generally used the *hsala*, the medicine man with his herbal remedies, to cure their illnesses. Also, not many villagers had faith in Western medicine. Clearly, until there was a good mode of transport, it was going to be difficult to help everyone.

Young qualified teachers and midwives generally were reluctant to go into the villages to work and had to be persuaded to go and make sacrifices, or villagers had to be persuaded to come into town. It was a challenge for state administrators to organize.

Communications in the Southern Shan States were aided by the railway line from Rangoon to Meiktila and Thazi. It wound some 3,000 feet through hilly terrain to the Shan Plateau and levelled off from Kalaw, continuing onto Shwenyaung, the terminus, through Heho, where the airfield lay. It was a busy airdrome catering to civilians, but soon became a major military airfield. Today, it is the tourist gateway to the Shan States, especially to Inle Lake, which has become an

internationally renowned beauty spot.

Then, the train service in the Northern Shan States stretched from Mandalay to Lashio, and on to the China border. Like the Burma Road, it played a significant part during World War II in keeping troops and ammunitions moving. The railway route is picturesque with spectacular views of the mountains, especially around Gokteik Bridge. This bridge, a structure of steel trestle, was built by the Pennsylvania and Maryland Bridge Construction Company. Begun in 1901 and completed in 1913, it claims to be the second highest viaduct in the world rising more than 300 feet over a deep rocky valley and spanning 2,260 feet across. These days it is a popular tourist route.

During that period before World War II, there was an appearance of relative contentment though not necessarily enjoyed by everyone. Nevertheless, even if some people suffered poor living conditions, at least they were not living in deserts or wide-open spaces where little grew to support them. The Shan Plateau with its temperate climate, its rivers and fertile valleys provided villagers with land where they could nominally grow produce to support themselves. However, much was to happen during and after the Japanese occupation to change the pattern of life for everyone.

On the political side, it was only natural that when the then Burmese Premier, U Saw (1900-1948), visited London in September 1941, the princes were anxious to know about what changes the British government might be making regarding the future constitutional position of the Shan States. They wrote to the Commission in Taunggyi expressing their apprehension. The new governor, Sir Dorman-Smith (1899-1977), had said then that there would be no prejudice when the examination of Shan States was made at end of the war. However, after the war, British policy changed and the *saohpa* realized that they were now on their own.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Princes Hsahkung Sao Hkun Kyi, Mong Nai Sao Kyaw Ho, Mong Nawng Sao Hkun Hsar, and Mong Pawn Sao Sam Htun (1930s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



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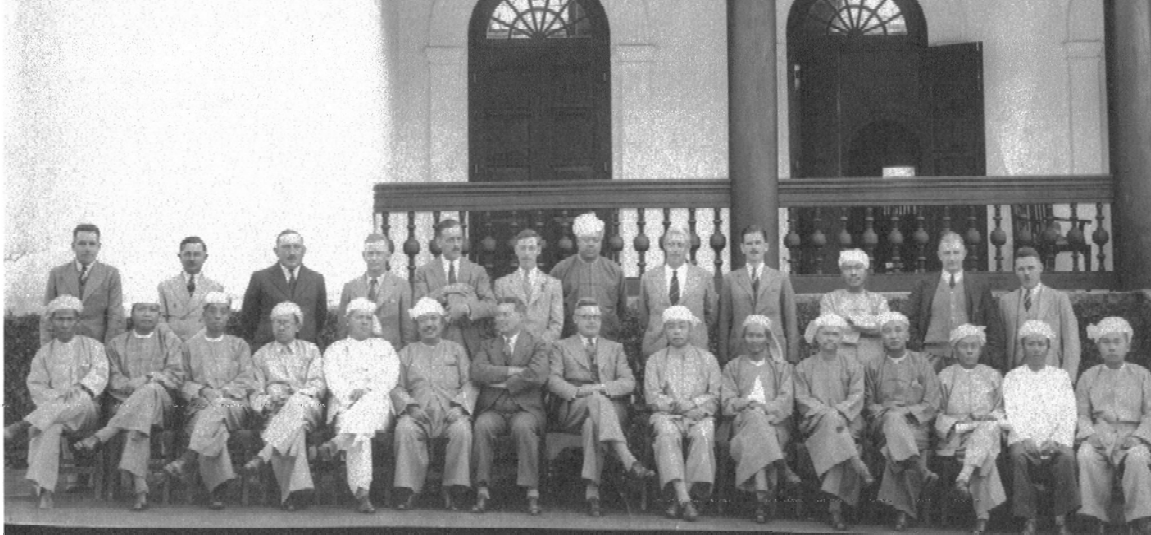
En route to London. Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa, Yawnghwe Saohpa Sao Shwe Thaike, and Kengtung Kyemmong, Sao Kwan Tai (1931; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Delegates to the Round Table Conference, London (1930-1931; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Princes with the British Commissioner of the Shan States, Mr. Philip Fogarty. Front row: (1) Hopong Sao Htun Law, (4) Mong Mit Sao Hkun Hkio, (5) Tawngpeng Sao Hkun Pan Sein, (6) Mong Nai Sao Kyaw Ho, (8) Commissioner Philip Fogarty, (9) Yawnghwe Sao Shwe Thaike, (11) Laikha Sao Num, (12) Hsenwi Sao Hom Hpa, (13) Sakoi Sao Hkun Nyunt, and (15) Mong Pawn Sao Sam Htun. Standing at the back in the middle are (7) Pwehla Sao San Mya and (10) Pangmi Hkun Po Min/Sao Hkun Min (1939; Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Four Princes with a British official: Maukmai Hkun Hkwang, Mong Nai Sao Kyaw Ho, Mong Pan Sao Hkun Ong, and Mong Pawn Sao Sam Htun (1930s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



မိုင်းပွန်, မိုင်း, မိုင်းခင်း, ဂခင်, ထွန်း, မိုင်းပခင်, မိုင်းပုခင်

Six Princes: Pwehla Sao San Mya, Mong Kung Sao Kyi, Samka Sao Hkun Kyi, Tawngpeng Sao Hkun Pan Sein, Yawnghwe Sao Shwe Thaike, and Mong Pawn Sao Sam Htun (1930s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Governors of the Shan Chiefs School, Taunggyi (1927; Shan Literary and Cultural Association Taunggyi).



Tip 8 HNA TUN, S' PA, 8 MWA TU, U DO MA W, 8 HUN ON, SOMN,
 Mulla, Sao Ky T, Sao Na He, 81 Ma Thi, Khe Proy, Khe Yi, Khe Kyi
 Kye Ka, Khe W' Ape.
 Total listed - Khe Lu Kyi, Sao Khe Hkhe, Sao Hwa Phi,
 Khe Leng H, Sao Qe Kyi, Mr. J A Cress
 Khe Kyi, Sao Khe T, Sao Sao Mye
 SK @ 1927

Shan Chiefs School students with their master, Mr. Williamson. Standing L-R: Mong Hsu Sao Hman, Bawlake Sao Nge Du, Pangmi Hkin Maung Latt, Pindaya Sao Win Kyi, Loi Long Hkam Htun, Mong Pai Sao Sein Hpu, Ywangan Ko Ko, Yawnghwe Maung Htun Ohn, Samka Sao Win Kyi, Yawnghwe Sao Hseng Ywet, and Pangmi Hkin Maung Gale. Seated L-R: Yawnghwe Sao E Cho, Loi Ai Sao Aung, Mr. Williamson, Yawnghwe Maung San Lin, Hsahtung Hkam Mun, and Ywangan Sao Hkun Kyi. Seated front row L-R: Loi Long Sao Ohn Kyin, Mong Yai Sao Hpong Khung, Pangmi Hkun Soe Min, Yawnghwe Sao Hseng Hti, Samka Sao Hpu Kyi, and Yawnghwe Sao Hseng Ong (1930-1931; Shan Literary and Cultural Association Taunggyi).



Princes who were British Army officers before World War II. L-R: Sao Seng Sai of Kengtung, Sao Ohn of Hsenwi, Mong Nai Kyemmong Sao Pye, Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa, Yawnghwe Saohpa Sao Shwe Thaïke, Hsenwi Kyemmong Sao Hman Hpa, and Sao Yape Hpa of Hsenwi (1940; Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



CHAPTER THREE: THE INTERIM

A STORM APPROACHES

While the British Government and the Burma Office were pondering what action to take on the many proposals and demands the *saohpa* had put forward, World War II was declared. In Burma Proper, there was a whole set of different problems. Ever since the conquest of Burma by the British in 1824, the Bamar living in Rangoon had been educated in English at convents and missionary schools. In 1878, a Rangoon College affiliated with the University of Calcutta was founded, which later, in 1920 became Rangoon University. Sons and daughters of the Bamar elite attended the university. Anyone pursuing higher education found they had to have a competent level of English to read the subjects of their choice. Once they graduated, many became civil servants working in government departments. The bright ones took the prestigious exams of the Indian or Burman Civil Services and became high officials. Some Burman and Anglo-Burman officials were handsomely rewarded for their devoted services by being knighted.

Few people in the upper echelon of Burmese society showed aggressive anti-British feelings or socialist tendencies. If they had such feelings, they largely kept them under control. Young Bamar students and budding politicians, however, were different. They were prepared to speak out, decrying British prejudice and inequality.

Around the same period, until the Japanese invasion in 1942, a new crop of students emerged from Rangoon University. They were members of the Dobama Asi-ayon 'We Bamar Association', later to become the Thakin movement, whose members were vehemently anti-British. The Burmese term *thakin* 'master' was chosen to indicate that they were masters of their own fate. Their fervor for freedom from British rule easily pushed them towards the Japanese. As Burman, they felt things should be done the Burman way.

Many had come from small towns and villages to enroll in university. They found the English system a stumbling block and questioned why they had to learn English and why their own language was not good enough to obtain their BA and MA degrees. It was a justifiable objection.

Rules and regulations at the university including having to learn English to obtain higher degrees, together with the haughty attitude of the British, only encouraged young students to become nonconformists. Before long, these few nationalistic students gained popular support on the campus and the university student union became a hotbed of anti-British protests. Some began reading Marx and Lenin, learning about communism, while others who studied the British Socialists advocated socialism for the country.

Many who were to become Bamar leaders such as Aung San and U Nu were instigators of strikes against the British government, strikes which became nationwide in 1920, 1936, and 1939. They were members of the All Burma Student Union which, in 1938, had Aung San as its president.

ENTER THE JAPANESE

For us - the Yawnghwe family - World War II began on 7 December 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The first bombs fell on Rangoon around Christmas time. By the middle of January 1942, the Japanese had marched through from Siam, and by the end of the month, Moulmein in the south had fallen.

Much of the rapid advance through the country was made possible by the fact that Japanese intelligence agents who had been gathering information in Burma before the war had singled out eager young Burman who were passionate in their hate of the British to become converts to their cause. With their knowledge, they could influence Bamar politicians and point them in the direction they wanted.

Thakin Aung San and his group were soon enlisted and taken to Japan for indoctrination and military training. By the end of 1941, the Burma Independence Army (BIA), was formed in Siam. Its nucleus of the elite Thirty Comrades included men such as Thakin Aung San, Bo Yan Naing, Bo Ne Win (1910-2002), and Bo Set Kya (1916-1969), who were to lead the 1,000 men into battle. They gave themselves lofty Pali names - Aung San was Bo Teza 'Fire', Yan Naing was 'Victory', Ne Win was 'Sun of Glory', and Set Kya was 'Flying Weapon' 'Chariot' - to inspire their followers. Indeed, they became great heroes, saviors of the country

Once the invading Japanese forces marched into Burma together with the BIA, the numbers of the national army swelled. Its popularity gave the army access to and knowledge of the terrain they had not known before. This meant that the BIA were at an advantage to aid the 'enemy' in its invasion of Burma. The troops marched jubilantly, chanting "Dobama! Dobama! We Bamars! We Bamars!" They encountered British troops and their allies, the Karen forces, as they made their way from the south to the capital, Rangoon. The Japanese advanced so rapidly that those Karen villagers and Karen forces left behind by the British to continue fighting the enemy were unable to get away in time. They became easy targets for the invading troops. The BIA soldiers who were mainly Bamar, were on a rampage and killed, raped, and looted at random.

For centuries past, the Karens, many of whom were Christians, had been denigrated and maltreated by the Bamar. The hatred was mutual, but for the moment there was little the Karens could do to protect themselves against the armed mob.

Despite the rapidity of the Japanese attack and estimates that there were more Japanese forces on the ground in Burma than British troops, neither the British administration in Rangoon nor the British government thought Burma would fall so easily to the Japanese.

The air defense at that time proved to be insufficient. With the help of a few pilots from the American Volunteer Group (AVG) stationed in Rangoon, the Royal Air Force (RAF) could help defend the city from Japanese planes laden with heavy bombs. They were also able to curtail daytime bombing by inflicting heavy casualties on the Japanese bombers. The AVG, under the command of Claire Chennault (1893-1958), was known as the Flying Tigers. Stationed at Mingaladon to protect the Burma Road, they were supported by the American government. As the Japanese grew nearer and British forces were in full retreat, and with the country meanwhile rapidly falling into Japanese hands, these brave air battles stopped. The Flying Tigers moved on to other areas where they were desperately needed.

In early March 1942, the Japanese arrived in Rangoon, while simultaneously carrying out a three-prong attack on Upper Burma. The march eastward was towards the Shan Plateau coming up to Taunggyi and northward to Lashio. By the end of April, Lashio had fallen, cutting off the Burma Road for the retreat of the Chinese and allied troops. It was apparent that Burma could no longer be defended and what began as a gradual retreat of the British forces and evacuation of civilians, took on a more urgent tempo.

Mandalay fell to the Japanese in early May. By now, thousands of civilians were trying to escape via the shorter route out of Burma from Kalewa on the Chindwin River, to Tamu and to Imphal. Others walked up to Myitkyina, hoping to be airlifted, only to find that the Japanese were a step ahead. Guessing that this was the plan, the Japanese had kept up a constant attack on the airfield until it was destroyed. People continued arriving, hoping to find a plane that could fly them

out, but there was little hope of escaping that way. Consequently, there began the great trek northward into the Hukawng Valley, along the Ledo road and into Assam and India.

What misery! Countless days of walking, dire shortages of food and water, and the inevitable malaria and dysentery took a heavy toll on the thousands trying to escape. The weak and sick were often unable to continue and many died by the roadside. While the terrible trek went on, we in the Shan States were not spared. The rapid advance of the Japanese had disrupted all British plans. The disorganized Chinese forces of Chiang Kai-Shek (Jiang Jieshi, 1887-1975), who had been trying to hold the Burma Road, were also in retreat. The retreating Chinese troops looted towns and villages and raped women along their route.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION

In 1940, some princes had been commissioned into the Thirteenth (Shan State) Battalion, the Burma Rifles (Burma Territorial Force). These were Yawnghwe, who was made a Captain; and five others who were made second lieutenants: Mong Mit, Laikha, Sao Hman Hpa Hsenwi, Sao Hkun Aung Tawngpeng, and Sao Pye Mong Nai. Two Jemadars were Sao Soe Kyi Samka and Hkun Htun Oo Pangmi (M/3/226 BL). Yawnghwe Saohpa was promoted to major and Hsenwi Saohpa joined as captain.

When the British forces began withdrawing, these princes were expected to retreat with them, but they did not. They knew that their presence in their home states at this crucial time was of paramount importance for their subjects, and their own families. Unfortunately, both the British administration and the army read this as disloyalty. It was presumed that they were returning to their states to welcome the conquering Japanese. Throughout the Japanese occupation, the British kept watch on the princes to assess their behavior and what action could be taken, if any, at the end of the war.

The *saohpa* had little inkling of what was to happen to them, although they surmised that they could be in serious trouble with the Japanese because they had been officers in the British Army, and therefore the enemy of the Japanese. As far as Yawnghwe Saohpa was concerned, his loyalty to the British remained to the end. It never faltered.

In March or April 1942, the first Japanese bombs fell on Heho, the airfield, and on the administrative center in Taunggyi. Fortunately for us, my father, who was in Taunggyi that day, managed to safely return and report that his battalion was moving out and retreating to India. He also said that we were to evacuate to one of the Inle villages that very night.

The Japanese were advancing with great speed and neither Taunggyi nor Yawnghwe were safe any longer. Some made for the nearest jungle and into the hills, while others made their way to the Inle villages. Those with foresight had left earlier, allowing themselves time to collect their belongings, while others who had delayed found themselves fleeing for their lives leaving all their possessions behind. Yawnghwe and nearby villages soon emptied, leaving just the stray dogs that barked incessantly.

A year later in 1943, all *saohpa* were summoned to Rangoon to meet the Japanese High Command. Although the journey to Rangoon was dangerous, the ruling princes had little choice but to obey. The Imperial Nipponese Government announced that it was giving the country its independence. Furthermore, the princes were told that the Japanese government was incorporating the Shan States and Karenni State into Burma Proper, while Kengtung and Mong Pan were to be given to Siam.

While the action of separating Kengtung and Mong Pan arbitrarily from the rest of the Shan

States dismayed and demoralized the princes, it was even worse for the rest of the Shan States to be amalgamated with Burma. That was indeed disastrous news. The princes wanted to object, but feared for their lives.

To advance into British Burma and Malaya, Japan needed Siamese territory for its army and wanted Siam to be on friendly terms with the Axis. Siam had little choice since Japanese forces were swiftly advancing from all directions. Knowing it could not stop Japan Siam made a trade-off signing a treaty giving Japan access to all its territory. At the same time in 1942, Siam became Japan's ally declaring war on the United States and Britain. In return, Siam now had charge of the eastern part of the Shan State, the area east of the Salween River. Simultaneously, Japan turned over to Siam the administration of four Malay states that had been transferred to Britain in 1909.

In 1941 Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram (1897-1964), the then Prime Minister of Siam, having grandiose ideas had changed the country's name from Siam to Thailand. To turn his ideas into reality, Phibun had created a separate army called the Northern Army to seize control of the eastern Shan States. Next, he ordered the Thai Air Force to bomb Kengtung in preparation for the arrival of the Northern Army.

He was therefore jubilant over the acquisition of the two Shan States in 1943, calling them the 'Original Thai State'. He had maintained a vision of a greater Thai nation and Thai officials were already *in situ* to take charge when the Japanese government transferred Kengtung and Mong Pan to Thailand.

Phibun had sent an ill-equipped army into Kengtung to liberate it from the enemy, presumably the British. It was fortunate that they found no resistance.

Shortly before this, Kengtung had been host to a division of the Kuomintang (KMT), Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist troops, with the agreement of the Allied Forces, supposedly to fight the Japanese as they advanced. However, when the newly formed Thai Northern Army marched into Kengtung, the KMT units retreated into the hills.

Although in his eagerness Marshal Phibun had visited his troops, they were quite forgotten when the Japanese lost the war. Thai administration of Kengtung lasted only to the surrender of the Japanese, at which point it reverted to being a part of the Shan States. British administration resumed control of Kengtung and Mong Pan, and the "Original Thai State" was no more.

The Thai Northern Army (TNA) disbanded with some soldiers making their own way home, while others decided to remain in Kengtung. One positive outcome from this fiasco was that, with Japanese backing, Phibun was able to build the original un-surfaced road linking Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son, which still exists today.

The supposed "independence" awarded to Burma by the Imperial Government of Nippon and recognized by the Axis Powers was not without restrictions. While, unlike before, there were no stirring political activists, Dr. Ba Maw (1893-1977), the Adipidi (Pali word meaning Counsellor or Head of State), a renowned politician and an astute lawyer, managed to gather around him an older group of civil servants and politicians to help re-build Burma. None of this gained favor with Thakin Aung San (1915-1947), whose followers were of a younger generation, even though Major-General Aung San had been appointed the Minister of Defense, while U Nu was made the Foreign Minister.

Finding the independence given to Burma by the Japanese Government was no more than a charade Thakin Aung San became increasingly disillusioned. He then made up his mind to contact the British and, with the heroes of the Thirty Comrades, to stage another major resistance. The intention this time was to turn the tables on the Japanese by joining the Allies who were winning the war and help them regain control and re-occupy Burma. Perhaps their thinking at that time was that the British were the lesser of two evils.

In 1942, Thakin Thein Pe, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), went to India and made first contact with the British Government officials of the Burma Office in Simla. Once persuaded that the Burmese resistance were sincere, and that they were truly an active anti-fascist resistance organization, British intelligence stepped in.

Later, Aung San's emissaries, helped by the CPB soon found their way to Force 136,

the cover name for the Indian branch of the Special Operations Executive (known as SOE) which worked with resistance movements in occupied territories. The SOE came under the Minister of Economic Warfare, which gave them direct access to Churchill, and were not subject to military or India Office control (Donnison 2005:281).

Formed in 1940 the SOE operated first in Europe and then extended its activities to Asia during the period of the Japanese war. Force 136 generally used agents who were indigenous to the area enabling them to liaise with the people in the locality to form resistance or guerrilla units. People with local knowledge of the terrain and the language were invaluable. The head of the Indian SOE branch, Colin Mackenzie (1898-1986), a clothing manufacturer in civilian life, was later knighted for his challenging work.

The underground forces were gradually building up, so that when, in early 1945 the British eventually took Mandalay, the Burma National Army (BNA) under General Aung San struck. The plan was that the BNA troops would march out of Rangoon supposedly to fight the enemy (the British) but in fact they would then turn around and fight the retreating Japanese army.

When this happened, the Japanese forces were caught by surprise; there was little they could do in retaliation. The BNA together with the underground groups successfully routed out pockets of Japanese as they retreated across the plains. The underground groups knew the terrain well and helped the BNA gain the advantage over the withdrawing troops. In this manner, together with the advancing British troops, they marched through Japanese lines inflicting major damage on the enemy.

The British army applauded General Aung San for this clever maneuver of turning against the Japanese, though former allies of BNA, and Aung San soon found a benefactor in Lord Mountbatten (1900-1979), the Supreme Commander for Southeast Asia.

No sooner had some form of British administration returned to Rangoon to begin the difficult task of re-establishing itself than there were instructions from the Burma government in India to dissolve Aung San's Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO) and the BNA. However, these orders were never carried out; they had come too soon; there was still fighting against the retreating Japanese, and British ground forces were not sufficient to take over completely. Thus, the AFO and its army remained *in situ*.

One can sympathize with the older colonial officials who had to evacuate to India under extreme conditions. Some of the military men were undoubtedly incensed at the way their troops had been brutally chased out of the country by the advancing Japanese with the help of the Burma Independence Army, under the command of Aung San. Now, the same man and organization that had supported the enemy, was making an about turn and offering its services to the British administration. The many cautious, older civil servants sitting in Simla were far-sighted and experienced men. They were skeptical and unconvinced that Aung San was sincere or trustworthy. In fact, they had been somewhat shocked that they had not been consulted first before Lord Mountbatten had made his hasty decision and given the young Burman his blessing. To them, Aung San was a young upstart. Little did they realize how adept he was in handling his old adversaries.

When the British Military Administration ended in October 1945, the Governor, Colonel Sir

Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith (1899-1977), returned to Burma after three and a half years away in India. He announced that there would be little change in its administration and that the 1935 Constitution would be maintained as before the war. Burma Proper would continue with its own administration, while full self-government within the Commonwealth was promised in three years' time.

DISTRUST

Meanwhile, most of the Shan Plateau was turned into a continuous battleground. First, there were the Japanese bombing raids, then the retreating British and Chinese Nationalist troops, next the advancing Japanese forces and occupation, and later, the British bombs and advancing British forces pursuing the retreating Japanese. All the Shan States were in turmoil. Villagers were in flight with nowhere to go but into the jungles. Fields could not be planted with paddy, as people were constantly being press-ganged into working for the Japanese army. Rice became scarce and, as the Japanese army had requisitioned much of the food for its troops, shortages of all kinds were beginning to show.

With their buildings destroyed and looted those living in towns moved away into nearby villages. Farmers in the country fended for themselves as best they could but all the same they found life extremely hard. People had little money to buy goods and in any case, there was a scarcity of imports such as textiles and consumer goods so they had to live with whatever they possessed.

Up on the Shan Plateau there were neither newspapers nor radios. Rumors were the sole source of news. Some rumors did indicate what was to be expected from the Japanese. For example, one story was that anyone who did not do what they were told would be slapped across the face. It was learned that face slapping was a common occurrence, that one had to bow three times on meeting a Japanese person and that they liked being called *gyi gyi* 'master' 'big, big master' (Burmese).

Soon people realized that any contact with the Japanese authority meant trouble. Arrests, torture, and disappearances happened daily. Villagers in the Shan States were forced to become porters and repair roads and bridges. Many were used for construction work on the railway line to Siam. They were sometimes paid with military currency, which enabled them to buy necessities but at exorbitant prices.

During the occupation, the Burma Army stationed their troops at Kalaw while the Japanese stationed theirs in Taunggyi. Unsurprisingly, British bombers targeted those towns and the surrounding areas, which included the Heho airstrip and Yawngnaw. It was exhilarating to know that the British were fighting back and to contemplate the possibility of their return, but at the same time we feared that their bombs might kill us all before then.

Some of the *saohpa* had little to do with the Japanese, but had to appear when commanded before whoever was in charge. On one such occasion in 1943 the Japanese General in command summoned them all to Taunggyi and Rangoon. They were told that U Khin Maung Pyu, a Tai Shan who was a well-known Indian Civil Service (ICS) person, had been appointed to take charge of the Shan States. Not knowing where they stood in the new circumstances, the *saohpa* found themselves in a precarious position with the Japanese government on the one side and the government of Dr. Ba Maw on the other.

Fortunately, in the Inle Lake region, people could grow vegetables and catch fish to feed themselves and sell the excess in the bazaar. This situation changed when the British intensified

their bombing raids. People were afraid to be out in the open tending to their floating gardens or fishing, which led to a general lack of food.

We were thankful to have had the Inle to provide us refuge, especially during the retreat of the British and later in 1944, when the British and Allied troops began advancing into northern Burma, and the Japanese retreated. This was a dangerous and difficult time for everyone. Food became scarce and in our family, we were down to eating boiled rice broth or plain red unpolished rice and salt.

During this period, many *saohpa* kept discreetly away from each other and lived quietly in their capitals, or even went to live in the jungles. Most delegated day-to-day administration to one of their State ministers. It was an uncomfortable time for the Shan princes who were each treated differently by the Japanese authorities. A few who complied with Japanese commands were given little trouble.

Others, like my father, kept their distance and dealt with the Japanese officers formally and respectfully. There was little variation in their daily lives though like their subjects, each was trying to look after his family and stay alive. Consequently, in all matters their behavior had to be exemplary towards the Japanese, their new master.

During this time, those in the Shan States were becoming politically aware of the peculiar situation they were in. Where did the Shan princes stand? Were the Tai Shan now to be ruled by the Burman? In searching for answers, a veneer of nationalist feeling began to take root.

RETURN OF THE BRITISH

Even as the Japanese army was marching into Burma, clandestine resistance groups were being formed to oppose them; for example, ethnic groups and political parties that each worked separately. The CPB and the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP with socialist tendency) functioned by themselves in Burma Proper. In 1944, to strengthen their position the two groups amalgamated to form the Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO) with Aung San as its President and the two CPB leaders appointed Secretary General and Political Leader.

In 1945, when the re-occupation of the country by the British was complete, the administration of the Supreme Allied Commander Admiral Mountbatten duly recognized Thakin Aung San and his organization, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), formerly the AFO. It became firmly established as the main organ through which all negotiations with the British for the independence of the country were made.

Mountbatten had accepted Aung San earlier, saying, "Burma could be kept within the Commonwealth only by winning the League's confidence" which showed there was a widening difference between the policies made in Simla and what was presently being advocated. The AFPFL had stated that it wanted "no period of direct rule, AFPFL should be recognized as sovereign Provisional government" (Collis 1956:240, 243). This was exactly what happened when the Attlee-Aung San Agreement was signed.

While Governor Dorman-Smith in Simla was discussing what was to be done at the end of the war, one assurance given to the ethnic nationalities was that they would not come under Bamar rule. However, during the talks in London the AFPFL, or Thakin Aung San, had stressed that any independence granted to Burma had to include the Frontier Areas. Initially the British response seemed to suggest that the decision would be up to the ethnic nationalities. But later it became clear that the British government had no intention of taking no for an answer from the Frontier Areas.

In the background, Hubert Rance (1898-1974) who had taken over as Governor, assessed the situation and in January 1947 cabled the Burma Office advising that:

We should start with the premise that there is only one Burma and that the part known as Ministerial Burma and that known as the Frontier Areas are merely parts of the whole. They have been one in the past and they must remain one in the future so that our ultimate aim is always a united Burma in the shortest possible time (Smith 1999:77).

At the same time promises of rewards were being made to the ethnic forces, including that their wishes would be granted in return for their invaluable war-time services. It seems individuals made these promises unofficially, as no such acknowledgement was ever received from the British Government.

Vernon Donnison pointed out: "The Chins, the Kachins and the Karens all gave gallant and valuable military support to the British in the war against the Japanese. For much of the time these people were fighting and giving their lives for the British cause, the Burmese fought on the other side" (1970:135).

It has been assessed that the Fourteenth Army, comprised of 30,000 men and Special Forces under Wingate,¹¹ was made up of the British army, Indian army, Burma army, and African units. Of the soldiers who served in the Burma army, it was estimated that a high percentage were Kachin, Karen, and Shan. These ethnic soldiers made great sacrifices, giving up their lives in the fight against Japanese aggression to help the British re-capture their country. Furthermore, Kachin villagers who hated the Japanese for stealing their cattle, ill-treating them, and for using their Baptist churches as brothels, organized themselves into a highly successful resistance group, despite being badly equipped.

Without a doubt, it was due to the bravery of many Kachin and Shan, that the American 101 and British 136 forces successfully set up a valuable espionage network behind enemy lines as Allied forces made their advance. Without such help, it might have taken the British army much longer to re-capture the country.

Earlier the British, fearing political agitation within Burma Proper would influence certain elements within the Shan States, had prohibited political agitators from the plains to enter the Plateau. Both the Burman and young Tai Shan politicians accused the British of wanting to have the Tai Shan remain politically naive and backward. But having entered these areas during the Japanese occupation, the AFPFL were now able to filter through to the Shan States and other regions of the Frontier Area without restriction.

Earlier, in 1940, the Shan State Youth League (SSYL) had been formed with an office in Yawnghwe. It had tenuous links with the AFO, the war-time underground organization preceding the AFPFL. Soon after the return of the British Administration, Taunggyi became one of AFPFL's major bases for the Shan States.

Many members of the League had been educated at Rangoon University, where they had met young Burman with lofty ideals. This contact sowed the seeds of discontent which, nurtured by politically astute Burman students, gradually took root.

All the while, there were strikes in Rangoon and general unrest in the rest of Burma Proper. The discontent and depressed conditions in the cities prompted politically-minded students to protest; Shan students were involved in these student movements. Mixing with activists at Rangoon University and listening to them in the Student Union, young Shan began to think that both

¹¹ Orde Charles Wingate (1903-1944).

colonialism and feudalism were bad for the country and that it was socialism they had to struggle for to attain equal rights. By the end of the war, the influence of the Youth League, encouraged by the AFPFL, was already destabilizing major towns in the Shan States.

During this period of uncertainty, the *saohpa* began to feel that they had to come together to make some decisions. Meetings were held to unify ideas and to discuss how the Federated Shan States should prepare themselves if the returning British Government would grant them their wish of Dominion Status.

Consequently, as soon as the British administration was re-established, there was a flurry of correspondence between the senior princes themselves, and the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States. The princes, having become conscious of the changing political scene and the demands of the Tai Shan politicians, proposed a reduction in the number of existing princes to a manageable size, even proposing having only one prince who, with full support from others, would work to bring the Shan States progress and development. There was also the formation of a new council in which both privileged (princes) and non-privileged members could work and plan together.

At the same time, among themselves, the princes called for co-operation with each other and urged all to unite to improve the circumstances of their States. Senior princes stressed unity suggesting that self-sacrifices should be made, including retirement in some cases or seeking re-election by the people. But these challenging ideas were not simple to implement, and few princes were willing to give up their positions. Consequently, nothing further happened.

In 1946, in a letter to the Commissioner, Federated Shan States, Yawnghwe Saohpa (*Private Papers*) wrote:

There has been a widespread growth of the idea that personal and inherited authority is out of keeping with the time, and that the voice of the people should be heard in the Councils of the land ...While recognizing to the full not only the trend of the times but the duty of the incumbent upon us *saohpa* as leaders of our peoples, [it is our duty] to take the initiative in sharing our powers, rights and privileges with our beloved people....

It was not always easy to operate constructively in this tangled web of power and egos; even my father felt at times that the other princes thought him too assertive. Some openly joked to his face, "Saohpa Yawnghwe wants to be boss." Also, the attitude that a person from a different state could not tell others what to do was a factor preventing real progress. Some were not humble enough to admit that there might have been others with better knowledge than themselves. The *saohpa* were an amorphous group of men needing a leader but reluctant to elect one.

Before the January 1947 meeting in London between the AFPFL and the Labor Prime Minister Mr. Attlee,¹² the British administration in Simla gave considerable thought to certain plans for the Shan States (M/4/2808 BL). However, it appeared the British were still very much in favor of keeping the pre-war status of the *saohpa* in Shan States for the time being, but with fewer states and a stronger grouping. There was the possibility of amalgamating smaller states and having only five Shan States divided namely into Kengtung - eastern area, Mong Nai - central, Yawnghwe - western area of Southern Shan States, while the Northern Shan States would have Hsenwi in the eastern area and Hsipaw in the western area.

But the smaller states could not be arbitrarily amalgamated without valid reasons. The British could possibly justify this proposal by pointing out that, in their close relationships with the Japanese authorities, many had been disloyal, or by noting that the princes had been unable to raise

¹² Clement Richard Attlee (1883-1967).

sufficient revenue to meet the needs of their respective states, which no longer could be supported by extra funding.

It would have been difficult for such a strategy to work since they had to consider factors such as the different races that lived on the Plateau with their own *saohpa*. Questions then arose as to how the Burman might react to stronger Shan States. The Burmese press was already asserting "Burmese will not allow others to influence the Shan, we must get together to struggle for independence" (M/4/2819 BL).

In fear of upsetting the Bamar, and realizing that the Burmese were "against the idea of a separate Shan State with a stronger monarchical system" (M/4/2028 BL) the British hesitated. Then threats by Burman politicians that there would be riots and disorder, finally led the British to drop all plans in encouraging the *saohpa* to reorganize themselves to evolve into a strong Shan State.

The 1935 Burma Act that came into being in 1937 was not further implemented due to the outbreak of World War II, but by 1948 after the return of the British it was relaunched. The 1935 Burma Act stipulated that because of the differences found:

in the stages of development between Ministerial Burma and the Frontier Areas and between the Frontier Areas themselves (*Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry 1947:25*).

The 1935 Act made allowances for the different stages of development in the different parts by dividing them into less politically advanced regions, known as Part I areas, still to be administered by the Governor in his discretion, and the more politically advanced Part II areas, the administration of which was within the ministerial sphere (*Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry 1947:13*).

It was envisaged that later when Part II Areas developed they could be merged with Burma Proper, while those in Part I Areas could join Part II areas once they developed. The British were, of course taking a long-term view, but Burma gained its independence before much happened.

Then without any previous indication, the princes were told that with immediate effect, there would no longer be a Federated Shan States with a Commissioner. Instead, there would now be a Director of the Frontier Areas Administration, with two Residents who would deal with the Shan States, Kachin, and Chin areas. The princes were to form their own Executive Council that was to include representatives of the people.

This was not welcome news for the princes. The British had once again acted unilaterally on an important matter that concerned the Shan States, and the British had yet again undermined the position of the princes. Also, it was not comforting to know that whichever way the *saohpa* may now decide to act, they were no longer in a favorable position to think about their future optimistically.

In the time being, Burma was offered full self-government within the Commonwealth. The British had hoped to first grant self-rule, then progressively lead up to independence. But when presented with this proposal the Bamar politicians declared it imperialistic, accusing Britain of dragging its feet and of wanting to continue to rule Burma. Aung San flatly refused the offer, adamant that it did not satisfy Bamar nationalist aspirations, which was complete independence.

The end of the fighting, the occupation and return of the British did not bring back those halcyon days on the Shan Plateau. Instead, each state had its own problems trying to sort out the confusion and mayhem left by the war. People in the Shan States had suffered together from the hardships inflicted by the Japanese and were not helped by the over-bearing attitude of influential Burman towards the Tai Shan, during the occupation. The Japanese period had taught the Shan many things, but one bitter lesson learned was that they could not trust anyone, and least of all, the Burman.

SCOUHP 1946

During the latter part of British rule before the Japanese occupation, politicians in Burma Proper were greatly influenced by Western socialist and communist ideology. Furthermore, Indian politics and their demands for independence had an impact on the young politicians whose nationalist sentiments produced such slogans as 'Burma for the Bamar' and 'This is our land', declaring that they no longer wanted to be ruled by the British.

Members of the Council for the Shan State Saohpa headed by the Tawngpeng Prince, and including my father who was the vice president and the Saohpa of Hsenwi, Mong Mit, Mong Pawn, Mong Nawng, and Hsahtung, were all very concerned. At one of the Council meetings it was suggested that a "confederation with Kachins, Chins and Karens on an autonomic basis" be considered while wanting "the question of confederation with Burmans (to) be left to a future date" (M/4/2837 BL)

The Council realized that any political unrest in Burma Proper would inevitably move up to the Shan States more rapidly than they wished, since some Tai Shan politicians were staunch anti-feudalists. There appeared to be little room for conciliation, despite having the same aspirations and objectives for the Shan States.

The frequent political disturbances the princes encountered galvanized them to consider the Tai Shan position in relation to Burma's demand for independence: where did they and the other ethnic nationalities stand? They realized that to have a meaningful discussion on the future of the country, it was necessary to have a meeting of all ethnic nationalities.

A decision was made to hold such a conference in March 1946, in Panglong Village to the north of Loilem in Laikha State. The aim was to bring all Frontier Area peoples together to generate common ideas and aspirations. The initiators were the princely statesmen Mong Pawn, Sao Sam Htun (1907-1947), Hsahtung, Sao Hkun Kyi, and Yawnghwe, Sao Shwe Thaike. The participants at the meeting were *saohpa*, Tai Shan leaders and politicians, and Chin and Kachin leaders and their representatives.

The Laikha Saohpa Long, Sao Num, acted as host since the meeting was being held in his state; he also funded much of the event. He was as eager as other princes to see that there was no hitch to the conference and that it would be successful. It was the first time since the Japanese occupation that the princes seriously sat together to discuss, ruminate, and plan. It was also the first time that the various nationalities came together in a way that benefited them all. As they talked, they found common ground for discussion given their similar problems. They recognized they would have a better chance of achieving what they wanted if they were united in their requests, even though they were thinking only in terms of staying within the Commonwealth.

Consequently, the Supreme Council of United Hills Peoples was formed, with my father as its president. Its members were happy to be associated with Burma on the condition that they were guaranteed full autonomy in internal administration within a federal government, with all members being equal. Out of this meeting sprang a new wave of nationalism and a boost to Tai Shan culture, with demands for schools to re-introduce the teaching of Tai Shan, so that the mother tongue might live on.

As vice-president of the Council of the Shan State Saohpa, Yawnghwe Saohpa Long cautioned all princes to pay heed to the enormous effort needed by each to promote education; technical and professional training; industrial development; expansion of natural resources in agriculture, forestry, and mining; fostering of commerce and trade; organization of modern financial methods; and improvement of communications. He predicted that fifteen to twenty years might be needed for

all this to be achieved. Little did he realize that things were not going to be in his favor.

The Saohpa Long of Tawngpeng counselled the princes not to fall into a propaganda trap. Suspicious of the Bamar politicians, he was not altogether convinced that the Shan States should be joining Burma. He warned that joining Burma meant that the Shan might become slaves and that the Shan States could be wiped off the map forever. He believed though that even if *saohpa* eventually disappeared, the Tai Shan nation could survive and should be preserved.

At that time, it was felt there should also be a Tai Shan army to protect Shan land. At that moment, Burma had four battalions, the Kachin two, the Chin two, and the Tai Shan had none. This appeal to the British for the formation of two such battalions was interpreted by some politicians as a request by the princes purely to safeguard their own power and positions.

ATTLEE-AUNG SAN TREATY

It was an anxious time for the Tai Shan who felt that the 1946 meeting and the formation of SCOUHP was a step in the right direction. The first milestone towards their objective was considered achieved but so far, they had not thought of total independence.

In March 1946 FW Pethick Lawrence¹³ of the Burma Office writing to Governor Dorman-Smith regarding the position of the Shan States, said:

The policy aims at the eventual voluntary inclusion of the Hills People with the constitutional structure of a united Burma, but as it is accepted that conditions will not be ripe for such inclusion for some considerable time yet, ...until such time as the Hills Peoples signify their desire for some suitable form of organization of their territories with Burma Proper (M/4/2808 BL).

The *saohpa* did not know that this was British policy and that the die had been cast. Had they been aware of the British position earlier, the princes might not have been so comfortable with the British. The realization that there might be dangers ahead might have propelled them to a different point of view.

Nothing was done to include anyone from the Frontier Areas despite a British official report to the Burma Office that the *saohpa* were "perturbed at the thought of the Burmese mission in London exercising its powers of persuasion over the British Government, without a single representative of the Frontier Areas being present" (M/4/2819).

In January 1947, Thakin Aung San, as head of the AFPFL, and indeed of Burma, led a Burmese delegation at the invitation of the Labor Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee¹⁴ to London to consider and discuss AFPFL demands for independence. Neither the British nor the Bamar thought the Tai Shan and the Frontiers peoples were important enough for consultation.

As the princes were not privy to what was being decided about their future in Rangoon or in London they wanted to register their views. The Executive Council of *saohpa* signed a telegram that was sent through the Director of the Frontier Areas in Rangoon at the end of December 1946, for forwarding to the Burma Office (Appendix 6) stating that they understood the Burmese delegation currently in London would ask for the control of the Frontier Areas and in such a case, they wanted to call attention to the fact "that neither Honorable U Aung San nor any of his colleagues has any mandate to speak on behalf of the Frontier Areas. Whether and when the Frontier Areas will amalgamate with Burma is matter for the people of the Frontier Areas alone to decide."

¹³ Frederick William Pethick-Lawrence (1871-1961).

¹⁴ Clement Richard Attlee (1883-1967).

When the dispatch of the telegram from the *saohpa* became known, U Tin Aye, Chairman of the Shan State Youth League (SSYL) organized a public rally in support of Thakin Aung San, under orders and help from AFPFL, whose members had especially travelled up to Taunggyi. Simultaneously, U Tin Aye and Shan State Peoples Freedom League (SSPFL) sent a telegram contradicting what the princes had stated, saying that they were wrong, and that, as the rally demonstrated, Thakin Aung San undeniably had the full support of the Tai Shan people. This incident showed the wide cleavage between the *saohpa* and the young Shan anti-feudalists.

It was agreed in the Attlee-Aung San Treaty of January 1947 that the British Government would recognize Thakin Aung San and his ministers as an interim government, and a Constituent Assembly would be established through elections. Full independence was to be granted within one year. The treaty stipulated that other ethnic nationalities, lumped together as the Frontier Areas, had to be consulted and their consent obtained before independence would be granted. This stipulation was presumably added only for effect as Britain had already given Aung San full control of the country.

The Burma delegation in London at that time was likely fully aware of HMG's policy of wanting a federated Burma that included the whole of British Burma and even the Karenni states. The delegation made clear that it did not think that the Frontier Areas people were politically backward. However, if such was the view of HMG, they themselves wanted trusteeship over these areas because they wanted to elevate these backward people to equal footing with themselves, the Bamar.

Whatever the Burma Office had in mind for the non-Burman, Thakin Aung San cleverly managed to get them to begin thinking along the lines of what his mission proposed. At that time one of the Tai Shan leaders, Sao Sai Mong Mangrai, wrote: "The sceptic might say the Frontier Areas were not ready for union with the plains without the Burmese getting the upper hand. In that case, it might be said that the whole of Burma was unready for independence" (1965:309).

This question takes us back to square one. Was 1947 the right time to have demanded full independence? Maybe Burma Proper felt ready for complete independence, but the Frontier Areas people wanted self-rule and dominion status.

The princes felt that whatever the consequences, they were right to have protested to remind the British that there were races other than the Bamar living in the country who had to be considered. This action of the princes infuriated both the SSPFL and the AFPFL politicians who felt the *saohpa* had no right to complain.

ANTI-FEUDALISTS

The leading members of the SSPFL were idealists who appeared to be thinking only of the immediate future, without weighing the long-term pros and cons of amalgamation with Burma Proper. The atmosphere was vitriolic as the group of young men fought to abolish feudal rule. They criticized the feudal system, organized people to shout out slogans such as "Down with the *saohpa*" and pressured the princes to renounce their powers. They claimed that the *saohpa* abused their powers and bullied their subjects, taxed them heavily, and did nothing for them.

Sai Aung Tun, the Tai Shan historian expressed the view that in the olden days the *saohpa* wanted to have absolute power, and rulers were "mostly despotic in their character, thinking, behavior, and outlook" (2009:118). Were anti-feudalists and people like Sai Aung Tun comparing the recent princes to those of yesteryear and, therefore, particularly harsh in their criticism of them?

The anti-feudalists had had the benefit of a university education in Rangoon or Mandalay

supported by their respective states. During much of this time they had spent hours reading Marx and Lenin, listening to radicals preaching socialism, and had become acquainted with members of the Thakin party. The young Shan politicians wanted to emulate the Bamar politicians and fight the British imperialists for freedom for the Shan States. They felt the only way of gaining this freedom and becoming independent was by joining with Burma Proper.

Understanding that under socialism all men were equal the SSPFL members saw no reason to kowtow to the princes. Having mixed with Burman leaders they felt they were better educated and even superior, and had no use for the age-old curtesy of greeting the lord with a *wai*. Putting one's palms together in greeting as is done in both Thailand and Laos was, they felt, showing submission to the *saohpa*. They had no respect for the princes and wanted to change the servile attitude of the people to view the princes differently, for instance, as their equals standing on the same platform.

Back among the ordinary people in the Shan States, things were very different. For centuries, the *saohpa* had ruled in a hierarchical manner in keeping with tradition without any change. People were used to such rule, each generation accepted it, and most still respected and revered the *saohpa*.

The *saohpa* did not understand why the young politicians were thrusting a concerted force of hate against them. Overall, most of the *saohpa* were older and generally had gained their experience from life. Hardly any had been to university; some may have travelled abroad, while others were trained in the British Indian army. When there were problems in the villages which could not be dealt with by headmen, people came to see their prince to complain. The princes in turn generally tried as best they could to solve problems, but some were high-handed and uncaring.

Still it was a difficult time for the princes. They had never experienced such opposition from persons they knew personally, and found it humiliating. Having always been respected, they were now being challenged about their birthrights. They were in a quandary as to how best to deal with this opposition. Knowing the AFPFL instigated these tactics they were even more careful in their dealings with the Burman.

Although anti-feudalists, these politicians claimed they were not necessarily personally anti *saohpa* since many had close dealings with the princes. Not knowing how to counter such outright attacks to their authority, a few princes reacted by keeping a tighter grip on the trouble-makers and protesters and detaining the ring-leaders, which was the only way they knew of keeping the peace. Predictably, such action only strengthened the resolve of the protestors.

U Tin Aye, chairman of the Shan State Youth League (SSYL) explained his party's position, saying that the Tai Shan could not achieve independence alone. He believed that Burma proper was an indispensable ally since the Burman, like the Shan, were under colonial rule and besides, they shared the same aspirations and aims for their country. He also pointed out that the natural resources and riches of the Shan States were essential for an independent Burma.

U Tin Aye was an energetic and committed man, an Intha who came from the Inle Lake. His father was one of the assistant ministers of Yawnghwe State. He was one of many young Tai Shan politicians who, while studying at Rangoon University, joined the student movements and became acquainted with members of the Thakin Party. They strongly admired the Thakin, and the senior members, such as Thakin Aung San and Let Ya, were not slow in taking advantage of these fledgling Tai Shan politicians.

By 1936, U Tin Aye had taken part in the Rangoon University student strike in the capital. When he came back to the Shan States a Shan Students Association was set up and a library called the Alin Yaung was established in Taunggyi.

In 1942 during the Japanese occupation, U Tin Aye formed the Asia Youth League with himself as chairman. By then, he had graduated with distinctions in Burmese and decided he wanted

to further his political position by joining the Japanese resistance. Although he taught for a while, the thrill of rubbing shoulders with the Burman political leaders of the independence movement gave him the impetus to become a politician. It was in this way that he became involved in organizing rallies and hate campaigns against the princes whom he continually criticized for being selfish and only out for their own gain.

It was only in 1947 that U Tin Aye, President of the newly formed SSPFL, showed openly how closely linked the organization was to AFPFL. The views of the SSPFL were that the Shan States should immediately join with Burma Proper in seeking independence from the British, that feudal rule be terminated, and the *saohpa* abolished.

Unsurprisingly the princes disapproved of the SSPFL's attitude, and firmly accused the league of having sold out to the Burman. The princes were not the enemy; they were cautious men who were alarmed that the Tai Shan politicians were unilaterally advocating a union with Burma, which they feared.

As a new organization, the SSPFL members appealed to the AFPFL for guidance, little realizing they would increasingly come under the influence of the AFPFL, carrying out its orders throughout the Shan States. Once in their grip it became difficult for Tai Shan politicians to act on their own initiative. They had to follow the party line. From 1946 until 1958, the SSPFL remained firmly opposed to feudalism and the princes, with little thought of their earlier aspirations for a free and prosperous Shan State.

It emerged that many of those involved in the political movements were from Yawngwe and the Inle Lake. They had all been educated up to the middle level in Yawngwe State School before going on to Taunggyi for their high school studies at the American Baptist Mission (ABM) School. From there they went on to university at Rangoon where they joined the Shan States Students Association, then the Students Union, and in 1936, joined the student strikes thinking that it was the right thing to do.

Two men were not from Yawngwe: Namkham U Htun Aye and Langkur U Htun Myint. Their aim was for immediate union with Burma Proper under any terms, and once independence was achieved, to end feudal rule and abolish the *saohpa*. They wanted the feudal system to be replaced by a socialist peoples' government.

In retrospect, much time was wasted fighting each other when they could have made attempts to work together since their aspirations for the development of the Shan States were the same as that of the princes. Whatever the Tai Shan opposition thought of the *saohpa*, there was a need for an understanding between the two groups. Evidently there would need to be a great deal of compromise in their dealings with each other to resolve their differences.

It was disappointing that members of the SSPFL did not look beyond their hate of the *saohpa* and feudalism. They could have put their energy into creating a better understanding with the princes, together drawing up plans and concentrating on what was needed for the Shan State and its development.

Unfortunately, the two sides never had a chance to sit down and thrash out their different positions thoroughly without interference from the outside. As far as the Burman were concerned, a wedge between the princes and the Tai Shan politicians allowed the Bamar to control the latter more effectively. In this way, a united Shan front was prevented from being formed against the central government, the AFPFL.

Despite this, over time many of the Tai Shan politicians themselves were to become disillusioned since their ambitions for the Shan State were not realized in the years after independence. They also became more aware that, even if they did not always agree with the princes, there was a necessity for unity if they wanted to achieve progress, freedom, and peace for the Shan

State. However, this realization came too late, for that was when the Tatmadaw 'the Burma army' stepped in.

NAMKHAM U HTUN AYE

Namkham U Htun Aye, originally known as U Htun Aye, was a Shan-Palaung from Namkham in Hsenwi State. Born in 1912 in Namhsan, capital of Tawngpeng State, where his family was involved in the tea trade, Namkham U Htun Aye was educated in Mandalay at St Peter's High School. In 1939, as a young man, he worked for a while as a truck driver along the Burma Road for the Bombay Burmah Trading Company that had a factory in Namhsan.

By 1945, after the Japanese occupation, he had arrived in Taunggyi. In 1946, he was one of the founding members of the Shan State Peoples Freedom League. As far as we know, Namkham U Htun Aye was vehemently anti-*saohpa* and against the feudal system and consequently was considered pro-Burman and later, pro-Ne Win and pro-Tatmadaw.

Like U Tin Aye and other young Tai Shan, he became closely allied with the leaders of the AFPFL. He moved his family to Taunggyi and joined the hotbed of young Tai Shan socialists. Together they agitated against the *saohpa*.

His son, Henry Andre Aye, in *The Shan Conundrum in Burma*, explains his father's attitude towards the *saohpa*, saying

he was never a *saohpa* partisan, ... he had never borne any personal grudge against the *saohpa*...However, he believed profoundly that Shan State, which had barely three million inhabitants at the time, could not drag on with thirty-four feudalistic states and sub-states. It was too much to bear for the people of Shan State (Aye 2009:29).

Maybe he had a point. It was a difficult period for both the princes and the young aspiring politicians. There were no quick solutions to the problems facing them after the devastation of the Japanese war.

Henry Aye also points out that the anti-British feelings held by the Burman spilled over to anyone they considered to be "Westernized." He writes of the time when Yawnghwe Saohpa was selected as first president of independent Burma. Most Burman wanted a Burman to be president. "U Chit Hlaing, an ethnic Mon, a veteran nationalist" was thought to be more suitable than "a westernized Saohpa in three-piece suit who served under the British as frontier officer" (2009:37, 38). The Burman determined that my father was an Anglophile and objected to the fact that his three children had been sent to England for their education.

It is surprising that despite the various disagreements and points of view, the families of Shan politicians have become indelibly aligned with the Yawnghwe Dynasty. They are the sons and daughters of Namkham U Htun Aye, Langkur U Htun Myint, and U Tun Myint Galay. The former two families are linked to my maternal side, while the third, U Tun Myint married my father's niece.

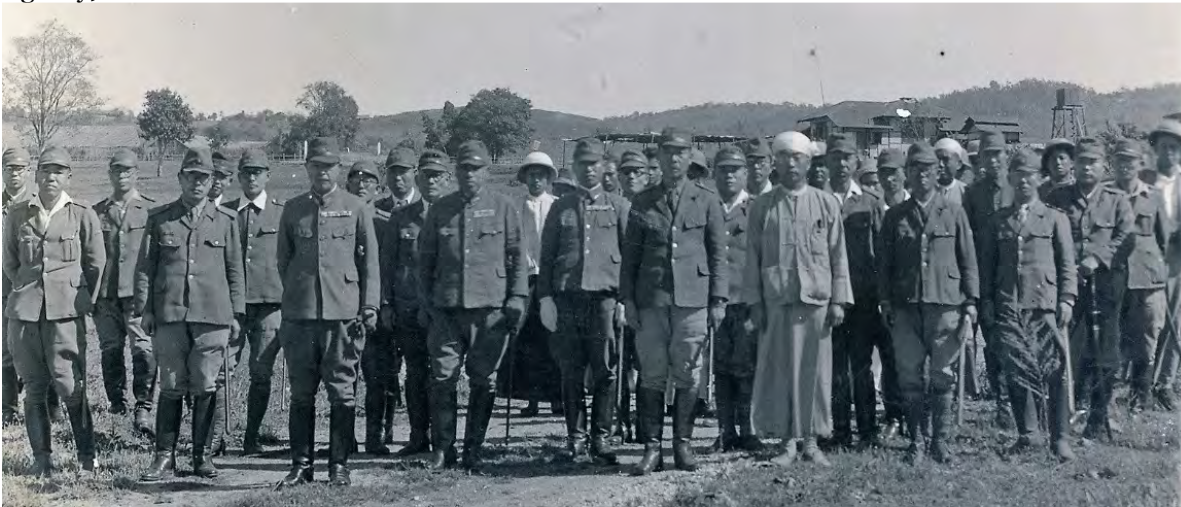
The connection came about because Uncle Tun Ong, a younger brother of my mother, married the daughter of Langkur U Htun Myint. In his youth, he was a member of the Shan States Youth League at Yawnghwe. As a politician, he later joined the SSPFL, becoming an anti-feudalist. Despite his acceptance of AFPFL help, by 1960 he had become disillusioned with Burman arrogance and the undisciplined behavior of the soldiers in the Shan State. Like other Tai Shan politicians, he decided to support the federal proposals for constitutional reform with the possibility of a better future for the Shan State and its peoples.

In late 1946, Thakin Aung San came up to Taunggyi to address a rally to persuade the populace that joining with Burma Proper would benefit everyone. Although well attended, there were fewer local people than anticipated. Many were Burman politicians with their followers from notified areas, such as Kalaw, Loilem, and Lashio. Thakin Aung San then continued his tour to Karenni where he met Mr. HNC Stevenson, the Director of the Frontier Areas Administration. Aung San reportedly told the latter that he was there to "set Karenni separate from you" (meaning the British). Stevenson found Aung San violently anti-British and aggressive towards him at their meeting (M/4/2819 BL).

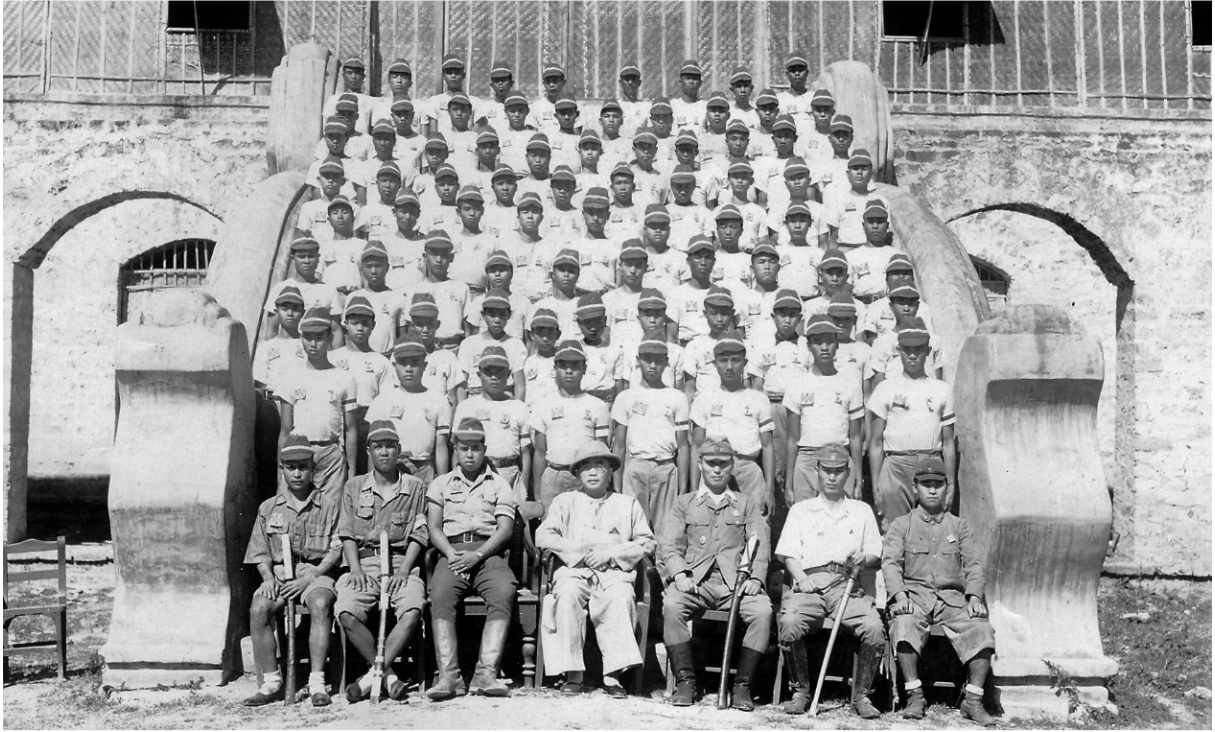
The reason for Aung San's outburst might have been because the AFPFL's theory was that the "Frontier Services Administration was designed simply to check development and to retain control of the Frontier Areas for exploitation by the British" (M/4/2819 BL). Aung San was opposed to any British involvement in his dealings with the ethnic nationalities in his on-going campaign for independence.

PHOTOGRAPHS

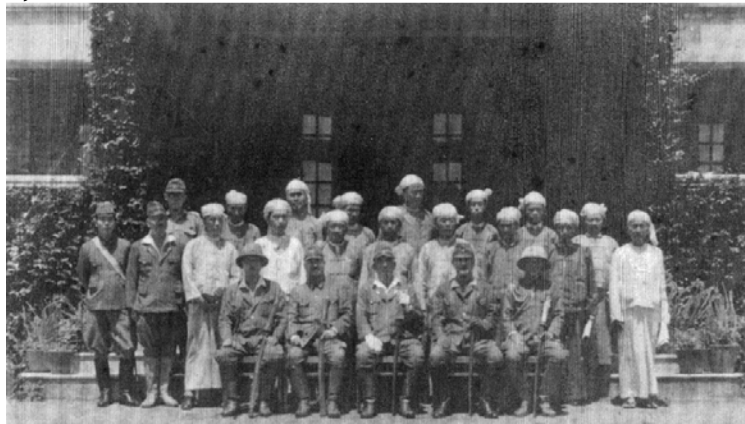
Japanese officers and soldiers with Sao Shwe Thaik, Yawnghwe Sao (1943; Shan Herald News Agency).



Yawnghwe Saohpa with Japanese army officers and soldiers on front stairs of the Haw (1943; Shan Herald News Agency).



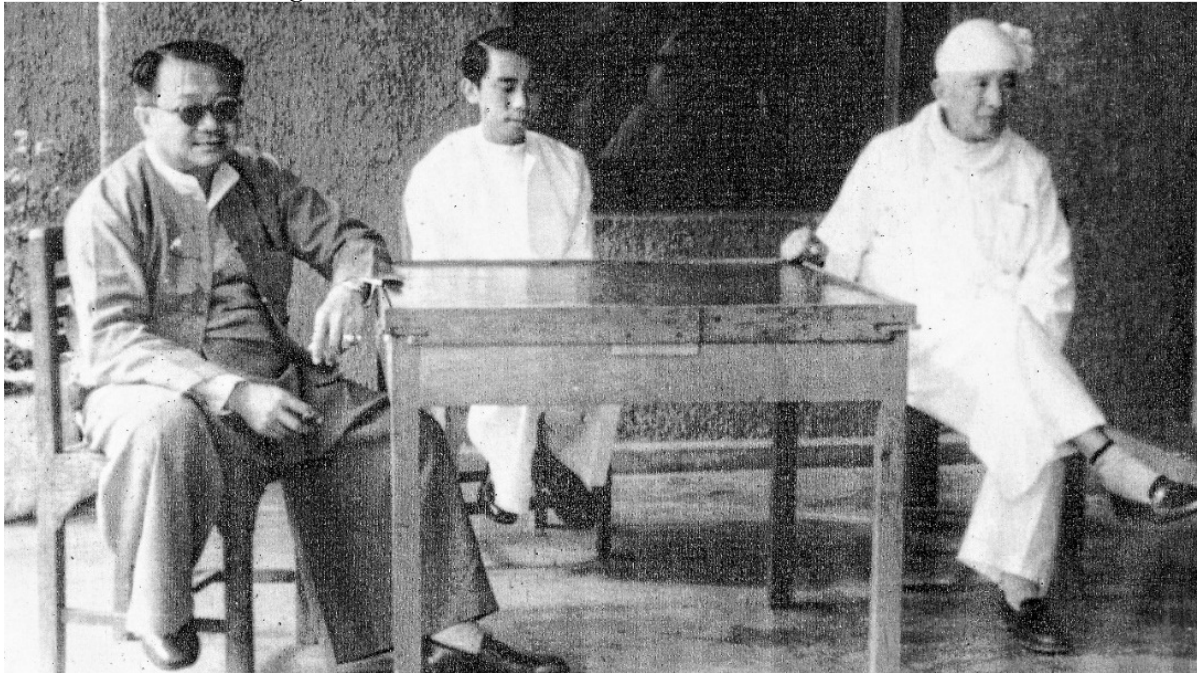
Princes from the Southern Shan States, including the Mye Lat with Japanese army officers. Recognized standing behind Japanese officers are (3) Samka Sao Hkun Kyi, (4) Mong Pawn Sao Sam Htun, and (8) Yawnghwe Sao Shwe Thaïke. Back row: (4) Hopong Hkun Law, (6) Loi Long/Pinlaung Sao Moe Kyaw, and (8) Lawksawk Sao Hkun Hsar (1943-1944; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



A British officer in conversation with Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa and Yawnghwe Saohpa Sao Shwe Thaike (1941; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Mong Mit Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio, Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa, with Sao Hso Hom of Mong Pawn, probably taken at the end of the Japanese war, at an unknown location (1944-1945; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



CHAPTER FOUR: PANGLONG AND AFTER

THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT OF 1947

British exclusion of the *saohpa* regarding the London Attlee-Aung San Treaty greatly alarmed them. Nevertheless, to show they were not without plans and to signal their apprehension, the newly formed alliance of the Supreme Council of United Hills Peoples (SCOUHP) decided to hold another Panglong Conference. Founded in 1946, SCOUHP was made up of Tai Shan, Chin, and Kachin members. Those invited to attend this second conference at Panglong in February 1947 included all members of SCOUHP, officials from the Governor's office, other British officials, General Aung San, and other Burmese politicians. Karen leaders attended as observers.

Although it was an occasion for serious talk and hard bargaining between the participants, the organizers also wanted the public to take notice. They felt if the conference was presented as a *poy* or *pwe* it would attract more people. Participants, after hard negotiations and proceedings, could relax and enjoy the festive atmosphere, while townspeople and villagers who came from all over could join in the fun with feelings that they too were part of this great occasion.

Various exhibitions were organized with the agricultural show being the largest. The program included best cattle shows, demonstrations on the use of new agricultural implements, methods of plowing, soil conservation, and forest conservation. There were also lectures on health, education, trade, and commerce. Exhibitions of arts and crafts and methods of different types of weaving were also on display. For further enjoyment, there was the *zat*, an all-night show with Burmese classical dancing and music, and film shows such as *Battle of Britain* and other British propaganda material provided by the Frontier Areas Office.

There were also various gambling activities with tables set aside for the four-animal game, which attracted the serious gamblers. This game is played on a rectangular oilcloth, diagonally divided. A pig is painted at the top, a rooster to the right, and an eel to the left. Below sits a frog, with outstretched legs. The pig and the frog are colored black, and the eel and the rooster, are red. A four-sided top with these animals painted on its four sides is spun as excited gamblers place their money on the animals. When the top stops revealing one of the animals facing upwards, shouts and laughs reverberate as winners collect their money. Losers try their luck again and once more place their money on the animal of their next choice. Many continue making bets hoping to win a fortune. The anti-feudalists objected to this particular gambling game, since people could lose a year's earning in one single sitting.

Everyone concerned in arranging this important conference enthusiastically contributed what they could in energy, time, and material. In the end, each claimed responsibility for bringing the conference to fruition.

During the three-day conference, leaders such as Sima Duwa Sinwa Nawng and Zaw Lon of the Kachin, and Vum Ko Hau of the Chin, together with the Tai Shan, came to believe the promises that in return for their co-operation, Bogyoke Aung San would allow them to achieve full independence from the British giving them equal rights in the Union, power sharing, and secession. The Burman Bogyoke also gave assurances that there was to be no discrimination and, in terms of finances, emphasized that "If Burma receives one *kyat*, you will also get one *kyat*." Everyone assumed his sincerity and trusted these promises.

John Cady (1958) observed that the Panglong Conference of early 1947 created a friendly atmosphere for Thakin Aung San by allowing:

the Sawbwas freedom to write their own terms of co-operation and also pledged continued financial assistance from Burma revenues. The Burman leaders were obviously prepared to pay a fairly high price to exclude British control and to include within the new Burma agreement mining, timber and other resources of the Shan country (Cady 1958:546).

The potential of the Shan States' natural wealth was a contentious point. It was clear during negotiations that Burman politicians were conscious of these mineral riches and their value. The Tai Shan princes were aware that there were pitfalls in joining Burma Proper, one of which was the danger of losing control of their natural resources and their riches.

U Tin E (1916-1995), the Tai Shan AFPFL politician who wrote the forward in U Pe Khin's (1912-2004) book, entitled *Pinlon*, acknowledged the importance of the natural wealth of the Shan States in enriching independent Burma. He stated that "The geo-political significance is easily appreciated. The economy of Burma Proper without the forest and mineral resources of the States would not be very significant."

On 12 February 1947, the Panglong Agreement¹⁵ was duly signed by the representatives of the Tai Shan, Chin and Kachin nationalities with Thakin Aung San, who was representative of his AFPFL interim government and the sole Burman/Bamar.

Signatories also included Shan People's Representatives such as U Tin E and Langkur U Htun Myint, who were both anti-feudalists, and U Kya Bu, a well-known Tai Shan leader. They were pleased that the *saohpa* had not highjacked the show and that they, as the Peoples' Representatives, could assist in the outcome. They were proud to have witnessed the day.

The Panglong Agreement and the formation of the Union of Burma was highly valued by all who participated in its signing, generating optimism for a prosperous, peaceful future. What had been achieved that day was an undertaking from Bogyoke Aung San and his interim government for the appointment of a Tai Shan Counsellor responsible for Frontier Areas affairs to be assisted by two deputies of an ethnicity other than Tai Shan. The new Counsellor was to be a member of the Governor's Executive Council without portfolio. In principle, full autonomy in internal matters concerning the Frontier Areas was accepted and its citizens would enjoy the same rights and privileges of any democratic country.

In addition, the Kachin would have a state in the future, the Chin would gain material and social benefits, and the Tai Shan would have financial autonomy and the right to self-government. Thus, in principle, the Union of Burma was created. Unfortunately, at the time of signing of this agreement, the Karen, the Karenni States, and the Wa regions were not represented nor were such peoples as the Mon and Rakhine who lived mostly outside the Frontier Areas. Consequently, this important milestone lacked the full representation of all ethnic groups.

Immediately following the Panglong Conference, Bogyoke Aung San came to Yawnghwe to meet with my father and some other *saohpa* to allay any fears that the Tai Shan and others might still have had regarding their status within the Union of Burma.

In the past, the princes had made representations to express apprehension on the constitutional position of the Shan States and its relations with Ministerial Burma. Many British officials were, therefore, taken by surprise when the Panglong Agreement was signed. Some accounts suggest that even General Aung San himself had thought there was little chance of the Shan States joining demands for independence.

A major reason for this participation was the influence of AFPFL. Its presence across the Shan Plateau in guiding the undecided, led many to believe that this was the only way to achieve

¹⁵ See the Panglong Agreement of 1947 in the Appendix.

self-government and be rid of the British. There was also the fact that the Bogyoke was a charismatic and skillful politician. To most people, he was their hero. The assurances the Bogyoke gave them won the day. Many gave him the benefit of the doubt because they liked and respected him.

The Burma Office (M/4/2837 BL) gave other reasons for why the *saohpa* had signed the Panglong Agreement suggesting that it was because they were angry that their request for the re-establishment of the Federal Shan State Council, their own Shan Commissioner, and the return of the notified towns to their respective states, had been refused.

Those at the Burma Office, however thought the princes might have been upset because of British failure to recognize that the Federal Council had in the past twenty-four years been only a purely advisory body, and it could not continue as such. It was felt that the *saohpa* had made their choice because they wanted more say in their own affairs.

On the other hand, Glass reported:

Since the whole precarious agreement (Frontiers Areas' consent) on the peaceful handover of Burma to the Burmans depended on this agreement, the British brought heavy pressure to bear on the frontier areas, and in the end their inclusion in the Republic was bulldozed through, at the Panglong Conference in February 1947" (Glass 1985:205).

In any case, although the Panglong Agreement was signed, not everyone in the Shan States was convinced that joining with Burma Proper to demand independence had been the right move. However, those who objected regrettably did so only when it was too late.

Governor Hubert Rance attended a Shan States Federal Council meeting after the Panglong Agreement. In his report to the Secretary of State, he cheerfully remarked,

I was impressed with the latter (the princes) and I can foresee that before many years have passed a great deal of authority will pass from the Sawbwas to the people. The Sawbwas as a whole are not impressive but provided they are prepared to accept advice for the next few years and able to attract to the Shan Federal Council the right type of representatives from the people then I believe that union with Burma will be successful (M/4/2805 BL).

Later, writing in June 1947, Rance commented that, although the Shan wanted freedom, they did not merely want a change of masters. Consequently, the Governor and the Burma Office were left with little doubt as to how the Tai Shan and the *saohpa* felt about their union with Burma Proper.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY 1947

In March and April, just a month or so after the signing of the Panglong Agreement, the British Government sent a Frontier Areas Committee of Inquiry, led by D. R. Rees-Williams MP, to the country. He was tasked to find out what the different nationalities actually wanted for their future. The earlier meetings were held in Rangoon and dealt mainly with the Karen issue. Moving up to Maymyo in April the Inquiry met and interviewed different ethnic representatives including Tai Shan, Kachin, Chin, Kokang, Karenni and Wa.

The Committee dutifully listened to a perplexing assortment of answers and went away feeling that at least it had tried to understand the situation. No one though, seriously considered the ethnic problem, nor how it should be dealt with.

As stated in the report of the *Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry 1947*, the most confusing

of answers came from the representatives of Karenni and the two Wa States. On the question of joining with Burma Proper, the Karenni replied that they would join only if they remained "in the British Commonwealth of Nations" and "Only when they (the Burman) have proved that they are loyal and faithful to their words." No Karenni trusted a Burman.

As for the Wa representatives, they had no idea why they had been summoned to appear before the Committee. Having explained that the Federated Shan States was to join Burma Proper, one of the Wa representatives said "Was are Was and Shans are Shans. We would not like to go into the Federated Shan States" (*Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry* 1947:36). In answer to what the Wa States wanted the future, the northern representative truthfully replied that they had not thought about it, as "we are wild people. We never thought of the administrative future. We only think of ourselves" (*Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry* 1947:39).

Hugh Tinker a historian and writer, observed that "The Committee has often been criticized for the cavalier way in which it appeared to dispose of the future of the hill peoples, but in reality the whole issue had been prejudged under the Attlee-Aung San Agreement" (Tinker 1957:25).

People tend to forget that without the agreement of Tai Shan, Chin, and Kachin to co-operate, there would not have been an independent Union of Burma. One often pondered what might have happened had the ethnic nationalities refused to join with Burma Proper in the demand for independence.

In *Toward the Third Union of Burma* (1993), U Shwe Ohn, a Shan politician from Yawngnwe and one of the participants to the Panglong Conference, suggested that if the Panglong Agreement had not been signed the country might have been divided into Burma and the Frontier Areas. He further reflected, that without this Agreement, Burma might have become independent in 1948, but the Shan States would have remained under the British.

Much has happened over the years since the quickly drawn up 1947 Constitution which gave the central AFPFL government all control at the local, state and central levels, leaving other ethnic nationalities with no power at all. Whether it intended or not, that Constitution eventually gave all executive powers within the Union solely to the AFPFL and subsequent central governments. This has been the crux of the matter creating mayhem over the last six decades.

Soon after his return to Rangoon, Bogyoke Aung San formed the Constitutional Advisory Committee and laid down guidelines for the drafting of the Constitution. At the February Panglong Conference he had exhorted the ethnic nationalities to work together, warning that if each tugged in different directions, the Union would certainly come to grief. The Bogyoke was confident that he could build a unified Burma so long as there was no outside interference (evidently a snipe at the British).

Although Burma had been granted independence, it was claimed that some British officials still hoped Burma would opt for Dominion Status. Admiral Mountbatten explained that apparently the Bogyoke had told him that had it not been for the capital charge against him and the order for his arrest, Aung San, would have persuaded his followers to accept Dominion States. He was referring to the British administration's (the Burma Office) wish to arrest him earlier, but Mountbatten had prevented Aung San from being arrested (Collis 1956:286).

TRAGEDY

On 12 July 1947, General Aung San, the Prime Minister and originator of Burma's independence was assassinated, along with his newly appointed Cabinet. He was a man of stamina who fought fiercely for what he wanted without regard to how it was gained believing that the ends justified the means.

He was indeed a tough opponent to the British. His tragic death was a great loss creating a national crisis. It left a huge gap in the politics and government of the country. Many felt their dreams and aspirations for the future of their independent country had been completely shattered.

"People feared that when the assassination took place the British could have taken advantage of the situation by withdrawing the promise of independence ... But Rance and Attlee were above thought of revenge..." wrote Dr. Htin Aung (1909-1978) in *A History of Burma* (1967:307). It must have been of immense relief for those concerned to find the British so accommodating. Within hours U Nu was asked to form a new cabinet.

By great misfortune, Sao Sam Htun, the Saohpa Long of Mong Pawn, who had been chosen to represent Shan State in the interim government had also been assassinated with General Aung San and his Cabinet. Sao Sam Htun was a brilliant man with a natural feeling for what was needed for the Shan States. He was a great loss to the Shan States.

U Saw, a lawyer and former Prime Minister (1940 -1942) during British rule, was blamed for organizing the assassinations, and hanged. He would have preferred Burma to have been given Dominion Status rather than outright Independence. Many of the old administration, the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and other British officials had just sat back to see how things would develop under the new management of the young Bogyoke Aung San, but U Saw felt more aggrieved than most.

After the return of the British in 1945-1946. U Saw had hoped to be re-elected Prime Minister, thinking he had British backing. But General Aung San beat him at the polls. This did not please U Saw. Another reason for his aggression towards his "rival" was that he blamed Aung San and the AFPFL for the assassination attempt on his life some months before the general's death.

Many Burmese recognized that Aung San and U Saw could have never come together. Though they shared the same objective of freedom for Burma, they came from different backgrounds. One historian remarked they were also after the same prize, to have a place of honor in history. Sadly, as it turned out, one is remembered as a hero and martyr while the other as a ruthless villain.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

When the Constituent Assembly met in June a committee had been formed to deal with specific questions. Late in July, after the assassination of the Bogyoke, the Assembly reconvened and Constitutional advisers, legal experts mostly trained in England, continued the work of drafting the Constitution. There was now an urgency to complete the drafting by September when, following their summer recess, the Houses of Parliament would meet again in London. It was generally understood that it was to be an interim Constitution which could be amended later once Independence was granted by the British.

The Tai Shan representatives who participated in the Constituent Assembly meetings found themselves out of their depth which is not a surprise as at that time there were no Tai Shan lawyers highly qualified in matters of legislative procedures nor was there anyone with a complete knowledge of the different federal states that existed in the world. They had, therefore, to rely on qualified Burman lawyers. It is possible that "so-called Constitutional Advisers" may have misled the Shan representatives.

At one stage a half-hearted attempt was made to engage an outside unbiased barrister to help establish Shan State's legal position, but instead a local barrister who later became Chief Justice of Burma, was engaged. There was no impartiality here.

When the Constituent Assembly meetings resumed, members of the Shan contingent were

still mourning the loss of their national leaders and their morale was low. They had gone to the meetings firmly believing that the Constitution had promised equal rights for all and their attention was firmly on finalizing the draft of the Constitution as soon as possible. Nothing else seemed important.

Under the 1947 Constitution, the *saohpa* were permitted to retain administrative control over their own states. They were also allowed to elect from among themselves the twenty-five members of the Union Chamber of Nationalities, with a promise to surrender their judicial powers. In other words, they could retain their prestige and not lose face. Clause 201 of the Constitution gave any State the right to secede after ten years of union. This right of secession was presumably included to allay fears and to create the belief that there was a way out of the Union, if desired.

Just like the Shan the different nationalities had accepted the Bogyoke's overtures, that there should be trust in intention rather than in the formal words of the Constitution. Their faith in the fallen hero was such that nobody thought of scrutinizing the words of the hastily drawn up Constitution nor did anyone find out what the words meant in legal terms. It took over ten years for the ethnic nationalities to realize that what had then been written in the Constitution was not what they had understood it to mean. When the meeting was concluded, they were quite unaware that they had not fully understood certain provisions of the Constitution to which they had agreed.

When the Assembly ended, the Tai Shan delegation came away firmly believing that the Constitution they had helped to draft had provided for a true federation of eight equal states within the Union of Burma. They had faithfully accepted General Aung San's exhortation to trust the intentions rather than the words of the law. His words were faithfully accepted as sacred and binding.

Many years later Sao Hso Hom commenting on the reactions of the Tai Shan representatives at the Constituent Assembly, wrote that they "never realized that by allowing Burma Proper to be combined with the Union Government instead of being established as a constituent state, they would be doing a great disservice to the Shan State" (2008:9, 10).

Predictably, when many years later it was discovered that they should have paid more attention to what was written in the constitution regarding the form of federal government to be adopted these delegates were blamed for negligence. For, as Tinker revealed, one of the Constitutional Advisers, U Chan Htoon remarked later that "our constitution, though in theory federal, is in practice unitary" (1957:30).

It was under these circumstances that the Union government of AFPFL became increasingly powerful paying little heed to the many problems and difficulties that arose regarding ethnic nationalities.

Towards the end of September, the draft bill of the Constitution was adopted; by October, the "Provisional Government of Burma" was accepted; and by December 1947, the British Parliament had endorsed the Burma Independence Act. Subsequently, on 4 January 1948, the country became independent and became known as the Union of Burma.

SELECTING A PRESIDENT

Soon after the Panglong Agreement was signed without undue fuss; the Northern and Southern Shan States came under one Head of Shan State with a Shan State Council formed of sixty-six members divided equally into two groups: the *saohpa* and the Peoples' Representatives. The Council controlled the Shan Government. It was the Council that elected Sao Sam Htun, Mong Pawn Saohpa Long as the first Head of State for the Shan State.

His brother-in-law, Sao Hkun Hkio, was chosen to replace him. Some Tai Shan politicians objected to his appointment, as they had wanted a non-titled person to be chosen, and a tussle between the princes and the People's Representatives followed. At first the other candidate, Langkur U Htun Myint, had the full support of the majority of Shan State Council members. Lobbying by the princes influenced Premier U Nu's decision to give the post to Sao Hkun Hkio, the Saohpa of Mong Mit. This appointment created much bad blood between the princes and the Shan politicians.

Although Sao Hkun Hkio was a feudal lord and a Tai Shan prince, he had been accepted by the members of the ruling AFPFL. An intelligent, cordial man, he soon came to be valued by the Prime Minister for his diplomacy and friendliness. Realistically, Sao Hkun Hkio was a qualified candidate, considering his overall background. Unfortunately, such elitism was what the Tai Shan politicians abhorred.

U Htun Myint's mother was a princess from the Mawkmai family who had married a well-to-do timber merchant of Moulmein. U Htun Myint, although from a princely family, became well-acquainted with various Shan politicians and came to agree with their anti-feudalist and anti-*saohpa* views.

As a leading Tai Shan politician, Langkur U Htun Myint was well known to U Nu. In compensation for not being the Head of State, he was appointed Minister of Industry and Mines. He worked hard to prove his ability. When he left his ministerial post, he concerned himself with the Virginia tobacco governmental project. It had its many ups and downs but he continued working hard. By 1959 his life's goal to be rid of feudal rule was realized.

The Aung San-Attlee meeting in January 1947 produced an understanding that a Tai Shan would be appointed the first President of the Union. One of the Tai Shan politicians who was involved in this matter wrote amusingly about the incident and how it was solved.

Realizing in September 1947 that there was an urgent need to select someone to represent the Union of Burma at the Royal Wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip in November of that year, Prime Minister U Nu sent for U Tun Myint Galay, the Tai Shan politician, who was in Rangoon attending the Constituent Assembly meeting.

Not knowing why, he had been summoned, U Tun Myint Galay decided to take two other Tai Shan politicians, U Ba San and U Tun On, with him.

When they reached the Prime Minister's office, U Nu told them that there was a need to appoint a provisional president. It seemed that Bogyoke Aung San had by this time chosen the Tawngpeng Saohpa Long as President, but he wanted the opinion of the Shan politicians on this choice.

U Tun Myint already knew that a Shan President elect had been chosen, since he and my father had visited General Aung San in July when the Bogyoke revealed that a Tai Shan was to be elected President of the Union and that the Tawngpeng Saohpa Long had been chosen.

In his autobiography, U Tun Myint recounted their conversation with U Nu. He told Thakin Nu that they were very pleased to hear that a Tai Shan was to be elected President, but they felt the Yawngwe Sawbwa was a more appropriate choice. Alarmed, U Nu asked what was wrong with Tawngpeng Sawbwa.

U Tun Myint explained that Tawngpeng Sawbwa's Mahadevi¹⁶ was a "white face" and it did not seem right that Burma should be represented by a President with a "white face" wife. They wondered if such a choice was wise for international relations.

Thakin Nu was surprised as he had no idea that the Tawngpeng Mahadevi was a "white face."

¹⁶ The title *mahadevi* 'Great Goddess' was a Sanskrit term bestowed on the chief wife of a *saohpa long*.

When asked if it were true that Yawngwe Sawbwa had two wives, U Tun On, one of the other politicians, told U Nu that one of the prince's wives was his own sister and if there was a problem, he could ask her to divorce the *sawbwa*.

U Nu insisted that this was unnecessary and added that if the AFPFL chose the Yawngwe Sawbwa, then it would be all right for him to have two wives, so long as they were not at the President's House at the same time.

U Tun Myint confessed in his autobiography that he and his friends were in favor of the Yawngwe Prince, since they knew him personally and they were all from the same state. For instance, U Ba San had served together with my father in the Territorial Force. U Tun On, my maternal uncle, was a brother-in-law and U Tun Myint himself, had married one of the prince's nieces. They and other Tai Shan politicians endorsed Yawngwe Saohpa as the most suitable to hold the presidency.

These men were members of the SPFL, were anti-*saohpa*, and were opposed to the feudal system. However, when given a chance to choose a presidential candidate, they chose a *saohpa*. Why did they not suggest someone from their own milieu? Did it show that they found the Yawngwe Prince well disposed towards them despite their socialist attitude and therefore respected him for his acceptance of their political opinions? Or, did they feel that it was a good idea to have the Yawngwe Saohpa away from Tai Shan politics during those years when the SPFL campaigned long and hard against the *saohpa* and for their abdications?

Regardless, the dilemma as to who should represent the country at the Royal Wedding was solved when it was decided to select my father, who, when U Nu became Prime Minister, was serving as the President of the Constituent Assembly.

In early 1948, there was an air of achievement. The Union of Burma had been created, and for better or for worse, they had to stick together. There was no turning back. The princes became energized believing that they were entering a new epoch. Understanding that they were on an equal footing, they gave full support to the AFPFL government. Anticipating that it might be a long road to progress they seemed prepared to work hard to achieve their goals: peace, progress and democracy.

INSURGENCY

Independence had been gained and at last there was the Union of Burma. Nevertheless, splits had already begun appearing between politicians and the various political parties in Burma. Bogyoke Aung San's untimely death produced serious struggles. Close followers of the political scene probably foresaw trouble, but nothing had been put in place to curtail the spontaneous disturbances. By mid-1949, the situation had deteriorated and groups of armed men known as "multi-colored" insurgents, began roaming the country.

All the ensuing problems traced back to the aftermath of the Japanese occupation and to the anarchy that existed when the British administration returned. The situation was the result of many factors, including shortages of food, strikes, armed bands of former Burma National Army soldiers, soon to be renamed the Peoples' Volunteer Organization (PVO), roaming the countryside, and insufficient British troops on the ground to control such lawlessness.

These conditions in the country was very much like the early days of annexation in 1886, when law and order broke down then as soon as the British took full possession of the country. Then, the British Indian troops on hand were used to quell the troubles, but in 1947 and 1948, it was a different matter. British Indian troops were not allowed to be used for internal security. Active

Indian nationalists in India had stipulated that Indian troops, though controlled by the British, were not to act against the people of Burma nor against the mutinous soldiers of its army.

Simultaneously, there was a communist uprising by two groups, the Red Flag led by Thakin Soe, and the White Flag, led by Thakin Than Tun, the brother-in-law of General Aung San. Then a mutiny broke out in the communist-oriented PVO, the AFPFL's own army. It was a veteran's organization directly under Bogyoke Aung San with a unit in every district and town in Burma Proper. The White Flag that later became known as the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), marching up along the Burma-Shan border was joined by the PVO. There was also the Muslim Mujahidin uprising in Arakan, to the west.

This unlawful situation persisted throughout the year, and by 1949, there was every possibility that the AFPFL government of U Nu was on the verge of collapse.

It was inevitable that anything that happened in Burma Proper would eventually affect the Shan State. In the meantime, the euphoria of being part of the Union of Burma continued. Plans were being made and new proposals were put forward to boost Tai Shan morale. Many of the princes came together in consultations with other Council members to have meaningful discussions and to work out ways in which to provide what was needed. A request was made that in future the Tai Shan be included in any consultations that involved Union policy on land nationalization, including the regular border conferences where disputes with China, Indochina, Siam, India and Pakistan were settled.

Within the Shan State Council, it was emphasized that more attention had to be given to the appointment of ethnic Tai Shan in State administrative offices per laws that had been laid down. As mentioned before, there was a manpower shortage. This meant that if a *saohpa* was selected to participate in Shan or Union government service, he had to entrust the rule of his State to his son, the heir, known as the *kyemmong*, or to an administrator while he was away. Such was the position for Yawnghwe, when my father left to take up his post as President of the Union of Burma. It was my eldest brother, Sao Hseng Hpa, the *Kyemmong*, who took charge.

During the following years, many princes were selected to become Ministers of State; Members of Parliament; members of the different offices of the United Nations, including being delegates of goodwill missions; and becoming diplomats. Ethnic Tai Shan were thin on the ground but others who were from communities such as the Danu, Pa-O, Intha, Kachin, Kayah, Padaung, and Palaung were included in these prestigious appointments. Certainly, none of such posts were reserved only for princes, but the tone of protests from anti-feudalists made it sound as if they were.

There was objection to outsiders running their affairs, but of course it happened anyway. Certainly, in the principle offices such as that of the Head of State, the Commissioners, and other high officials, Burmese were usually retired ICS or Burman Civil Servants, or men who had simply been transferred to fill posts for which there were no trained Tai Shan.

The anti-feudalists took advantage of this since many princes were not sitting at their posts ruling the States, but engaged elsewhere. A familiar demand was why the princes were becoming "absentee landlords?" The Peoples Representatives felt there was no longer any need for *saohpa* and the sooner they abdicated, the better it would be for the Shan State.

It was also decided that princes under the age to forty-five should serve in the army, specifically in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Burma Territorial forces whose battalions were stationed at Kengtung, Taunggyi, Lashio, and Kutkai. Indeed, many of them did this, which stood them in good stead when the 1949 insurgencies broke out.

Among other considerations put forward, were the restoration of postal and telegraph services to pre-war standards and the maintenance of strategic roads leading to border areas to be carried out by the Public Works Department (PWD) of the Union government. Employment of Shan

in Customs and Immigration services was requested. Another important stipulation was for their own State police to be allowed to control the state borders rather than the Union police, while the purchase of arms for their own police was to be the responsibility of the state administration themselves.

While such plans were being formulated, the sudden arrival of the insurgent forces of the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) on the Shan Plateau, upset the whole equilibrium. The KNDO had been formed in 1947 as the military wing of the Karen National Union (KNU). When it took up arms against the AFPFL government, it immediately gained backing from the many scattered Karen people. Its forces soon controlled swathes of Karen populated areas from Moulmein in the south of Burma along the Tenasserim borders, to up along the mountain range of the Pegu Yoma, while another group marched through the Karenni State to occupy the southern part of the Shan State.

The popularity of the uprising was considered to have been inspired by Karen disappointment with the uncaring attitude of the British towards their situation. Over the years, including the two World Wars, the Karen had loyally served the British military and believed that they and other "hill tribes" had strong bonds with the British. Therefore, they had good reason to believe the trust was mutual, because the British had worked with them more closely than they did with the Burman. In fact, in those days the Burman were not too keen to be soldiers of the British forces.

Due to these close ties, it was expected that the British would have in return supported Karen demands for a separate state and self-rule. Unfortunately, when the time came the British government gave no such support.

The AFPFL government accepted the KNDO at one point, but subsequently became its enemy when the KNDO defended its own Karen people who were dejected and immensely frustrated by continuous unprovoked attacks by the Burma army in and around the Delta area. This grievance was one reason that gave the Karen the impetus to revolt and why Karen leaders could recruit the demoralized Karen people from different areas to join in the fray.

The Karen and Kachin troubles, and those of the Tai Shan and other ethnic groups, were complicated political problems that could not have been solved through force. This is recognized today. What was needed then and now is understanding and dedication to resolve these sensitive ethnic problems.

The history of the depressing relationships with the Bamar for each of these nationalities goes back centuries. Louis Walinsky (1908-2001), who lived in Burma for some years as Chief Economic Adviser to U Nu's government perceptively observed that:

The Shan, the Kachin, the Chins, the Arakanese and the Mons – each a distinct racial, cultural and language group – had all within recent history been defeated or subjugated, or both, by the dominant Burmese group. The history of these minority peoples and their frequently unhappy relations with the Burmese is woven into the social fabric of contemporary Burma (Walinsky 1962:13).

The Karen may have thought that there was no other way to end the oppressive government of U Nu and the AFPFL than to take up arms. They assumed that, if the government could be toppled, they had a good chance of gaining independence and becoming their own masters. It seemed a simple idea, but it was not to work out.

At about the same time in the northern part of the Shan States a mutiny led by a Captain Naw Seng within units of the Kachin Rifles was creating havoc. By May, when the KNDO had infiltrated the Kachin State, Captain Naw Seng forming a short-lived Pawng Yawng National Defence Force,

decided to join them. Together with the communists, they became quite a force, causing the Tai Shan and others to fear an imminent takeover. The situation was tense in Lashio and beyond, in areas such as Muse and Namkham on the Chinese border.

For some time in the Shan States, the insurgents managed to hold major administrative towns, such as Taunggyi, Loilem, Lashio, and Maymyo. The uprising had happened so suddenly and so rapidly that no one was prepared. There was no equal force to oppose the combined forces of the KNDO and the Kachin.

By the time the insurgents had got to Lashio, the White Flag had emptied the Shan government bank, and had also taken some civil servants, police, and soldiers along with them. Sometime later, the Lashio bank was again emptied by Naw Seng and the KNDO.

When Naw Seng and his allies reached Taunggyi, he raided the Shan Government Treasury, looted supplies from government godowns and warehouses, and sacked the stores of the Public Works Department. There were little the police or the hastily levied men, who were volunteer units, could do. By that time, the Kachin and the KNDO had been joined by the Pa-O around the neighborhood of Taunggyi, and with the Lahu in tow, they began to spread out over most of the Shan States.

At the same time in different states, levies were ordered to be formed and there was general mobilization of available forces. Reports were coming in that the Red Flag Communists had reached Mogok, where the ruby mines lay, and that they were travelling with elephants and bullock carts. The Lashio Resident's office panicked. They were short of men and arms. An airlift of arms and reinforcements requested from the central government never materialized. With no opposition, the CPB stayed around areas such as Lawksawk and Mong Kung in Southern Shan State for a few years.

Not long after these troubles, the KMT were to cause even more serious problems as its troops retreated from China through the Shan States. There were also major problems along Kengtung's border with Laos. Unable to control the border-crossing, the customs and immigration officers of the Union government had to give free passage to some 600 armed Laotians - the Lao Issara (Free Laos) force - making their way from northern Laos, to join the retreating KMT along the Thai/Laos border. The Union Military Police at Kengtung, too few and not properly equipped, were also unable to stop this crossing and others to follow.

Communication within the Shan State was slow and at such a time, the decision to have placed the office of the Head of State for Shan State in Rangoon rather than in the Shan State itself, seemed negligent. The poor communication, and slow responses from Rangoon on matters of urgency during the insurgencies, prompted the Hsenwi Prince to protest strongly, arguing that there was a need for a man on the spot. Subsequently, the Hsenwi Prince was offered the post of Special Commissioner to deal with day-to-day problems. Though he declined at first, he eventually accepted.

Sometime later, it was decided to move the office of the Head of Shan State to Taunggyi where it became easily accessible to all who wanted to make contact from different parts of the Shan State. It was difficult enough for people to travel to Taunggyi, but it must have been worse still to have had to make their way down to Rangoon whether by road, rail or air, for it was time consuming and dangerous.

It was also now that a decision was made for administrative purposes to create an Eastern Shan State. Those states making up the new division were the states that lay towards the east of the Salween River and included Kengtung, Kokang, and the Wa States. Mong Pan adjacent to Kengtung was included, though it was situated on the west bank of the Salween River.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa Long of Yawnghwe and family visit China. Middle row: Mao Zedong in the center with Sao Shwe Thaike on his left and Sao Hearn Hkam, Mahadevi of Yawnghwe, on the right. Back row L-R: Chinese official; two Yawnghwe brothers, Sao Hso/Tiger and Sao Tzang, a Burmese official and others. Front row Yawnghwe siblings from L-R: Sao Ying Sita, Sao Myee, Sao Harn, Sao Wan, Sao Leun, Sao Haymar, and Nang Htila (1957, Beijing; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



At the handing over ceremony on Independence Day. President Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa of Yawnghwe, and Governor Sir Hubert Rance (4 January 1948; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Shan State Cabinet 1948. Hsahmong Kham Saohpa Sao Htun E (Education & Health), Sao Ywat Mong Kengtung, (Home Affairs), Baw Saohpa Sao Htun Aung, (Information & Ethnic unity), Mong Mit Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio, KSM (Head of Shan State & Foreign Affairs, Union Government), Mong Nai Saohpa Sao Pye (Chairman Shan State Council), Pindaya Saohpa Sao Win Kyi, (Soil Conservation), U Sit Han (Finance & Revenue & Religion), and U Hme (Planning) (1948; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



At Laikha after the first Panglong Conference 1946. Sitting L-R1: Tawngpeng Saohpa Hkun Pan Sein, (4) Mong Nai Saohpa Sao Pye, (5) Mong Mit Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio, (6) U Nu Chairman AFPFL, (8) U Tin Aye Shan politician, 10. Saohpa Samka Sao Hkun Kyi. 2nd row: (1) Pangmi Saohpa Hkun Po Min, (2) Saohpa Pindaya Sao Win Kyi, (5) Hopong Saohpa Sao Hkun Law, (7) Laikha Saohpa Sao Num, (8) U Hla Shein ICS, (10) Kyong Saohpa Sao Hkun Saung, (11) Samka Kyemmong Sao Soe Kyi, (12) Mong Yai Saohpa Sao Hso Holm. 3rd row (1) Kengtung Saohpa Sao Sai Long, (4) Loi Long Saohpa Sao Mo Kyaw, (8) Mong Hsu Saohpa Sao Hman Hpa, (9) Kesi Mansam Saohpa Sao Shwe Hmon, (10) Mong Kung Saohpa Sao Kyi, (11) Hsipaw Saohpa Sao Kya Sein, (13) Lawksawk Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsar, and (14) Pwehla Saohpa Sao Htun Sein (1946; Laikha Family Private Collection).



To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the signing of the 1947 Panglong Agreement. A reunion of some participants was held in Rangoon at 74 Kokine Road, the residence of the Saohpa and Mahadevi of Yawnghwe in 1958. See caption under photograph for names (1958; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Governor Sir Hubert Rance and Lady Rance with Government House staff and Burmese officials in Rangoon (1947; Samka Family Private Collection).



CHAPTER FIVE: TEN LONG YEARS

DISENCHANTMENT

Much criticism and many accusations have been levelled at the *saohpa* for reportedly sympathizing with the rebels. People forget that without the help of the Tai Shan, the central government would certainly have fallen. At that moment, the fledgling Tatmadaw could not have so swiftly overcome the rebels without help from many local princes and ethnic leaders, all of whom had been trained in the British army.

Throughout these disturbances, the princes, without exception, rallied to fight against the insurgents. However, with their ill-equipped levies they were no match for the rebels who were trained soldiers. It soon became apparent that neither the Tai Shan levies nor the union police force could contain the insurgents.

The princely rulers found themselves in a predicament. They might have felt sympathy for the Karen, knowing their antipathy towards the Burman, and the abysmal relationship between them. But the *saohpa* would never have thought that taking up arms was the answer, since they believed explicitly in one overriding principle, which was their loyalty towards the Union of Burma. Furthermore, they had invested a great deal in achieving the Panglong Agreement that had created the Union of Burma, a fact of which they were proud. There was no way they would have wished to see the Union disintegrate.

Realizing the control, the communists were gaining over the rebels, the princes did not wish to encourage the rebels. Having just thrown off the mantle of British imperialism and attained freedom within the Union, they desired stability. They felt it was imperative to save the Union by suppressing the insurgents and preventing the communists from gaining an upper hand.

There was also a personal reason, which was their respect for Premier U Nu, who had always been willing to listen and was sympathetic to their problems, although did little to alleviate them. Being a kindly figure with a ready smile, he was well liked.

Had the *saohpa* in anyway wanted to break-up the Union, they surely would not have supported the AFPFL central government nor the Tatmadaw in overpowering the rebels. In fact, many of the *saohpa* themselves, with their police forces and enlisted men, fought alongside the Tatmadaw led by well-known Burman commanders such as Bo Tin Oo and Bo Ba Htoo, and Major General DA Blake. In this manner, they helped U Nu's AFPFL government from falling. Regrettably, *saohpa* have rarely been given credit for their assistance.

Proof that the *saohpa* did not wish to join the rebellion can be found in the orders they issued to the public during the troubles, advising villagers not to join either the KNDO or the Naw Seng groups but noting instead that these groups should be "annihilated."

Repeated requests for help from the Union government brought in the army. Towards the end of 1949 and by the beginning of 1950, a military administration was set up in the Shan State. For better or for worse, the Tatmadaw had arrived on the Shan Plateau.

Although the military administration in the Shan States lasted only from 1950 to 1954, the Tatmadaw stayed on, moving deeper into the Shan Plateau. They were in no way an exemplary army. Villagers were raped, tortured and generally treated very badly by Tatmadaw officers and soldiers alike. Although complaints were made to both Premier U Nu and the senior members of the military, no action seemed to have been taken to curb such shocking behavior. This lack of response, this seeming indifference upset and angered the Tai Shan population. For many, the only way of showing

their hatred and opposition seemed to be to take up arms and to go into the jungle and fight against the occupation of the Shan Plateau by the Tatmadaw.

The princes and the Shan government found they could do little to lessen the misery of their people, having accepted they could protest only through the proper channels and this they had done since the Union government had been informed of the excesses of the army. Although the AFPFL recognized the situation, it did not want to take responsibility for curbing the army. Year after year things only got worse up on the Shan Plateau.

With different forces fighting their causes, the Shan Plateau became a battleground of inconceivable sufferings for its people. Then when many of the troubles eased a little, the anti-feudalists, the Shan Peoples' Freedom League (SPFL) began organizing protests against the *saohpa* in earnest. Their demand for the princes to relinquish their feudal powers was strongly supported by the AFPFL, while the central government pressured the princes saying that the unrests in the Shan States was a symptom of desire for change. Later, quite openly, the AFPFL admitted that it had been behind much of the agitation against the *saohpa*.

During the following years, there was a flurry of discussions and meetings to consider these political demands. By 1953, the princes had worked out a means by which they were prepared to renounce their powers and put forward certain proposals. They agreed to give up judicial powers but suggested that they kept their administrative and legislative rights. They demanded compensation to cover themselves and their families and the right to retain their titles and family estates. At the time, no official notice was taken of these proposals; instead the princes were blamed for inaction and non-cooperation.

Political parties were many and within the Union Parliament there were always disagreements. One can safely say that U Nu's government had made little impact on the country since achieving independence. Economically, the different Two-Year and Five-Year Plans for implementation and joint ventures, which had been set up earlier, did not run smoothly. There were scandals claiming corruption and politicians bickered while, in the country, there was widespread civil unrest.

On the Shan Plateau politicians were observing and learning from their "big brothers" and had acquired some political savvy; by the middle of 1950's, some nine Shan political parties had been formed, preparing to take part in the 1956 elections. When the general elections came, the AFPFL was re-elected with U Nu once more the Prime Minister. However, the infighting among the politicians continued and AFPFL party was in chaos.

The fact that the population of the Shan States was not all Tai Shan made it difficult to administer. Apart from the larger communities such as the Danu, Intha, Kachin, Pa-O, Padaung and Palaung, there were other diverse peoples who shared the plateau with them. They were all at different levels of education and political consciousness. In terms of political awareness and understanding of democracy, there was no comparison between a university-educated person and a villager living in the hills. Many people living in the villages had little clue about politics, nor understood what was happening. Nevertheless, with the plateau opening to commerce and travel, people were gradually becoming politically enlightened. Whatever their thinking might have been, people listened to and read taunts against the princes and were persuaded to think differently of them and to disrespect them. People on the Shan plateau were confused with promises of progress and development made by politicians, but over the years it was realized that these benefits that had been promised to them at independence, had not happened nor materialized.

TO SECEDE OR NOT, 1958

The Shan State Council established in 1947 was composed of sixty-six members, of which thirty-three were *saohpa* and the other half were nominated representatives of the people. Together with the Shan State Government they carried on the business of administration, although many found it difficult to agree on issues.

It could not have been easy for the new Shan Government that took over the governance of the Shan State to implement a brand new official administration after throwing out the age-old traditional system of authority. With the war and different armies trampling over the Shan Plateau the roads and communication systems including the postal and telegraph services were in a bad state necessitating the restructure of the services.

In the meantime, the Shan government made an important proposal to open two agricultural banks in the two administrative towns of the north and south, which seemed to be a suitable move for all cultivators. There were other development schemes where there were funds available but unfortunately, the events that followed did not give the Shan government time to prove itself.

Briefly the years from 1948 to 1962 were important years for the Tai Shan during which they had to work out where their future lay and what was the right path for them to take for the development of the Shan Plateau. At the 1956 elections members of six parties were elected from the contesting political parties. The Shan State Hill People's Organization (SSSPO), the *saohpa*'s party, won a majority as they were better organized. The other parties, two of which were Pa-O organizations, were not content and later demanded a state of their own.

But all was not well within the Shan State and on the plateau. All through the ten-year period of independence from 1948 to 1958, there was the constant problem of the ever-encroaching central government that interfered in most Shan affairs. At the same time, there was no real understanding or compromise between the princely rulers and the elite Tai Shan politicians. The first flush of enthusiasm when the Union was created was gone and not unlike in Burma Proper, there was discontent and despondency. Little was moving forward; the princes were seen to be dragging their feet while the politicians were getting extremely agitated.

Of this situation, Sai Aung Tun wrote: "There were three groups of *saohpa* at this time. One group consisted of those who saw the changing conditions and realized that they would have to give up their power. The second was comprised of those who would like to stick to their traditional right to rule. The third did not care much about what happened" (2009:348).

Earlier proposals to re-arrange the thirty-four states into a more manageable size by amalgamating the smaller states and thereby at least halving the numbers did not materialize. Nevertheless, discussions, proposals and counter proposals by the princes on the relinquishing of feudal powers had been an on-going subject ever since the end of the Japanese occupation. While their 1953 proposals seemed to have been disregarded and shelved.

As the years progressed, the media in Burma Proper was having a heyday whipping up rumors and incredible stories. When rumors began spreading that the princes were seriously thinking of seceding from the Union, the princes realized just how hostile the Burman press was towards them. There were hints that members of the princely families had had contact with SEATO, that secret letters had been exchanged with foreign powers and assistance requested, and that once the Shan States had seceded, it would become a US air base. Sao Hkun Hkio, who was then the Head of State for Shan States, denied such allegations, but the claims persisted.

With talk of secession in the air, one of the first meetings to discuss this serious issue was held in Mong Yai at the end of 1956. Thinking they were free to express their views those attending spoke their minds, about the disillusionment and anguish they felt about the unhappy situation on

the Shan Plateau. They felt there was no visible progress because of a lack of funds and they were weary of being pushed around by high-handed Union officials who were unsympathetic.

The misconduct of the Tatmadaw soldiers topped the bill, creating a great deal of the sorrow and anguish. Not only were there accounts of rape, forced labor and recruitment of child soldiers but they recounted how anyone going about their daily chores would be beaten and tortured if found carrying arms of any description, which was in fact a Shan tradition. Being suspicious and ready to find fault with the princes, it seems the Tatmadaw decided the villagers were being armed for a rebellion.

All through 1957 more meetings and rallies followed with the possible separation from Burma being a major topic. *Saohpa*, politicians, government servants, students and villagers seriously began thinking and weighing up the pros and the cons - should they secede or should they stay within the Union? Most of it was merely talk, but the AFPFL government and the army who were observing every minute detail took it seriously.

Soon it was 1958, the first year in which, in accordance with the 1947 Constitution, the Shan States and the Karenni State could secede from the Union. Clause 202 of the Constitution stipulated that "The right of secession shall not be exercised within ten years from the date on which this Constitution comes into operation."¹⁷ For those who wished secession, this clause was a bonus but others, mainly politicians, felt it should not have been included in the Constitution.

The more thoughtful and cautious of the Tai Shan believed as Joseph Silverstein (1958:57) put it: "The right to secession must be viewed as an unrealized and vague power which is more useful as a potential than as a reality."

The clause was likely added to placate the various ethnic leaders who had demanded Dominion status or a protectorate, rather than independence. The British in those days, did not want to be tied down, and presumably, felt the cessation clause was strong enough and that the Bamar would have honored it.

One of the anti-feudal Tai Shan leaders, U Tun Myint¹⁸ remembered what General Aung San had said, "The right of Secession must be given, but it is our duty to work and show (our sincerity) so that they don't wish to leave." So, what was the right action to take? U Tun Myint then went on to expound his theory which was simply: "To stay in the Union if it is beneficial to the Shan people as a whole, and to secede if it is not."

He then added, "If one were to observe the real basis of the Shan Secession issue objectively, one would be surprised to discover that the main question is not secession itself, but progress and prosperity in the Shan State. It is for these basic aspirations the secessionists wish to secede. It is also for these aspirations that the unionists wish to remain in the Union." A choice had to be made, he observed, but it was Burma's responsibility to prove its sincerity so that the States did not wish to secede.

On the lack of progress and overbearing behavior of the Union Government, U Tun Myint rightly pointed out that in matters where it wanted to evade responsibility, the Government always responded: "It's your internal affair. You should not expect us to meddle." But then, on other matters when there should have been consultation with the Shan State Government, they "interfered without compunction, e.g. the 1952 Martial Law of the Shan State, and the 1956 Burma-Israel Agreement to "develop" one million acres of land in the Shan State.

This proposed joint-venture required one million acres of paddy land in the Shan States to be put under cultivation and its produce to be purchased by Israel. It was a barter deal the Union Government had made with Israel at the end of 1955. This unilateral action angered princes and

¹⁷ *The Constitution of the Union of Burma* (1947).

¹⁸ Htun Myint *Whither the Shan States*.

Shan politicians alike because land on the Shan Plateau was being given away without consultation. The question was eventually settled when land somewhere else was used to provide for the rice barter agreed upon.

TATMADAW'S SOFT APPROACH

In 1958, U Nu in Rangoon began to realize that his laissez-faire policies were being blamed for an increasingly serious economic situation nationwide. Some members of his party, seeing him as responsible for the current wished to see him forced out of active politics. Under these circumstances, it was thought U Nu may not have been the right man to have been in charge.

Then, in April, due to un-reconcilable issues, the AFPFL unexpectedly split; U Nu and his followers called themselves the "Clean AFPFL" and the opposition, led by U Ba Swe (1915-1997) and U Kyaw Nyein became the "Stable AFPFL." The powerful AFPFL, the political unity forged by Bogyoke Aung San, was gone forever.

By September 1958, the Union parliament had been dissolved. U Nu declared that, as a civilian, he could no longer control the political upheavals and ongoing uprisings. He is alleged to have requested the help of General Ne Win, the head of the army, to organize free and fair political elections due in April 1959. The army had been looking over U Nu's shoulders and had decided to take over. In the first military coup d'état in the country General Ne Win declared himself Prime Minister of the new government, which he called the "Caretaker Government."

Most people, believing that the military had been asked to step in, breathed a sigh of relief understanding that the army had come in to tidy up the political mess. Led by the then top colonels, Aung Gyi and Maung Maung, the Tatmadaw efficiently restored the country's economy viability, both in agriculture and industry. Within a short period, internal and external trade were once again beginning to thrive.

The failure of the AFPFL government's economic plans and joint-ventures meant that there was room for the army to fill the vacuum. Many of the commercial ventures were carried out by the Defense Services Institute (DSI), which in 1951, began as a non-profit organization. Having obtained a loan from the state, it opened its first military canteen in Sule Pagoda Road for use by the armed services. The DSI then slowly extended its services to civilians and one of its first ventures was Ava House in Rangoon, supplying low-cost student books and stationery at prices that private shops could not compete with.

After two years, the DSI had done so well in its trading that it could repay the government its full loan. The profits were partly given to charity and partly used as capital to expand its business ventures into civilian sectors taking over Rowe's, a department store and forming a shipping line, the Five Star Line. From the profits of the Sule Pagoda canteen, it built other canteens throughout the country for its troops.

By 1960 Aung Gyi, the prime mover, and his colleagues were running banks, shipping lines, and the largest import-export operation in the country. With its tax-exempt status, the DSI could not help but make profits and these were fed straight into Tatmadaw coffers.

Decades later, in the 1990s, bigger organizations that were Tatmadaw's capitalist conglomerates, took over from DSI. The Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Corporation (MEHC) and the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) employ hundreds of thousands of people and provide welfare for the generals and numerous military families and associates. Their tentacles extend and permeate the economic, social and political fabric of the country, leaving no doubt as to who is in control.

In the months following the army's takeover, people were impressed by the efficiency and capability of the Tatmadaw. The army was noticeably beginning to win hearts and minds. At the same time, the people assumed that when the time came, power would be handed back to U Nu. However, when April 1959 arrived, General Ne Win found it was too soon to return power to the politicians, and no one objected. The prevailing belief was that the Tatmadaw was the savior of the moment.

Upon reflection, many people realized how wrong they were to have supported the army whole-heartedly. Little did they realize what Ne Win was up to. Nevertheless, he is now thought to have been the lesser of the two evils, since the later military regime of Than Shwe had no conscience.

During its tenure, the Caretaker Government achieved a number of things. Importantly, it restored law and order having ruthlessly quelled rebellions. In moving more soldiers into the Shan States and Frontier Areas it allowed the army to establish itself permanently in these regions. The military proved to be heavy-handed and life became more and more difficult for the people in these regions. Also without control from army headquarters to curb the excesses of its soldiers in the field, the commanders turned themselves into warlords in their own patches.

THE 1959 ABDICATIONS

The on-going negotiations concerning the surrender of hereditary rule by the *saohpa* were soon to be concluded. At the same time, a delegation of *saohpa* had visited India mainly to find out about the course of action to be taken; specifically, whether the process chosen by the Indian maharajahs when they handed over their powers to the Indian government would be suitable for the *saohpa* to adopt.

Everything was now set. In April 1959 at a grand ceremony, General Ne Win, as the Prime Minister of the Caretaker government triumphantly went up to Taunggyi to accept the surrender of these powers. The signing of the Renunciation Treaty was overseen by the new Head of the Shan State, Sao Hom Hpa, a Hsenwi Saohpa who was to remain for the duration of the Caretaker government. The princes were offered compensation for the maintenance of their states and their families. The feudal system was no longer in existence and the ruling princes' powers were now vested in the new Shan State Government.

As soon as the hand-over ceremony was completed, General Ne Win demanded that the new Shan State Government surrender altogether the legal right of secession from the Union. Was this a warning of what the future held for the Shan State? Most Tai Shan now asked whether, despite the legality of Clause 202 in the 1947 Constitution, the Burman politicians, or the Tatmadaw, would ever agree to secession. One had to ask, was the 1947 Constitution no longer valid?

Different opinions were expressed but the anti-feudalists were now content. With the princes gone, they were in charge. The Tai Shan politicians must have appreciated that now they had to prove that they could do better.

Unfortunately, people did not adequately consider that due to insurgencies of the Burma Communist Party and the KMT over a period of twenty years or so, much of the Shan State was unstable. Everything was in turmoil on the Shan Plateau; it was impossible to live a normal life. Much has yet to be written about why, in those years, the British failed the Tai Shan, why the Tai Shan let the Bamar bully them and their people, and why they did not unite to form a strong force.

Henry Andre Aye¹⁹ wrote that his father had been Namkham U Htun Aye, who became Head

¹⁹ Aye (2009).

of State for the Shan State after the 1962 coup was

...caught up between the *saohpa* on one hand and the anti-*saohpa*, such as the radicals of the Shan State Freedom League, United Pa-O Organization, and the lefty-leaning university students on the other. The radicals wanted to take drastic actions such as a demand to force the *saohpa* to relinquish power without any compensation (Aye 2009:42).

U Htun Aye was a moderate and had not been happy with the demands of the radicals. He had supported the Union Government's decision to recompense the princes. Despite his strong stance against feudalism, he appeared in this case to believe in open-mindedness and justice.

NEW ELECTIONS

In the early months of 1960 Prime Minister, General Ne Win attended to some overseas commitments. On 1 February, he flew to Peking to meet Premier Chou En-Lai (Zhou Enlai, 1898-1976) and to sign the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Non-Aggression. At the same time the Sino-Burma Boundary Agreement was published.

A fortnight later, the General entertained the Soviet Prime Minister, Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971), who came to inspect two of the several projects that the Soviet Union had given to Burma: The Technological Institute for some 1,000 students, and the over 200-room Inya Lake Hotel, which was to include twenty-five luxury suites. There was also the hospital at Taunggyi. Then, at the beginning of March, their Majesties, the King and Queen of Thailand made a goodwill and friendship visit.

By April 1960 the Caretaker government, having achieved what was thought sufficient for the time being, readily handed back power to U Nu. U Nu had in the meantime, renamed his 'Clean AFPFL' the Pyidaungsu 'Union Party'. For the forthcoming elections, he based his platform on what he expected to be popular measures: Buddhism as the State Religion, and statehood for the various minority groups who were being administered directly under the central government. When the general elections were held, it was not surprising that U Nu was swept back to power with a clear majority. Once again, he was Prime Minister.

However, the election victory did not bring peace. U Nu's new government was not able to continue the economic momentum of the Caretaker government. His policies did not bring contentment; in particular Christians, Muslims, and other non-Buddhists protested against Buddhism as State religion.

By now the Stable AFPFL as the opposition, firmly decided to ally themselves with the army. The two had been closely aligned before and, supposedly, its present aim was to continue the economic rejuvenation of the country achieved by the Caretaker government during its eighteen months of rule.

Meanwhile, quarrels continued between politicians, regardless of which party they belonged to, the newspapers were full of their infighting. It seemed that nobody was seriously considering the unsettled situation in the country nor were they aware of the dangerous position they had put themselves in.

As he did not act, it seemed that U Nu did not recognize the severity of feelings on the Shan Plateau against the military and its soldiers and the unscrupulous behavior of those in authority of his AFPFL government. The princes and Tai Shan leaders knew that force was not the way to re-establish peace on the Shan Plateau. They thus decided that the only legal way to achieve the peace

wanted by the populace, was to seek reforms to the 1947 Constitution.

The two years following the general elections was a period when all the *saohpa*, Tai Shan leaders, and other ethnic leaders energetically prepared for what they believed was the appropriate move. However, they were not to succeed as will be seen in the following chapter.

PHOTOGRAPHS

KMT soldiers marching down a road in the Northern Shan States (1944-1945; Shan Herald News Agency).



Shan Literary Society, University of Rangoon (1960-1961; see names below the photograph; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).

SHAN LITERARY SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF RANGOON.
MAGAZINE COMMITTEE, 1960-61.



Sitting: (L. to R.) — Sao Ying Sita, Nang Yawt Seng Lao, Nang Dong, U Tin Aye, Sai Kyaw, Sai Hsam, Sao Tzang.
(Associate Editor-Shan), (Education Officer), (Treasurer), (Consulting Editor-Burmese), (Chairman), (Secretary), (Publisher).
Standing: (L. to R.)— Sao Kan Kywe, Sai Nyo Myint, Sai Khun Ong Tai, Ko Khin Maung Gyl, Sai Moong Tip.
(English Editor), (Business Manager), (Business Manager), (Associate Editor-Burmese), (Associate Editor-English),
Sai Kyaw Zan, Sai Yawt Ngurn,
(Burmese Editor), (Shan Editor).
Absentee: — Sai Sai Sinn.
(Education Officer).

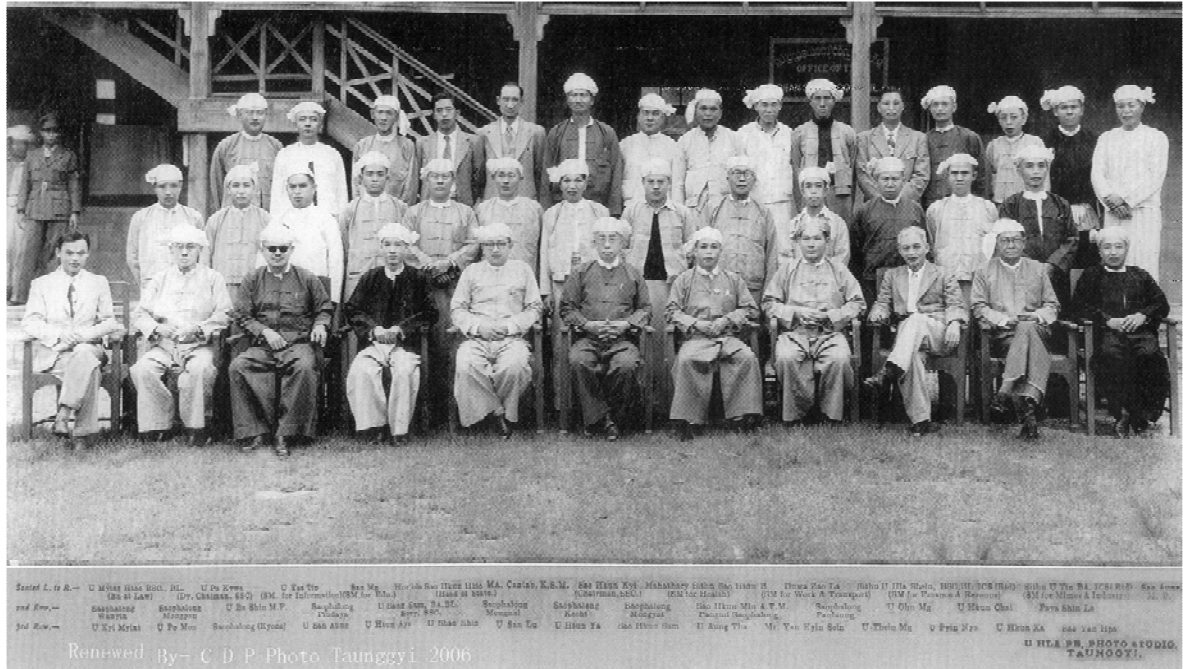
A *saohpa* with his officials and KMT officers and soldiers, unknown location (1944-1945; Shan Herald News Agency).



Shan State Student Association, Rangoon Executive Committee (1960-1961; see names below photograph; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Shan State Council L-R (seated): U Myint Htoo (Barrister at Law), U Po Kywe (Deputy Chairman SSC), U Yee Tip (Information), Sao Maung (Education), Sao Hkun Hkio (Head of State), Sao Hkun Kyi (Chairman SSC), Sao Htun E (Health), Duwa Zao La (Works &Transport), U Hla Shein (Finance &Revenue), U Tin (Mines &Industry), Sao Aung (MP). 2nd row: Saohpa Wanyin, Saohpa Mong Pan, U Ba Shin (MP), Saohpa Pindaya, U San Sam (Secy. SSC), Saohpa Mong Nai, Saohpa Kesi Mansam, Saohpa Mong Yai, Saohpa Pangmi, Saohpa Loi Long, U Ohn Maung, U Hkun Chai, Paya Shin La. 3rd row: U Kyi Myint, U Po Mon, Saohpa Kyong, U San Aung, U Htun Aye, U Shan Khin, U San Lu, U Htun Ya, Sao Hkun Sam, U Aung Tha, Yang Kyein Sein, U Thein Maung, U Pyin Nya, U Hkun Ka, Sao Yape Hpa (1952; Shan Literary and Cultural Association Taunggyi).



Shan State Cabinet L-R: U San Lu (?) (Soil Conservation), Mong Hsu Saohpa Sao Hman Hpa (Health and Education), Mong Nai Saohpa Sao Pye (Deputy Head of State and Interior), Mong Mit Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio (Head of Shan State), Baw Saohpa Sao Hkun Aung (Information and Unity for Indigenous Races), U Zaw Latt (Finance and Revenue), and U Po Hmone (Public Works and Irrigation) (1956; Shan Literary and Cultural Association Taunggyi).



Board of Governors of the Kambawza College, Taunggyi taken in front of the College, the old Shan Chiefs' School. Standing: L-R: Headmaster Mr. HT Lawrence, Sao Koon Laikha, Sao Kya Seng Hsipaw, Sao Shwe Hmon Kesi Mansam, Sao Pye Mong Nai, Sao Hseng Hpa Yawnghwe, Yan Kyein Sai Kokang, Sao Hkun Maung Baw, Sao Sai Mong Kengtung. Sitting: Laikha Saohpa Sao Num, Tawngpeng Saohpa Sao Khun Pan Sein, Mong Mit Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio, Hsahmong Kham Saohpa Sao Htun E, Daw Mi Mi Khaing (Principal) and husband, and Sao Sai Mong Kengtung (1958-1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



CHAPTER SIX: WITHOUT TRUST

THE FEDERAL PROPOSAL

Since the early 1950s the army, the Tatmadaw, had been in control of all administrative and economic affairs in the Shan States. In areas where martial law had been declared the princes had little or no power. Life was indeed difficult in the rural areas; at the mercy of the army and its soldiers, villagers could no longer safely carry out their daily work in the fields. In the towns, the common arrogant, superior attitude of officials towards the people created bad blood.

On the whole people from different walks of life living on the Shan Plateau, began to feel sympathy for the villagers and developed a strong bond against the brutality of the Tatmadaw soldiers.

With the arrival on the plateau of the AFPFL and other political parties, to educate the "naïve Tai Shan" in politics, people became conscious of the tense situation that existed. Most were beginning to feel they had had enough mudslinging and slander against their rulers and themselves. They no longer wanted to go on suffering under what they felt was an untrustworthy AFPFL government.

In May 1958, an underground group called the *Num Suk Harn* 'Brave Young Warriors' was formed by a young Tai Shan from Yunnan. Saw Yanda, also known as Chao Noi, caught the attention of university students and high school youth, and became their hero. Many joined this dissident movement as it best expressed their feelings. Together, this motley group, poorly armed and disorganized, made their way into the jungles and set up camp.

Such were the circumstances in the Shan States that however much the elders abhorred the thought of their young going into the jungles, they had to acknowledge their despondency and sense of hopelessness. It was a trying time for parents who could not stop their sons from going underground and potentially being killed.

Whatever their personal opinions the *saohpa* knew that they had a duty towards the Union to stand firm and to help quell the insurgencies. They believed in loyalty, discipline and respect. If the Union they had helped to create was to continue, it was not a time for them to turn sentimental and weak in resolve.

The princes had always recognized their responsibilities and despite all, assisted the Tatmadaw in the defense of the country in order that the Union of Burma might continue to survive. Paradoxically, in the eyes of the army, they were the aggressors.

The *Num Suk Harn* caught the imagination of young and old across the Shan plateau. Then came the dissidents of the Tangyan insurrection who were however, mostly from Mong Lun, the "tame" Wa State that thought of itself as Tai Shan rather than Wa. Bo Mawng, an officer from the Union Military Police, led the insurrection. He was joined by Sao Kyaw Tun and students from Rangoon University. Sao Kyaw Tun, also known as Sao Hso Won, from Mong Yai State became renowned for his bravery. Tangyan, which is in the northern Shan State was held by the rebels for a few weeks before they were routed. Bo Mawng and Sao Kyaw Tun with their followers then marched towards the Thai border where the *Num Suk Harn* had their encampment.

It was a time fraught with difficulties for most ethnic peoples wherever they lived. Pascal Khoo Thwe (b. 1967) captures the feeling of the nationalist ethnic youth at that time:

What above all was borne in upon me was the sense that the army assumed that it was untouchable,

that it could never be called to account. Indeed, many of the atrocities were simply a direct expression of arrogance, a demonstration of supremacy.

As long as these villagers were left in peace to trade, harvest their crops and live their lives, they did not care who ruled Burma. But the Tatmadaw had been treating them with a brutality that was astonishing in its recklessness, and that had made passionate enemies out of those who had been neutral and docile. This had been going on for twenty years ... (Thwe 2003:188).

Although Khoo Thwe was describing the domineering attitude the Tatmadaw held towards the ethnic nationalities in the 1990s, it appears that such atrocious behavior had continued ever since Tangyan, nearly forty years previously. It seems that little had changed in the army's ruthlessness towards civilians since 1949, when the Tatmadaw first set foot on the Shan Plateau.

While these disruptions were going on in the rural areas and the jungles, in Taunggyi and other towns the next generation of Tai Shan who had been trained in the legal profession were discovering that the 1947 Constitution did not give the Shan States nor the other ethnic States, the protection they assumed that they had.

Per Clause 222, each state was considered a "constituent unit." Then Clause 8 confirmed that: "All powers, legislative, executive and judicial, in relation to the remaining territories of the Union of Burma shall, be exercisable only by, or on the authority of, the organs of the Union." The clause was interpreted to mean that all powers pertaining to the Union of Burma could be exercised only by the Departments and Officials of the Union of Burma, or on their authority. This led to the belief that executive powers belonged solely to that part of the Union that had not been identified as a State, and this in turn meant Burma Proper, since it had not been identified as a state or as a "constituent unit."

As these two Clauses were further analyzed and discussed, it began to dawn on the Tai Shan why the AFPFL Government had been acting on its own and had not acknowledged the "equality of status, or of opportunity" of others, as promised in the Preamble of the Constitution. It was deduced that what was required now was for Burma Proper to become the eighth State of the Union joining the seven other ethnic nationalities, the Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karenni/Kayah, Karen or Kawthulei, Mon and Rakhine or Arakan.

Once this was understood, the Shan Government together with *saohpa* and Tai Shan leaders realized that the only way to rectify such a misrepresentation was to seek amendments to the 1947 Constitution. With this understanding, many of the *saohpa*, Tai Shan and other ethnic leaders got together to work out a means by which such a change could be affected. In 1960, they began putting out feelers for proposals towards constitutional reform to U Nu, the then Prime Minister.

There was nothing underhand about the proposed modifications. They were lawfully presented under the aegis of the legally constituted Shan Government. This action was taken only after seeking advice from leading judicial and legal members of the profession, who were mainly British-trained Burman personnel. The request made for constitutional changes were in fact, recommendations for the strengthening of the Union, to give ethnic nationalities unity and an equal voice within the country's parliament.

A fortunate opening occurred in late 1960 and early 1961, when an amendment to the Constitution had to be made to accommodate the recent boundary agreement reached between the Union Government and that of the People's Republic of China. The Union Government then offered to consider simultaneously proposals for any other changes to the Constitution. The Chief Justice stipulated that so long as the principle of democracy remained intact, the underlying principle of the Constitution or discord created among those living within the Union, the revision of the Constitution could go ahead.

Considering this to be a green light from the government, a conference was held in Taunggyi under the Chairmanship of the Mong Nai Saohpa, who was also Chairman of the Shan State Council. The meeting was well attended by representatives other than Tai Shan, who had all come from the Kachin, Chin, Kayah and Karen States.

The All States Conference set up a committee of thirty men to investigate the way the Constitution could be revised. This committee then appointed a Steering Committee of six men, to carry out the tasks assigned to them by the meeting.

When the first of the Constitutional Amendment Meetings took place, the Yawnghwe Saohpa, my father, handed a letter (Appendix 4) to the then Minister of Justice, expressing his personal views as to the paramount importance of the proposed amendments. Regarding the unpopular Clause 8, he wrote, "If Burma Proper becomes a Constituent State of the Union, on equal footing with other States, the dissatisfaction will gradually disappear." He further added that in the Shan States and in other ethnic regions during the past years, they had been under "subordination of Burma proper"; and that since purse strings were controlled by the Central Government, finances received by the States for any planned development, were lamentably inadequate.

By February 1961, the final report was completed and presented at the Convention held towards the end of the month. It had been meticulously discussed, at length and in minute detail. The majority approved it; only the Heads of State of Kachin and Chin expressed caution. It also transpired that Namkham U Htun Aye did not approve of it.

The Steering Committee had concluded that to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all, the Constitution should be revised in accordance with the principles of a truly federal constitution.

As stated by Sao Hso Hom,²⁰ the Saohpa of Mong Pawn, the report came to be known as the 'Blue Book' of the Shan State Government. In it were suggestions on "several amendments to the Constitution, one of which was to make Burma Proper a State and thereafter to make all States equal in status, power and privilege." A list of grievances suffered by the States and peoples in dealing with Central Government and its officials was included. Overall, it pointed out that during the thirteen years of the Union's existence, the Constitution exposed many defects and deficiencies, making it clear that there was encroachment on the rights of the States which were not equal to those that were enjoyed by Burma Proper.

There was an urgency to make amends and it was believed that by certain reforms to the Constitution, the peoples' grievances could be resolved and the central government's deficiencies could be redressed. It was also hoped once the amendments were made, the changes would satisfy the disillusioned dissidents and gradually stem their flow into the jungles to join activist groups.

Working together and listing existing problems, the ethnic nationalities began to comprehend that the AFPFL government had all along been practicing a divide-and-rule policy and thereby could dominate and manipulate the different sections of the ethnic nationalities.

U TUN MYINT

During the conference, many people made representations regarding the economic and social situation in their part of the Shan Plateau. The reports were alike revealing that there had been little improvement in the standard of living and, in fact, no progress of any kind. Added to this was the suffering endured by the local people from the overzealous soldiers, the officers of the Tatmadaw,

²⁰ Hso Hom, Sao, *Shan State Affairs*, paper prepared by the Office of the Regional Co-ordinator, Australia & the Pacific. 2008. Sao Hso Hom was one of the thirty members of the Constitution Revision Committee, and son of late Sao Sam Htun, the Saohpa of Mong Pawn. He was assassinated with General Aung San in 1947.

and from the condescending manner of Union officials of the Central Government.

One of the many speakers was U Tun Myint, also known as U Tun Myint Galay, not to be confused with U Htun Myint from Langkur. Both were known to be anti-feudalists. Born in 1920 in Taunggyi U Tun Myint Galay went to live in Heho and Aungban in the Mye Lat when his parents moved there. He went to high school in Taunggyi, then in 1941 to Rangoon University where he joined the young Tai Shan dissidents. During the Japanese occupation, he was selected by the Japanese to continue his education in Japan. When the war ended, he returned to Taunggyi having sailed via the Philippines and Singapore which gave him a broader outlook and some ideas of what other countries were like.

He joined up with the anti-feudalists who had all congregated in Taunggyi, and took part in their movement for immediate Shan union with Burma Proper. As an intelligent, ambitious young man he wasted no time in contacting members of the AFPFL he had met earlier. Together these Tai Shan politicians had an entrée into the inner circle of Thakin Aung San and his colleagues.

Many years later, a mature U Tun Myint Galay took a balanced view of the way the AFPFL looked at the Shan question and how they considered secession and independence. He observed that the AFPFL policy in action did not pay much attention to the wishes of the indigenous nationalities. Instead, it tended to divide each nationality into two opposing camps with the AFPFL being the balancing power between them.

At the All States Conference, he pointed out what he felt had gone wrong and at the same time made some recommendations. He dwelt at length on the secession question and promoted the federal proposal. He concluded that after weighing up the advantages and disadvantages, he repeated that he had concluded that if the Shan State experienced prosperity and progress, it did not matter which decision was taken.

In his *Whither the Shan States* (1955), he criticized Bamar dominance and the "monopolization of power" at the center of government, which was a disadvantage to constituent states. Nevertheless, he did not feel it was right for the Tai Shan to demand secession nor to prolong the rule of the *saohpa*. This booklet and others, such as *A Grain of Sand and a Slab of Brick* (1956) and *Shan State Succession Issue* (1957), were published together in English under the aegis of The Shan Human Rights Foundation (1964) in Maehongson, Thailand. Predictably he was detained by the regime for his outspoken speeches and spent ten years in confinement. He died in 1997.

There were other politicians who came to the fore then. Among them were two men of note, Khun Kya Bu and U Shwe Ohn. The former, an important Tai Shan leader since 1939, believed in full freedom for the Shan States from the British, though he did not align himself too closely to the AFPFL.

Khun Kya Bu was from Hsipaw State and went to Rangoon University and onto India where he trained as an agronomist. On his return, he was put in charge of the experimental farm that had been established in Yawngghwe in the early 1900s. Khun Kya Bu became politically active; as well as participating in discussions at Panglong, he was, in the capacity of a People's Representative, a signatory to the Panglong Agreement in 1947. After independence, he became chief agriculture officer for the Shan State government.

Khun Kya Bu was a firm believer in preserving Shan culture. In his memoirs, he wrote of his regret in seeing the Shan language replaced by Burmese as the norm in schools. He was pleased though that the Shan monasteries never stopped teaching the young so that at least there were still some people in the Shan State literate in the Shan language.

Khun Kya Bu also noted that praise was due to General Aung San for stressing that he was an advocate of Federalism and that he did not favor a unitary system for the new Union of Burma. Nevertheless, after his assassination, a unitary, rather than a federal system, of government was

adopted by the AFPFL when the country gained independence. Aung San's views had not been honored.

In later years Khun Kya Bu witnessed the sufferings of the Tai Shan villagers at the hands of the military and the lack of discipline of its soldiers. Such appalling actions against the innocent, he observed, were what had prompted the young to rebel. He strongly supported the Federal movement and wanted internal peaceful rule in the spirit of Panglong. Like most Tai Shan politicians, he too spent five years in detention.

Two of Khun Kya Bu's six sons decided that they had had enough of the machinations of both the AFPFL and the appalling behavior of the army towards the Tai Shan. In 1959, they went underground and joined the *Num Suk Han*. In 1960, the sixth son, Khun Kya Nu, also known as Sao Seng Suk, became the commander of the Third Brigade of the Shan State Army.

Sao Seng Suk later became Chairman and Commander-in-Chief of the Shan State Progressive Party. He also founded the Shan State Organization, and was the co-founder of the Shan Democratic Union. Following his involvement in politics, he was elected as first President of the Shan State Constitutional Drafting Committee for the 2008 Constitution. He also took an interest in ethnic affairs and was involved in the Ethnic Nationalities Council. Living in Chiang Mai he became a prominent Tai Shan leader. He died in August 2007 at the age of seventy-two.

Another person of note was U Shwe Ohn. He was born in 1923 from Yawnghwe and was a contemporary of U Tin Aye and U Tun Myint Galay. In 1936 when he was only thirteen years old, he was already interested in politics and joined the student protests.

U Shwe Ohn was an early member of the SSPFL and began to take an active role in the party's work leading towards the Panglong Conference in 1947. He attended as a journalist working for the *Myanmar Alin* newspaper and as an observer. Although he became a lawyer he kept abreast of Tai Shan politics and occasionally involved himself in matters concerning the Shan States, which landed him in jail on two or three occasions. He believed in working together for a better Shan State with anyone who shared his aspirations and political views. He still had hopes for a "genuine federal union," when all ethnic groups would be unified.

In the 1990 election, U Shwe Ohn led the Shan State People's Freedom League for Democracy, which was later deregistered.

He wrote books in the Burmese language that provide insight into the conditions of that period, including ones about individuals such as U Tin Aye and U Tun Myint Galay.

At the age of eighty-five, U Shwe Ohn became involved in a new political party, the Union Democratic Alliance Party formed mainly by a group of former 1940s Tai Shan politicians. He passed away in August 2010, a few months before the November elections.

NO COMPROMISE

By late June 1961, the All States Conference was ready to send a delegation consisting of members of the Steering Committee for the Revision of the Constitution to Rangoon with an important mission: to convince the Prime Minister and other Burman political leaders of the importance and purpose of the proposed constitutional reforms and to present the amendments that had been unanimously adopted by the different ethnic nationalities at the conference.

Among the Saohpa, were Sao Pye of Mong Nai, Sao Num of Laikha, Sao Htun E of Hsahmong Kham, and Sao Shwe Hmon of Kesi Mansam who had led the discussions and completed the validation on the federal issues. It was their responsibility now to explain to the Burman politicians in Rangoon the purpose and conclusions of the All States Conference. Sao Hso Hom said that they

made it clear at each of these meetings with Bamar leaders and politicians that "The Federal proposal which was adopted by a decision of the Taunggyi Conference, [they said,] should not be regarded as a Shan proposal, but should be seen as a principle agreed to, proposed and adopted by all parties and races at the conference."

By now the two words federal and secession were becoming synonymous. The Burman politicians, newspapers and foreign embassies seriously considered that this was a Tai Shan ruse leading towards demands for secession. The princes and the other Committee members were unable to reassure the Bamar; in fact, they showed little interest in learning the truth.

To make matters worse, Namkham U Htun Aye with members of his *Ya Pa La Pha* party followed the delegation down to Rangoon and is alleged to have contradicted the claims put forward by the delegation. He claimed that it was a ploy of the *saohpa* to secede; it was a ruse to reinstate their powers; they were in conspiracy with, and backed by the dissidents; and they were in touch with the KMT and other foreign powers soliciting help and funds.

U Htun Aye, who was well regarded by Burman politicians and the *Tatmadaw*, (he later became Head of State for Shan State) was believed. His claims helped the Burman politicians to take a one-sided view without further consideration.

The *Saohpa* of Hsahmong Kham, Sao Htun E, refuted each of U Htun Aye's accusations and that the allegations were utterly untrue and a slur on the *saohpa* reputations to claim they backed the insurgents and were in touch with foreign powers. However, the damage had already been done, and neither the Bamar politicians nor the *Tatmadaw* paid any attention to his protestations. The fact that the *saohpa* had been loyal to the Union throughout the turbulent years since independence was never once acknowledged.

About the same time, an advisory committee was set up by the Union government under the chairmanship of Dr. Ba U, a former President of the Union of Burma to study the pros and cons of the Federal proposals. The report claimed that the proposed nature of a federal government that had been put forward by the Shan State government and its people was unacceptable, chiefly because it included aspects that could have led to the break-up of the union.

First, it was wrong of the Burman politicians to continue to doggedly believe that the federal proposals were put up solely by the Shan government and its people, although they were repeatedly told it was a collective proposal from all the ethnic nationalities who had attended the All States Conference.

No one was willing to consider that it was truly a joint proposal of all the ethnic nationalities. Obviously, having already made up their minds, the Bamar elite, politicians and *Tatmadaw* were not prepared to change their prejudicial judgement.

With suspicions growing rapidly between the Burman politicians and the Tai Shan, it looked as if there would never be trust between them again. Most of the Bamar politicians seen by the delegation were men known to them personally and with whom they previously had had rapport. The meetings had been disappointing, even disastrous, as none of the Bamar were in favor of revising the Constitution, nor of changing the status of Burma Proper, but these reactions were not official.

Later at a press conference in July 1961, U Nu said he had read the report on the Shan proposed reforms to the Constitution that had been endorsed by other ethnic nationalities, and he had found no fault with it. In fact, he acknowledged that it had been submitted by invitation as the Government was already making amendments to the Constitution. He had had one or two misconceptions but Sao Hkun Hkio, the Shan Head of State, had since cleared those up.

U Nu agreed to convene a National Conference for the following year, in February 1962, when Parliament would be in session to deal with, what became known as, the Federal Proposal.

Probably those Tai Shan and other ethnic leaders who had put in so much effort during the

last two years felt momentary relief and gratification to be given this opportunity to put forward their views believing that their determined efforts had been worthwhile. But many wondered if U Nu meant what he said. Could he overrule what other Bamar politicians thought of the Federal Proposal? Would he be prepared to carry out the reforms?

Doubtless there was an inkling of unease, since it was a known fact that the Tatmadaw, through its Military Intelligence Service (MIS), were keeping tabs on everyone involved. Their presence was very much in evidence both in Taunggyi and in Rangoon. A longyi clad man with a Shan bag over his shoulders could be seen standing around idly, often singly or in pairs, which was then the hallmark of the MIS.

Perhaps there was an expectation of future problems, but at that moment, at the end of February 1962, the dignitaries who came to Rangoon to attend the National Conference, were still hopeful.

The Rangoon Convention was duly opened and appeared to have gone well for the first days. Unfortunately, an important speech that was to have been given by Dr. E Maung, the Justice Minister, on 2 March 1962, did not take place as it was the day of the ill-fated military coup d'état.

It was later revealed that his address would have reflected the view of the Union Party and U Nu's Government, casting doubts on the Federal Proposals. Sai Aung Tun (2009:479-481) revealed that in the text of the speech Dr. E Maung claimed that Bogyoke Aung San had at an earlier stage explained to the ethnic leaders how the Union was to be formed, that although all the states would have their own separate administration, Burma Proper would not be one of them.

The Justice Minister's speech then concluded that as the All States Conference proposals for federal reform differed from, and were inconsistent with Bogyoke Aung San's idea of promoting stability and permanence between Burma Proper and the States, the Union Party could not accept the federal proposal.

Even if Bogyoke's explanation had been fully understood by the ethnic leaders then, it was his words rather than the letter of the law that said a federal system and not a unitary system would be chosen for the Union of Burma. Nonetheless, throughout the succeeding years ethnic nationalities began to find discrepancies indicating that his promise had been broken. For that very reason, it became a necessity to seek reforms to the 1947 Constitution.

Union Party members and the Tatmadaw were obviously privy to the speech, and shared the same views. Undoubtedly this negative statement gave General Ne Win the impetus to act; he considered U Nu too weak to resist the demands of the ethnic nationalities.

It will never be truly known whether the Justice Minister's speech was made public and what the participants of the National Convention and ethnic leaders might have felt about it, since many of them are no longer alive to give their opinions.

U Nu had half-heartedly decided to hold a Convention to give people the chance to air their views, because in his own way, he also recognized the many faults that existed with his government. He may have thought that the Convention might have been an opportunity to repair any damage in relationships with the ethnic nationalities. Being a true Bamar though, one imagines he would never have conceded to having a true federation of equal partners.

In truth, the relationship between the Tai Shan and the Burman was already well beyond repair in the years of 1960 and 1961 when the question of the revision of the 1947 Constitution was being discussed. In those days, the *saohpa* were depicted as tyrants, being repeatedly blamed for anything that happened in the Shan States and accused of being the cause of all the troubles.

In fact, I would like to repeat, that it was the far-sightedness of the ruling princes who had abstained from taking sides and had remained neutral throughout the political troubles, which saved the Union from breaking up in the late 1940s and again, in 1958 when the AFPFL split. Their

impartiality had enabled the U Nu government to continue ruling. It was proof that the princes were loyal and that they had no desire to destroy the Union.

Remarkably, 1962 was the third and last time that the thirty-four *saohpa* and the Tai Shan politicians would come together with other ethnic nationalities to work out their destiny. The first and second occasions were respectively the Panglong Conferences and then in 1947 when the Agreement was signed to form the Union of Burma. This time, in 1962, they had united to request reforms to the 1947 Constitution that would ameliorate the ongoing unsettled situation in the Shan State. Instead, they were accused of wanting to break up the very Union they had helped to create. U Nu, his government and the Tatmadaw did not readily accept denials of such accusations.

It must have been humiliating for these Tai Shan leaders who, while deeply believing in healing broken relationships and wanting to start afresh, found that they were being scrutinized and condemned even before the important Federal issue had been thoroughly considered.

THE COUP D'ÉTAT 1962

The coup d'état of 2 March 1962 was swiftly and efficiently carried out. The army took into detention government ministers, *saohpa*, ethnic leaders, Tai Shan, ethnic Members of Parliament, and important politicians. Government offices were taken over and surrounded, and the police were told not to interfere and confined to their stations. All key positions in Rangoon such as the Parliament, the Union Bank, the Mingaladon airport and the railway station came under army control.

Of the Tai Shan personalities, only a few were not detained such as the Head of State for the Shan State, Sao Hom Hpa, Hsenwi Saohpa, Sao Kya Seng, and Hsipaw Saohpa. The latter, who was not in Rangoon with the others, mysteriously disappeared. Some, such as Sao Hkun Kyi, Samka Saohpa, and Sao Hman Hpa, the Hsenwi MP, the brother of the Head of State, were said to have been taken in by mistake. In the Shan State itself, all politicians, community leaders, prominent businessmen, senior civil servants, and even police were detained without charge for four to six years.

General Ne Win, Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Army, had orchestrated the brilliant coup d'état. The army take-over of power had been achieved without shedding a drop of blood, excluding the death of Myee Myee, one of my younger brothers. The soldiers who had come to arrest my father, Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa Long of Yawngghwe, had shot him.

My brother, Harn Yawngghwe, has put together comments by various members of our family clearing up some misconceptions of what happened at our home on that fateful night of the coup²¹ (Appendix 1). A description of the coup may also be found in my previous book, *The Moon Princess*²² (Sao Sanda 2008:262).

On that night, Sao Kya Seng, the Hsipaw Prince was on his way to Rangoon from Taunggyi when he disappeared. While the official statement was that he had never been arrested, it was widely believed that he had been killed while in custody at the infamous army camp of Ba Htoo Myo, which lies near Taunggyi. His *mahadevi*, Inge Sargent,²³ in her book, *Twilight over Burma, My Life as a Shan Princess*, gives an account of her sadness and sorrow of not knowing the truth about her husband's disappearance.

The Tatmadaw has consistently stated that the coup was to stop the Federal Movement from destabilizing the country. Yet the Federal Movement was a perfectly legal request by the Tai Shan

²¹ Yawngghwe (2 March, 1962, see Appendix 2).

²² Simms (2008).

²³ Sargent (1994).

and other ethnic nationalities to reform the 1947 Constitution that had been hastily assembled to enable the British Government to grant Burma independence in January 1948.

The Panglong Agreement of February 1947 had seen the creation of the Union of Burma when Tai Shan and other Frontier Areas nationalities joined Burma Proper. The loose form of federation within the Union of Burma, which had been promised, envisaged the sharing of power and privileges equally between the ethnic nationalities and the Bamar, but this was never achieved. The twelve to thirteen years spent together after independence created more disillusionment than joy at being free from British rule.

In the end, it was neither the Tai Shan nor the other ethnic nationalities that broke up the Union. In fact, the breakup of the Union was the Tatmadaw's own doing. The 1962 military coup revoked the 1947 Constitution and overthrew the democratically elected government of U Nu.

Not long after the formation of his government and that of the Revolutionary Council, General Ne Win and his army began showing its strength. People then began to realize that it was not a benign coup like that of 1959.

In July, a few months after the coup, Rangoon University students began protesting the army takeover. Soldiers were sent in and fired, killing several students. At the same time, the army blew-up the Student's Union within which, it has been suggested, were students. This action against university students made people think again.

From the 1930s when Ne Win was a student, there together with Aung San and U Nu the Student Union had been historically a hotbed of dissent. It was here that the young dissidents plotted against their imperial masters, the British. Until 1962 the Rangoon University Student Union building had always been considered hallowed ground.

In *The 1988 Uprising in Myanmar*, Dr. Maung Maung reports that General Ne Win claimed that he had never ordered the Student Union to be blown up, but in fact was very concerned about the students (2012:122). It is hard to believe that this was true.

Rangoon University was soon closed. Students who acted quickly enough, managed to escape arrest by making their way underground into the jungles to join the revolutionaries. Unfortunately, many became entangled with the insurgent Communist Party of Burma.

Whatever good intentions General Ne Win and his commanders might have had of transforming Burma into a socialist state none came to fruition. Instead, there was a complete restructuring of government, its economy, and society. Non-Burman who had been born and bred in Burma were no longer welcome. Gradually, communities of Indian and Chinese traders left. Uncertain of their future, jobless civil servants and their families from various sections of society also left to seek employment and life abroad.

The introduction of the Burmese Way to Socialism, which combined Soviet style nationalization and central planning with General Ne Win's policy of isolation for the country, only made the army stronger.

The country-wide arrests of politicians and anyone believed to be in opposition continued. In the Shan States, which no longer had their princes and other leading figures of society, there was much re-organization that was mostly carried out by army commanders, leaving little room for civilians.

In response to the fierce conduct of the army, more people went underground and ethnic armies were formed to defend their homelands. The Tatmadaw which now constantly shouted "One blood, one voice, one command!" was determined that all inhabitants of the country would be Burmanized.

An important result of the coup for the Shan State was that the new Head of State was not a *saohpa*. He was Namkham U Htun Aye, a long-time supporter of the AFPFL and a staunch anti-

feudalist. Henry Aye recounted that when his father was offered the post Ne Win is supposed to have told him "you now have the opportunity to serve your country, but if you fail, just hang yourself" (2009:80).

What did Ne Win mean? U Htun Aye was to find that his optimistic predictions that once the *saohpa* and the feudal system were removed all would be well for the Shan State, did not eventuate. One might well ask then, were the *saohpa* the real stumbling block to progress and freedom, as professed by the anti-feudalists?

The end of 1962 saw the end of the Shan State we knew and loved and the passing of the Yawnghwe Saohpa. My father died mysteriously in solitary confinement in the notorious Insein Prison in November that year. The military regime has never given any explanations regarding his sudden death.

In 2015, it is useful to reflect on how the Tai Shan and other ethnic nationalities have fared since the transformation in 2011 of the previous military government to purportedly civilian rule. The future of the Shan State in 1962 lay in the balance as it does today even under present changing circumstances. As many foresaw, there has been improvement in material circumstances just as there was in Laos and Cambodia when they emerged in the 1980s at the end of the Vietnam War. There has been much-needed economic development leading to education and social reforms, but human rights and freedom issues, where the hand of the Tatmadaw operates behind the scenes, have yet to be addressed.

In 2010, David Steinburg, a specialist writing on Burma and a historian, commented that a new class would be formed by "the sons of the military who have and will join the Tatmadaw and/or wield political and economic influence" (2010:182), leaving little room for civilians to participate. Unless the next generation changes its mind-set, the status quo is likely to continue, with the Tatmadaw retaining its influence over all matters for many years to come.

Much has changed since the abdication of the *saohpa* in 1959. The Shan State has evolved through different stages and presently, Tai Shan and others sharing the Shan Plateau, have become revitalized and, with hope in their hearts, pray that just and inclusive solutions will be found under the civilian-led government of the National League for Democracy (NLD) that won the 2015 general election.

However, it may be that only sometime later following an economic boom, and not in the foreseeable future, will cherished aims for democracy and human rights become a reality. Eventually, there may be real peace and prosperity for all the people of the Shan Plateau, allowing them to live freely without fear and in peace.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Langkur U Htun Myint, Shan politician (1950s; Shan Cultural Museum, Taunggyi).



Namkham U Htun Aye, Shan politician (1950s; Henry Aye).



U Hla Pe, Pa-O politician (late 1940s; Shan Cultural Museum Taunggyi).



U Tin Aye, Shan Politician (1950s; U Ohn Maung Yawngghwe).



Shan State Security Council members. Seated in front L-R: Lt. Col. Khin Za Mon, 6th Brigade Commander; Mong Hsu Saohpa Sao Hman Hpa, Deputy Chair, Home Minister, Shan State Government; Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa, Chairman, Head of State, Shan State Government; Col. Tin Maung, 9th Brigade Commander; and Col. Thein Toke, 4th Brigade Commander. Back Row, standing L-R: U Khun Ohn Kyar, Commissioner, Northern Shan State; U San Yee, Police Commissioner, Shan State; U Htun Lu, Commissioner, Southern Shan State; and U Sang Hsam, Secretary, Shan State Government (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Shan State Steering Committee for Revision of the 1947 Constitution. Sitting L-R: Sao Kyaw Kaung (MP); Sao Htun Aung, Baw Saohpa (Information Minister); Sao Htun E, Hsahmong Kham Saohpa; Sao Pye, Mong Nai Saohpa (Chairman Shan State Council); Sao Shwe Thaike, Yawnghwe Saohpa (Saohpa Association); Sao Ywat Mong, Kengtung (Public Works Minister); and Sao Shwe Hmon, Kesi Mansam Saohpa. Standing L-R: U Tun Myint Galay, U San Mya, U Htun Ohn, U Hkun Hti, Sao Kya Sone (Secretary Shan State Council), U Tin (Adviser), U Khan, Sao Hso Hom Mong Pawn Saohpa, U Aung Than, Sao Kya Seng, Hsipaw Saohpa (Saohpa Association), U Kya Bu, U Hkun San Myat (Parliamentary Secretary), and U San Sam (Secretary Shan State Government) (February 1961; Shan Literary and Cultural Association Taunggyi).



U Tun Myint Galay, Shan politician (1988; U Tun Myint family).



U Tun Myint Galay Shan politician and wife Sao Ohn Khu, niece of Yawnghwe Saohpa (1950s; U Tun Myint family)



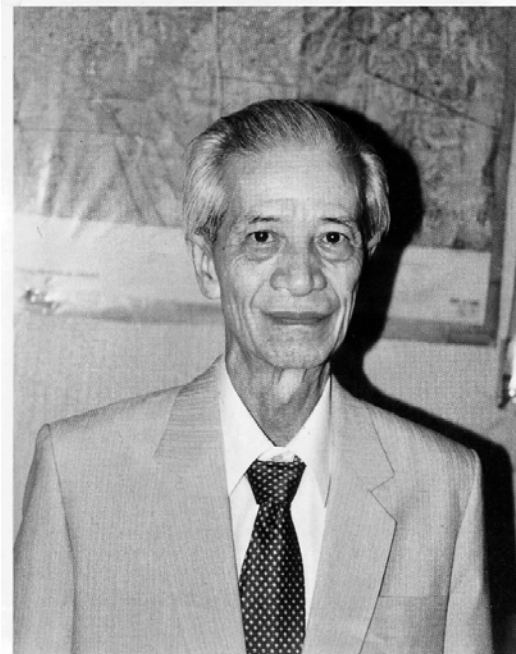
General Ne Win standing extreme left with Hsahmong Kham Saohpa on his left. Others are unknown (1959-1960; Shan Cultural Museum, Taunggyi).



U Tin Aye, Shan politician, with his wife and daughter (1950s; U Ohn Maung Yawnghwe).



Sao Seng Suk, Shan politician (1990s; Shan Herald News Agency).



Sao Seng Suk
Chairman, Shan Democratic Union (SDU)
Senior Advisor, UNLD-LA
ENSCC - Strategy Analysis and Policy Research

U Kya Bu, Shan politician (1940s; Shan Cultural Museum Taunggyi).



U Tun On, Shan politician, Yawnghwe Saohpa's brother-in-law (1950s; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



L-R: Sao Harn Yawnghwe, Executive Director, Euro-Burma Office (EBO); Sai Ai Pao, Chair, Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (White Tiger Party; won in 2010 elections and served as Industry & Mining Minister in current Shan State Government); Lt Gen Yawd Serk, Chair, Restoration Council for Shan State and Commander-in-Chief, Shan State Army, South; Hkun Htun Oo, Chair, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (Tiger Head Party; won in 1990 elections, did not compete in 2010); and General Hso Hten, Patron, Shan State Progress Party and Shan State Army, North (2015; Shan Herald News Agency).



PART TWO

GUARDIANS OF THE SHAN PLATEAU

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE NORTHERN SHAN STATES

For centuries, it has been recognized that much of the Shan Plateau's land surface is rich in natural resources such as antimony, chromium, coal, copper, diamond, precious gems, gold, silver, lead, manganese, natural gas, nickel, iron, tin, tungsten, mica, fluorite, marble, wolfram, and zinc.

What is not acknowledged is that the bulk of these natural resources lie on the Shan Plateau and were at one time in the possession of the *saohpa long* who ruled the different northern states - Mong Mit, Hsipaw, Tawngpeng, and Hsenwi. Elsewhere on the Shan Plateau, smaller deposits have also been found in states such as Mong Pawn near Taunggyi, silver, nickel and tungsten deposits in the Naungkieo Township area, and other ruby mines in Mong Hsu, all of which have yet to be fully exploited.

To some extent these states, clustered together, shared these rich mineral deposits and the teak forests that had in the past made their princes prosperous. These were the states of the older established rulers, direct descendants of fierce warriors, who stood firmly on principle and on their rights.

After British annexation, most of the land came under British control and, thus, many British and foreign enterprises were granted rights to mine the minerals in the different areas of the Shan States. At that time, it was believed that not only did Westerners have the expertise, but also only they could afford the outlay for the expensive machinery necessary for excavating the ores.

HSIPAW STATE

Fate Unknown

The Federated Shan States was made up of thirty-four Northern and Southern States. In this book, for convenience and to give a more comprehensive picture, I have divided the Southern States into Eastern, Inner, Central, and the Mye Lat.

During the army coup in 1962, the unexplained disappearance of the then Saohpa, Sao Kya Seng, the last ruler of Hsipaw, caused much unhappiness and speculation throughout the Shan States. The fear was he had been killed.

Like his ancestors, Sao Kya Seng was a true nationalist who ardently believed that by being principled and on the side of the law, there would be a better future for the Tai Shan people and the Shan State.

Although the young Hsipaw Saohpa could see that the way ahead was full of obstacles, he, like my father and other honorable *saohpa* were firm in their loyalty to the Union of Burma and democracy, which they would never have tried to destroy, contrary to accusations of treachery by the Tatmadaw who spread such propaganda.

MIS undoubtedly questioned Sao Kya Seng as they had questioned my father. The accused were surely maltreated, but to what degree is unknown. To justify whatever action was taken, the MIS was determined to prove that the two *saohpa* were traitors. Looking back to his youthful days, there is no way that Sao Kya Seng, being just four years old when his uncle, the Saohpa of Hsipaw died, would have known that one day he would succeed him. Educated initially at both St. Joseph's School in Maymyo and at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi, Sao Kya Seng continued his studies in 1941 at St. Paul School in Darjeeling, India. On his return to Hsipaw, he served from 1944 to 1945 as Monglon Myosa. By 1949, he had been installed as the Saohpa of Hsipaw (r. 1949-1959).

Some months later that same year, Sao Kya Seng went to America to study at the University of Denver. He graduated in 1953 with a degree in Mining Engineering. He returned home the same year married to Inge Eberhard, an Austrian, who had been a university classmate in Colorado. By 1957, she had been installed as *mahadevi*, with the Tai Shan name, Thusandi.

Elected in 1954 as a Member of Parliament for the Shan State to the Chamber of Nationalities, Sao Kya Seng made frequent trips to Rangoon. From 1955, onwards he served as Secretary for the Saohpa Association. His contribution to Union affairs was sincere and unselfish. His demise was a tragic end to a promising man with hope for the Shan State and upon whom the hopes of the Shan State were pinned.

Sao Kya Seng had been politically astute and recognized the importance of the work being done in the All States Conference for the reform of the 1947 Constitution and the request for true federalism for the Union of Burma. Many misconstrued his deep concern and anxiety for the young Tai Shan who had gone underground, claiming that he was supporting them. This was totally untrue.

My brother, Tzang Yawngghwe,²⁴ mentions in his book that in 1961, he had asked the Hsipaw Prince if he would like to meet the dissident leader of the Shan States Independent Army. In reply, the prince "brought out the Union constitution and read out the oath of loyalty he had sworn as an MP of the Upper House" (1987:195).

In 1994, his widow, Inge Sargent, wrote about her husband: "The only thing that mattered to him was standing firm on his principles and on his commitment to all the people who had faith in his leadership" (1994:49).

Until 1962 the family had had an almost idyllic life with a loving husband and two lovely daughters. When the military coup d'état took place Sao Kya Sein, the prince, disappeared, presumed dead. It was alleged General Ne Win held a grudge against the Hsipaw prince, consequently many people believed the General had something to do with his non-appearance in Rangoon for the Federal seminar in March.

An account of the disappearance of her husband, and the agonizing uncertainties of not knowing whether he was alive or dead can be read in Inge Sargent's book. She also tells of the unhappy time when she and her daughters were virtually prisoners of the military regime, before she could escape from Burma. Her book vividly recalls her years in Hsipaw adapting to the Tai Shan way of life, while at the same time having to carry on her duties as a *saohpa's* wife. She was the second "white face" to be married to a Tai Shan prince. The other was the Mong Mit Mahadevi back in 1938. The change in society's acceptance of mixed marriages in the twenty years between these two entries into Tai Shan aristocratic life, illustrate how much easier it had become for the younger wife.

Inge Sargent also tried to learn Tai Shan so that she could talk and listen to the men and women she worked with. Together, she and her husband began working in different fields such as farming and mining, social welfare, and education, all the while making efforts to raise the standard of living for their people. They were a popular, respected pair. Their subjects appreciated their endeavors. One such act was to decree that any paddy land worked by a farmer became his property, a popular move by the prince. Previously, all land had belonged to the Hsipaw State.

Sao Kya Seng had been interested in improving agricultural methods and established experimental stations where farmers could learn about new crop varieties. He also had encouraged exploration of minerals found in his state and created the Saohpa of Hsipaw Foundation Charitable Trust to help those in need. In this, the couple had worked jointly with divided responsibilities. While he dealt with the finances of the foundation, his wife looked after its administration. It was an ideal

²⁴ Yawngghwe (1987).

distribution of the workload and the people of Hsipaw felt themselves fortunate in having such a devoted couple working in their interest.

Hsipaw State

The State of Hsipaw, considered one of the wealthy princedoms, lies south of both Mong Mit and Hsenwi, with Tawngpeng State tucked between them. It sits on the edge of the Shan Plateau along the border with Burma Proper. Mong Yai, formerly known as South Hsenwi, lies to its east. To the south are the inner Southern Shan States, including Kengtung, Mong Nai, Lawksawk, and Yawnghwe, one of the ancient and larger states.

Hsipaw Town, the capital of Hsipaw State, lies in a fertile valley at a junction of roads and railways, putting it in a unique position to benefit. It sits on the Dokhtawaddi River, a Pali name known to the people of Hsipaw. The river is also known by two other names: the Burmese call it Myitnge, while the Tai Shan name for the river is Namtu. It traverses the Shan Plateau from its source in Yunnan in the north, and flows through Hsenwi, Tawngpeng, and Hsipaw States, eventually joining the Irrawaddy at Ava, below Mandalay. Both Dokhtawaddi and Myitnge 'little river', a comparison to the greater Irrawaddy River.

The Dokhtawaddi River allows for convenient transport by boat, making it easy to travel to the capital. Roads and the railway provide alternative means of transportation. The major road from Mandalay to Lashio passes through Hsipaw, eventually joining the Burma Road leading into China. Other roads south go towards the interior of the Shan Plateau leading to some of the inner Shan States. Hsipaw Town is a gateway to the Northern Shan States since it also connects to Mogok, the famous ruby mines.

Due to its location, the population of Hsipaw Town is a mixture of Shan, Palaung, Kachin, and Burman who maintain a regular flow of trade with other towns. Its proximity to Mandalay and the Mandalay Court of Burman monarchy in former days encouraged most people living in the area to speak Burmese, rather than Tai Shan. For their livelihood, many living along the Namtu River grew rice both on the uplands and in the low-lying valleys, while in other areas tea and *thanapet* (*Cordia myxa*) leaves used for wrapping cheroots, were cultivated.

As in the olden days, there are daily trains from Mandalay and Maymyo, now renamed Pyin Oo Lwin, climbing through the stunning Gokteik gorge and going on to Lashio. It is usually a twelve-hour journey but well worth taking just to see the magnificent bridge, and to visit Maymyo. The train journey from Mandalay is roughly four hours to Maymyo and eight hours to Hsipaw.

Maymyo lies less than fifty miles from Hsipaw. In days gone by, it was a favorite hill station for both the British and the Anglo-Burmese families who congregated there during the summer months. Although many have departed to foreign lands, a sizeable population is believed to still live there. During the very hot months in the lowlands, the civil servants, the mercantile and military, would come to escape the heat of the plains and enjoy the coolness of the hills. They built their dream houses here with beautiful gardens of temperate flowers emulating the colorful botanical garden of some 200 acres that lay just outside of the town. The Bombay Burmah Trading Company's handsome teak mansion, a chummary for its employees who worked in the adjoining states, still stands today, providing accommodation for tourists.

The much-admired Botanical Gardens created around 1915, was a show piece of a wide selection of temperate flowers. There were orchards around the hill station then and tourists report that there are still pineapple and strawberry plots, and coffee plantations.

Maymyo was established in 1896 and named after Colonel May of the Bengal Regiment, a veteran of the Indian Mutiny, who had earlier been stationed in the place for a short while. *Myo*

means 'town' in Burmese, hence 'May's Town'. Just as the British found it agreeable and strategic to station its troops there, so has the Tatmadaw. The army currently maintains a large presence there, as it does in Taunggyi and Kalaw, for easy access to the ethnic areas and beyond. In recent times, a military academy and a military Technological Institute have also been established in Maymyo.

Currently, Maymyo/Pyin Oo Lwin is a favorite holiday spot for tourists. Situated on the Burma Road it has a flourishing Burma-China border trade, which has turned it into a business center. It has also become a hub for education where students are coached for matriculation exams. Boarding houses are crammed full of eager students studying hard to gain entrance into universities.

At present, both Hsipaw Town and Hsipaw State have benefitted economically from being in such a favorable position, with roads, railway, and waterways radiating out. Imagine caravans of bullocks or mules, or boats loaded with rice or tea being brought down by villagers to major towns in the olden days to sell to Chinese and Indian traders. Then villagers bought imported goods and textiles for their journey homeward. Nowadays, imported textiles are still in demand but with electrical goods becoming better known, it is not surprising to see spare motorcycle parts, radios, and mobile phones being bought by those who can afford them.

Journeys are shortened now that the produce can be loaded onto a railway goods wagon, although that mode of transport costs more. On the other hand, before railways, it was a lot more fun travelling for a day or two, either walking or riding in a bullock cart, meeting friends and acquaintances on the way.

The Saohpa Long

The history of this ancient Hsipaw State traces back to the time it was known as Onbaung. The *Annals of Hsipaw*, recorded that in 1757 Hkun Myat Sante (Sandi), the seventy-fifth prince, was the Saohpa of Hsipaw and recognized as ruler by the monarchs of the plains. Since early times these Hsipaw princes were powerful and had influence over Shan and Burmese affairs.

There is some discrepancy in dates given as to who ruled and when. A Tai Shan historian, Nang Khur Hsen says that there were eight rulers who followed Hkun Myat Sante. A descendent, Hkun Kya Htun, ruled until 1866 when his son, Sao Kya Khai, also known as Sao Hkun Hseng, assumed the throne. He ruled as the eighty-fifth ruler of Hsipaw until 1902. It was not a peaceful reign.

Over the centuries, the House of Hsipaw always had strong ties to succeeding Bamar kings. The fact that they were on the border with Burma Proper was one reason for this close relationship. There were also intermarriages between the two courts. One was when Sao Hkun Hseng married Meiktila Supaya, whose younger brother, Thibaw Myosa Mintha, later became King Thibaw. Thibaw was thus the great-grandson of Hkun Myat Sante. It needs to be noted here that Hsipaw was referred to by the Burman as Thibaw and since the king had originated from Hsipaw, he was known as Thibaw Min. This makes King Thibaw half Tai Shan and gives the Hsipaw Dynasty the honor of having another king as one of its princes.

Just prior to the annexation of Upper Burma and the Shan States, the Hsipaw Prince, Sao Hkun Hseng, having annoyed the monarch at Mandalay, decided to flee in case he was called to Mandalay and imprisoned. After wandering around for a while, he made his way to Rangoon, which was under British rule. Sao Hkun Hseng was put in jail for having killed two of his men, whom he accused of plotting to assassinate him. Once released, he made his way to the Karenni, where he lived under the protection of the chief, Sawlapaw and won support from him. In his absence Hsipaw State had been taken over by Sang Hai, who had also chased away his neighbor, Hseng Naw Hpa, the Hsenwi Prince. Later the rightful ruler, Sao Hkun Hseng, returned from Karenni and with

support from his faithful followers, regained Hsipaw State and continued to rule without further disruption.

The next Hsipaw Saohpa, about the time of my grand uncle, was Sir Sao Hke, who was also known as Sao Che (1872-1928). After his father's death in 1902, he was acknowledged as Saohpa but the appointment was not confirmed until 1906. As was the case with Sao Mawng of Yawngghwe, he had also spent time at the Court of Mandalay and had close ties to the Bamar kings.

The Hsipaw Prince, Sao Hke, was sent at an early age to a mission school. Later, his father took him to England, where he spent two years furthering his education. On his return, he worked in state administration as most young princes did, until 1906 when he became Saohpa. Sao Hke enjoyed travel. From 1909 to 1910, he made a three-month voyage visiting Ceylon, Australia, the Straits Settlements, and Singapore. He had several wives, one of whom was the daughter of Kesi Mansam Saohpa.

Sao Hke was a distinguished gentleman who was knighted and awarded the Companion of the Indian Empire (CIE). He attended two Delhi *durbars* and was accorded an audience with His Majesty, King George V and again when he made his third trip to England. On this last occasion, he had gone for medical treatment taking with him his youngest daughter, Sao Malar, who later became the Mahadevi of Hsenwi. When his younger brother Sao Lu died, he took under his wing two of his brother's daughters. One of these nieces, Sao Thunanda, married his only son Sao Ohn Kya and later became his Mahadevi.

Though a man of grandeur and tradition Sao Hke was modern in outlook. A great believer in education, he sent most of his nieces and nephews to be educated at convents and Christian schools, or sent them abroad. He was well assimilated into the Royal Court of Mandalay and its ceremonial paraphernalia. He loved Burmese art and music, especially the Burmese harp. In those days, the older princes did not hold back. They loved to show what they possessed. His Haw, the palace, was a replica of the Mandalay Palace and its throne room was just as splendid. Unfortunately, it was destroyed during the Japanese war.

Sao Hke had ruled for twenty-two years, until his death in 1928. His son, Sao Ohn Kya (1893-1938; r. 1928-1938), succeeded him. Like his father, Sao Ohn Kya was educated in England at Rugby School in Warwickshire, then went on to Brasenose College, Oxford. In 1917, he attended the South-Eastern Agricultural College at Wye in Kent and stayed for two years. On his return, he was trained in administrative affairs and assisted his father in State administration. He was enlightened and his progressive aspirations for the Shan States proved a step too far for the British so they kept a keen eye on this 'upstart'.

Sao Ohn Kya had begun to see that the creation of the Federated Shan States had somewhat curtailed the powers of the princes. At that time, although there was a Council of the Shan Saohpa, it had been given little to no legislative or political power. As stated by historian Tzang Yawngghwe, Sao Ohn Kya and some of the younger *saohpa* were afraid that when "Burma was granted self-government (according to British intention), the Shan states would be handed over to the Burmese without any political arrangements" (1987:218).

In 1931, Sao Ohn Kya had attended the Round Table Conference with my father, as representatives of the Shan States. That was the time my father had the amazing experience of hearing one of the Burman delegates object to their presence at the Conference. This objection was to make my father, and the other *saohpa*, realize how deeply the Burman felt about the Tai Shan. It must have particularly shocked Sao Ohn Kya who, of the four princes, had had the closest relationship with the Courts of Mandalay and with the Burman.

While attending the Round Table Conference, Sao Ohn Kya, on behalf of the Tai Shan, made a plea to improve the Shan State's position by awarding it Dominion status, thus making it totally

detached from Ministerial Burma. He also requested the change in status for the *saohpa* themselves, but there was little sympathy for these demands. It can now be seen that at that time, although the British may have given the princes some hope, British policy had always been conceived as Shan States being within the territorial limits of Burma. They were therefore destined to remain with Burma Proper as one unit.

Strained Relations

The unfeeling, unsupportive Burma Office officials in London made deprecating remarks, declaring that the Tai Shan princes' manners at the Conference had not earned them any distinction. The delegation returned dejected, each prince determined to work for a better deal.

Sao Ohn Kya had been praised for his intelligence and was considered a good administrator. However, some British officials did not like him and were prejudiced towards him. Maybe they saw him as arrogant as he knew he was as good as the British official he was dealing with, and did not take kindly to receiving orders from colonial officials. However, it was reported that during his father's illness, the Assistant Superintendent found him difficult to deal with and that he was generally uncooperative. Had the officials been more understanding, the barrier that sprang up between them might have been avoided.

It began to appear that, like the Burman monarchs, the British officials wanted to impose their will on the princes, and it gradually became apparent they were keen to show who was boss. Such attitudes made the princes resentful. British handling of Sao Ohn Kya made the princes realize that they would most likely get the same treatment. It was becoming a difficult time for the colonialists and for the princes, but fortunately there were one or two thoughtful and considerate Commissioners and Residents who eventually saved the day. By then, World War II was approaching, which left little time for continued improvement in their relationships.

In 1938, after a long illness, Sao Ohn Kya died. A long interregnum followed, from 1938 to 1947. Up until the Japanese war a British administrator from the Frontier Services was put in charge of the Hsipaw State, an action that created suspicion and dissatisfaction among the *saohpa* who believed that the British were aiming to rule directly, and thereby deprive them of their states. Two important states, Hsipaw and Kengtung, were without *saohpa* at the same time. The consensus among the princely rulers was that it would have been more acceptable to have either a relative, or a prince from a neighboring state appointed as administrator during the interregnum, rather than having a British official rule the state. The British did not listen and insisted on installing a British Administrator to look after Hsipaw affairs, as was the case in Kengtung. To be fair to the British, they had seen how quarrelsome the princes could be and to keep the peace, they had preferred to put in one of their own until the respective heirs were old enough to assume their duties.

The deed was done, and the advancing Japanese along with the beginning of the British retreat eliminated any further argument on the subject.

In the 1920s, Sir Gerald Kelly (1879-1972), the English artist, was encouraged to visit Burma by his friend, Somerset Maugham. While in Burma, he painted enchanting portraits. Many were of Burmese dancers and beautiful landscapes of the country. His later painting of a princess from Hsipaw became one of his outstanding and widely-known paintings. She had accompanied her sister, Sao Thunanda, the Mahadevi of Hsipaw, to London. Her husband the *Saohpa*, Sao Ohn Kya, was attending the Burma Round Table Conference. It was around this time, from 1930-1931, that Gerald Kelly met the princess and gained permission from Sao Ohn Kya to paint her. The artist created a remarkable image of the petite princess, of her graceful figure, painted in delicate colors capturing an air of gentility and charm. When it went on show, it was an immediate sensation.

Unknowingly, Sao Ohn Nyunt had become famous. Today, her portrait is seen hanging in galleries around the world with Sir Gerald Kelly's other well-known Burmese paintings.

When Sao Ohn Nyunt returned from England a few years later, she married Sao Hkun Mong, one of the sons of the Kengtung Saohpa, Sao Kwan Kiao Intaleng. The marriage was another link between the two senior Houses of the Shan States. When the British administrator, Mr. GET Turnbull left, Sao Hkun Mong, who was working in the Public Works Department (PWD) in Hsipaw, was appointed to administer Kengtung State.

Japanese Occupation

During this time, Sao Kya Zone, the son of Sao Hke's third brother, Sao O, had earlier been earmarked to become Hsipaw Saohpa, was installed as Kyemmong. Like most *saohpa*' sons, Sao Kya Zone had studied at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. He was outgoing and friendly and had a lively personality. Before the war, he had served in the British army.

When war broke out and the British retreated, Sao Kya Zone returned to Hsipaw to help his father, Sao O, who was then ruler, for the duration of the Japanese occupation. Some considered father and son to have been too friendly to the Japanese and accused them of "mistreating" their own people. It must be remembered that during the Japanese occupation a thin line had to be trod that could be overstepped inadvertently. Living under the Japanese was not a trouble-free period; the options were to comply with their wishes, or be considered their enemy. The latter brought imprisonment, torture, and even decapitation. It was not an easy life to lead.

During the Japanese occupation, people were always judging the behavior of others. It was difficult at times to assess what was right or wrong. Consequently, after the British returned, due to misunderstandings, family infighting and maneuvers, Sao Kya Zone did not become the Saohpa of Hsipaw as was expected.

It was alleged that Sao Marla, his cousin, who was now a senior member of the family, objected to Sao Kya Zone becoming Saohpa. She had returned to Hsipaw after her divorce from the Hsenwi Saohpa Long, and was determined to play the part of 'king-maker'. Her view was that he had fraternized with the enemy and was not fit to become the Saohpa of Hsipaw. She was fond of Sao Kya Zone's younger brother, Sao Kya Seng, and decided that he should become the ruler instead. The returning British took notice of her strong representations against Sao Kya Zone and, in 1949, installed, Sao Kya Seng as Saohpa.

Inge Sargent provides another perspective:

The people of the state, for these (alleged collaboration with Japanese) and other reasons, had refused to accept him - the older of the two brothers in line for succession - as their ruler in 1947, when the country was gaining independence from the British (Sargent 1994:48).

Nevertheless, a family member related that before the younger brother had accepted the position of Saohpa he had gone to Taunggyi to see Sao Kya Zone to explain the complicated situation. Both brothers spoke frankly to each other and reached an agreement regarding an announcement in the newspapers. Sao Kya Zone promised to declare his abdication as Saohpa of Hsipaw while Sao Kya Seng promised to declare that he would have no objection if his elder brother, Sao Kya Zone, were to resume being the Saohpa of Hsipaw.

Although Sao Kya Zone announced his willingness to abdicate in the Ludu and Bamah Khit newspapers, there was no reciprocal announcement from his younger brother declaring he had no objection to his elder brother being Saohpa. Ludu Daw Amar (1915-2008), a famous writer and the

wife of Ludu U Hla (1910-1982), the proprietor of the Mandalay daily newspaper, praised Sao Kya Zone's generosity. Only Sao Kya Seng knows why he did not keep his promise.

Notwithstanding his abdication, Sao Kya Zone helped to care for Hsipaw State while Sao Kya Seng went for further studies in the USA in 1949. Later it was revealed that the "king-maker" gang had forced Sao Kya Seng not to fulfill his promise and stirred up misunderstandings between the two brothers. For instance, when Sao Kya Seng returned with his Austrian wife from the States, Sao Kya Zone was not informed and subsequently did not travel to Rangoon to welcome back the couple.

In 1955, Sao Kya Zone went to the States to take a course in Public Administration at Syracuse University in New York State. On his return, he worked closely with Sao Hkun Hkio, the Head of State for Shan State on Shan Affairs, and served as a Minister for the Interior of the Shan State Council. Sao Kya Zone became deeply involved in Shan politics and when the meetings for the federal issues were discussed from 1961-1962, he was the Secretary of the Steering Committee for Amendment of the Constitution of the Union of Burma.

Another friend of the family revealed that apparently on the evening before the military coup headed by General Ne Win, the two brothers had been together in Taunggyi. In the early hours of 2 March 1962 when the coup was declared, Sao Kya Zone was taken to the Shan State Eastern Command Military Headquarters situated in Taunggyi.

The next morning, Sao Kya Seng was arrested at Kayin ma Yay htwet in Taunggyi as he was making his way to Heho Airport en route to Rangoon. He was then taken to the military camp. The two brothers met there, managing to speak briefly. It was the last time that they saw each other. Sao Kya Seng was said to have been transferred to Ba Htoo army camp and the following day, Sao Kya Zone was transferred to an isolation detention center at the Aungban Military Camp. Three days later, he was transferred to the notorious Insein Prison in Rangoon, where he was detained for eight years, until 1970.

Sao Kya Zone made attempts to meet General Ne Win after his release to inquire about his brother's fate, but Ne Win refused to meet him. It was only in 1984 that it became known that Sao Kya Seng had died during interrogations by the military intelligence, MIS, in Ba Htoo Camp.

Sao Kya Zone intended to take legal action for his brother's death, but Ne Win died before he could do so. Sao Kya Zone himself passed away at the age of ninety-three on 13 January, 2011.

The Tabaung Festivals

Annual festivals known as *poy* or *pwe* were held in various Shan States. For most people, poor and rich alike, the festivals were a time to relax and enjoy, meet friends, and have family reunions. These annual festivals provided outlying officials and village headmen occasions to come to the capital, pay into the state Treasury the taxes that they had collected during the year, and to affirm allegiance to their respective *saohpa long*.

In Hsipaw, the Bawgyo Pagoda *pwe* was held on the full moon day of Tabaung, a date which falls between March and April depending on the lunar calendar. It was a major event attracting townspeople of the capital and villagers alike from all over Hsipaw State including Kachin, Palaung, Lisu, and others. Many travelled for days to attend this important festival, as it was the one time in the year when they could see their prince and pay respects in his temporary, spacious pavilion. His arrival at the *pwe* ground was a spectacular event with bodyguards leading the procession followed by the Saohpa and his richly dressed entourage.

Many Burman, Indian and Chinese from Mandalay and other nearby towns came to sell textiles, clothing, and such imported goods as condensed milk and tinned sardines. The brightly colored imported goods were laid out to attract the unwary who usually ended up paying more than

they should have for the items.

Food and toy stalls lined the narrow lanes. The food stalls offered mouth-watering rice and curries, egg noodle dishes, the ever-popular Shan tofu, glutinous rice sticks, juicy mandarin oranges, and other tempting sweetmeats. People jostled around in the crowd, stopping to eat and drink with friends and family. The day was spent going around the side stalls, discovering magicians and jugglers. With money in hand, others shopped for gold and silver necklaces and bangles, and all kinds of beautifully colored textiles.

At sunset when the crimson skies of twilight faded, an assortment of lamps would be lit by the individual stallholders to further attract shoppers. The lanterns were either simple wick kerosene lamps or the bigger pressurized storm lanterns used by the larger stall owners. They transformed the whole area into a fairground. Villagers who were not used to such bright lights would be thrilled. By the late 1930s however, a generator was used to power the strings of electric light bulbs slung across from stall to stall enhancing the appearance of the merchandise.

Zat, 'musical and theatrical shows', lasted from dusk to dawn. Troops of Burmese actors and dancers from Mandalay were considered the best and played in different states at these festivals. Glitteringly dressed *minthami* and *mintha* danced their intricate steps to classical Burmese music. Nowadays, such classic entertainment is increasingly considered outdated at many festivals. Instead, the stage is shared by jean-clad guitar-strumming youths, singing Burmese and Tai Shan songs, some adapted from Western and Asian tunes.

To one side of the festival grounds would be the gambling tables where the four and the thirty-six animal games were played. The four-animal game was the more serious as people could win or lose their year's earning. Since ancient times the revenue collected from the gambling tables usually went into the "privy purse" of the princes. While generosity varied between princes, most gave the proceeds to schools, monasteries, hospitals, and roads in their respective states. Some were more honest and public-spirited than others and parted with sizeable sums, while others probably kept the whole lot.

On this matter the princes were attacked by Shan politicians who felt it was wicked to allow gambling at festivals and that it should have been banned. They also objected the pocketing of all the gambling money and not spending it on the state, as was proper. The Burmese writer and historian Mi Mi Khaing wrote in the early 1950s that:

The *pwes* come no more often than the State Lottery, and are over after a few days with a clean break unknown to the weekly or daily poker parties. The people go back to their fields, and looking forward to the next *pwe*, must produce enough to exchange there, or squander there if they like.

In the absence of an efficient form of taxation, this gambling money, if properly controlled and spent, perhaps pooled, could be a boon. Early this year, the UMP (the Union Military Police) in Taunggyi, in need of amenities for the men, were "allowed a *pwe*" and got Rs. 40,000 from the gambling contract.

She suggested that if the authorities allowed a night's gambling, enough could be raised for the schools, and hospitals or the Taunggyi Maternity Home which, with their wards full of poor patients, were always in need of money. Even today I am told that when funds are needed, Tatmadaw officers often organize a *pwe* in a Tai Shan town to raise the money needed. In this way it appears that there would always be money to pay for whatever is required.

HSIPAW FAMILY TREE²⁵

I Sao Kya Kai/Sao Hkun Hseng Saohpa No.85; (1866-1882; r. 1886-1902)

IWife1 Meiktila Supaya, sister to King Thibaw

(married 6 wives)

II1 Sir Sao Hke, Saohpa No.86; (1872-1928; r. 1906-1928)

(married 24 wives, only 4 wives are shown here)

II1Wife1 name unknown

III1 Sao On Kya, Saohpa No.87; (1893-1938; r.1928-1938)

III1Wife1 Sao Thunanda,* Mahadevi of Hsipaw

III2 Sao Kya Nyunt m. Sao Kwang Tai, Kengtung Saohpa (r. 1937-1937)

Mahadevi of Kengtung

II1Wife2 name unknown

III1 Sao Ohn Mar

II1Wife3 name unknown

III1 Sao Thiri Malar m. Sao Hom Hpa, Hsenwi Saohpa (1925-1959)

Mahadevi of Hsenwi

II1Wife4 Sao Shwe Myu

II2 Sao Kalar

II3 Sao Lui

(married 4 wives, only one is shown with 4 daughters)

II3Wife3 Khin Badauk remarried U Maung Maung Ba

III1 Sao Thunanda* m. Sao On Kya, Hsipaw Saohpa

III2 Sao Ohn Nyunt m. Sao Hkun Mong, Kengtung Family

III3 Khin Ma Gyi/Millie (from 2nd marriage)

III4 Khin Ma Lay/Pansy (from 2nd marriage)

II4 Sao O (1942-1945) ruler during Japanese occupation

(married 3 wives only one is shown with descendants)

II4Wife1 Sao Sein Lwa

III1 Sao Wunna/Sao Ma Ma Gyi m. Dr Ba Nyan

IV1 Khun Thawda

IV2 Dr Nang Mo Heng

III2 Sao Kya Zone/Harold (1918-2011) m. Sao Shwe Yone

IV1 Sao Oo Kya m. Sao Hsam Phone/Fern Holm, Mong Yai Family

IV2 Sao Htoo Kya

IV3 Sao Sandar

IV4 Sao Kya Hein

IV5 Sao Kya Hpoo

III3 Sao Kyi Su m. U Ba Nyunt

IV1 Hkun Htun U (SNLD) (adopted by Sao Kya Zone at the age of 2 years old)

IV2 Nang Lao Kham (adopted by Sao Kya Zone at only 3 months old)

III4 Sao Kya Seng/Charlie, Saohpa of Hsipaw (b. 1924-1962? r. 1947-1959);

m. Inge Eberhard/Sao Thusandi, Mahadevi of Hsipaw

IV1 Mayari

²⁵ Sources: Hsipaw family members and SSK (1943).

IV2 Kenari
III5 Sao Yi Nu

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Hseng (r. 1886-1902) (Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sir Sao Hke (r. 1906-1928) and Mahadevi Nang Kot Loang (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Hke at the Sakantha Haw at his inauguration (1922; Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hke (r. 1906-1928) with friends (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sawbva Saw Khé, Ko Shwé Hman and Dr. Marks.

Saohpa Sao Hke/Che standing with Sao Lue the Kyemmong, Hteik Kaung Tin Ayee Phaya, Sao Ohn Kya, Sao Kya Nyunt, and Sao O (1902; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Ohn Kya (r. 1928-1938) (Hsipaw Family Private Collection)



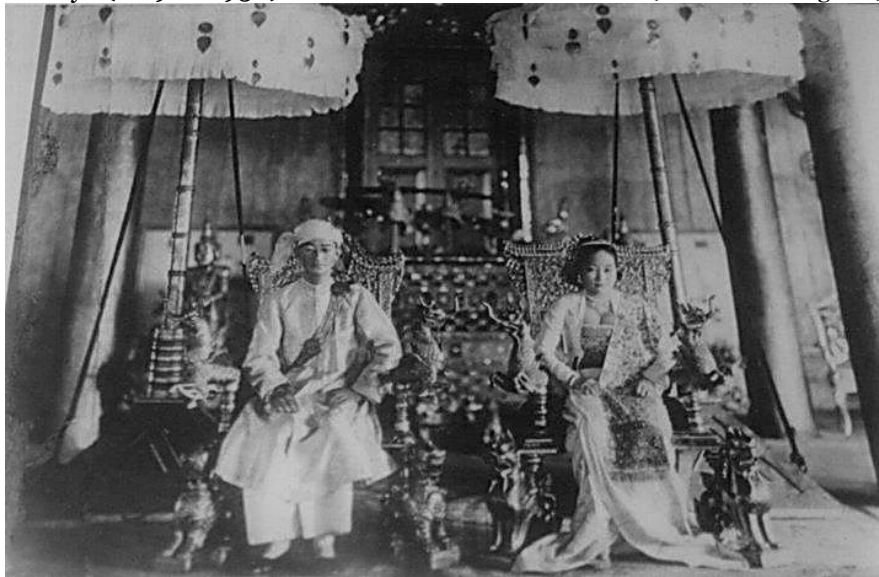
Saohpa Sao Hke (r. 1906-1928) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Shwe Myu, one of Sir Sao Hke's wives (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



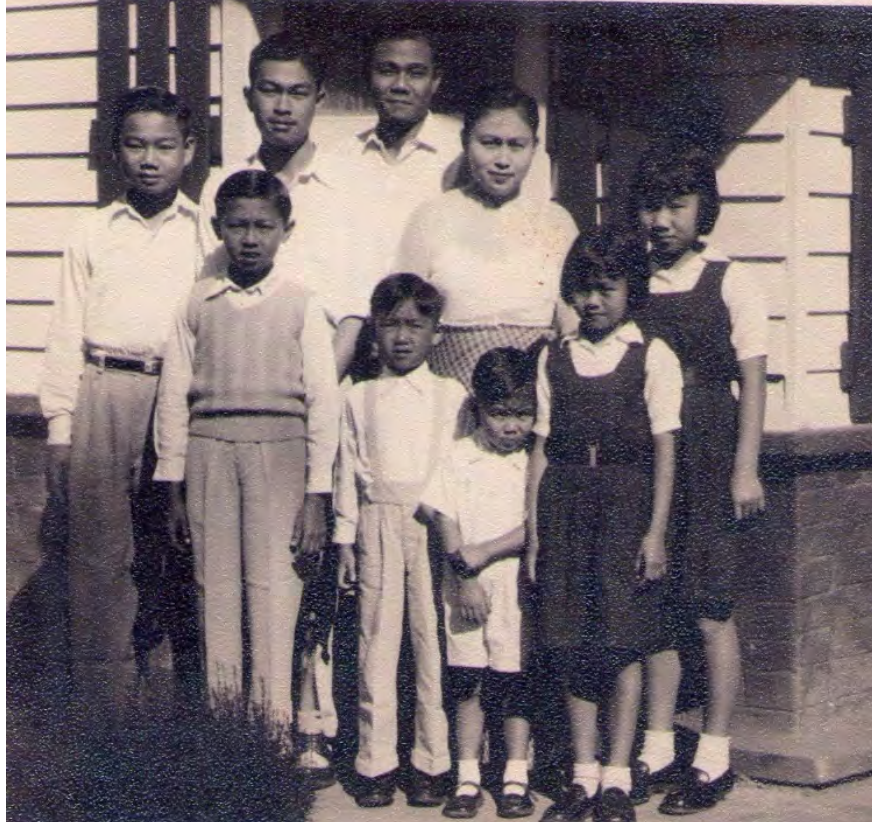
Saohpa Sao Ohn Kya (r. 1928-1938) and Mahadevi Sao Thunanda (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Kya Seng (1947-1959) and Mahadevi Sao Thusandi (Arthur and Huk Private Collection).



Center: Parents Sao Kya Sone and Sao Shwe Yone. Sao Oo Kya (next to Sao Kya Sone) diagonally down: Khun Htun Oo (next to Sao Oo Kya), Sao Htoo Kya, Sao Kya Hein, Sao Kya, Sao Kya Hpoo, Sao Sanda (in school uniform next to little Sao Kya Hpoo), and Nang Lao Kham also in school uniform (1957; Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



Sao Ohn Nyunt's famous portrait painted by Sir Gerald Kelly in London (1930s; Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



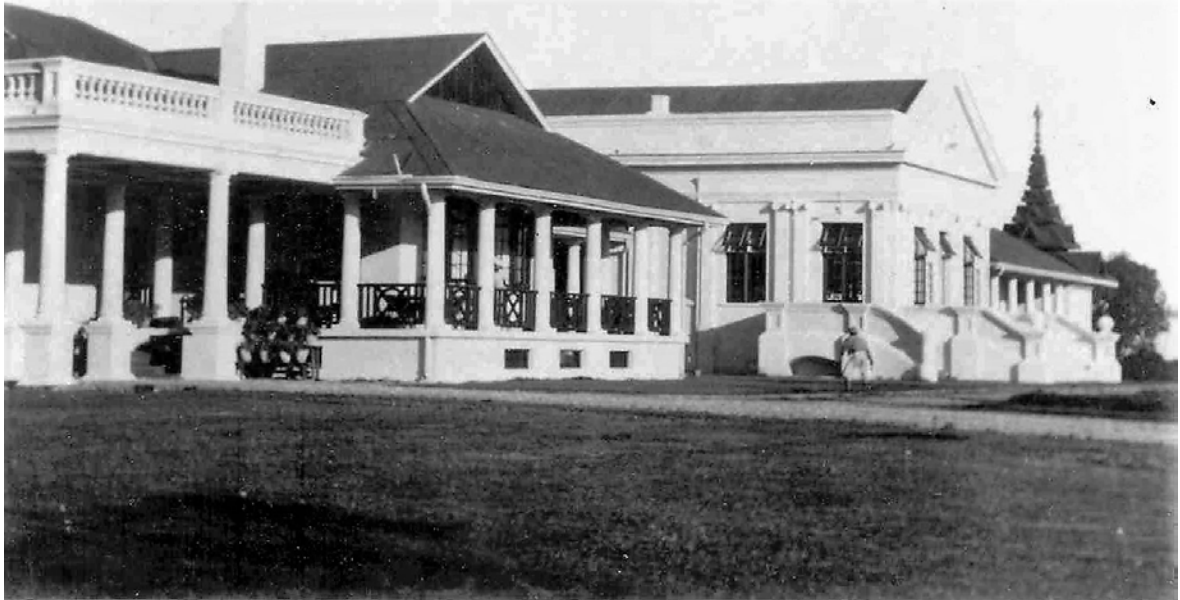
The old Hsipaw Haw (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



The Hsipaw Haw that is still standing and inhabited by members of the Hsipaw family (2000s; Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



The Sakantha Haw, the grand summer palace (1940s; Hsipaw Family Private Collection).



HSENWI STATE

Hsenwi Saohpa Long

The path of Tai migration from the north followed the Nam Mao, the Shweli River Valley. The region then was Mong Mao, a large Tai kingdom and included what was to become the original *mong* of the Shan States: Hsenwi, Hsipaw, Mong Nai, Mong Pai, Yawngghwe, and Kengtung. At that time, Mong Mao was also known as Kawsumpi but the Bamar pronounced it Ko Shan Pyi 'Nine Shan Kingdoms'.

When Hsenwi came into its own, it covered territories to the south, which became known as Mong Yai (South Hsenwi), Kesi Mansam, Mong Hsu, Mong Nawng, Mong Kung, and Laikha. These were smaller *mong* between Hsenwi and Mong Nai. To Hsenwi's east were the states of Kokang and the two Wa states that later came under its jurisdiction. To the west were Hsipaw, Mong Mit, and Tawngpeng that collectively made up the Northern Shan States. Its northern neighbor has been China in its many changing forms, from empires to present day communism.

In the past, rival claimants contested the Hsenwi Mong. In about 1846, the Saohpa of Hsenwi was Hseng Naw Hpa, a Burman appointee. He was unable to rule with authority and was duly unseated by Sang Hai, a military man. The Hsenwi Prince was summoned to Mandalay for failing to resist his overthrow and was kept prisoner. During King Thibaw's time, Sang Hai was left alone in charge of the northern part of Hsenwi. The two or three Burman ministers sent to rule Hsenwi, were also unable to maintain control. In 1877, various states including Yawngghwe, were called upon by the Mandalay Court to attack Sang Hai, the usurper. Upon their arrival, he fled, but left his son-in-law, Hkun Sang Ton Hung, in charge of his territory.

Released from imprisonment, Hseng Naw Hpa was for a while able to regain control of Hsenwi and was reinstated with help from other friendly princes, but once again, failing to handle his state, was summoned by the Mandalay Court. Knowing what the consequences might be, he sent his son Naw Mong, in his place while he fled to Kengtung. In the prince's absence, Hkun Sang Ton Hung seized the opportunity to take up arms against him, and overran the state with the help of a large force of Kachin. He immediately declared himself the ruler of Hsenwi and was permitted to rule the state by King Thibaw.

The British on annexation, finding Hkun Sang Ton Hung *in situ*, declared him Saohpa. To keep the peace, the British divided Hsenwi State into North and South Hsenwi. Subsequently, Hkun Sang Ton Hung ruled the northern portion while Sao Naw Mong, son of Hseng Naw Hpa, the former ruler of Hsenwi, ruled the southern portion that eventually became South Hsenwi. Later South Hsenwi was renamed Mong Yai while North Hsenwi remained as Hsenwi.

Earlier in 1904, Hkun Sang Ton Hung had named his son by his first wife, Hkun Ai, as his successor for recognition by the British Government. However, when he died in 1916, a Board of Officials appointed by the Government, chose So Hom Hpa (1902-1963; r. 1925-1959), a son of Hkun Sang Ton Hung's fifth wife, Nang Am.

Sao Hom Hpa, was duly acknowledged as the heir. In 1912, he began his education at the Shan Chief's School in Taunggyi. During World War I, he served with the Burma Rifles and like my father, continued service in the British/Indian army. He resigned from the army in 1921 and later served as a gazette officer at Magwe. He was installed as Saohpa of Hsenwi (r. 1925-1959). Then in 1931, he attended the Round Table Conference in London as an observer, with my father and two other princes.

In 1938 with the approach of World War II, the British Army re-enlisted ex-soldiers and many princes re-joined, including Sao Hom Hpa, the Hsenwi Saohpa Long, who again served in the Burma Rifles with my father. As a captain, Sao Hom Hpa oversaw the Kalaw District and was later

promoted to major. Tall and distinguished looking, he was attractive to women. It was at that time that he met his fifth wife, a Burmese beauty known as Nang Kalaw 'Lady from Kalaw' (in Tai Shan). She became his favorite wife and he generously indulged her. After the British retreated in 1942, Sao Hom Hpa resigned from the army and returned to Hsenwi to administer his state.

Despite his many wives, Sao Hom Hpa had no offspring so decided to adopt a son and daughter. He adopted Sao Hkam Hip Hpa, known as Ivan in school, the son of his brother, Sao Hman Hpa, and acknowledged as the *sao sa daw*, the royal son. The prince then adopted the daughter of an elder sister who had married a French gentleman, Mr. ETD Gaudoin. In this manner, Sao Sein Myint, or Elaine as she was known in school, became the *sao sami daw* 'the royal daughter'.

In earlier days, Sao Hom Hpa had little interest in state affairs. He preferred a game of mahjong to discussing politics. This is where my father differed from his brother-in-law. Sao Hearn Hkam, my stepmother and fourth mother, was a half-sister of the prince. The Hsenwi Saohpa was a severe ruler, a disciplinarian, and almost autocratic in his attitude. He disliked anyone raising an objection or contradicting him. It was even rumored that he did not think twice of sending such people to jail for a short spell to make them change their minds. He believed that anyone breaking the law had to be punished and it did not matter whether the offence was large or small or who they were.

Mi Mi Khaing described Sao Hom Hpa picturesquely:

...only three big chiefs of the older generation, Yawnghwe, Taungpeng, and Hsenwi, remain. The rest are all young or of recent succession. Hsenwi Sawbwa is the most colourful of the leaders who remain -- a Shan Sawbwa with a solid body of Kachins among his subjects, forming in his personality a bridge between past days and the present, autocratic in the days of autocracy, magnanimous and conceding in these days of change, always positive, astute and daring. (Khaing 1950:13)

The Saohpa of Hsenwi was a wealthy prince with revenue from various sources. Lashio, the center for rail and road communications, brought in trade at all levels and became a booming town. The silver, ruby, and jade mines in its territory brought in still more income from taxes and royalties. Bertril Lintner assessed the prince's wealth:

Although most of the income from opium trade was generated in markets outside the poppy growing area, the Saohpa of Hsenwi - under whose jurisdiction the newly acquired territory of Kokang fell - collected more than any other prince during the British era (Lintner 1999:62).

The main part of Hsenwi town lay in the valley but the prince's *haw* and those of his relations were built on a hillside. Driving up the short steep hill, one suddenly comes upon a large, imposing stone building, the *Haw*. Unlike our own Yawnghwe Palace, the architecture of the *Haw* was in the colonial style complete with modern amenities, decorated with European furnishings and furniture. Many of the houses belonging to the prince's family too were built in western style. But the old Hsenwi Haw, which was similarly built of teak wood in the architectural style of the Royal Palace in Mandalay, was no longer lived in and used only on ceremonial occasions. Higher up and almost on top of the hill, stood a small pagoda that the prince had built as his private place of worship.

Japanese Disapproval

As expected, during the Japanese occupation the Hsenwi Prince did not gain Japanese trust. Like my father, Sao Hom Hpa had served in the British army and was thus labeled pro-British. The

Japanese authorities 'unseated' him, replacing him with a younger half-brother, Sao Yape Hpa from 1942 to 1945, the duration of their occupation. This action obviously did not please the prince, but since he could not object, he had to accept what the Japanese decreed. In his private papers, the Hsenwi Prince pointed out that since he knew the Japanese authorities were unhappy with him, he had voluntarily handed over the state to Sao Yape Hpa.

The Japanese kept Sao Hom Hpa under house arrest, interrogating him from time to time, accusing him of continued loyalty to the British. He was eventually released after convincing them that this was not the case. Having been forced to relinquish his position and with no responsibilities, Sao Hom Hpa kept a low profile, spending much of his time playing mahjong.

The Japanese commandeered the Western style palace and occupied it for the rest of the war. Sao Hom Hpa's family thus had to leave the new *haw* and, with their cousins, moved into the old *haw*. All the palaces and much of the town were destroyed during the latter part of the war. Little of the old Hsenwi remains today.

During this period, the Japanese dropped leaflets with a picture of the Hsenwi and Yawnghwe princes sitting together in company of a British general. The printed message instructed the BIA and any pro-Japanese person who came across the two men, to kill them. This showed how much antagonism there was against the two princes: neither was free from danger.

On the other hand, the behavior of individual Japanese officers was generally decent. For instance, when Sao Hman Hpa, the Hsenwi Kyemmong, the prince's brother was sentenced to death after parachuting down behind enemy lines in General Wingate's campaign for the reoccupation of Burma, it was through the good offices of one of the kindly Japanese officers stationed in Lashio that it was possible to negotiate and save him. The orders for release came just in time, for he was about to finish digging his own grave. Despite the black mark against the Hsenwi Prince, the authorities were willing, on humanitarian grounds, to release his brother. All the same, these individual kindnesses and shows of friendship were not enough to offset the misery suffered by most.

Sao Hom Hpa was also not happy with the way Sao Yape Hpa was ruling Hsenwi State. He accused him of fomenting trouble in Kokang and the Wa States by taking Japanese forces into those territories. During British rule the two states had been under Hsenwi State jurisdiction, but after the war both Kokang and the Wa states came into their own as territories with distinctive aspirations.

Flight to Safety

When the Allies began bombing Hsenwi Town, the Hsenwi Prince wisely went to live in the jungle. In 1944-1945 towards the end of the Japanese occupation, the British and Allied troops attacked northern Burma. Many of the princes who had been living quietly then had to flee into the jungles as the Japanese troops retreated. No one wanted to be in the way of the retreating Japanese forces. Sao Hom Hpa was already living in a remote part of his state and organized a resistance group to fight the Japanese as they retreated. Sometime later, the US 101st Airborne Forces contacted him and arranged for him and family members to escape. When the Japanese heard of their escape, they burned down the entire town of Hsenwi in revenge.

In anger against Sao Hom Hpa the Japanese took Sao Yape Hpa, the acting ruler, into custody although he knew nothing about his brother's escape. The two brothers were not on good terms. Sao Hom Hpa wrote in a private memo that he had deliberately not told his brother for fear that he might have reported their escape to the Japanese and that could have easily led to the whole family being slaughtered by the soldiers.

Members of the Saohpa's family left behind were given a hard time. This included Elaine, his

adopted daughter, the *sao sami daw*. The Hsenwi Prince believed that his French brother-in-law had been working together with the acting ruler, Sao Yape Hpa, for the Japanese, so he also was not told about the intended escape. In their fury, the Japanese took the Gaudoin family at midnight to a little village, Na Mark Kaw, in Hsipaw State. Having managed earlier to buy some staple foods, the family then survived on rice, oil, and salt, which became the basis of their daily life. As salt became a precious commodity, they bartered their supply in exchange for meat and vegetables, making their lives more bearable.

In describing their escape, Elaine said that one day, one of her brothers who had learned some Japanese, but had pretended to have no knowledge of the language, had accidentally overheard the guards saying that the family was going to be taken to Bangkok as they retreated, or they would be killed. This was unwelcome news, but good fortune was on the side of the Gaudoin family. Elaine further told me that, "Our savior was the same Captain that got Uncle Sao Hman Hpa a reprieve. He told us to get out and to keep away from the retreating line. We were guided by villagers to a mountain village and stayed with tea planters." Lucky to have escaped, they remained in this remote village until the end of the war, though it was neither a happy nor comfortable time for the family.

After the return of the British administration, Sao Hom Hpa, who was by now taking an interest in Shan State affairs, became decidedly anxious about the position of the *sao hpa* and their relationship with the returning British administrators. He attended the Panglong Conference in 1946 and a year later, he was one of the signatories of the Panglong Agreement on 12 February 1947.

Soon after independence was gained on March 1948, Lashio was occupied by the White Flag Communists, who robbed the government bank of 1,500,000 Kyats in cash and took soldiers, police, and servicemen with them. Northern Shan State was in utter chaos. However, Sao Hom Hpa managed to organize the police and state civil servants and led them to successfully fight the communists, to re-occupy Lashio, and hand it back to the Union government.

Later, Kachin Captain Naw Seng together with the KNDO, attacked Lashio again and managed to take 600,000 Kyats in cash from the government bank. When Hsenwi Sao hpa asked help from the Union of Burma government, the government disappointed him by sending only a squadron of Kayah military-police to guard transport. He decided to fight on with his small group of men as he was determined to defend the independence of Burma, rather than giving in to the communists and insurgents. Instability continued for many months.

In 1949, Sao Hom Hpa as Commissioner of Shan State for Special Duties worked hard to maintain law and order in the Shan State. He was duly honored and given one of the top awards, the title of Thadomaha Thraysithu, by the President of Burma for his concerted efforts and untiring service to the country.

In March 1953, the Hsenwi Prince once again demonstrated his military skills when he fought together with the Tatmadaw against the invasion of the KMT and drove them out of Hsenwi State. Subsequently, the split of the AFPFL party into two factions that of the Clean and the Stable, caused enough concern for changes to be made in the administration of the Shan State. The Shan State Government, which until then was situated in Rangoon, was moved to Taunggyi, the administrative center. Sao Hom Hpa was offered the position of Head of State, which he had refused two or three times before accepting in November 1958.

Playing the role of an outsider, Sao Hom Hpa did not participate further in Shan State affairs. Perhaps Sao Hom Hpa had shrewdly seen the writing on the wall and realized that he had to support the Tatmadaw to gain their goodwill. He doubtless did the right thing for himself by keeping away from the Federal issue discussions, for General Ne Win did not arrest him with the other princes when the disastrous coup took place in 1962.

Shan-Kachin

Northwest of Hsenwi State is a region inhabited by the Kachin, part of which, after independence in 1947, became Kachin State. In earlier days, the Hsenwi Saohpa Long had the responsibility of ruling over the Tai Shan, the Kachin, Kokang, and the Wa peoples living in his state.

For many decades, the Kachin people lived along the northern edge of Hsenwi State, mostly in the area between Namkham and Kutkai. There are six main groups of Kachin: Azi, Jingpaw, Lăshi, Lisu, Maru, and Răwang, with the Jingpaw sub-group being the largest. They are of Tibeto-Burman stock, one of the latest immigrant groups to enter the country, though there is some dispute about this.

Before their arrival, most of the land was occupied by the Tai Shan, Chin, and Palaung/Ta'ang, but the aggressive and tough Kachin drove them out. The Chin and a group of Tai Shan, who came to be known as the Ahom, were driven westward. Both the Palaung and Tai Shan were forced to move south, while the Kachin remained in the uplands. Periodically, they sent raiding parties, harassing the Tai Shan living in the valleys.

There were many problems with the Kachin who kept creeping onto Hsenwi territory and the Hsenwi Saohpa had a difficult time keeping them out, resulting in frequent wrangles over land. Although boundaries were marked, there were constant quarrels over cattle and buffaloes that wandered across international borders into different villages. To contain these disputes locally, there were regular meetings between Chinese and Tai Shan officials to smooth things over.

Kachin living in the Kachin hills were conservative. There was both a political and a social gap between the two groups. Kachin who had moved down to the valleys lived within the Hsenwi State and, like the Tai Shan, showed great loyalty to the *saohpa*. They lived side by side cultivating rice and some even became Buddhists. As they continued living within Hsenwi State many considered themselves Tai Shan, adopting its language and culture.

During and after the war years, the princes of Hsenwi and Mong Mit both found that, there was more encroachment from the nearby hilly regions. The British had encouraged these resettlements in the more amenable lowlands, as reward for Kachin loyalty to the British and services given during the war. Considering the deal unfair the princes objected to these intrusions. They felt strongly that it was the duty of the British to see that the demarcations between the States were clear and that the question of encroachment was settled amicably, otherwise they were likely to face racial tensions between the Kachin and the Tai Shan. Clearly, there was discontent and an urgent appeal was made to the new Frontier Areas Service to help sort out these matters.

However, with the formation of the Kachin State and advent of independence, Tai Shan and Kachin in the hills have increasingly grown apart. Today, the Kachin people live in the Kachin State and northern Shan State, an area that covers the northern most region of Burma to the north of Hsenwi State. The sources of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers are to be found here, with the longer Irrawaddy running through the length of the country.

During colonial days, the British Indian army recruited large numbers of young Kachin, together with Chin, Karen, and Tai Shan. Many fought in World War I. When World War II broke out, many of these ethnic soldiers fought valiantly alongside British troops against the Japanese.

Catholic missions arrived in the Kachin hills around 1874, followed by Baptist missionaries. Although in the old days many Kachin were animists, most have now become Christians. The missionaries have helped to educate the young in local schools and in other missionary schools in big cities such as Rangoon, Mandalay, and Maymyo. With poor conditions in towns and villages in the Shan and Kachin States, many of the promising youth, having qualified as doctors, engineers, and scientists, have left their homeland to make a living for themselves elsewhere.

They have the Christian missionaries to thank for giving them the opportunity to spread their wings. But once the young have flown their nests, few want to return. This behavior is understandable and not much can be done if there is no framework to absorb them back into their own society. It is a phenomenon to be found throughout the Shan Plateau nowadays.

The modern Kachin wear their traditional costumes only for their weddings and other important celebrations such as the New Year. The women's costumes are striking, showing a love of vivid reds and silver ornaments. The beautifully designed silver mantles, worn over the shoulders like a shawl, indicate the family's wealth. The chunky discs and different shapes of silver that make up the decoration weigh a few kilograms. The sarong and a blouse have become the standard dress for modern young women, and both young men and women now wear jeans.

Burma Road

Linking Burma with China, the original Burma Road section, 717 miles (1,154 km) long, was completed in 1938. It runs through rough, winding mountainous country from Lashio to Kunming in China. Built by mainly Chinese laborers it was initiated when full-scale war broke out between China and Japan. At that time, the Japanese occupied most of China's coastal areas, forcing the Chinese to seek an alternative route for bringing in their supplies. Consequently, the road became a busy thoroughfare transporting military equipment to Chiang Kai-Shek's forces, the KMT, in China, through the port of Rangoon. The supplies were transported first by rail to Lashio, and then transferred to heavy trucks for onward dispatch along the Burma Road.

Beginning in 1941, US Army engineers greatly improved the road up to Kunming to accommodate the increased traffic, thus making Lashio a major railhead for the highway. It also made the two towns of Muse and Namkham, near the China border, important stopping places.

The northwest link, the Ledo Road that started from Ledo Town in Assam via Myitkyina, was a 478 mile stretch. In the 1920s, the British and the Indian had begun building the road from Ledo to Assam through the Pangsau Pass, which is 3,727 feet high. But it was only in 1937 that serious construction work was carried out. This road went through the Hukawng Valley, where thousands of refugees died of disease, hunger, and exhaustion, as they fled the advancing Japanese army in 1941 and 1942. It earned the name of 'Valley of Death'.

Following the British withdrawal, the road became a priority for the United States and was upgraded by American engineers, soon reaching Myitkyina and Bhamo in the Kachin hills. It was completed in late 1944, two years after General Joseph W Stilwell took on the responsibility for building the Ledo Road. This whole stretch of the road was renamed Stilwell Road, in honor of the American general, who was Chief of Staff to Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

Once the two sections were connected, it became a highway of 1,079 miles stretching from Assam, India to Kunming, China. By early 1945, loaded trucks from Ledo were making their journey to the Chinese frontier. Importantly, the Stilwell Road was of the greatest help to advancing British forces from India as they fought their way back to regain Burma and effectively chase the retreating Japanese troops southward.

Lashio, an administrative center for the Northern Shan States within Hsenwi, had long been a trading center between China and the Shan States. In the 1940s, the numerous convoys carrying food, building materials, and military supplies that departed from here to the frontier and into China, changed the town's financial status. That change was immediately apparent after the war. Unlike other Shan towns, which were mostly long main streets of small bamboo and thatched houses on stilts, here there were more wood and brick houses. Corrugated iron sheets had replaced thatch and bamboo for roofing.

The narrow streets and lanes in the market area were filled with busy Chinese and Shan-Tayok (Shan-Chinese) people. There were rows of little shops selling such imported goods as textiles, shoes, and tinned food. In fierce business competition with the Chinese, Indian and Pakistani shopkeepers stood in front of their stores inviting people to come in and inspect their goods. Then, as now, the streets were lined with lorries and trucks laden with goods on their way to China. Nowadays, there is a thriving black market along the border area and a great many Chinese inhabit Lashio. Even in the old days, the town itself looked as if it was inhabited only by the Chinese and not Shan, though Hsenwi and its neighboring towns were still inhabited by Shan and Kachin. In 1998, the Lashio to Muse road was rebuilt and upgraded to take heavy traffic, which has cut the time of travel between the two towns from two days to less than eight hours.

In earlier days, not only Hsenwi State prospered, but adjoining Hsipaw, Mong Mit, and Tawngpeng states benefited from the Burma Road and the commercial enterprises that grew out of it.

Dr. Gordon Seagrave (1897-1965)

Travelling further northeast of Hsenwi towards the Chinese border is Namkham 'Golden Waters' Town, which sits by the Shweli River. The town's Tai Shan and Chinese residents are usually referred to as 'Tai Neua' in Shan, and 'Shan-Tayok' in Burmese, meaning 'Shan-Chinese'. They live along the border and in the former Shan states of Yunnan just over the Shweli Bridge to the north of Namkham and Muse. Large numbers of Tai Neua also live in Kengtung State. They are like the Tai Dam who live in Laos near the Shan-Laos border at Luang Namtha.

The architecture of the houses and temples in this town was influenced by the neighbors across the border. The buildings have tiled roofs, many with two or three tiers. Except for the dress of the women who are distinguished by their tall, cylindrical shaped-turbans, there is little visible difference between the two banks of the Shweli.

One cannot refer to Hsenwi or Namkham without mentioning the renowned Dr. Gordon Seagrave, an American doctor who worked in this remote frontier town of Namkham at the American Baptist Hospital, better known as the American Medical Center. Dr. Seagrave also ran a nursing school that was attended by girls from different Shan states, including daughters of *saohpa*. A school was also set up to teach English to the young trainees who needed to upgrade the language for their medical instruction.

The princes were pleased to have the American Medical Center and, as its fame grew, young Kachin, Indian, and Chinese men and women, enthused by the venture, flocked to join the Center.

Dr. Seagrave, himself, became increasingly famous for his surgical and humanitarian work. Many mountain people who had no faith in Western medicine in the early 1930s, came in large numbers to be treated when they heard there was a cure for goiter. This affliction, which was caused by a deficiency of iodine, was common in the region. The doctor soon became multilingual, speaking both Tai Shan and Kachin proficiently, which enabled him to win the confidence of those who came from diverse communities to seek his help. The missionary spirit and the commitment to humanitarian work of both Dr. Seagrave and his staff made the hospital successful.

The doctor and his nurses attended to wounded British soldiers and marched out with them as they retreated into India. When the British re-occupied Burma, he returned with the troops. But when independence came, he was in disgrace with the then AFPFL government. His crime was that he had helped the wounded and sick alike, making no distinction between those who were insurgents and those who were not. After he was released from detention until his death in 1964, he carried on his work in Namkham with devotion and a passion for the mountain people who needed him so

much. His book *The Life of a Burma Surgeon* tells of his life's achievements in the Shan hills.

HSENWI FAMILY TREE²⁶

Sang Hai, a successful commander usurped Hsenwi throne 1887

I Hkun Sang Tun Hung, Saohpa (1852-1916; r. 1888-1916); son-in-law of Sang Hai (married 7 wives)

IWife1 Nang Nang/Nang Hsang, daughter of Sang Hai

II1 Hkun Ai

II2 Hkun Ung Hpa

III1 Nang Hkam U

III2 Sao Kai Hpa (b. 1908) m. Sao Mya Sein, Hsipaw family

III3 Sao Yan Hpa (b. 1910)

IWife2 Nang Ywet/Nang Kham Hpuk, Mahadevi of Hsenwi

II1 Sao Hkam Hseng m. Sao Som, Mong Lun Saohpa

II2 Sao Hkan Hkam m. Saohpa Kang Ai, China

II3 Nang Hseng U m. E.T.D. Gaudoin

III1 Nang Htwe Kham/Nancy

III2 Sao Sein Myint/Elaine (b. 1925) Sao Sami Daw adopted by Saohpa m. Frank Quinn

III3 Nang Sampu/Eleanor

IWife3 Nang Kham Ai, a daughter of San Hai, a half-sister of husband

II1 Nang Kham Mo

IWife4 Nang Kham Kut, a daughter of San Hai, a half-sister of husband

II1 Nang Sam Hkam

II2 Sao Yape Hpa (1909) Ruler during Japanese period (1942-1945)

IWife5 Nang Am

II1 Sao Hom Hpa, Saohpa (1902-1963; r. 1926-1959)

(married 6 wives)

II1Wife1 Sao Malar, Hsipaw Family, Mahadevi 1925

III1 Sao Hkam Hip Hpa, Sao Sa Daw (adopted)

III2 Sao Sein Myint, Sao Sami Daw (adopted)

II1Wife2 Sao Van Tip, Kengtung Family, Mahadevi 1933

II1Wife3 Nang Hseng Hern

III1 Sao Lun Coup Wan

II1Wife4 Nang Mo Hkam

II1Wife5 Nang Than Yin

II1Wife6 Nang Shwe Tin

II2 Sao Hman Hpa, Kyemmong (1905-1962) m. Sao Thu Sanda, Hsipaw Family

III1 Sao Hkam Hip Hpa/Ivan (b. 1927) Sao Sa Daw adopted by Saohpa m. Erica Wootton

III2 Sao Shwe Ohn/Patricia (b. 1928) m. Sao Hseng Hpa, Yawnghwe Kyemmong

III3 Sao Yu Pa Kya Yi/Nancy (b. 1929) m. Sao Lon Mawng, Mong Kung

²⁶ Sources: Hsenwi Family members and SSK (1943).

Kyemmong

IWife6 Nang Ai

II1 Hkun Huk Hpa

II2 Nang Heng Kaw

II3 Sao Pym Hpa

II4 Sao Hearn Hkam m. Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa of Yawngghwe, Mahadevi
(see Yawngghwe FT for offspring)

IWife7 Nang Kham Hsar

II1 Sao Hseng Zanda (b. 1913) m. Hkun Ohn Kya

II2 Sao Kyaw Hpa

PHOTOGRAPHS

Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa with family and retinue. L-R: sitting on chairs Mahadevi Sao Malar (5) sits with Sao Sa Daw/Sao Hkam Hip Hpa (6) between her and Sao Hom Hpa (7) and Sao Sami Daw/Sao Sein Myint (8) on his left (1930s; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



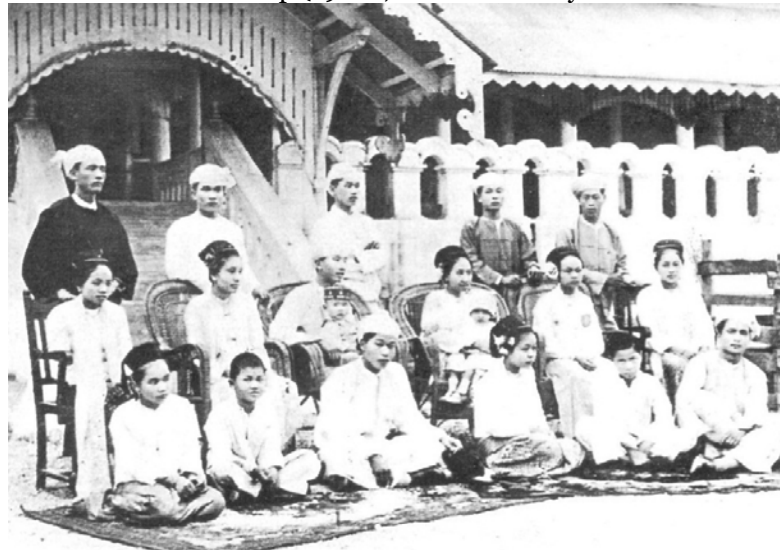
Mother of Sao Hom Hpa and Sao Hman Hpa (1900s; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Sao Hom Hpa and Sao Thiri Malar Mahadevi I (1925; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa with members of his family. Sao Sa Daw sits on his lap, while Sao Sa mi Daw sits on Mahadevi Sao Malar's lap (1920s; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa with Sao Van Tip Mahadevi II, Kengtung Family (1933; Sao Khai Mong)



Mr ETD Gaudoin and Mrs Gaudoin Sao Hseng Oo, elder sister of Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa (1930s: Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Hsenwi Kyemmong Sao Hman Hpa with his wife, Sao Thu Sanda (Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa officiates at wedding of niece Sao Shwe Ohn and Sao Hseng Hpa Yawnghwe Kyemmong (1950s; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Two Hsenwi princesses, Sao Hearn Hkam and Sao Hseng Zanda (1930s; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Sao Yape Hpa, half-brother of Hsenwi Saohpa Sao Hom Hpa, who administered Hsenwi State during the Japanese occupation (1943-1945; Shan Cultural Museum, Taunggyi).



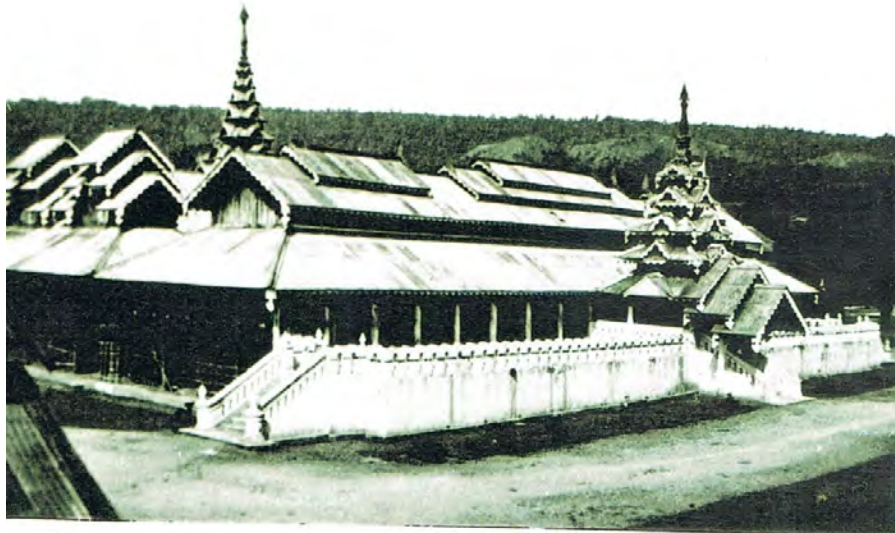
Sao Hman Hpa (sitting second on the left) with his fellow army officers 1942, North West Frontier, India (1942; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



Hsenwi Haw as it was before the Japanese war (1940; Hsenwi Family Private Collection).



The old Hsenwi Haw (1930s; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



MONG YAI STATE

A Kingdom Lost

Mong Yai State was the original southern portion of Mong Hsenwi. The state sits directly under Hsenwi to the north and is flanked on the east by the two Wa States. Below it to the south is Kesi Mansam. Hsipaw lies to the west. Just over thirty miles north is Tangyan, the birthplace in 1959 of the Shan resistance movement, the Num Suk Harn. Sao Kyaw Tun, also known as Sao Hso Won, from Mong Yai State became renowned for his bravery.

The vast Mong of Hsenwi was ruled many centuries ago by the ancestors of Hseng Naw Hpa. As stated in the *Hsenwi Chronicles*, Hseng Naw Hpa is mentioned as the son of Saohpa Hso Harn Hpa, founder of the original dynasty.

Until the destruction of the Mao Tai kingdom in 1604, Hsenwi was a powerful *mong*. However, in those days there were many battles for control of a *mong* and there was much unrest in Hsenwi. In 1846 Hseng Naw Hpa was the Saohpa of Hsenwi but he was not a strong ruler. Due to the time he spent in prison at the Court of Mandalay and his later flight from a usurper, he lost his *mong*.

Hkun Sang Ton Hung, the son of the usurper took advantage of the legitimate ruler's absence and overran the state with the help of a large force of Kachin. He immediately declared himself the ruler of Hsenwi and was given permission to rule Hsenwi by King Thibaw.

During the reign of terror that followed Thibaw's accession, a daughter of the Hsenwi Saohpa, Hseng Naw Hpa and Hsenwi Saohpa's grandson were victims of the massacre. It was not a pleasant time for Shan princes who had presented their daughters or sisters in goodwill to the monarchy for they also had to flee or be killed or imprisoned.

In 1886 when the British occupied Mandalay, all prisoners were released. Among them was Naw Mong, the son of the Hseng Naw Hpa, the Hsenwi Prince. Meanwhile, one of the Konbaung princes who had escaped from the royal massacre carried out by King Thibaw and Queen Supayalat, also found himself free. The Myinzaing Prince together with Naw Mong made their way towards Hsenwi. They formed a confederacy and planned to reinstall Naw Mong's father to Hsenwi State, while Naw Mong would rule Hsipaw. This did not happen and a year or so later, Naw Mong raised his father's standard and went to battle against Hkun Sang Ton Hung to reclaim Hsenwi for his father, but found his enemy far too strong for him.

Hsenwi Divided

The British by then had annexed the Shan States, but instead of Sao Naw Mong being installed as Saohpa for the whole of Hsenwi, the territory was divided into North and South Hsenwi to avoid further complications. Hkun Sang Ton Hung ruled the northern portion, known as North Hsenwi, while the southern portion known as South Hsenwi went to Sao Naw Mong, son of Hseng Naw Hpa. The two states were renamed and South Hsenwi became Mong Yai, while North Hsenwi simply became known as Hsenwi.

At that time, the Hsipaw Saohpa was Sao Naw Mong (1855-1918; r. 1888-1913). For most of his twenty-five-year reign, there was peace in the Shan States and Mong Yai progressed. Sao Naw Mong attended Delhi *darbar* in 1903 and 1911. In 1896, he was awarded the Kyet-tha-ye zaung Shwe salwe Ya Min 'Gold Chain/Sash of Honor' KSM decoration. On his death in 1918, his eldest son, Sao Sone (1888-1946; r. 1918-1946), succeeded him also receiving the KSM in 1918 for his services during World War I.

Sao Sone had ten wives. The first was Nang Htun Hla, a princess adopted by Laikha Saohpa, who was originally the daughter of Mawksmai Saohpa. Sao Sone was to have several children by his many wives.

When Sao Sone died in 1946, his son, Sao Hso Holm (1917-1989; r. 1946-1959) the Kyemmong, became ruler. In 1928 when he was eleven, Sao Hso Holm went to study at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. While at school he took great interest in sports, playing football and indeed, became a player on the school football team. Like his father, he was good with his hands and enjoyed wood and metal work. Photography and music were other interests. He then went on to the universities in Mandalay and Rangoon. After graduating, he had administrative training in Kyaukse at the District Officer's office. He also began working in his father's State office taking up administrative duties of the Mong Yai State.

In 1938, Sao Hso Holm married Sao Nyunt Kyi (1921-1964), the eldest daughter of Sao Hkun Hsa, the Saohpa of Lawksawk. They had eight daughters. Sao Hso Hom was installed as *saohpa* in 1947. Since they did not have a son, their eldest daughter, Sao Tern Murng (b. 1939), or Ellaline, as she was known at school, was recognized as his heir.

During the Japanese occupation, *saohpa* families led quiet and unobtrusive lives. Part of it was spent in the jungles. The Mong Yai family was no exception. However, at the beginning of the war as the British were retreating and the Japanese were advancing, an ill-fated incident happened to one of Sao Hso Holm's sisters. Sao Sein Nyunt or Nancy, her school name, was married to a British official, Ronald TO Mitchell, an Assistant Superintendent on Special Duty. Nancy's husband had been posted to Bhamo and, as they were preparing to join the retreating British, Japanese troops arrived suddenly. They took Mr. Mitchell away and told Nancy to return to her family in Mong Yai. She heard later that her husband had been shot. Once back in Mong Yai, she and her family went with others to live in the jungles and returned only some months later.

The eighty-year-old Mong Yai Saohpa, Sao Sone, was obviously not a narrow-minded man, though a prince of the old tradition. He appreciated the fact that Nancy and her sisters, being convent educated, were fluent in English and thus of assistance to him in his dealings with British officials regarding state matters in the 1930s. Consequently, Sao Sone who was broadminded, unlike other *saohpa*, allowed his young daughters in their late teens and early twenties, a certain freedom to mix with British officials and their families to observe and to adapt to their Western ways.

Later, during the Japanese period when Dr. Ba Maw, the then President of Burma came on tour, Nancy was designated Dr. Ba Maw's tour guide, by her father. When the British administration returned, Nancy met and married Julian Daghish, who at that time was District Superintendent of Police, stationed in Lashio. In 1952, she returned with him to live in England. Throughout the following years, their house in Wimbledon became a haven for many Tai Shan and Burmese visitors and students.

Julian died in 2006. Nancy, who was then in her early nineties, continued living in Wimbledon. She was a focus for all of us, especially for Tai Shan exiles, like myself. However, sadly in July 2015 just short of her ninety-fifth birthday, Nancy passed away.

Back in Mong Yai during the troubles in 1949, Sao Hso Holm, like other princes had taken part in the fight against Naw Seng, the Kachin mutineer and the KNDO. However, they were too many and too strong for his small force and he had to flee Mong Yai. Not long afterwards the KMT came. Again, he organized for the police and his people to expel the KMT from Mong Yai.

Sao Hso Holm's political activities included working with the Shan State Council and becoming a member of the Ya Ta Sa Nya Pha 'Shan Saohpa Association'. The 1962 coup put him in detention with other princes for at least six years. Sao Hso Holm passed away in 1989.

Two notable members of the Mong Yai family were Sao Kyaw Tun, also known as Sao Hso Wan, who was a hero of the Tangyan uprising and joined the Num Suk Harn. He was killed in 1961 when the SSIA fought the Burmese army. The other was his father, Sao Naw Mya, who joined the resistance in 1967. He was with the Shan State Army (SSA) and later became a vice-president of the Shan United Army (SURA), but left in 1978. Three years later, he returned to Mong Yai under the 1981 amnesty offer from the Tatmadaw. It is not known if he is still alive.

MONG YAI FAMILY TREE²⁷

I Sao Naw Mong, Saohpa of South Hsenwi (r. 1888-1913) and Mong Yai

IWife1 Nang Sum, Mahadevi of Mong Yai, niece of Yawnghwe Saohpa

IWife2 Nang Htun Hsar

IWife3 Nang Hseng Santa of Mong Yai

IWife4 Nang Nun Sing of Na-hko

IWife5 Nang Hkam of Na-nang

IWife6 Nang Hawe Ing of Hoya

IWife7 Nang Nun of Laikha

IWife8 Nang Mawn of Mong Tong

IWife9 Nang Pying of Man Se

IWife10 Nang Ku of Ma-hko

IWife11 Nang Yawt of Mong Yai

IWife12 Nang Hseng Mya of Mongtawm

IWife13 Nang Ya of Mong Yai

IWife14 Nang Hseng Mong of Mong Pat

IWife15 Nang Hseng Sam of Hsipaw

IWife16 Nang Hpong of Mong Yai

IWife2 Nang Htun Hsar

II1 Sao Sone, Saohpa of Mong Yai (1888-1946; r. 1913-1946) married 10 wives

II1Wife1 Nang Htun Hka, Mahadevi was originally from Mawkmai family and brought up in Laikha Court

II1Wife2 Nang Kham Num

II1Wife3 Sao Hwe Ing

II1Wife4 Nang Hkam Hsar of Man Se

III1 Sao Hso Holm, Saohpa of Mong Yai (1917-1989; r. 1946-1959); m. Sao Nyunt Kyi, Mahadevi, Lawksawk Family

IV1 Sao Tern Murng/Ellaline, Mong Yai Kyemmong

IV2 Sao Hkam Hom

IV3 Sao Sam Noan

IV4 Sao Sam Phong

IV5 Sao Sam Kham

IV6 Sao Hseng Murng

IV7 Sao Heio Hseng

IV8 Sao Hern Sai

III2 Sao Kham Ying

²⁷ Sources: Mong Yai Family members and SSK (1943).

- II1Wife5 Nang Hseng Awn of Mong Sit
 - III1 Sao Kham Hkawng/Kittie
 - IV1 Edwin
 - IV2 Sheila
 - IV3 Fairy
 - III2 Sao Sein Nyunt/Nancy (1920-2015); m. Julian DGLISH (1916-2005)
 - IV1 Sao Yin Aye/Nancy Jean DGLISH m. George Czerny
 - IV2 Derek DGLISH
 - IV3 Raymond DGLISH
- II1Wife6 Nang San Pao of Man Seng
 - III1 Sao Naw Htun
 - III2 Sao Ung
- II1Wife7 Nang Myawaddi of Loikaw
 - III1 Sao Kaw Hpa
- II1Wife8 Nang Hkam Ing of Mong Yai
 - III1 Sao Naw Mya
 - IV1Sao Kyaw Tun/Sao Hso Wan
 - III2 Sao Nandi/Dolly m. Victor Aung Pe
- II1Wife9 Nang Sam Ku of Hoya
 - III1 Sao Naw Sing
- II1Wife10 Name unknown
 - III1Sao Hkawn Pak

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Naw Mong of South Hsenwi (r. 1888-1913) (Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Naw Mong and Mahadevi Nang Hwan Hsar (1900s: Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Sone's Mahadevi (Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Sone of Mong Yai. (r. 1918-1946) (1920s; Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



S

Mong Yai Saohpa Sao Hso Holm (1946; Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hso Holm and Mahadevi, Sao Nyunt Kyi, Lawksawk Princess 1939 (1939; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Sein Nyunt/Nancy and husband, Julian Daghish (1990s; Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Two sisters, Kittie and Nancy, with their mother (1930s; Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Sao Tern Moeng (Ellaline), eldest daughter of Mong Yai Saohpa (Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hso Holm and Mahadevi with their daughters in Lashio. L-R: Sao Hpawng Hkum (not in the photo), Sao Tern Moeng, Sao Hseng Murng, Sao Hso Holm (father), and Sao Nyunt Kyi (mother), Sao Hern Hsai, Sao Hieo Hseng, Sao Sarm Hom, Sao Sarm Noan, and Sao Sarm Hpong (not in the photo) (1954; Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



The Mong Yai Haw built in 1953 and lived in by the Saohpa's family. It was occupied by the army after the coup in 1962 and vandalized by the soldiers. The prince demolished it later and donated the iron/steel frames and beams to rebuild a monastery in Mong Yai (Mong Yai Family Private Collection).



MONG MIT STATE

An Accomplished Prince

Sao Hkun Hkio (1912-1990; r. 1937-1959) was Saohpa of Mong Mit of the Northern Shan States. He became an important public figure from the beginning of Burma's independence in 1948 until the military coup in 1962. He came to Shan prominence following the assassination on 12 July 1947, of General Aung San, the Prime Minister of the interim government and his newly appointed cabinet. One of the victims of this assassination was Sao Sam Htun, the Saohpa of Mong Pawn, Sao Hkun Hkio's brother-in-law.

Replacing his brother-in-law, Sao Hkun Hkio became Shan State's first Head of State and a committee member of the Constituent Assembly that was drafting the Constitution. As a member of the Defense and Finance Mission, he was involved in discussions with the British Government in pre-independence negotiations.

Sao Hkun Hkio showed interest in Tai Shan politics and became involved in the two Panglong Conferences. In 1947, together with the Saohpa of Yawnghwe, he founded the Shan States United Hills Peoples Organization, He then served as its chairman and was later the Chairman of the Shan State Saohpa Association.

In the early 1950s, Sao Hkun Hkio, led several delegations abroad to improve international relations on behalf of the Union of Burma. These included goodwill missions to India and Indonesia. He attended the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) conferences in Thailand and in Australia, and chaired the ECAFE conference when the Chairman was unable to attend. In 1954, as leader of the Burma delegation, he attended both the Colombo Plan Conference held in Ottawa, Canada, and the UN Assembly.

Gradually he became more and more involved, not only in matters concerning the Shan State, but also in Union of Burma affairs. From 1948 to 1962, his appointments included twice being Head of State for the Shan State, serving as Union of Burma Foreign Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister in U Nu's AFPFL government. Prime Minister U Nu came to value Sao Hkun Hkio's friendship and from time to time, took his advice on political matters concerning the Shan State.

Born in 1912, Sao Hkun Hkio's first school was the Maymyo Government English High School. He then attended Framlingham College in Suffolk, which had been founded in 1864 in memory of Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. The school soon became a favorite of Shan *saohpa*, who began sending their young sons to be educated there.

Sao Hkun Hkio went on to read law at Magdalene College, Cambridge. While there in 1934, he met and married Mabel Phillips (1915-2007). She was not an undergraduate but a townswoman. Marrying an English wife was a daring act, as he was to be the first prince to bring a Western wife into Tai Shan aristocracy. While his father, Sao Khin Maung, was willing to accept Western ideas, he was also a traditionalist and was by no means pleased when he heard of the marriage. He instructed his son to come home immediately. Sao Hkun Hkio found himself in a difficult situation, since their first child had been born and he was not certain whether he should return alone or take his family with him. The problem was solved, however, when his father died not long after in 1936, and he was able to take his wife and child back to Mong Mit.

Sao Hkun Hkio (r. 1938-1959) succeeded his father on his death and became *saohpa*. As a well-educated prince with fresh ideas, he contributed his administrative and political skills not only to his own state, but also to Shan State affairs. Like many princes, he served in the Shan States Territorial Army at the advent of World War II and was trained in Maymyo. In 1942, he was promoted to captain and put in charge of motor transport. When the British retreated, he returned

to Mong Mit to join his family. Later, in 1945 when the war was over and the British administration returned, he was honored for his distinguished services in the British army.

The Saohpa Long

Going back in time and, in accordance with the chronicles, Mong Mit was founded in 1231 AD by the Saohpa of Kengtung. In the tradition of his ancestor, King Mangrai of Lana, who had sent his sons to rule over different *mong* within his kingdom, one son was sent to Mohlaing and another to Mong Mit. When the incumbent Saohpa of Mong Mit died in 1276 AD, various descendants ruled Mong Mit until 1837, when Shwebo Min installed Maung E Pu, the grandson of a former ruler, Maung Nyunt, as *saohpa*. However, the reign of Maung E Pu was interrupted when he was driven out by his generals. The Bamar king then sent a succession of *wun* 'court ministers' to rule until 1843 when four Mong Mit *amatgyis* 'state ministers' were appointed to administer the state.

In 1850 Maung E Pu gathered some Kachin and Palaung villagers to help him regain his throne, and killed the rightful descendent. Eight years later, Hkun Hti, a son of the original ruler, was granted permission to depose Maung E Pu. Once rid of him, Hkun Hti was recalled to Mandalay and his brother, Kyaw Kyin, was installed as ruler. Taking advantage of the unsettled state, many Kachin began settling there illegally. Hkun Hti was then sent back to Mong Mit to drive out the Kachin. During that period, many of the ruby mines were within the Mong Mit Saohpa's jurisdiction.

In either 1594 or 1607 (the exact dates are unclear), the ruby mines were eventually taken over by a Burman monarch of the Toungoo Dynasty. In this deal, the Mong Mit Prince was forced to exchange the Mogok mines for Tagaung, an ancient city that lay adjacent to the mines. The prince might have been in a quandary. Owning Tagaung would enlarge his state and give him greater prestige, but owning the ruby mines would give him greater wealth, although a smaller state. In fact, he had little choice, since he had been commanded to make the exchange.

Despite the transfer of the ruby mine, Mong Mit was still a rich territory as it had other ruby tracts. What happened later is complicated and unclear but, for various reasons, there were many claimants to the Mong Mit throne. The town of Mong Mit was burned time and again by Kachin recruited by various aspirants. Even the King's appointees were overthrown. In desperation, the King brought a Kengtung prince to rule, which he did successfully for three years.

Another version of the lineage has Maung Hmaing as the ruler of both Mong Mit and Mohlaing in 1840, but had given Mohlaing to U E Pu, and Mong Mit to Kya U to rule. However, when they died in 1874, Kan Ho, the son of Hkun Hti, emerged to rule Mong Mit until 1883.

By the time the British annexed the Shan States in 1886, the reigning Saohpa of Mong Mit Kan Ho had died and the state was again in chaos. The population of Mong Mit was then composed largely of Kachin and Palaung living in the hills, while Burman and Shan lived along the river valleys and plains. It had not been an easy state to administer. Sir Charles Crosthwaite says that he found the "administration was feeble ...and the Kachin were in the ascendancy" (1968:269). Being right on the edge of the Kachin Hills the states of Mong Mit and Hsenwi both regularly faced the problem of Kachin encroachment.

Earlier problems with the Kachin continued to the 1890s, with British forces usually engaged in expelling unwanted small armies of Kachin and bands of dacoits, all intent on gaining control of the ruby mines and Mong Mit State.

Mong Mit was a large state with smaller sub-states under its authority in the days before annexation. The constant change of rulers left the state in confusion. When the British arrived, they judged the Mong Mit State ministers administering the state to be incapable of running it. While some consideration was given to placing the state directly under a British officer, this did not

happen. Sir Charles Crosthwaite explained that because British policy then was to leave the Shan States as they were: "The absorption of one of them would have alarmed the others just when we were striving to win their confidence and to bring them peacefully into the fold" (1968:281).

In 1887, the British decided to recognize Sao Khin Maung (1883-1938), the grandson of Saohpa Hkun Hti, as ruler who, although in his infancy, was of the original lineage. The continuing unrest and attempts by other descendants with support from neighboring Kachin to rule Mong Mit, created instability.

It was then decided to appoint a regent until the young prince came of age. The search for a regent ended when the British found my granduncle, Sao Mawng, in Mandalay. At the time, Sao Mawng was recovering from an injury received during an earlier battle, and awaiting news of when he could safely return to Yawngwe. The British authorities hoped that Sao Mawng, an outsider and a senior prince, might contain the internal conflicts, and appointed him Regent in 1887. As Regent, Sao Mawng had to submit reports to the British deputy commissioner of the Ruby Mines District, and advise him. There was also an assistant British commissioner resident in Mong Mit, the capital.

Because the incumbent ministers did not support Sao Mawng's appointment, he found it difficult to rule and to contain the troubles of Kachin incursion and internal squabbles within the Mong Mit Court. In 1892 following complications, Sao Mawng left for Mandalay. He was unable to return to Yawngwe straight away as his half-brother, Sao On, was ruling the state. During annexation when the British arrived in Yawngwe, the concerned officials immediately recognized Sao On, who was then temporarily in charge of the State as the ruler. It was to avoid complications that details were not first ascertained as to whether he was in fact the rightful ruler

When Sao Mawng left in 1892, Mong Mit State was handed over to the British Assistant Commissioner to be administered as a subdivision of the Ruby Mines District until 1906, when it lost its status as a state. Although the British had not been prepared to take this action earlier, having obtained submissions from the princes to the British Empire, the British now believed there was no longer any danger of confrontation with the *saohpa*.

In 1906, the young prince of Mong Mit, Sao Khin Maung, was duly installed as Saohpa (r. 1906-1936). He was educated in Rangoon at the Baptist College and later returned home to work in the Mong Mit State administration.

Sao Khin Maung was to become an outstanding prince and was awarded the KSM, one of the highest Burmese honor titles created by the British. In 1912, the Governor of Burma had the prerogative of conferring the honor on behalf of His Majesty, the King. In 1933, Sao Khin Maung was also awarded the Commander of the Indian Empire (CIE) by the British Government. He was among the princes Sir George Scott escorted on their trip to the Coronation Durbar in Delhi in the early 1900s.

In 1923, a year after the formation of the Federation of the Shan States, Mong Mit ceased being a subdivision and was restored to its former position as a state in its own right. The prince was later chosen to attend the preliminary talks to the Round Table Conference in 1930/31 as an observer, with Sao Shwe Thaik, the Saohpa Long of Yawngwe.

When he died in 1936, Sao Khin Maung was honored by a grand funeral to which most of the *saohpa* and British government officials were invited. Among those who attended was Maurice Collis, who had been touring some Shan States at the invitation of Philip Fogarty, Commissioner for the Federated Shan States.

Maurice Collis wrote about his meeting with the various princes and Mabel, the English wife of the Mong Mit Saohpa, who had been shocked to find on arrival that Mong Mit was such a small place with no pavements along the roads on which to push her pram. It must have been a daunting experience being in a totally foreign environment surrounded by people who did not speak English.

Then sadly, intermarriages were not acceptable, unlike these days. As expected, some of the *saohpa* and *mahadevi* were not welcoming and showed no inclination of adopting her. Instead, Mabel was ignored most of the time making it difficult for her to adjust to her new life.

In 1937, Sao Hkun Hkio became Saohpa of Mong Mit.

Japanese Occupation

The Japanese occupation was not an easy time for the Mong Mit Saohpa and his family, but they were luckier than others. In Sao Hkun Hkio's interview with Dr Ralph ES Tanner, ²⁸ he related that since Mong Mit town was isolated, few Japanese troops were stationed there. Only a small garrison with some twelve or so Kempeitai²⁹ lived in the capital gathering intelligence. Consequently, the prince and his family carried on with their daily lives peacefully and kept very much to themselves. He delegated the running of the state to his ministers and paid their salaries out of his pocket.

Sao Hkun Hkio also revealed to Dr Tanner that sometime in 1944, one of the Kempeitai came to see him to tell him that Mong Mit town was to be bombed in four days' time. He advised the prince and his family to leave town. "We are now advancing to the rear," the officer added, meaning that they were retreating. The officer also said they wished to construct some huts for their living quarters outside of the town, as they too were moving out. Although permission was not needed, the prince agreed to their plan. Sao Hkun Hkio then proposed that, in the light of the departure of the officers, he should also leave immediately with his family and officials. The Kempeitai officer agreed to take the prince's family and others - in total about seventy-five people - to Mogok. They travelled at night for a few days and camped in the jungles near two Palaung villages where there was a large cave.

Later, officers of the 101st US Airborne Division contacted the prince who was flown out to Bhamo, while the family stayed behind in the jungle for a time until they were also rescued. Sao Hkun Hkio's son, David, said that his mother being an Englishwoman with light brown hair, had to dye her hair black so that the villagers would not easily notice her. They need not have feared. The Palaung villagers were loyal and they would never have betrayed their presence to the retreating Japanese.

When normalcy returned in 1946, it was found that the Japanese had used up the entire paddy stock that had been stored. There were also shortages of other commodities within the state of Mong Mit. Fortunately, the Americans provided airdrops of rice and other essentials for which everyone was grateful. A bonus was that once the parachutes were cut up into smaller pieces, they provided handy material for making much needed shirts and jackets.

To his annoyance, the prince found that the elephants he owned had all been taken to Thailand by the retreating Japanese. He was not pleased when he had to pay a large sum of money to get them back to log timber.

During the Interim period from 1945 to 1948, Dr Ralph ES Tanner had been an Assistant Resident in the Northern Shan States. When interviewed by Tanner in 1990, Sao Hkun Hkio explained that most of Mong Mit's revenue came from timber, cane, and bamboo with a greater portion of these monies going to the central government. Only eight percent was allotted to the state and to himself. He did not collect the gross income deriving from these enterprises, as some people claimed. Sao Hkun Hkio claimed that his private wealth came primarily from his mother's side as she was the daughter of a wealthy merchant owning several ruby mines in and around Mogok.

However, one cannot discount the fact that in former days, Mong Mit was indeed a wealthy state. It received royalties from the Bombay Burmah Trading Company, Steel Brothers, and

²⁸ Yawnghwe (1987).

²⁹ The Kempeitai 'Military Police Corps' served the Imperial Japanese Army from 1881 to 1945.

Darwood & Company, which had the leases from British government to extract teak and other valuable timber from the forests, as well as take profits from the ruby mines. Eventually inheriting the ruby mines owned by his mother, Sao Hkun Hkio must have become one of the richest *saohpa* of the Federated Shan States.

Like other *saohpa* and leading Tai Shan personalities, Sao Hkun Hkio was a casualty of the 1962 coup and spent five years in detention. On release, he was not allowed to travel to see his family in England for another ten years. Although he had given unstinted service to the government of the Union of Burma for well over a decade, he received no thanks. Instead, as a Tai Shan himself, he was accused of being a traitor for lending his support to the people of the Shan State and for taking up their cause on Federalism. This harsh allegation from the then reigning regime did not lessen the unhappiness of a shattered man and hastened his passing.

Rubies

Mong Mit State was well situated: not only did it have the advantage of the scattered ruby mines, but it also possessed mixed deciduous forests. Flowing down from beyond the borders of China, the Shweli River enters the Shan Plateau at Namkham and Muse in Hsenwi State. Running the whole length of Mong Mit State, it flows into the great Irrawaddy River. To the north of Mong Mit are the Kachin Hills, to the east is the Hsenwi State sitting between Mong Mit and Hsipaw State, and its southern neighbor is Tawngpeng State.

Nevertheless, despite this excellent situation and its economic advantages, Mong Mit was isolated from the rest of the Shan States. There were formerly no good or direct roads between Mong Mit and the adjoining states. The only road to Mong Mit's capital was that from Mogok. However, there was no problem traveling from Mogok towards the Burma border towns and on to Mandalay. Presumably it was a route well used in olden days by the armies of the Burman kings and traders. In later years, great improvement was made in this route and other roads leading to the Namtu/Bawdwin mines and towards Lashio and onwards to the Burma Road. The route then became the main thoroughfare for the mercantile community for easy movement of their produce.

A major Mogok ruby mine tract formed part of this state long ago. When Chinese traders came from China to trade they occasionally stopped over to dig in the mines. Even in those days, the existence of the mines was known widely and they often changed hands with excavation being carried out by whoever gained control of the region, including Mong Mit State itself

Mogok Valley is about 4,800 square miles in area with over 100 or so ruby and sapphire mines scattered over the terrain. Rubies occur in crystalline limestone (marble) and have been embedded in the rocks for millions of years. Over centuries, the rain and wind have loosened the stones that have then been swept down the hillsides onto the valley floors, settling at the bottom of streams and rivers.

Discovering that these ruby gemstones were to be found in riverbeds, Chinese traders and locals simply gathered them by panning the gravel in the riverbeds, just as one pans for gold. Later, other methods were found, but one used most frequently was that of digging a pit and allowing the gravel to be carried away by the river or stream. The gravel was then washed through a series of sluices, with the lighter material being washed away, leaving the heavier gemstones. Their color and sheen would quickly give them away and the rubies were eagerly collected.

Legend has it that since prehistoric times, rubies have been found in Mogok and you had only to scrape the dirt away to see brilliant red rubies lying below. When people began to hear about these riches, there was a rush to own these ruby tracts. It was also said that more powerful rulers outside the area levied tributes payable in rubies. Unfortunately, this underground wealth has by no

means enriched those living directly above ground.

Soon after annexation in 1887, a full geological survey of the region which revealed extensive deposits of ruby-bearing alluvial matter as well as other gems such as spinel, garnet, tourmaline, and rock crystal. The British India government leased the ruby mines to the Burma Ruby Mines Company, a British consortium organized by Edwin W Streeter (1834-1923), a London jeweler with Rothschilds of France.

The company was given a monopoly to exploit these major Mogok mines, and initially did well using a new dangerous form of mining that involved men climbing down into the narrow cracks or crevices, some very deep, of the gem-bearing hills. This profitable method was also adopted by other companies.

In 1908 when the synthetic ruby was developed, the business faced challenges. In 1931 when the ruby market became uncertain due to the years of depression, the Burma Ruby Mines Company returned its lease to the Burma Government and was liquidated in 1934.

Nowadays, government-assisted companies such as Myanmar Gem Enterprise and Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings carry out mining operations on a large scale using modern techniques and machinery. In 1988, the then government adopted a free market policy that attracted private enterprises and foreign investment. Although private companies were permitted to operate under license temporarily, overall it is the government that runs the operations and makes the money.

While sparkling, red rubies have been surrounded by various myths and tales, including that they have magical powers, it is the "pigeon's blood" ruby that has made the Mogok mines internationally famous. When and why this romantic term was introduced to describe such perfect rubies is unknown.

The other famous gemstones found in Mogok and its surrounding areas are sapphires - dark velvet and pale sky-blue gemstones. Sapphires are usually set with diamonds in fine jewelry and are popular with Europeans, though older Asian women also wear them, believing the blue stones represent peace and coolness. However, most Asians, both men and women, seem to prefer the deep red rubies of many carats.

Depending on the cut, color, and size of the stones, fine ruby and sapphire jewelry can be worth thousands of dollars. That is why, when allowed, many young and old locals can be seen scrambling around at the tail end of the sluice network. It was a tradition that anyone who found a gemstone could keep it. Obviously, everyone thinks of making a fortune and each hopes that one day by chance, they will find on the riverbed a sparkling red ruby that had been missed earlier on its descent!

Teak Forests

A considerable portion of the vast forests spread all over the country's high ground was within the Shan Plateau. Here were large areas of different types of natural forests ranging from tropical evergreen forests in which roamed wild elephants, rhinoceros, bison, and tiger; deciduous forests with bamboos that were less dense; to sub-tropical and temperate evergreen forests of pine and others occurring at altitudes of over 3,000 feet above sea level. The natural teak typical in high altitudes grew here in abundance, scattered among other species of other valuable woods and bamboos.

Burma has been famous worldwide through the centuries for its hardwoods, especially teak. Formerly, during the British period, ownership of land was vested in the Crown. Accordingly, different British companies were granted permission through those years to log, mill, and export teak and other valuable timbers. From 1926, the East India Company extracted and exported large

quantities of hardwood, especially from Tenasserim, which was shipped through Moulmein.

The Burma Forest Department granted licenses for the exploitation of timber to the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Messrs. Steel Brothers and Co., Messrs. Macgregor & Co., Messrs. Foulard & Co., and Messrs. T. D. Findlay & Co. In 1924, it was estimated that the capital of the five big British lessees was about £7,500,000.

Only one local company, U Ba Oh and Sons, was awarded a license. U Ba Oh had worked for many years as a contractor for Bombay Burmah. Latterly, this Burmese company carried on a successful business in this major timber trade both before and after independence.

The Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, first founded in 1863 by the Scottish Wallace brothers in Bombay, left Burma after independence. The enterprise returned to India and became one of the leading companies of the Wada Group. It is one of the oldest publicly quoted companies in India. While trading in Burma, it became a major producer of teak in both Burma and Siam, with other interests in cotton, oil exploration, and shipping.

Timber extraction was a major industry employing about 100,000 men. When their dependents are included, more than 220,000 people were estimated to have been dependent on this industry.

In the 1930s and 1940s, these large international companies used over 6,500 domesticated elephants to lift the heavy timber, to handle trees growing among rocks and boulders on precipitous slopes, and to drag the timber through mud or water. Buffaloes were also used, but only on easier terrain.

The well-trained elephants could lift the logs onto their tusks with their trunks on top, and carry them to the exact position needed. They were also well looked after. Around three in the afternoon when work generally stopped, their mahouts took them down to the river to be washed. Afterwards, the elephants were allowed to wander off into the forests to look for food. Having looked after his elephant from boyhood, the mahout could find it by looking for its distinctive footprints, and bring it back for work in the early morning.

A freshly cut teak tree is too heavy to float so must be prepared before it is ready to be felled. This generally takes five to six years. Once a tree is selected it is killed by girdling, which involves making a deep cut around the base through the sapwood to reveal the heartwood. The tree is then no longer able to feed off the sapwood. After several years, most of its moisture is lost and the wood becomes light enough to be felled.

Elephants then drag the logs to streams from where they are floated downstream. Streams are often dry between June and October. When the monsoon arrives, the water level rises and enables the logs to float downstream. When the logs reach the Salween River, they are grouped together to form rafts, and then floated on through forest creeks into the main rivers. They have some 400 to 500 miles to go before reaching their destination sawmills. The journey can take as little as two months or as long as years, depending on the flow of the river. The major sawmills that process the logs are situated on the mouths of rivers in and around Rangoon and Moulmein.

Teak has many uses, but has mostly been used for building ships and different types of sea vessels, railway carriages and sleepers, houses, and furnishings. According to Morehead (1944:48) "About one thousand tons of Burma teak was used in Cunard-White Star liner 'Queen Mary', commissioned in 1936." The value of exported timber in those days came to about £2,500,000 a year, contributing eight percent of the country's revenue.

At that time and until the 1950s the State Timber Board maintained strict control through the then Forest Department to ensure that immature trees were not cut. The theory was that the trees should not be logged until they were at least fifty years old, taller than one hundred feet, and with a diameter of at least twenty-eight inches at the base. In 1955-1956 the chief importers of

Burma's hardwood were still the United Kingdom and India.

Despite these rules and regulations, corruption went on in those days when logging contracts were issued. What happened then and still now, should not be of surprise. After rapacious logging since 1962 and, again, under further military government since 1988, it is not known what rules exist, in what condition the forests are in, and where teak is still found. Conservationists express concern about the timber trade in Burma, but little can be done against greedy loggers. Much of the depletion of forest lands is caused by increased illicit cutting and logging, commercial use for agriculture and building, extension of pasture land, shifting cultivation, and production of charcoal for domestic use. It is a very depressing picture.

This one great asset of the Shan Plateau is no longer a viable industry. As long as both ethnic nationalist armies and the Tatmadaw use these jungles as a battleground or a buffer zone, no consistent timber extraction as in the past can be carried out there. Illegal logging continues to leave vast stretches of hillsides and valleys bare. Had there been a re-planting scheme of the precious teak trees, the industry would not have suffered nor caused ecological problems. Hopefully, future investors in the timber industry will be responsible and respect the fragile environment.

MONG MIT FAMILY TREE³⁰

I Sao Khin Maung Saohpa (1883-1936; r. 1906-1936)

IWife1 Ma Ein, Mahadevi, daughter of Phayataga Hmat, principal ruby merchant in Mogok

IWife2 Ma Khin Shwe

IWife3 Ma Khin Nu

IWife4 Ma Khin Aung

IWife5 Ma Khin Ngwe Ma

IWife6 Ma Kham Lang

IWife1 Ma Ein, Mahadevi

II1 Sao Hkun Hkio, Saohpa (1912-1990; r. 1937-1959) m. Beatrice Mabel Philips, Mahadevi of Mong Mit (1915-2007)

III1 Theresa ME Hkio (b. 1936); m. Frederick Haines

IV1 Theresa Haines

IV2. Karen Haines

IV3 Colin Haines

III2 Margaret P Hkio (b.1940); m. Kenneth Harwood

IV1 Christopher Harwood

IV2 Linda Harwood

III3 Sao Hkun Kyaw San/David E Hkio (b. 1944); m. Elizabeth Toller

III4 Philip M Hkio (b. 1946)

IWife5 Ma Khin Ngwe Ma

II1 Sao Khin Thaug m. Sao Sam Htun, Saohpa of Mong Pawn (1907-1947; r. 1929-1947) assassinated with General Aung San in July 1947

Mahadevi of Mong Pawn (1929-1943)

III1 Sao Nanda/Peggy

III2 Sao Hso Hom Saohpa (r. 1948-1959) m. Sao Khemawaddi, Kengtung Family

³⁰ Source: David Hkio of Mong Mit Family; Sao Hso Hom of Mong Pawn Family and SSK (1943).

- III3 Sao Kai Hpa
- III4 Sao Ohn Nyunt
- III5 Sao Myint Kyi
- II2 Sao Sein
- II3 Sao Mya Sein

Offspring from Sao Khin Maung's other wives named above

- II1 Ma Nang Tao (f)
- II2 Ma Saw Hla (f)
- II3 Sao Mein (m)
- II4 Sao Hein (m)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Khin Maung (r. 1906-1936) (Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



Sao Khin Maung, Mong Mit Saohpa and Mahadevi in regal dress (1900s; Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



Mong Mit Mahadevi, Ma Ein, Sao Hkun Hkio's mother (1920s; Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Khin Maung with his Mahadevi, and son Sao Hkun Hkio and daughter Sao Khin Thaung (1920s; Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkio (1912-1990; r. 1937-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Sao Hkun Hkio, Mong Mit Saohpa and Mahadevi (1938; Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



Foreign Minister Sao Hkun Hkio entertains John Forster Dulles, US Secretary of State 1953-1959 at a Garden Party in Rangoon, on his visit to Burma (Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



Mong Mit Haw, with the many tiered roof (Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Sao Hkun Hkio with wife, Mabel Phillips, and Sao Hseng Hpa, Yawnghwe (my eldest brother) in Cambridge (1989; Mong Mit Family Private Collection).



TAWNGPENG STATE

The Palaung/Ta'ang

Many years ago Tawngpeng State, which was over 930 square miles in area, was surrounded by the larger states of Mong Mit to the north, Hsenwi to the northeast, and Hsipaw to the south. Together, they shared in the wealth of the natural mineral resources, gemstones, and teak forests of the region and each year, accrued considerable revenues from these riches.

It is in Tawngpeng State and its surrounding areas that the Palaung, who call themselves "Ta-ang" in the Palaung language, claim to have lived for a very long time, even before the Tai Shan migration. They claim to be descendants of a Mon-Khmer group originating from Mongolia. Nowadays they prefer to be addressed as the Ta-ang people.

Many of them also live in other areas of the Shan Plateau, such as in eastern Kengtung, and to the south, around Kalaw and in Lawksawk State, and can be also found in China and in Thailand. They are divided into various groups such as the Rumai Palaung, the Riang-Lang, the Golden Palaung, and the Silver Palaung. As with many ethnic communities, each group has its own dialect within their respective villages, but speak Tai Shan or Burmese when they deal with officials and outsiders.

In earlier days, when the Palaung lived together with Kachin and Lisu further up the mountains, they used slash and burn cultivation to grow rice, vegetables, and other consumption crops. The Rumai Palaung, who also lived in this hilly terrain some 6,000 feet above sea level, grew only tea, which thrives very well at this altitude. The Silver Palaung lived lower down, cultivating rice and other crops such as hemp and tobacco on irrigated terraces, using the rotation method for their crops. Many villagers grew opium poppies for their own use, and found that selling their surplus gave them handsome rewards. Unfortunately, this led many to grow more than they needed,

which gradually led them into the arms of drug dealers, who pressed the villagers to grow even more poppies.

Most Palaung live with their extended families in long houses, often about one hundred feet in length. In some villages, they live side by side with the Tai Shan and other ethnic communities. Over generations, they have assimilated much of Tai Shan culture mainly through intermarriage, as unlike other groups, endogamy is not practiced. Inter-tribal marriages have broadened their contacts with other communities, including that of the Burman. Despite these assimilations, the Palaung have generally managed to preserve their own distinctive culture and language.

The Palaung are predominantly Buddhists so it is not unusual, when travelling around their areas, to see a shimmering white pagoda and a monastery for Buddhist monks in the villages. Some, claiming to be Buddhists, also practice animism, worship guardian spirits, and believe in other spirits, good and bad. Tai Shan also believe in guardian spirits. It is quite normal for a Tai Shan to go to a *sala* 'medicine man', with his problems, while the Palaung is more likely to rely on a shaman, a powerful man, or a witch doctor in the community to solve his difficulties. Contacts with missionaries have led some villagers to convert to Christianity.

Many Palaung women maintain their traditions and wear short, brightly colored long-sleeved customary jackets, like a bolero, with red skirts featuring horizontal stripes of white or other colors. Both black cane and lacquered bamboo hoops are worn loosely around their waists once they are married, like Kachin women. They enjoy wearing silver jewelry with long multi-stringed beaded necklaces. The women also often decorate their clothes with various beads and silver ornaments.

In former days, most of the Palaung and Tai Shan communities in the Tawngpeng area were fortunate to live in a region of ruby and sapphire mines, and the well-known silver and gold Namtu/Bawdwin mines. In this region, tea flourished all over the slopes of steep hills rising from narrow valleys. As farmers, they were able not only to grow their own paddy in lower areas, but also temperate fruits such as apples, pears, and oranges. Overall, people living in the valleys were well off. Those living further up the hills made a living through growing tea and poppies. Chinese who lived among them became prosperous by breeding mules and running caravans of tea and opium across the borders. All in all, it seemed an ideal world, in which the Palaung could lead a comfortable and peaceful life, but all that changed after the army coup of 1962.

Tawngpeng and its Saohpa

Tawngpeng's capital, Namhsan, founded by one of Tawngpeng's earlier rulers, Hkam Kung Mong, is set high in the mountains, 5,249 feet above sea-level. It affords splendid views down into the green valleys and slopes of tea gardens and paddy fields. Built on a narrow ridge, Namhsan is surrounded by valleys and higher mountains that rise to over 5,511 feet.

Its *saohpa* ruled over Palaung, Tai Shan, and Kachin inhabitants. The Palaung were the majority and, as it was their homeland, they have always had a Palaung prince. In 1846, the first such ruler of Tawngpeng to be recognized by the Burman monarchy at the Court of Mandalay was Hkam Kung Mong (Shan States 1943:62). On his death twelve years later, Hkun Hsa seized power, but was opposed by the rightful heir. In 1861 in the ensuing struggle between the two factions and their followers, the usurper was killed. Although Hkun Kyaw, the son of Hkam Kung Mong, won, he ruled for only a few months.

In 1865, one of Hkun Kyaw's brothers, an ally of Hkam Kung Mong, became ruler. He died in 1880 after fifteen years as ruler. His brother, Hkam Mong (aka Hkun Kham Mong), became saohpa and was recognized by the Mandalay Court.

The British failed in their first attempt to make the ruling prince submit. It was only in 1887 that Hkam Mong tendered his allegiance to the British government, with a request that his son be recognized as his successor. Unfortunately, Hkun Kyan did not rule for long. In 1905, Hkun Hsang Awn, a cousin and head of the Palaung Katur Clan, became *saohpa*.

As the new ruler, Hkun Hsang Awn was a poor administrator, a British officer was consequently posted in Namhsan to assist with problems concerning state affairs and to help reform the administration. This included finances because heavy debts had been incurred due to mismanagement. The British were pleased with the progress made and Saohpa Hkun Hsang Awn ruled until 1926. In 1911, during his reign, he attended the Delhi Durbar celebrating the ascension to the throne of George V and Mary as Emperor and Empress of India, and was then awarded the KSM.

After Hkun Hsang Awn's death in 1926, his son, Sao Hkun Pan Sein (1894-1975; r. 1926-1959), succeeded him as *saohpa*. Sao Hkun Pan Sein was educated at the Shan Chiefs' School in Taunggyi. After leaving in 1916, he was appointed *kyemmong* and helped his father administer Tawngpeng State. On his visit to England in 1925, he spent six months touring industrial centers and later travelled to France to see the Somme battlefields.³¹ His tour around Europe gave him new ideas for ways of contributing to the development of the Shan States.

In 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II he made a second trip abroad to Malaya, China, the USA, England, France, and Norway, becoming a well-travelled prince.

He had six children with his first *mahadevi*, a daughter of the Lawksawk Saohpa Long. In the 1930s, Sao Hkun Pan Sein sent his two sons to be educated in England. Not unlike my father, the fact that the Tawngpeng Prince had a son in England aroused Japanese suspicions and he was under constant surveillance.

About the same time as the Hsenwi Saohpa was fleeing to safety, the Japanese authorities announced to the Tawngpeng Prince that they were planning to take his whole family away to Japan for their safety. Soon after he had been told of these plans, Sao Hkun Pan Sein reliably learned that the Japanese had no such intentions, but instead were planning to kill them. The proof was that the Japanese killed his secretary, who had secretly given him this information. The news of this death motivated the quick-thinking prince to flee with his family into the deep jungles. Leaving in the dead of night, they trekked day and night for several days with the Japanese in hot pursuit. Fortunately, loyal Palaung villagers never once betrayed them and the family reached safety. The Tawngpeng family certainly had a narrow escape.

Upon reaching Namtu, they rejoiced at the good news that the war was over but to their sorrow, were given the sad news that Sao Hkun U, the prince's eldest son, had become a war casualty. He stayed behind after accompanying his family to England in 1937. In 1939 at the beginning of World War II, he joined the RAF. While flying on a mission over Burma he was shot down by the Japanese. He was later laid to rest at the War Memorial Cemetery in Singapore.

Prince Sao Hkun Pan Sein remarried after the death of his first wife. The Palaung Mahadevi died leaving four children. A son, Sao Hkun Aung, also educated in England, became the *kyemmong*. The next *mahadevi* following the Palaung wife was Eurasian and bore him thirteen children including several beautiful daughters. He also had many more children with his other wives.

In 1946, Sao Hkun Pan Sein presided at the first Panglong Conference. Afterwards, he became seriously concerned about Shan State affairs and its politics. He was one of the signatories of the Panglong Agreement in 1949 when most Tai Shan believed there would be a genuine

³¹ The Battle of the Somme during the First World War was fought by the British and French empires against the German Empire between 1 July and 18 November 1916 on both sides of the Somme River in France. More than one million were wounded or killed.

federation with Burma Proper giving equal rights and freedom. He also became the Chairman of the Shan State Saohpa Association. He supported the All States Conference for the revision of the 1947 Constitution and took an active part in discussions, trying to find the best way of making the Union of Burma stronger and working towards its progress. Like other senior princes, he found the period before the Japanese war an anxious time.

Apart from politics, Sao Hkun Pan Sein had a keen interest in the development of his state, which led him to become a member and a director of the Union of Burma for Burma Corporation Namtu Mine. He was also selected as a member of Burma Technical Industries and Production of Tea Leaves, which dealt with issues close to his heart. Sao Hkun Pan Sein's other appointment was as a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities. In 1959, he was awarded the Maha Thrayssithu for distinguished service to the country.

It made little difference that the *saohpa* was a Palaung. All the princes respected and liked him, and many went to him for advice. Sao Hkun Pan Sein was of sturdy build like my father, and had a benevolent bearing. He and my father got on well, and shared common ideas on progress and development for the Shan States. The only time they may have had a tiff was when he was passed over for the post of President of the Union of Burma and my father was selected instead.

The Tawngpeng Prince was full of energy, ideas, and plans to help his people as much as he could. However, despite his efforts he was not free from criticism. He adapted to modern conditions and may have understood the political climate of the day better than most princes, but he was also a traditionalist. His views were most reflected in the large Western-style Haw he built. It featured such modern amenities as plumbing but also had a traditional many tiered roof and a *pya-that* 'spire' (a Burmese word). The *pya-that* was a typical copy of the Mandalay Palace, imitated by many *saohpa* for their palaces, including our Yawngghwe Haw.

Although the new Tawngpeng Haw still exists, it is no longer a family home. It is believed that the Tatmadaw wished to confiscate it for its headquarters but, unhappy at this prospect, the prince donated it to the people of Tawngpeng State to be used as a hospital, thereby preventing its takeover. The Tatmadaw did, however, take over the burial grounds of the *saohpa* and their families for their observation post. These grounds commanded the best view of the whole valley of Namhsan and the town below,

In 1936 when Maurice Collis met Sao Hkun Pan Sein and other princes in Mong Mit, they discussed the possibility of a Tai Shan replacing Philip Fogarty, who was then the President of the Shan Chiefs Council. The Tawngpeng Prince, a forthright, plain-spoken man, told Collis "We Sawbwas are too jealous of each other. A Shan president (of the Federation) would lack support and authority" (1938:212). His statement indicates how difficult it was to reach a consensus among the *saohpa* to unite under one prince. Doing so would have been to their advantage, but somehow there was little interest in uniting and selecting a suitable *saohpa* to be the commissioner. Tawngpeng Saohpa certainly knew how most princes felt on this issue. It seemed they could unite and make decisions, but had no desire to have another *saohpa* lead them.

Tawngpeng, though up in the hills and far north, was not at all isolated. There were many visitors. The Tawngpeng family's travels to Rangoon, Mandalay, and the hill station, Maymyo, brought its members into a wide circle of friends and acquaintances of all nationalities. Today its members are scattered all over the globe, like other princely families after the 1962 army coup.

One son, Sao Naw Pha, had a bright future ahead of him, having been to Germany for higher studies. He chose to join the Shan resistance on his return to Tawngpeng in 1968. He was with the Shan United Revolutionary Army and later Mong Tai Army. In 1985, Sao Naw Pha became general-secretary of the Tai Revolutionary Council formed by Bo Moherng (SURA) and Khun Sa (MTA/SUA).

The Namtu/Bawdwin Mines

Before the arrival of the British, the Bawdwin/Namtu mines were owned and guarded by the Saohpa Long of Tawngpeng. The earliest work at the silver mines was carried out by Chinese traders from Yunnan as far back as the fourteenth century. Work on the mines stopped when the lode, the vein of metal ore, was found to have reached ground water level. In 1886 during British colonial times, the mines were revitalized when British and other foreign companies were granted rights to mine.

In 1920, the Indian Government awarded the Burma Corporation Company a thirty-year extraction rights lease, thus giving it a monopoly. The mines became the world's largest source of silver and lead, and were well known both internally and abroad.

With most enterprises, such as the mining and forestry in the hands of British companies, there was little or no competition. The few local ventures permitted to function were of no consequence.

To avoid having to take the raw material all the way to Mandalay, the Burma Corporation decided to have a railway line built. In 1911, the Burma Mines, Railway, and Smelting Co Ltd built the line at Namtu, which was about nineteen miles away from the mines. A Company rail trolley then connected these two lines. The main railway line from Lashio to Bawdwin had been built earlier in 1903. It became a convenient way of carrying the ore to export points. The train service was used by the mines. It also served villages along the line. Today, everyone continues to get free rides as they did years ago.

Like large corporations everywhere in the world, the Burma Corporation Company employed many people. Gurkha and Indian worked underground, while the Sino-Shan and Chinese worked above ground. For the duration of their tenure, these laborers were accommodated at Tiger Camp where certain amenities such as the bazaar and a few shops were provided.

The Company also employed British and other white-collar staff, most of whom were housed and looked after within a compound that was essentially a small, self-sufficient town, with schools, swimming pools, and tennis courts.

Unsurprisingly, there are different opinions regarding the British consortia that made money in the period leading up to the Japanese war. Maurice Collis, pondering the Bawdwin mines and the wealth accumulated by the Burma Corporation, concluded "If that money (net profit of the Bawdwin Mines) had been available during the years of the mine's prosperity the Shan States would not be, as they are, only beginning, after fifty years, to be developed" (1938:323).

Before the Japanese occupation, the proceeds from the Namtu/Bawdwin mines were considerable, with profits valued at £3,000,000 annually.

In 1942, as soon as news came that Japanese forces were advancing towards the northern Shan States, the Company first arranged for all company property at the Namtu/Bawdwin mines to be destroyed to prevent the enemy carrying out any work there, and then organized an orderly exit. Staff and families who made their way to Namkham, near the Chinese border, were evacuated by plane and were more fortunate than most to safely reach Calcutta. Those who did not make it to Namkham in time had to make the hazardous journeys by boat, road, and on foot.

When the British returned, they found the mines and smelting factories had been further damaged during the war. Deciding that these damages were not worth fixing, subsequent operations were not as exhaustive nor on as large a scale as pre-war levels. The mining company believed that the previous intensive exploitation of the mines could have easily depleted more than half of Bawdwin's natural reserves, making it another reason not to resume intensive mining. By 1965, the military regime had nationalized the company.

Before the military coup, a Mineral Resources Development Corporation was formed. It was

responsible for exploitation as well as marketing and finance. The minerals were divided into different groups and managed. Oil deposits were chiefly found in the Irrawaddy Basin, while minerals such as lead, silver, zinc, and others were found in and around Bawdwin. Smaller deposits were found in Mong Pawn, near Taunggyi. Newly found silver, nickel and tungsten deposits were found in the Naungkieo Township area.

A geological survey in the 1960s, discovered tin and wolframite (tungsten) near Taunggyi, dolomites, pyrite, and fluorides near Kalaw, and even diamonds around Mong Mit. Minerals such as coal and iron ore are scattered around the Shan Plateau. There are likely to be many more undiscovered or unexplored mineral deposits on the Plateau. In days to come, those in charge will, without a doubt, make every effort to exploit their potential. Under present circumstances, I fear the people of the Shan State will be unable to share in these riches.

The Namtu/Bawdwin mines have been taken over by the Ministry of Mines, and that the No 1. Mining Enterprise controls its exploitation. A Chinese company won a contract in 2002 to work the zinc oxide plant in Namtu. This industry employs several thousand people. Namtu Town, which had become isolated, is once again being populated.

Not for Export

Tea is another industry that has been a major money earner for Tawngpeng State, where both wet and dry tea were harvested. Both are still sold throughout the Shan State and Burma. It was and still is a substantial domestic industry with tea gardens scattered on hillsides, growing at random quite unlike the cultured tea plantations of Assam and Ceylon.

The prince's family had always been involved with tea production. The Prince, with a knack for business, financed much of the trade with his own money. In the 1930s, judging that the domestic market was inadequate, he was keen to export Tawngpeng tea, which was of high quality and comparable to Indian and Ceylon tea. He was joined by the Hsipaw and Mong Mit *saohpa* in this ambitious scheme, but they were to face insurmountable problems.

Ever since 1600, the British East India Company had an import monopoly on all goods from other parts of the world into Britain. It likewise had a monopoly over the tea trade, making decisions on how much was imported from different sources. The 1903 Indian Tea Cess Act controlled the tea industry in the Indian sub-continent, and protected the industry until independence and the partition of India in 1947. A tax, known as Cess, was paid on tea exports. This income was then used to promote Indian tea. Any attempt to change these rules was unacceptable to the Tea Licensing Committee.

The Tawngpeng Saohpa's many attempts in the 1930s to obtain a license from the Tea Licensing Committee in India to export Shan tea failed because the states of Tawngpeng, Hsipaw, and Mong Mit were not part of British India. In fact, the Shan States had been part of British India since 1888. Overproduction within the British Empire compounded the problem that had created a general slump in tea prices in 1929-1930.

A long and unpleasant wrangle with the Tea Licensing Committee followed. In London, understanding colonial officials tried to help, but despite support from both Sir John Clague, the Commissioner of the Federated Shan States, and RH Craddock (1864-1937), the originator of the Shan States Federation in 1922, and Lieutenant-Governor of Burma from 1918-1923, nothing could be done. It appeared that only when Burma separated from India would there be hope of obtaining approval to export tea from the Shan States.

Eventually in 1939, after the 1935 Burma Act was implemented and Burma was no longer part of British India, Bombay Burma Trading Corporation set up a factory at Namhsan to process

tea for export. With the monopoly to purchase all the tea grown within the State, it did very well during the first season, although this increase in fortunes did not show up in the Tawngpeng State budget. Robert Maule in *Tea Production on the Periphery of the British Empire* explains that "Although the 1939/40 Tawngpeng State budget did not reflect the upturn in its tea economy, this situation can be explained by the large contribution made by the Tawngpeng Sawbwa to the Lord Mayor's Fund for War Relief of Rs. 1.33 lakhs," which was a generous gift.

After World War II, the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation returned to re-establish the tea factory and its export links. The tea trade was once more on the upsurge, though by 1953, production gradually began to fall. When the army coup took place in 1962, all foreign trade stopped.

As tea is a beverage drunk every day by nearly everyone in the country, the domestic tea trade has not suffered throughout the years. Consequently, the tea growers of Tawngpeng, of both large and smallholdings have benefited. Pickled or fermented tea is a great favorite of many living in the country and, like the dry tea, is carried down to Kyaukme, the nearest railway station, to be taken to Mandalay and Rangoon for further distribution.

In the early days, the bulky load of the tea would be transported along the winding paths from the gardens in the hills by long caravans of mules, each carrying two tall baskets on either side. Where there was a rough, unpaved road, baskets of tea were loaded high onto bullock carts to make the two or three-day journey to a railway stop.

Tea: a Drink or a Salad?

Plots of tea planted in villages were considered common property. At harvest time, whole villages participated in picking tea leaves on precarious slopes, where mules were used to carry the heavy loads. In former days, anyone who cleared land in the jungle and planted tea became the owner of the plot so long as he paid state taxes.

A tea plant has a life span of ten to twelve years. It becomes useful once it reaches its third or fourth year when its leaves can be picked. Tea-picking season is May through November. Only the top tender leaves are harvested. Once picked, the leaves re-grow in about seven or ten days during the growing season and are ready to be picked again. The tea plant then continues producing useable leaves for the next seven or eight years.

In Tawngpeng, not all tea leaves are processed for drinking. Wet tea is a pickled tea, made by fermenting tea leaves. This popular dish is known as *neing yam* in Tai Shan and *letphet thok* in Burmese. The leaves are steamed, compressed, and placed into baskets. These are then put into pits, one on top of each other, and weighted down. The tea is checked regularly to see how the leaves are fermenting. Once fermentation is complete, the pickled tea is ready for consumption. The Palaung were the only tea growers who produce wet or pickled tea in this way.

In other parts of the Shan States where tea is also grown, tea is fermented differently. The tea leaves are crushed and wrapped into bundles using banana leaves. These packets are tied together with slender bamboo strips and put into large earthenware jars with weights on top. These are submerged in water until the tea is fermented and ready to consume. To anyone who has not tasted it before, it will probably seem a strange dish. It is an acquired taste.

Nowadays, even in Oriental supermarkets abroad, pickled tea in packets with complements of fried garlic, roasted peanuts, and sesame may be purchased. Sometimes adding a chopped garlic clove, a sprinkling of pounded dry shrimp, and a squeeze of lime makes it tastier.

Tea leaves are processed differently. Dry leaves can be first steamed or roasted for a few minutes to soften them so that each can be quickly rolled to form thin strips. Each leaf can then be rolled with the fingers on a mat, or between the palms of the hands. The technique of rolling the

leaves quickly without burning the fingers or palms takes time to learn. The rolled leaves are then further steamed. When finished, the leaves are spread on bamboo mats or screens to dry in the sun. Shan tea leaves are long and dark. They may be brewed plain or toasted, and can be drunk with a pinch of salt.

The good fortune of having suitable terrain for growing a cash crop such as tea and being within the confines of the silver mines of Namtu and Bawdwin, brought benefits to the *saohpa* and to his people. Now many years on, the tea industry still flourishes there, and people of Tawngpeng hopefully may once again live a stable and peaceful life.

An Episode

In 1959, one of Tawngpeng Saohpa's pretty daughters briefly became a film star when she took part in a short documentary titled *La Sourire 'The Smile'* made by Serge Bourguignon (b. 1928). Louisa Benson³² also took part in the film. A young Karen beauty, a "Miss Burma," Louisa was at that time a university student and a classmate of my brother Tzang, and my sister Ying. Louisa married a KNU commander who was later killed by enemy soldiers. She became deeply involved in Karen affairs and campaigned hard for democracy in Burma. Sadly, like many of her university friends who became dissidents and revolutionaries in the early 1960s, she too has passed away.

La Sourire tells of a day in the life of a young Buddhist monk who was constantly being tempted by things secular as he followed his *sayadaw* 'abbot' on their way to the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. In an encounter with a beetle on a dusty road, he almost trampled, but saved it just in time, consistent with the first Buddhist precept requiring one "to abstain from taking life." The film also features beautifully dressed Burmese puppets that are rarely seen in performance, lovely young women splashing water at a well, and an old lady with a cheroot who offers the monk a sweet.

To obtain permission to film the documentary, Serge Bourguignon had to appear before a board of senior Buddhist monks who questioned him on his knowledge of Buddhism and the five basic precepts. They were duly satisfied with the film being made and later, after viewing *La Sourire*, the monks asked for extra copies.

It was an exciting project for us. We were happy to learn later that it had won the coveted *Palme d'Or* prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 1960. Serge Bourguignon went on to make other films and, in 1962, won an Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film for *Les Dimanches de Ville d'Avary 'Sundays and Cybelle'*.

TAWNGPENG FAMILY TREE³³

I Hkun Hseng Awn (1870-1926, r. 1905-1926)

IWife1 Heng Seng, Mahadevi

II1. Sao Hkun Pan Sein, Saohpa (1894-1975; r. 1926-1959)

IWife2 Nang Sum

II1 Hkun Hkam Hseng

II2 Nang Saing

II3 Nang Ngun

IWife3 Nang On

II1 Hkun Kyi

³² Louisa Benson Craig (1941-2010).

³³ Sources: Tawngpeng Family members, Sao Mya Nwey, Sao Lao Kham, and SSK (1943).

IWife4 Nang Kying Kham

IWife5 Nang U

IWife6 Nang Nyun

IWife7 Ma Thet

IWife8 Nang Hsar

IIWife1 Heng Seng, Mahadevi

II1 Sao Hkun Pan Sein, Tawngpeng Saohpa

II1Wife1 Sao Num, Mahadevi (I) 1926

III1 Sao Hkun U (b. 1913)

III2 Sao Htun Aye (b. 1924)

III3 Sao Mya Sein, (1925-1933)

III4 Sao Mya Kyaw (b. 1927)

III5 Sao On Khaing (b. 1928)

III6 Sao Nang Sum (b. 1930)

II1Wife2 Sao Nang Kyan, Mahadevi (II) 1930s

III1 Sao Hkun Aung (b. 1916); m. Nang Thein Khin

IV1 Sao Kyar Myint

IV2 Sao Lao Kham/Maggie m. Yang Kyein Shuen/Francis Yang, Kokang Family

IV3 Sao Seng Aye

IV4 Sao Hkun Li

IV5 Sao Khar Win

IV6 Sao Kyar Khouing

IV7 Sao Sein Htwe

III2 Sao Yan Pye (b. 1931); m. Sao Hla Win, Lawksawk Family

III3 Sao Mya Ohn m. Captain Air Force, U Khin Maung Tint

II1Wife3 Daw Khin May May, Mahadevi (III), 1930s

III1 Sao Khin Su m. Dr U Saw Nyunt

III2 Sao Ohn Yee m. John Thaung Sein

III3 Sao Yin Pyone m. U Mya Oo

III4 Sao Mya Nwey/Ann m. Dr Patrick Pe Maung

III5 Sao Phone Myint

III6 Sao Win Kyi

III7 Sao Hnin Yee m. Robert Ba Tu

III8 Sao Yin Aye

III9 Sao Myint Soe

III10 Sao Nyunt Wadi m. Dr Thein Htut

III11 Sao Nay Win

III12 Sao Myat Thiri m. Dr Aung Myat Tut

II1Wife4 Nang Shwe Nyein

III1 Sao Thu Badha

III2 Sao Naw Pha

III3 Sao Kyi Hpa

III4 Sao Leng Kham

III5 Sao Seng Hpa

II1Wife5 Nang Kham Noon

III1 Sao Khun Myat

PHOTOGRAPHS

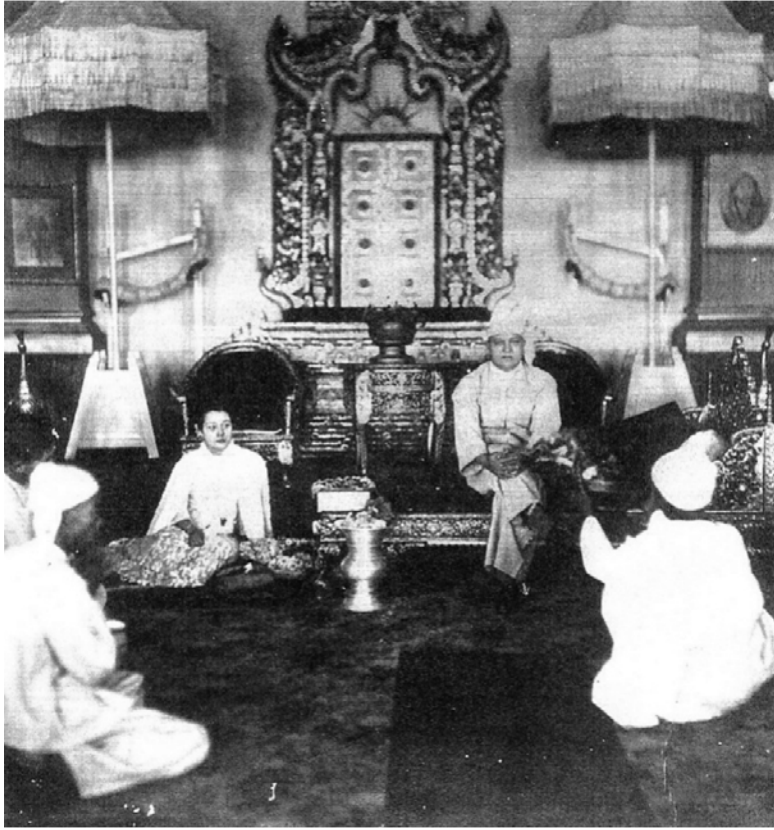
Tawngpeng Saohpa Sao Hkun Pan Sein (r; 1926-1959) with Sao Num, Mahadevi I Lawksawk princess, in court dress (1918; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Tawngpeng Saohpa and Sao Nang Kyan, Mahadevi II (1930; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Tawngpeng Saohpa Sao Hkun Pan Sein granting an audience (1930s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Tawngpeng Saohpa being greeted on arrival by train (1930s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Daw Khin Khin May, Tawngpeng Mahadevi III (1914-1991; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Seated: Tawngpeng Saohpa and Mahadevi with British official and wife (1930s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Saohpa (r: 1926-1959) with his Palaung subjects (1940s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Serge Bourguignon with the Palme d'Or award won for the film *La Sourire* (1959; Serge Bourguignon).



Sao Hkun Aung/Freddy and his wife, Nang Thein Khin (1950s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Sao Hkun Aung, Tawngpeng Kyemmong and family: Sao Hseng Aye (left of parents), Sao Hkun Aung (father), Sao Lao Kham (standing between parents), Nang Thein Khin (mother), Sao Sein Htwe (right of parents), and Sao Khar Yint (between parents). Sitting L-R: Sao Kyar Win, Sao Hkun Li, and Sao Kyar Khaing (1950s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Sitting: Sao Yan Pye, bridegroom and Sao Hla Win, bride. Row 1 L-R: unknown (4) Daw Khin May May, Tawngpeng Mahadevi, (5) bride's mother from Lawksawk, (6) Sao Khin Pyone, and (7) Nang Thein Khin. Row 2 L-R: (1) Sao Khin Lay, (2) Sao Tin Aye, (3) Tawngpeng Saohpa groom's father, (4) Sao Huk/U Than Din bride's father from the Lawksawk Family, and (6) Sao Mya Ohn. Row 3 L-R: (1) Sao Htun Aye, (2) Sao Myat Kyaw, (3) Bo Min Myint Aung (suit), (4) U Mya Oo, (5) Khin Maung Tint (suit), and (6) Sao Hkun Aung (1940s; Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Tawngpeng Haw in Namhsan as it was before the 1962 coup (Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



Tawngpeng Haw turned into a hospital (1970s: Tawngpeng Family Private Collection).



Khun Sa and Sao Naw Pha at 1987 MTA meeting, Homong (courtesy of Martin Smith).



CHAPTER EIGHT: THE EASTERN SHAN STATES

KENGTUNG STATE

Largest Mong

Kengtung State, the largest of the Shan States was, in the early days, grouped together with the Southern States. It was about 12,000 square miles in area. Part of it lay between two mighty rivers - the Salween to the west and the Mekong to the east. Yunnan lies to the north, while the Mekong River forms Kengtung's international borders with Laos and Thailand. It is the easternmost state and together with Mong Pan, Kokang, and the Wa States to the east of the Salween River, forms the Eastern Shan States.

Consequently, Kengtung was and is today, one of the better-known Shan States internationally. It is easily accessible to its neighbors. In contrast, it was isolated from the other Shan States for some decades as the only road leading to it from the interior was not a highway. This changed in the early 1940s, with World War II and the Japanese occupation of the country when the mountainous terrain of the region's hills and valleys became the tramping and battle grounds for various armies.

Kengtung's geographical position was always of great importance to the British, remained so under independence, and became even more so in the twenty-first century, under the present regime. It was and still is a gateway for cultural exchanges, and trade and commerce, both legal and illegal. It is also of great importance militarily.

Even in the days before World War II, access to Chiang Mai and on to Bangkok was easier with Thai road and rail links, since the only road through Kengtung State from its capital westward towards Taunggyi, the Shan administrative center, was through 300 miles of mountain terrain. Sometimes it took more than two days of hard driving along a narrow, winding road to get from one town to the other along the route. A lack of bridges across the Salween River meant it had to be crossed by ferry, which added considerable time to the journey. The main crossing was at Takaw, which sits in a gorge 800 feet above sea-level. Other crossings were at Nam Pang and Nam Khong.

Leaving China, the Salween rushes down through a succession of deep gorges for 1,750 miles to Moulmein, where it enters the Andaman Sea. It is only in the rainy season that it becomes navigable for less than fifty-five miles upstream from its outlet. Despite its length and beauty, the river has been of little commercial value. However, as mentioned earlier, projects are on hand to develop it, for better or for worse.

As a border area, Kengtung State has seen much trading activity from China, Laos, and Thailand. Apart from rich agricultural lands, Kengtung has had teak forests and gold and iron deposits. It was historically a rich state with potential. In earlier days, its merchants prospered from trade in opium, which was generally brought down from Yunnan and the Wa territory to sell to the British government for licit use in the country and onward sale to world markets. Until the 1923 Shan States Opium Act was passed, opium trade was considered a legal trade and businesses thrived. The law was not strictly enforced and, although some businesses may have suffered initial losses, the lucrative trade continued. It was generally believed that the British prohibition of the opium trade was mainly to make a good international impression. In fact, there was no real control over growing opium poppies. After the Japanese occupation, the amount of opium grown and traded

within the notorious Golden Triangle grew exponentially and became even more lucrative.

Kengtung State sat just above the ancient Lan Na Kingdom, from which lineage the princely family of Kengtung claims descent. Though Kengtung is within the Federated Shan States, neither the noble family nor its people are Tai Shan. Instead, they are a branch of the Tai peoples, known as Khun/Khern. They are akin to the Tai Lu, who like the Tai Khun originally came from Sipsong Panna (Xishuangbanna) in Yunnan. The Tai Lu currently live in Sipsong Panna, but still live in areas that once formed the Lan Na Kingdom.

Mangrai Descendants

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Chinese kept a wary eye on King Mangrai of Chiang Saen, whom they considered to be the most important Tai prince of the whole region. Even though King Mangrai had conquered a number of neighboring kingdoms, he was on the lookout to further expand his territory. It is likely he was in contact with the Tai Shan brothers who founded and were to rule the kingdom of Ava.

In his search for an ideal capital, King Mangrai moved his court from place to place for some years before eventually settling in Chiang Mai. Dates given for its founding vary. Lan Na historians cite 1262 as the date for the founding of the city, whereas Professor Wyatt (1982:48) states that its actual construction only began in 1296, after Mangrai held lengthy consultations with his brother princes of Ngam Muang and Ramkhamhaeng. In fact, Mangrai had already taken up residence in Chiang Mai in 1292.

King Mangrai was a great defender of the Tai against both the Mongols and the Chinese. His kingdom of Lan Na extended to areas around the Black and Red rivers in modern Vietnam and most of present day northern Laos and Sipsong Panna in Yunnan. To the south, it covered part of the Mon Kingdom where Buddhism was embraced and supported by the king. After Mangrai's death in 1317, a power struggle ensued among his descendants. Consequently, by 1328 after the reign of six kings over a span of eleven years, Lan Na's influence and size had decreased considerably.

Professor Wyatt explains that Chiang Mai had earlier maintained its strength because King Mangrai believed in distributing authority to each of his principalities to his kinsmen:

And because these principalities were of such importance to the fortunes of the kingdom, the kings of Chiang Mai laid great emphasis upon controlling them by personal relationships. They often sent their sons, brothers, close retainers, or at times an abdicated father to rule over the major principalities: Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen, Chiang Khong, Kengtung, Sat, Fang, Lampang and others captured in the course of warfare (1982:75).

Saimong Mangrai's translation (1981) of the *Padaeng Chronicle* and the *Jengtung State Chronicle*, states that the son, Sao Namthum, arrived in Kengtung in 1253 with a retinue of sixty-nine families who gradually increased over time, forming the population of Kengtung. The princes and princesses of the Kengtung House are proud of being Tai Khun and distinguish themselves from the Tai Shan and the Tai Lu of Lan Na who, nevertheless, are closely linked to the Tai Khun.

From 1317 onwards, there were numerous wars between Lan Na and Ayutthaya. However, in the late fourteenth century, there was a renaissance that included attention to Buddhist works, such as the translation of the *Tripitaka*, the building of temples, and generous offerings of alms.

Two factions emerged in 1523 during a dynastic struggle in Kengtung. One side sought support from Lan Na, while the other went to Hsipaw. King Kaeo sent Lan Na armies to re-exert

control, but these forces were defeated by Hsipaw armies.

By 1538, King Kaeo's son, Ket Chettharat (aka Ketkloa), had become king, but was subsequently overthrown. Although eventually restored, he was later assassinated marking the end of Lan Na's independence.

King Ket's daughter, Princess Chiraprapha, was made Queen Regent after this disastrous incident. However, continuing dynastic struggles in Lan Na gave both Ayutthaya and the Burmese the opportunity to attack Lan Na. Also, her enemies thought the state, with a woman as the regent, would be far too weak to resist them. To challenge such an attitude, it became imperative for Lan Na officials to install a male successor. They initially sent a delegation to invite the Kengtung Prince to ascend the throne. When he proved reluctant, they offered the throne to Mong Nai, who accepted. But before the Prince of Mong Nai arrived, the Hsenwi Prince attacked Chiang Mai. Meanwhile, an army from Ayutthaya marched into Chiang Mai and declared Lan Na a vassal state. The Mong Nai Prince then responded with a failed attack on Lan Na.

The Kingdom of Lang Xang then got involved. Two high-ranking Luang Prabang officials from Lang Xang arrived "to protect" Chiang Mai because the first queen of the Luang Prabang King was the daughter of a former king of Chiang Mai. It was claimed that on that basis, Lang Xang was entitled to the throne of Lan Na. Subsequently in 1546, Queen Chiraprapha's brother-in-law, Prince Chaiyasettha of Lang Xang, became king, at which point Ayutthaya withdrew.

A year later in 1547, Prince Chaiyasettha returned to Lang Xang to become the ruler, assuming the regal title of Setthathirath. For a time, he was ruler of both Lan Na and Lang Xang and when he left, he took the Emerald Buddha, the palladium of Lan Na from Chiang Mai to Luang Prabang. However, when the Siamese later sacked Lang Xang in 1779, they took the Emerald Buddha to Bangkok, to safeguard and protect their own Kingdom of Siam.

Events changed again. In 1551, Lan Na came under King Meguti (aka Mae Ku) of Mong Nai, who was a descendant of King Mangrai. Not long after, in 1558, the Tai Shan King was vanquished by Bayinnaung, King of Pegu. However, Meguti ruled until 1564, as a puppet of the Bamar king. From then on, Lan Na came under tight control of the Bamar kings. Their rule continued over the next two centuries.

Unfortunately, the frequent wars between the different principalities and kingdoms eventually left both Lan Na and Lan Xang too weak to defend themselves. As Wyatt notes:

By the middle of the eighteenth century, neither in Lan Na nor in Lang Sang was a kingdom fully comparable with Ayudhya in strength. Ayudhya thus was far better able than its upcountry neighbors to recover quickly from the next onslaught of Burmese armies after the middle of the eighteenth century, and ready subsequently to expand its territory substantially at the expense of both Lan Na and Lan Sang (1982:125).

These events and the associated destruction in Lan Na and in Lang Xang caused confusion and promoted insecurity among the people. The complex historical events of Lan Na also had consequences for the Kengtung House. Whatever happened to that kingdom inevitably affected the direct descendants of King Mangrai, the ruler of Lan Na.

Kengtung Saohpa Long

From 1742 to 1786, Sao Mong Hsam was recognized as the Saohpa of Kengtung by the contemporary Burman Court of Ava. He was the thirty-third prince of the line. Unfortunately for Kengtung, being an ally of the Burman Court meant that it suffered whenever there were wars with China and the

Chinese Shan States. While Kengtung gained little from the alliance, the Burman monarchy profited handsomely because the Burman armies could march through Kengtung's territories whenever they had military ambitions against Lan Na, Lang Xang, and Ayutthaya.

During the reign of Sao Kawng Tai, from 1787 to 1813, the state was again devastated by Siamese invasions. Many noble families were forcibly settled in the former Lan Na. Only Sao Maha Hkanan's family escaped. In 1813, the Court of Ava eventually acknowledged him as *saohpa*, becoming the thirty-fifth ruler of Kengtung.

In 1852-1853 and again in 1854, King Mongkut sent Siamese expeditions to Kengtung with the aim of driving out the Burmese who controlled the area, but these attempts failed as the Kengtung prince, Sao Maha Hkanan (1813-1854/1857), had built an enlarged walled city to withstand the Siamese invasions. He was an adept legislator and organizer.

At that time, the only sign of control from Ava was a small garrison of soldiers and a Burmese official stationed in Kengtung that came under the larger garrison at Mong Nai with a *sitke* 'viceroy'.

Upon Sao Maha Hkanan's death, either in 1854 or 1857, three princely brothers ruled in succession. During the Limbin Confederacy, Sao Hkam Hpoo was *saohpa*. It was during this chaotic period that the British annexed Upper Burma and deported the Burman king, Thibaw Min, and his queen, Supayalat. Due to the unrest, a few princes fled to Kengtung for safety.

Not until 1890, when George Scott visited Kengtung, was there an agreement to submit to the British. From then on, the British extended their control. In 1893, an important *durbar* was convened by the Superintendent and by 1894, an assistant political officer was stationed in the capital, together with a small garrison.

Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng (r. 1897-1935) was proclaimed the fortieth Saohpa Long of Kengtung. His *mahadevi* was a Laotian princess, Sao Nang Padunna, from Mong Sing.

Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng was a remarkable man and the British were so pleased with him that he was awarded the KSM, the CIE, and the nine-gun salute. During his reign of thirty-eight years, several sub-states were amalgamated into Kengtung State, enlarging the territory. By 1893, its southern border with Siam had been settled by the Anglo-Siamese Boundary Commission headed by Sir George Scott. Then in 1896, the Mekong River was declared to be the boundary between the British and French Empires, leading a year later to the demarcation of the northeastern boundary with China.

Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng also attended three *darbar*, including the first one in Delhi in 1903 for which Sir George Scott was responsible. Another, in 1906, was in Rangoon when Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, visited that city. Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng was intelligent and enlightened, and open to new ideas, including the abolition of slavery in Kengtung.

Kengtung prospered during nearly four decades of peaceful rule. In 1937, Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng was succeeded by his son, Sao Kawng Tai (1896-1937). Progressive and looking towards a bright future, Sao Kawng Tai was educated in Rangoon at a Christian school and then attended the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. He travelled in Europe and in 1931, he attended the Round Table Conference with my father, Saohpa of Yawnghwe. He and Hsenwi Saohpa were there as observers.

As a young forward-looking prince, Sao Kawng Tai had much to offer the Tai Shan people. Sadly, he was assassinated in 1937 before his coronation. Although the whole affair was controversial, the common view was that the young assassin, Sao Siha, a nephew of the *saohpa* had acted under instruction from his uncle, Sao Phrom Lue (1895-1955). Being the son of the *mahadevi*, Sao Phrom Lue felt he had a stronger claim to the Kengtung throne than Sao Kawng Tai, his half-brother, who had been chosen by their father and approved by the British. Obviously, Sao Phrom Lue was very upset, as was his mother, the Mahadevi of Kengtung who was greatly disappointed to see her son being passed over.

Despite Sao Siha claiming all responsibility for the assassination in his testimony to the police, the official written report stated that he had carried out the crime at the instruction of Chao-fa Phrom Lue. Even though Sao Siha repeatedly denied making such a statement, the official records remained unchanged. Had officialdom concluded his uncle was involved and therefore added this statement? Nevertheless, Sao Siha was found guilty at the ensuing trial and went to Rangoon to serve a jail sentence while Sao Phrom Lue was acquitted. With his wife, the Lan Na Princess, Sao Phrom Lue went to live in Chiang Mai. An interregnum followed, during which period the British Assistant Superintendent in Kengtung, Captain Roberts was appointed Administrator of Kengtung State until the beginning of World War II. During the Japanese occupation, when Burma was granted independence in 1943, the Japanese transferred Kengtung and its neighboring state, Mong Pan, to the Siamese government as reward for being its ally. It was then that Sao Phrom Lue/Sao Brohmlu, succeeded in gaining his much longed for wish: he was duly appointed the forty-second ruler of Kengtung by the Siamese king.

Close Ties

Through the years, the Kengtung ruler and his people have adopted many of the customs and characteristics of Siam, their immediate neighbor. For example, the Kengtung Saohpa wore court attire that resembled that of the Siamese and Laotian courts, whereas the Saohpa of Hsipaw and Yawnghwe, being nearer to the Courts of Mandalay and Ava, adopted the regalia and ceremonial dress of the Burman monarchy.

Kengtung was widely renowned. To illustrate, as soon as people knew I came from the Shan States during the time my husband and I lived in Bangkok, they immediately assumed I had come from Kengtung. In the early days, many Siamese thought that Kengtung *was* the Shan States.

The British though, were never happy about the close relationship between Kengtung and the Siamese and looked on suspiciously. Interestingly, when HRH Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1863-1943) was invited to visit Burma in 1936 as the guest of the British Government, he was not taken to visit the Shan States. He spent his time only in Burma Proper. The tour had been arranged by Thomas Cook. It was an obvious British policy not to encourage contact between the Siamese and the Tai Shan. It seemed to be a sensitive issue for the British.

At that time, there were calls from Thailand for a greater Tai sphere. It was a policy reaching out to all Tai people spread over Southeast Asia to unite and to form a greater Tai/Thai dominion. Maybe the British were on guard in case the Tai Shan took up the challenge. After the war, nothing more was heard of it. Nevertheless, it is interesting to ponder whether such a "Tai pact" would have worked then, or would work today.

The various influences of neighboring countries had also contributed to making Kengtung one of the most advanced Shan States. The Kengtung princes considered themselves sophisticated, open minded, and keen to adapt to new ideas. Many were well educated and spoke fluent English.

Sao Sai Mong, one of Sao Kwang Tai Intaleng's many sons, was a writer and much traveled. He became a prominent member of Tai Shan society. From 1948 until 1962, he was chief educational minister and, for a term, became Shan State Education Minister. Greatly interested in Shan culture and literature, Sao Sai Mong and U Kya Bu were the main initiators in efforts to modernize the Shan script.

Sao Sai Mong and his wife, the well-known Burmese writer, Mi Mi Khaing, ran the old Shan Chief's School in Taunggyi that in their time was renamed Kambawza College. Their many books have given them international fame. Despite having little to do with politics, Sao Sai Mong was taken into detention during the 1962 military coup.

After the assassination of Saohpa Sao Kwan Tai in 1937, an administrator was appointed to look after Kengtung State as his son, Sao Sai Long was too young to rule. As mentioned earlier, Captain VG Roberts of the Burma Frontier Service took charge until World War II broke out and the Japanese occupied the country.

Sao Sai Long (1927-1997; r. 1947-1959), the young heir, Kyemmong of Kengtung, attended King's School, Canterbury for a short spell together with my two brothers from Yawnghwe. Finding their Tai Shan names somewhat difficult to pronounce, the school decided to call the two brothers Sao Sao I, and Sao Sao II. The Kengtung Prince became known as Sao Sao III. In 1941, Sao Sai Long left King's School and went to Adelaide, Australia to study at St. Peter's College until 1945. Two years later after the end of the Japanese occupation and the return of the British administration, Sao Sai Long, twenty years old, was installed as the forty-third ruler of Kengtung

Popular and much loved by his subjects, Sao Sai Long took a great interest in education and sent many youths to be educated at the universities. The Prince was unassuming, friendly, and well-liked by all who met him. When the Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition went through Kengtung on their way overland to Singapore in 1956, they met the Kengtung Saohpa. Tim Slessor wrote about their encounter, noting Sao Sai Long's informality when he announced, "Just call me Shorty - all my friends do" (1957:221), a nickname that he had picked up in school since Australians were generally taller than him. The travelers had an enjoyable stay in Kengtung. They were looked after by the prince's family, and even took part in a game of cricket.

Sao Sai Long took an interest in all that was going on in Shan State affairs and supported cultural groups such as the Shan State Students Association and Shan Literary Society of both the Rangoon and Mandalay universities. When elected as a Member of Parliament for the Shan State to the Chamber of Nationalities he was its youngest member. The prince was highly regarded, not only as a Tai Shan leader, but as a national figure. He had a great future and a great deal to contribute to the progress of the Shan Plateau. Unfortunately, when the military coup d'état came, he was imprisoned for five years. When he died in 1997, he left family members scattered all over the globe.

Tai Khun and Tai-Lu

Most Tai Khun people live in the central plains and along the Kengtung Valley. The more populous Tai Lu live along the eastern valleys nearer the Mekong River that forms the border. The fertile land there has enabled crops such as sugar cane, cotton, and tea to be grown commercially. The Tai Khun and Tai Lu are thus better off than those living off subsistence farming in the hills, like the mountain Tais who are called Tai Neua or Tai Loi.

In earlier days, cotton was grown along the hill slopes and on terrain at altitudes up to 4,000 feet. The raw cotton was considered high quality and exported through Yunnan traders into China and elsewhere. For communities that lived further up the mountains, opium was the main crop. Much of the transportation of these goods was by pack ponies and pack bullocks winding their way along the rugged foot paths.

More Tai Shan is spoken in the many villages found towards the west near Mong Nai and Mong Pan States. Here too, farmers cultivate rice and vegetables and are settled in villages along the valleys. The people are Buddhists and the villages are usually built around a Buddhist monastery or a pagoda. Most young boys begin their education at the monastery where they are taught the rudiments of Tai Lu and Tai Shan languages. Unfortunately, since the military came to power, teaching the mother tongue has been forbidden.

The Tai Khun and the Tai Lu have their own language and script that is closer to Laotian than to Tai Shan, though there are similarities with Tai Shan, as with all Tai languages. While a Tai Shan

would find it difficult to understand a Tai Khun speaker, a Tai Khun does not find it difficult to be understood in Chiang Mai and northern Thailand where Muang is spoken, which is akin to spoken Tai Khun. Today, those who read Tai Shan and Thai can easily read Laotian, Tai Khun, and Tai Lu scripts, given the many similarities.

There is some difference between the Tai Khun and Tai Lu in dress. The usual attire for Tai Shan men includes baggy Tai Shan pants and a Chinese jacket. One can identify a Tai Khun woman by her skirt. The usual long skirt, the *sin* 'sarong', tends to have narrow horizontal strips of colors with a plain complimentary color forming the bottom third. The contrast in colors makes it attractive. The blouse, with a narrow high collar, may be either fastened down the front, or crossed over and tied to one side. Sometimes the women wear colorful turbans, especially on ceremonial occasions. Older women wear their hair in a chignon either on top of the head or to the side, as worn by Laotian women. Many women in the Shan State and in Chiang Mai nowadays have taken to wearing these beautifully colored tube or wrap-around skirts.

The capital of Kengtung is described in tourist brochures as lying near a lake in the middle of a valley surrounded by paddy fields and orange groves. Farmers living in villages spread out over the plain grow these crops. Four lesser townships, namely Mongping, Monglin, Mongyang, and Mongyawng, are to be found along the river valleys, radiating out from the center.

Other diverse peoples such as the Akha and the Lahu, who speak little or no Burmese, share the land and often experienced difficulties with the Burman soldiers for being unable to speak Burmese. By now the necessity to use Burmese may have made them more conversant. In any case, traders and townspeople certainly will speak Burmese, because they must deal with the Tatmadaw and their families.

The Lu/Tai Lu people also live in the provinces of Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, and Lamphun in Thailand. They were originally captives during a war between the Bamar Kings and the Kingdom of Siam, and were resettled there by Siam. Many live spread over western Laos in Luang Namtha and Mong Sing, and in the Shan State, although the Kengtung area is still their home. They are also to be found in Sipsong Panna in China, where they are commonly known as the Dai.

The Kuomintang (KMT)

The opposition went to great lengths during the 1950s, to accuse the princes of wrongdoing. Some suggested that the intrusion of the KMT, the Chinese Nationalist troops, had been orchestrated by the *saohpa* to extend their feudal rule. They argued that the *saohpa* had had secret meetings with the KMT asking for their support.

These alleged activities were reported to the Union Cabinet, but no action was taken. When General Ne Win was told the same story, he listened carefully in order to take action later. Implicating the *saohpa* in such rumors revealed the intensity of animosity felt towards them at that time. When the coup took place in 1962, the bulky dossier of untrue accusations was made public to anti-*saohpa* politicians and the Tatmadaw who, over the years, had desperately wanted to believe, whether true or not, that the *saohpa* were always working towards the disintegration of the Union of Burma. They felt these false reports confirmed their belief.

When the allegations were put forward, little thought had been given to the wider international circumstances. For instance, at the time of the Vietnam troubles, there was political unrest in most Southeast Asian countries with everyone afraid of what seemed to be encroaching communism.

Also, as early as 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed, Chiang Kai-Shek had offered the Allies China's full support. It was at Chiang Kai-Shek's suggestion that the KMT moved into the Shan

States, to protect crucial supply routes from Rangoon to Chungking (Chongqing). The Chinese troops were also there to fight the advancing Japanese forces. In fact, the KMT had been on Shan soil, off and on, since the beginning of the Japanese invasion in 1940-1941.

When the KMT troops were forced out of China by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), Chiang Kai-Shek, his top officers, and the bulk of the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949. However, remnants of the 93rd Division and the Eighth Army led by General Li Mi (1902-1973), stranded at Mong Yu, crossed the border down through Kokang and the Wa State of Mong Lun. Soldiers going on to Laos were disarmed and repatriated to Taiwan by the French.

It is unsurprising that the KMT chose to form their bases in and around the vast region of Kengtung east of the Salween River. Due to its isolation from the central Union government, the KMT managed to rebuild their regiments and maintained them with help from the Taiwanese Government and, it was the generally accepted understanding, that assistance also came from the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The KMT numbers gradually swelled as Chinese drifters, Tai Shan, and various communities such as the Lahu, Tai Neua, Tai Lu, and Wa were recruited into the organization. When sent out on covert missions to gather information for the CIA, these men blended into their own communities across the China border and were not easily discovered. These tribes people were highly valued.

The main KMT mission in the 1940s and 1950s, was to prepare for an offensive against the Chinese Communist forces, the PLA, but KMT thrusts against the communists in Yunnan and elsewhere failed and they were driven back across the border. The fighting gradually decreased and KMT activities became concentrated on buying and selling opium, and trading in arms and ammunitions. Most of the latter were flown in from Taiwan while the return flights carried the opium that had been brought down by caravans from the Shan Plateau along hilly jungle paths. Once these caravans reached safety, their precious commodity sometimes was paid for in gold but, more often, exchanged for much-needed arms and ammunition. Demand for opium was high, which led many farmers in Kokang, the Wa hills, and other areas of the Plateau to cultivate opium poppies wherever they could.

The situation became very complex. During the 1950s, communism was feared and Western governments very much believed in the Domino Theory that predicted a communist victory in one country would lead to communism spreading to other Southeast Asian countries.

From 1955 to 1975 America defended Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam against the Communist Viet Cong who wished to overtake these democratic countries. The war ended when Saigon fell in 1975 to the Viet Cong, which had become known as the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

Against the background of the Vietnam war, the twenty-year span of unrest and instability within these countries created a thriving market for arms dealers, opium traders, and black-marketers. Inevitably, this lucrative arena was to attract resistance armies within the Shan State, which led to involvement with neighboring countries such as Thailand and Burma. Before long the KMT, the Royal Laotian Army, the CIA, the Hmong forces, the Tatmadaw, and the Thai police were all heavily implicated in an assortment of flourishing illegal activities.

Later, the thriving drug trade became such a threat to the countries outside of Southeast Asia, that the United States and the United Nations began looking for ways to eliminate the large-scale cultivation of poppy crops, and to restore sanity to the region.

The KMT issue was debated at the United Nations. In 1953, after the General Assembly approved a resolution, some 2,000 soldiers and families were repatriated to Taiwan. This was followed a year later by a further 4,500.

Meanwhile, the Burma army fought many battles trying to oust the KMT. In the early 1960s, the Tatmadaw was allegedly helped by PLA soldiers who had spilled onto the Shan Plateau as they

pursued the Nationalist troops. Fighting together the two armies finally managed to defeat the KMT, pushing them towards the Thai border. As many as 6,000 KMT adherents may have fled into the jungles and later crossed the border into Thailand, where they formed bases and settled.

The Tatmadaw had been in the Shan State since the end of the military administration in 1954. Since then, it had taken every opportunity to keep moving further into the territory while it steadily increased its troops. Bertril Lintner rightly observed that:

The once tiny Burma army—perhaps as few as two thousand men in 1949—grew steadily in strength and importance. By 1955, Ne Win had more than forty thousand men under his command, equipped with modern weaponry acquired from mainly India and Britain (1999:153).

The fight against the KMT gave the Tatmadaw an impetus to enlarge its army and a good excuse to move into the very heart of the Shan State and a reason for it to stay on.

The KMT conflict had turned the Shan Plateau into a disaster area. Around the Shan villages, the KMT behaved badly, demanding cash and food, forcing villagers to be porters or laborers, raping women, and beating and killing men without restraint. It was a bad time for rural people. Unfortunately, they continued suffering under the unruly soldiers of the Tatmadaw.

Many former KMT maintained their links with the different ethnic groups, either supporting them in their fight against the Tatmadaw or the CPB, or even against each other. But their involvement with ethnic dissident groups, with strong or tenuous links, were mistakenly interpreted by critics as being links with the princes. The antagonists then accused the *saohpa* of seeking help from the KMT and SEATO as part of their plan to secede from the Union. Such allegations became the firm belief of the Tatmadaw and could have contributed to the 1962 catastrophic coup. There is little doubt that the issue of the KMT being linked to resistance groups contributed to the slow breakdown of relations between the ruling Burman and the ethnic groups, none more so than with the Tai Shan.

KENGTUNG FAMILY TREE³⁴

The direct descendants of Sao Mangrai of Lan Na who sent his son, Sao Namthum, to rule Kengtung in 1253. This is an abbreviated version of the large Kengtung Family.

I Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng/Sao Ratana, 40th Saohpa (1874-1935; r. 1896-1935)

IWife1 Sao Nang Paduma

II1 Debbakaison/Sao Tipa Sawn

III1 Sao Long

III2 Sao Phong Lai

III3 Sao HsiHa

II2 Sao Hprom Lue, (b. 1895, appointed 42nd Saohpa by the King of Thailand r. 1942-1945)

III1 Sao Waradait

III2 Sao Hpromtip

III3Sao Wilaiwan Phukaman

III4 Sao Vorawong

III5 Sao Phillailak Salawej

³⁴ Sources: Kengtung Family members: Sao Phong Kiao, Sao Khai Mong, and others, Nel Adams (2000), and SSK (1943).

III6 Sao Hom Noan Suntananon

III7 Sao Vorachak

IWife2 Nang Fong

II1 Sao Kawng Tai, Prince of Hsen Mong, 41st Saohpa (1895-1937; r. 1937-1937)

m. Sao Kya Nyunt, Hsipaw Family, Mahadevi of Kengtung

III1 Sao Nang Papawadi/Sao Noot/Marlene; m. Di Rees

III2 Sao Sai (d. in Hsipaw)

III3 Sao Sai Long/Sao Diraraj, 43rd Saohpa (1927-1997; r. 1947-1959)

III4 Sao Eindumadi/Sao Noom/Vera; m. Christopher Curwen

III5 Sao Sai Noi; m. Nang Noan

II2 Sao Intra, adopted by Sao Hke/Sao Chai, Hsipaw Saohpa

III1 Sao Shwe Lu

II3 Sao Phapmong/Sao Khun Mong

III1 Sao Kan Gyi

III2 Sao Khemawaddi/Biddy

III3 Sao Kawn Kiao Intaleng

III4 Sao Hkun Oo

III5 Sao Singhadej Pengrai/Sidney

III6 Sao Yan Naing

II4 Sao Bosawan (d.1979)

II5 Sao Fongkaeu (d.1935)

II6 Sao Khun Suik (1914-1992)

III1 Sao Razawong

III2 Dr Rachami Khemarasami Khunsuk

III3 Daeng Khemawade Chitdonra

III4 Sao Sai

IWife3 Nang Bodiphlong

II1 Sao Nang Vaen Kaeu (1903-1947) m. Sao Hkun Hsar, Lawksawk Saohpa,
Mahadevi of Lawksawk

III1 Sao Nyunt Kyi/Agnes, m. Sao Hso Holm, Mong Yai Saohpa, Mahadevi
(see Mong Yai FT)

III2 Sao Hom Noan/Audrey m. Sao Hseng Ong, Yawngghwe Family
(see Yawngghwe FT)

III3 Sao Noan Oo/Nel m. Brian Adams

III4 Sao Sam Cheio/Jean m. Edward Win Kyaw

III5 Sao Aung Kham/Desmond m. Dr Lily Hawng

III6 Sao Hkam Hsar/Kendrick

II2 Sao Nang Suvannagandha (1906-2003); m. into Chiang Mai Family

III1 Sao Ratarin Tharanai

III2 Sao Vilaiwan Intanond

III3 Sao Somboon Intanond

III4 Sao Phaitoonsi

III5 Sao Yerayut

II3 Sao Nang Van Tip (1912-1977), m. Sao Hom Hpa, Hsenwi Saohpa,
Hsenwi Mahadevi in 1933

II4 Sao Singjeyyaraj/Sao Singzai (1918-1982)

III1 Sao Win

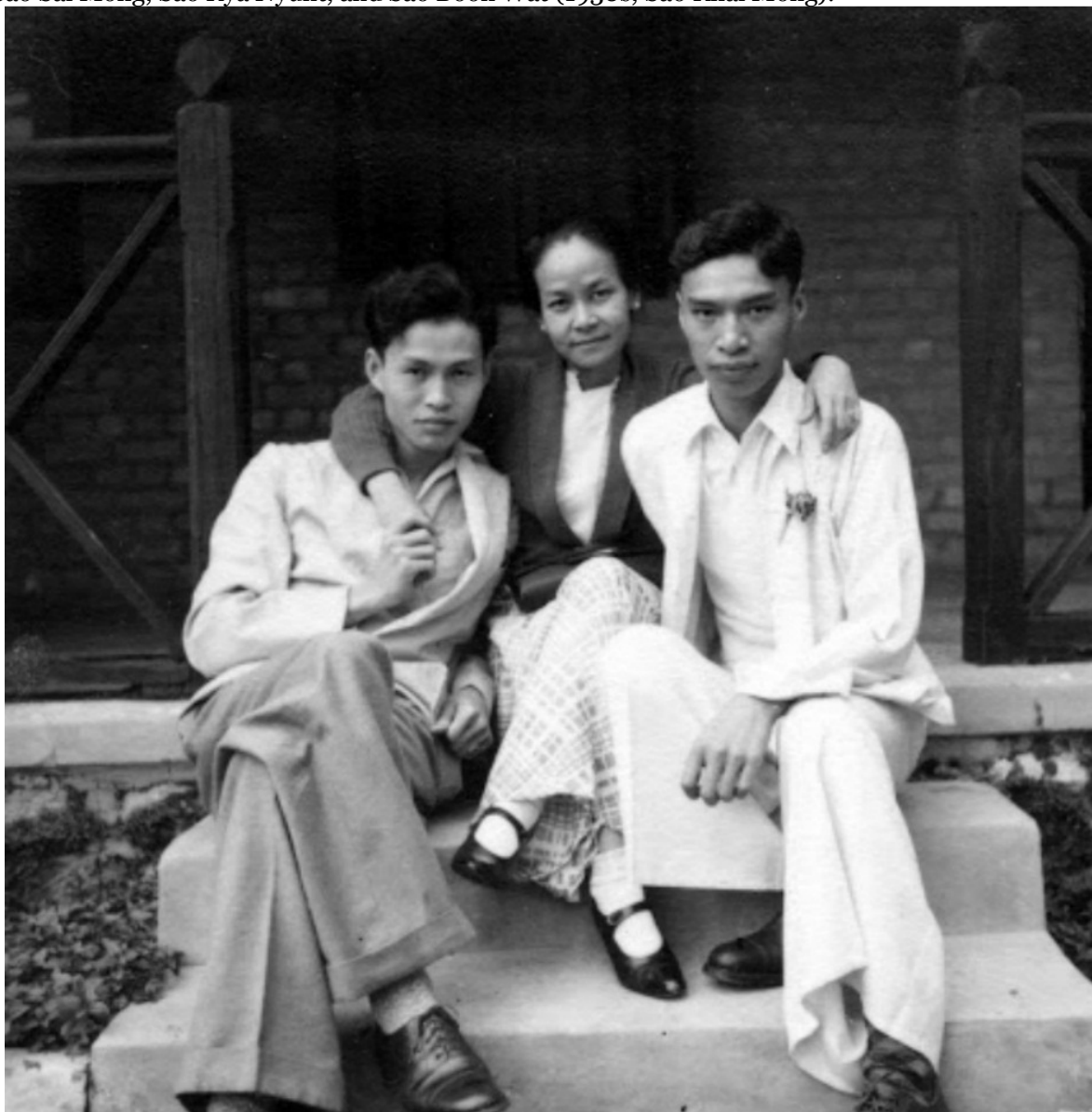
- III2 Sao Hom Noan
- III3 Sao Hom
- III4 Sao Hkam Zai
- III5 Sao Noan Hom
- III6 Sao Umphai
- II5 Sao Kaeumamong/Sao Kiao Murng (1920-2016) m. Sao Sein Mya, Mawkmai Family
 - III1 Sao Santasiri
 - III2 Sao Sulamani
 - III3 Sao Phong Noan
 - III4 Sao Phong Kiao/Ouie m. Dr Kyaw Thinn
 - III5 Sao Kiao Murng Noi
- IWife4 Nang Daeng
 - II1 Sao Saymong/Sao Saimong (1913-1987) m. Daw Mi Mi Khaing
 - III1 Sao Ying Noi
 - III2 Sao Thi Thi Ta
 - III3 Sao Khaimong
 - II2 Sao Nang Canfong/Sao Sanphong (d. 1996)
 - III1 Sao Sophawaddi
 - III2 Sao Sai Noi
 - III3 Sao Leang
- IWife5 Nang Bunyong
 - II1 Sao Fongnoan
 - II2 Sao Bunvadvongsa/Sao Boonwaat (d. 1991)
 - III1 Sao Noot
 - III2 Sao Sai Boonwaat
 - III3 Sao Leik Boonwaat
 - III4 Sao Leng Boonwaat
 - III5 Sao Let Boonwaat
- IWife6 Nang Bodipnoy
 - II1 Sao Nang Hnot/Bonoan/Mrs. Joe Huffman
 - II2 Sao Yodmong/Sao Yawt Mong (d. 2004)
 - III1 Sao Sirirut
 - III2 Khemawong
 - III3 Sao Dait
 - III4 Sao Wan Wai

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sao Kwan Kiao Intaleng, Saohpa Kengtung (r. 1897-1935) (Sao Khai Mong).



Sao Sai Mong, Sao Kya Nyunt, and Sao Boon Wat (1930s; Sao Khai Mong).



Three beautiful princesses: Sao San Hpong, Sao Bo Sawan, and Sao Hpong Keau (1930s; Sao Khai Mong).



Sao Nang Tip Htila, a forceful figure of the Kengtung family (1910s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Kengtung Saohpa Sao Kwan Tai (r. 1937-1937) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Wedding of Sao Kwan Tai. L-R: The father (Kengtung Saohpa), the bridegroom (Sao Kwan Tai), Sao Kya Nyunt (the bride), Hsipaw Saohpa, and Mawkmai Saohpa (1922; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Three generations of the Kengtung, Hsenwi, and Hsipaw families. Standing: Saohpa Hsenwi Sao Hom Hpa, Saohpa Kengtung Sao Kwan Kiao Intaleng, Saohpa Hsipaw Sao Ohn Kya, Kyemmong Kengtung Sao Kwan Tai, Kyemmong Hsenwi Sao Hman Hpa, and U Ba Taw. Sitting on chairs: Hsenwi Mahadevi Sao Malar, Sao Suk Santa, Hsipaw Mahadevi Sao Thunanda, Sao Ma Ma, Sao Tipp Sawan, and Sao Kya Nyunt. Sitting on the floor in front of Sao Malar (extreme left) holding a child, are Nang Mya Aye, Sao Hseng Zanda, Sao Van Tip, Sao Ohn Nyunt, Sao Hip, Sao Hearn Hkam, and Nang Nyunt. Three little girls sitting in front L-R: Evelyn Gaudoin Hsenwi, Sao Noot/Marlene Kengtung, and others unknown (late 1920s; Sao Khai Mong).



On the occasion of Sao Sai Long's ordination as a novice in Kengtung (1930s; Sao Khai Mong).



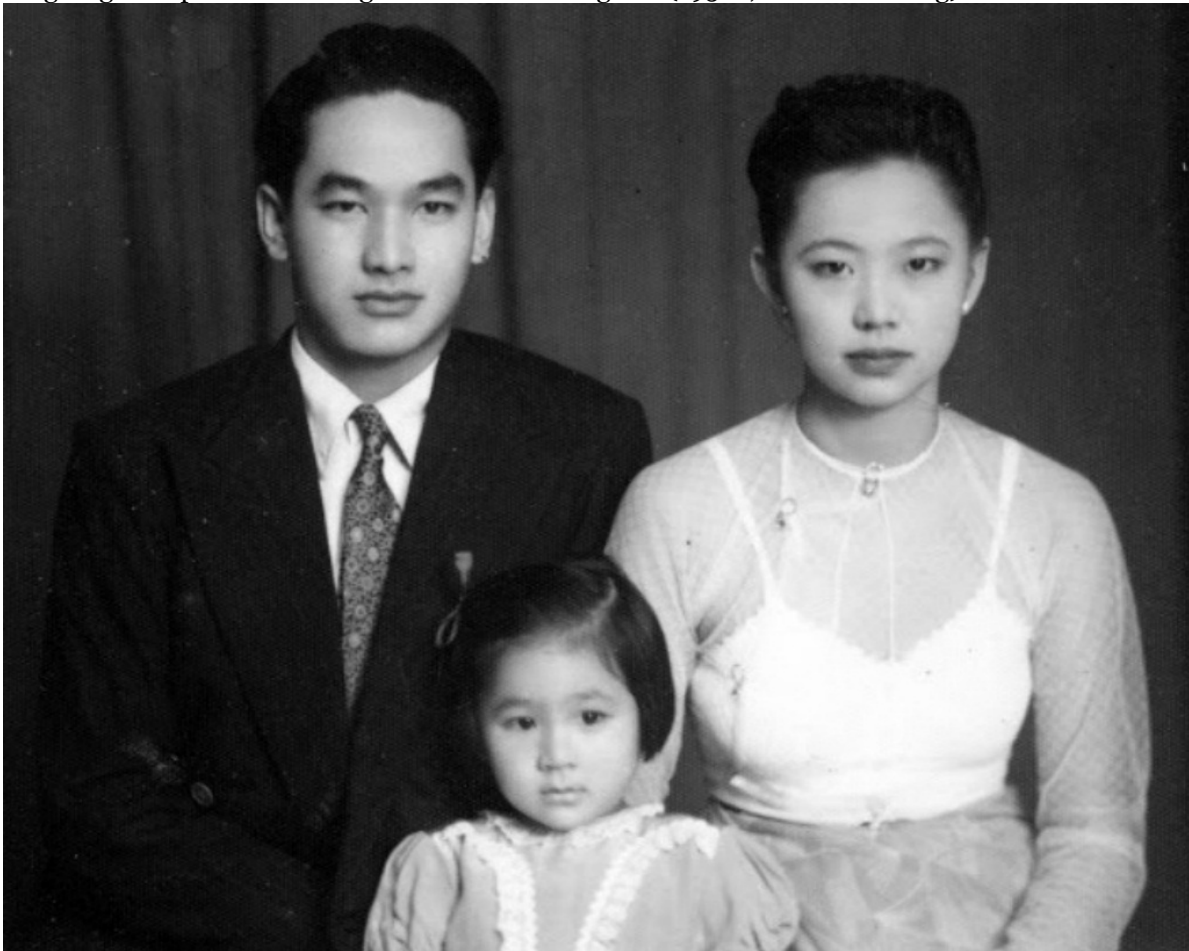
Sao Sai Long with his two sisters, Sao Noot the elder and Sao Noom the younger (1930s; Sarah Curwen).



Sao Sai Long on his enthronement (r. 1947-1959) (Shan Herald News Agency).



Kengtung Saohpa Sao Sai Long and wife with daughter (1950s; Sao Khai Mong).



Princesses: Sao Kya Nyunt Kengtung Mahadevi, Sao Hpong Kiao, Sao Bonoan, Sao San Phong, and Sao Noot. Princes: Sao Zing Zai, Sao Kwan Tai (wearing a topee) Kengtung Saohpa, Sao Kiao Murng, and Sao Hkun Suik (in shorts) (1930s; Sao Khai Mong).



Sao Kiao Murng, the last remaining son of Sao Kwan Kiao Intaleng (2009; Ouie Mangrai).



Sao Sai Mong and Mi Mi Khaing with their three children (1950s; Sao Khai Mong).



Sao Zing Zai, son of Saohpa Kengtung, and his bride, Daw Khin Mya on their wedding day (Sao Khai Mong).



Sao Sai Mong with nieces, Lillian, Marlene, and Noom in front (1930s; Sao Khai Mong).



Frontal approach to the Haw that was demolished by the army after the coup in 1962 (1950s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



The old Kengtung Haw (1920s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



MONG PAN STATE

Founded in 1637, Mong Pan, a state of nearly 3,000 square miles, is situated southwest of Kengtung and south of Mong Nai State. During the Japanese occupation when Burma was granted independence, the Japanese government transferred both states to the Siamese government as a reward for being its ally. They were returned to the British administration after the war.

The first Myosa of Mong Pan was installed in 1637 by the monarch of Burma. From this family, nine *myosa* followed, ruling the state until 1808. The monarch then appointed a Bamar, Maha Ne Nyo, who had been a commander of the Mong Nai garrison. On his retirement, he was designated Myosa of Mong Pan for services rendered. All the rulers that followed are said to have descended from this man. Upon his death in 1823, he was succeeded by his son Maung Shwe Hkam, who ruled for thirty-five years. His son Hkun Tun U (r. 1853-1886) took charge as Saohpa of Mong Pan. Unfortunately, when he died, his son was too young to rule therefore, a younger brother Hkun Leng (r. 1888-1894) was installed as ruler. The latter's reign was not peaceful as the state was plagued with quarrels and troubles.

The disturbed conditions after the death of the last ruler coincided with the beginning of the Limbin Confederacy and the British annexation of the Shan States, resulting in a total breakdown of law and order within the state. Sir Charles Crosthwaite wrote that Mong Pan was desolated when he arrived. The town had been burned down at various times and all inhabitants had fled.

Hkun Leng's son Hkun Num (r. 1894-1918) succeeded him. Although in the beginning the British experienced difficulties in dealing with him, they recognized that Hkun Num was well-meaning and a good chief. In 1916, he was awarded the KSM, the Gold Chain of Honor. When he died two years later in 1918, his half-brother Hkun On followed him.

Hkun On (1887-1947 r. 1918-1947)), a Tai Shan Buddhist, administered five *mong*, including Mong Pan. The four lesser *mong* were Mong Tone, Mong Han, Mong Kyut, and Mong Hta, where teak forests grew abundantly. In 1907, Bombay Burmah Corporation was given the logging lease for work in the Mong Pan forests. Hkun On's Mahadevi was Sao Nan Yon. Their eldest son, Sao Shwe Kyi (1921-?), was the designated heir. The four daughters were Sao Pwa Sein, Sao Ohn Sein, Sao Hla Win, and Sao Kham Mai from other wives. In 1932, Hkun On was honored by the British with a KSM, previously known as the Gold Chain of Honor.

Sao Shwe Kyi started his studies at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi in 1931. In 1940, he left to undergo training in administration with the Loilem District Officers for about one year. He also spent time at the office of the Mong Pawn Saohpa, Sao Sam Htun. After that, he assisted his father in the administration of the state and was appointed *kyemmong*. In 1948, a year after his father died, he succeeded him as *saohpa*.

When the KNDO forces swept through his territory in 1949 on their march up to Taunggyi, Sao Shwe Kyi enlisted men and aided the Burman army. He went to Loilem and served as the Army Supply Officer. In 1950, he visited Thailand, going to Bangkok and Chiang Mai to learn from his neighbors. In 1952, he was elected as a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities.

During the KMT invasion in 1953, Sao Shwe Kyi, together with Colonel Kyaw Zaw from the Tatmadaw, led his people to fight the KMT, joining the main military operation called Na Nga Naing.

In 1954, in another military operation, called Bayinnaung, Sao Shwe Kyi again effectively led his people to fight the KMT. He also helped recruit people from Mong Pan and other areas to cooperate with the Tatmadaw in their fight against the KMT. He made every effort in different ways to assist the Tatmadaw to chase the intruders out of his region. For his services, he was awarded a Land Rover, a motion picture projector, and a generator from the then Prime Minister, U Nu. The Union

Government then conferred on him the Thiripyanchi, an honorary title and a decoration created by the Union Government and awarded for outstanding service. After the elections in November 1958, he was appointed Minister of Education and Health in the new Shan State government. He also gained the respect and trust from his people for his ability and sincerity in serving them.

Sao Shwe Kyi married Sao Nan Myint, a second daughter of Doctor U Hlaing, but had no children. His sister Sao Pan Sein married Sao Sein Pwint, a nephew of Sao Hkun Kyi, the Saohpa of Samka.

MONG PAN FAMILY TREE³⁵

I Maha Ne Nyo, Burman king appointee (r. 1809-1923). Was former Bohmu (Viceroy) of Mong Nai garrison

II Maung Shwe Kham (r. 1823-1858)

III1 Hkun Htun U (r. 1858-1886)

III2 Hkun Leng; m. Nang Noot (d. 1894)

IV1 Hkun Num, KSM 1916 (r. 1888-1918)

IV2 Hkun Ong/Sao Khin Aung/Sao Tha Mong Dan, Saohpa (r. 1918-1947) married four wives

IV2Wife1 Sao Nang Yon, Mahadevi

V1 Sao Shwe Kyi, Saohpa (1921-2007; r. 1947-1959);
m. Sao Nang Myint, Mahadevi (1922-2011)

VI1 Sao Hla Win/Olive

V2 Sao Pan Sein

IV2Wife2 name unknown

V1 Sao Ohn Sein

V2 Sao Hla Win

IV2Wife3 name unknown

V1 Nang Nyunt

V2 Sao Kham Mai

IV2Wife4 name unknown

V1 Nang Chit

³⁵ Sources: Mong Pan Family and SSK (1943).

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sao Tha Mong Dan/Sao Hkun Ong, Saohpa Mong Pan (r. 1918-1948) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Shwe Kyi, Saohpa Mong Pan (r. 1948-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



KOKANG STATE

Into the Fold

In 1945 soon after the end of World War II, Yang Wen Pin, Myosa of Kokang, received the Order of the British Empire (OBE), for services rendered behind enemy lines. About the same time, Kokang seceded from Hsenwi State, becoming a separate state. Six months after the Panglong Conference in 1947, Kokang was officially acknowledged as an independent state. At the same time, Yang Kyein Sai succeeded his father, Yang Wen Pin, and was elevated to the rank of *saohpa*.

Kokang State lies in the furthest corner of the northeastern Shan Plateau. It was part of China until it was ceded to the British under the Peking Convention of 1897. For the next fifty years or so, it was included within the jurisdiction of Hsenwi State.

Like the neighboring Wa States, its topography is of high, intricate mountains, many rising to well over 9,800 feet in height, and streams. While the land in the valleys of the catchment areas of the Salween River system are often rocky and unfit for arable food crops, opium poppies have thrived here for centuries as the major crop. Traditionally, tracts of bright red and white poppies could be seen growing atop mountains.

Opium use has a long history, having been grown and used for medicinal purposes by Greeks and Romans, in Persia, and in Arab countries. Then in the 1500s opium was introduced into Asia by various colonial powers. The British introduced opium into China, shipping supplies from Bengal. This became such a lucrative business for the British that when the Chinese tried to stop opium imports because of a growing addiction problem, the Opium War (1839-1842) followed.

Chinese traders in southern China during and after that time, began urging villagers in Kokang and the Wa States, its next-door neighbors, to grow opium poppies to maintain supplies. The mountainous, infertile terrain was considered ideal for poppy cultivation and the higher the altitude, the better the crop and quality of the opium.

Opium was not a serious cash crop on the Shan Plateau until the 1900s. All the same, addiction to opium grew not only in these two states, but all over the country. Many of the diverse communities from as far north as the Kachin State stretching southwards towards the Kengtung area grew opium poppies and used the opium. In the villages, the opium poppies were grown for personal medicinal use with the surplus sold at the five-day bazaar. The money the villagers received was then used to buy rice, salt, and other necessities, such as textiles.

Soon after World War II, opium production changed. It dramatically increased in this area and the surrounding mountainous terrain irrespective of boundaries, becoming known as the infamous Golden Triangle on the junctures with Laos and Thailand.

Previously, there had been evergreen forests on the upper slopes of the mountains and temperate and deciduous forests, including bamboo further down. Unfortunately, to make space for new poppy crops, trees were cut down and areas burned, and some of these forests have been lost. Over time, the topsoil of the fields became completely degraded and infertile. Since the land is no longer useful, the poppy growers move on to new areas repeating the same slash and burn. This wasteful shifting method is still used widely today over much of the virgin mountain land in many parts of the Shan Plateau. In recent years, poppy growing has also escalated in areas north and south of Taunggyi.

In the past, lack of proper roads and transport had kept the Kokang Region remote from the Shan side. Travel was generally by horses and ponies with mules carrying heavy loads on the long journeys. Even when motor vehicles came into use, it usually took a whole day to drive the more than sixty miles to Lashio, the nearest large town in the Shan States. In contrast, better transport

connections made it easier to travel to China.

Although Kokang is inhabited mainly by the Han Chinese, Tai Shan also live in the state, and in and around Kung Long along the Salween River. Much of the population of Han descent live in the northwest of Kokang. The Kachin, Lisu, Palaung, Meo/Hmong, Wa, and many Muslim Chinese (known as Panthay by the Burmese) live with them.

The House of Yang

Earliest records show that around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Chinese traders travelled to the Shan Plateau and beyond. Many, specifically the Yang Clan and its followers, came to settle in the region. The Yang Clan were Han warriors and Ming loyalists who had fled the Manchu. They arrived around 1642 at a place then called Ko Kan Shan, possibly Ko Kan Mountain. The etymology of the place name is uncertain, since in Tai Shan, "Kao Kang" is thought to mean either 'Nine Guards' or 'Nine Village Headmen'. There were nine villages in the region. Kokang, an almost entirely Han Chinese populated state, was one of the casualties of the British, French colonial, and Chinese boundary exchanges. The mighty Salween River forms a natural border with Hsenwi as it flows along its western side of Kokang. Immediately to its north is Yunnan, and southward, the Wa States.

It was around 1738 when Yang Shein Tsai (1685-1758; r. 1739-1758) arrived with his family and entourage. He had earlier given protection to villagers living along the Salween from menacing bandits. Consequently, when he migrated he brought along a sizeable community that considered him their leader. This was the beginning of the House of Yang.

Later, it was his great grandson, Yang Guo Hwa (1814-1874; r. 1840-1874) who proclaimed himself Heng of Kokang and called his territory Kokang. It was during his rule that a group of Panthay Chinese Muslims from Yunnan arrived seeking asylum. Yang Guo Zhen, the nephew of the Heng was not in favor of granting the request. Consequently, there were battles between the Panthay and the Kokang forces and the former were eventually driven away.

When Yang Guo Hwa died, he left a four-year-old child as his successor. Since the child was unable to rule, his uncle, Yang Guo Zhen (1840-1920; r. 1874-1916), became Regent of Kokang. He was an able ruler and Kokang prospered under him. He was known as Hkun Lu Kwan when he moved in Shan circles. Keeping his promise to Yang Guo Hwa, the regent chose his nephew, Yang Chun Yon (1870-1929; r. 1916-1927), to succeed him upon his death, rather than his own son. Yang Chun Yon was recognized as *myosa* in 1919 by the British.

By 1929 when Yang Chun Yon's son, Yang Wen Pin (1897-1949; r. 1927-1949), became *myosa*, Kokang's links with other rulers had widened through intermarriages between Mong Pan, and the Wa state of Mong Lun. Contacts increased with Tai Shan princes when Kokang was incorporated into North Hsenwi. In 1936, Yang Wen Pin was awarded the TDM Thuye gaung ngwee Daya min, 'Silver Sword for Bravery'.

In her book, *The House of Yang, Guardians of an Unknown Frontier*, Yang Li (1997), also known as Jackie Rettie, gives a detailed account of what happened to the Yang family during the years of the Japanese war and how Kokang became a separate state from Hsenwi. Briefly, when the Japanese occupied the Shan States, her grandfather, Myosa Yang Wen Pin, was called to Hsenwi in 1942 to meet the Japanese commander by Sao Yape Hpa, the then Japanese installed *saohpa*, but Yan Wen Pin had refused to go. Later when Sao Yape Hpa came to Kun Long with a Japanese expeditionary force, Yang Wen Pin was obliged to meet them, and again in Hsenwi. Since the meetings were disagreeable, Yang Wen Pin decided to form an army to defend Kokang. Called the Kokang Self-Defense Force (KDF), it was made up of brave men, young and old, who were willing to give up their lives for their country. But without proper arms it had little chance of effectively

stopping a force of 6,000 Japanese soldiers marching in and occupying part of Kokang. However, this action mobilized the Thirty-Ninth Division of the Chinese KMT army to move, from across the border, into Kokang. In 1943, Chiang Kai-Shek invited Myosa Yang Wen Pin to Chongqing. They had an amicable meeting and more Chinese troops were sent in to help defend Kokang. Meanwhile, the family had left for Yunnan.

Allegedly, due to the actions of certain corrupt men, Yang Wen Pin was arrested on his return from Chongqing by the local KMT commander and accused of having been in contact with the Japanese, sending money to the Burma government, killing men who were anti-Japanese, and refusing to fly a Chinese flag. Yang Wen Pin was in a predicament. Kokang was British territory, yet as the Kuomintang were helping Kokang to resist the Japanese, the Chinese KMT commander felt Yang Wen Pin owed his loyalty to the KMT.

In January 1944 when the British learned of the arrest, they began negotiating the *myosa's* release with the Chinese commander in Kokang. The British declared that the Chinese had "committed an act of singular discourtesy and impropriety" (Rettie 1997:57) by arresting a head of a British State. After further exchanges, Yang Wen Pin was released with the KMT commander stipulating that the *myosa* was not to return to Kokang while the KMT remained in Kokang.

The Myosa Yang Wen Pin and part of his family were then taken to Kalimpong, where they stayed until the war was over. In his absence, his brother, Yang Wen Tsan, took charge. In 1944, the Allies based themselves in Japanese unoccupied Kokang for intelligence gathering to plan the recapture of Burma.

In 1946 after the British government had returned to Burma, the Yang family returned to find a devastated Kokang. Many lives had been lost and sacrifices made in the defense of Kokang. While Chinese forces had come to assist Kokang, their soldiers had behaved outrageously. On leaving they had wrecked the towns. But all was not doom and gloom as the British were to grant Kokang its separation from Hsenwi State, making it a state with a *saohpa*. Yang Wen Pin ruled for a second term from 1947-1949. On his death, the second son, Yang Kyein Sai, succeeded him.

The Next Generation

After the war, some members of Sao Yang Wen Pin's family of nine sons and six daughters were to play a part in trying to keep their Kokang State independent. The many courageous attempts to keep the state together, defended by the Kokang Self-Defense Force, sadly failed. However, in other spheres of activities they excelled. In 1948 when independence was gained and the Union of Burma formed, members of the Yang family found themselves fully integrated, serving as Members of Parliament and officials of the Shan State and Union government.

The new *saohpa*, Yang Kyein Sai (1918-1971; r. 1949-1959), who was known as Edward in school, studied at the Anglo-Vernacular School in Lashio. He then went on to the Shan Chief's School in Taunggyi. Later, he went to study in Rangoon. He was fluent in both the Tai Shan and Chinese languages. As someone interested in education, he encouraged the young people of his State to further their studies. His interest in agriculture led to tea plants being introduced and grown in Kokang. Due to its good quality, Kokang Tea soon became well known all over the country.

Edward became a Member of Parliament in the Chamber of Nationalities and served in the first 1948 Shan State government as Finance Minister. In 1950, he went as a Burmese delegate to the United Nations in New York. While in the United States, he learned more about democracy and was impressed by the technological development he saw. This convinced him that earlier programs he had introduced in Kokang were correct in promoting democracy and progress for his people.

Meanwhile, from 1949 onwards in Kokang, the political situation was not good. Batches of

Kuomintang troops moved into areas where they could not be controlled by the state. Thus, the prince and his family moved to Lashio and stayed there until 1953. There was little he or his administration could do to prevent the KMT from freely moving around Kokang. In 1958, the *saohpa* abdicated, surrendering his powers to the people of Kokang State rather than to the Shan State government. The state was administered by the Chief Minister from that time until 1963.

In 1959 after the Shan princes had relinquished their power as feudal rulers, Yang Kyein Sai retired and returned to live a quiet life in Lashio. He met army officers to play golf. His daughter, Jackie Yang wrote that, he believed "in golf there was discipline, ethics and honor" (1997:90), while in politics one was uncertain of the outcome. He had thought that by remaining neutral, Kokang could be saved from becoming involved in the chaotic political situation in the Shan State. After the army coup, he, along with other ruling princes, were detained by the Tatmadaw. In June 1964, Yang Kyein Sai was released as suddenly as he had been arrested, without explanation. In 1971 he returned to his family in Lashio. He died from cancer at the age of fifty-four.

In Lashio, though officially no longer a ruling prince, Yang Kyein Sai had been visited by many of his subjects coming to pay homage and seeking his advice. This was not unusual. As I wrote in *The Moon Princess*, villagers from all over Yawnghwe State sought audiences with my father, especially on bazaar days. As Yang Li says, "The tie between the Saohpa and the people, although officially severed was still strong. The simple people of Kokang did not understand nor appreciate the legal aspect of the transfer" (1997:89). The transfer refers to the renunciation of the feudal system by the princes and the transfer of their power to the Shan government.

Whether one supported the *saohpa* and their feudal rule or not, they and their forefathers had been there for a long time. Through centuries, the heritage of Tai Shan culture and tradition had evolved. While it was an antiquated system that needed to change in the modern world, the *saohpa* who ruled for better or worse, was someone the people looked up to in good and bad times. Nowadays, some may be contemptuous of feudalism, forgetting that many monuments and historical places exist only because of that system.

The respect and loyalty people had for their princes is also illustrated by this story related to me. In 1961, while the Burman media were having a major campaign against the *saohpa*, David, the son of the Mong Mit Saohpa, described the visit he and his brother, Philip, made to Mong Mit, their capital then, as schoolboys:

The day we arrived we were garlanded through the car windows, and stayed at the Inspection Bungalow. That day we noticed how a lot of people seemed to be gathering around the building, and later as it grew darker, you could see what seemed like tracks of fire flowing down the hillsides. When I asked Father what it was, he said it was the people of the state coming to see Philip and myself. That evening and night proved to be a wondrous time of celebration. We did not really understand why we were such a center of attraction as headmen knelt and said prayers for us. To us it seemed like a dream.

Despite giving up their feudal rule, the *saohpa* were still revered and cherished by the people demonstrating that tradition cannot be changed overnight. Creating such change required educating and convincing people who have little knowledge of governance that the new system advocated by the new Shan government was better than that of the ancient feudal one.

Jimmy Yang

One of the Yang brothers was Yang Kyein Sein, known to his friends by his school name, Jimmy. A generous, warm-hearted person, Jimmy, had many friends from Burmese society and the

international circle. Like his brother, he was educated in Lashio, played soccer and hockey while at the Shan Chief's School, and then went on to the University of Rangoon.

When war broke out, he went home to Kokang and continued his studies at Chongqing University. In 1943, he joined the Chinese army with the rank of captain and served with them during the war against the Japanese. From 1945-1946, he was with the Kokang Self-Defense Force. When independence was achieved, he became Chief Minister of Kokang, but later moved to Rangoon with his family. By then he was already the Member of Parliament (MP) for Kokang in the Chamber of Deputies. From 1952 to 1962, he was manager of the East Burma Bank whose clients were chiefly from the Shan State.

A year after the 1962 coup, when his brother was detained in Lashio, Jimmy decided to return to Kokang. As his house was a meeting place for young Kokang students, he learned a great deal about the anguish and resentment they felt for the Tatmadaw's maltreatment of the Kokang people. What irked him most was that contrary to their promise, the Burman did not treat the Tai Shan and other ethnic people equally. Instead, they acted as if they were superior when dealing with ethnic people.

Once back home, he decided with Kokang elders to resist the Tatmadaw, thereby starting a rebellion. The Kokang Revolutionary Force (KRF) was accordingly formed. It is sometimes referred to as the Kokang Resistance Force.

In 1967, there had been riots in Rangoon against the Chinese, which made it uncomfortable for those from Kokang. For many reasons, the KRF could not go it alone. It needed help. It approached both China and the KMT in 1967. China stipulated that it would help on condition that Kokang accepted CPB control.

At this point, Jimmy was faced with a quandary. He also had to deal with traitors within his fold. The KRF had divided into two camps. One was loyal to him and the other supported his sister, Yang Kyin Hsui, known as Olive. He knew that though he was an astute businessman, he was in no way a hard military man.

While the infiltration from China that began in 1967 was not immediately obvious, the whole of Kokang had come under the control of the CPB by 1969. As soon as this happened, Yang Kyein Sein and his brothers who were also actively involved in defending Kokang, and his followers fled into Kachin territory. But after a month, fearing they were overstaying their welcome, Jimmy with his units and their families, at the invitation of the KMT, made their way down to the KMT headquarters on the Burma-Thai border. It was a hazardous journey with the Tatmadaw hot on their tail, splitting the group up. Fortunately, after some narrow escapes and harrowing experiences, the two groups eventually made it to the KMT camp, arriving at different times.

A little later, Jimmy was disillusioned and left the KRF. Neither this venture nor his other underground activities with nationalist resistance groups were as successful as his commercial enterprises. As a civilian and a businessman once more, he became manager of the Rincome Hotel in Chiang Mai.

About this time, the former Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, U Nu, was released from house detention in Rangoon. He was appointed to the Interim Unity Advisory Board that had been formed to recommend how the transfer of power from the military to a national government could be affected. When he found out that the Tatmadaw was neither sincere nor prepared to seriously consider proposals, he left for India. Later he went on to London where he declared his intention to take up arms against General Ne Win and his regime.

Around 1968-1969, U Nu arrived at the Thai/Burma border where a few members of the Thirty Comrades who were opposed to Ne Win had set up camp. This was when Yang Kyein Sein (Jimmy) again became involved in an underground movement - the Parliamentary Democracy Party

(PDP). He had been given charge of the Eastern Command, its military arm.

The PDP had to depend on the ethnic armies such as the Karen and the Mon groups in the south and the Tai Shan in the northeast. Although for the next few years there was some progress in their fight against the Tatmadaw, U Nu could not agree to ethnic demands nor accept their political aspirations for federation. They soon fell out.

Jimmy, again disillusioned, went into exile in France. However, in 1981, when General Ne Win offered amnesty, he followed U Nu and other members of his PDP and returned to Rangoon to join his wife and family. During Jimmy's absence in the jungles, his wife, Jean, a Scottish-Chinese, had efficiently set up a restaurant that Jimmy helped her manage until his death in 1984.

It would be remiss when writing about the Yang family not to mention two of the Yang sisters who have made a name for themselves in different ways: Yang Kyin Pin (Jane) and Yang Kyin Hsui (Olive).

Jane Yang, a real beauty, married Henry Tin Pe, a charming, lively Bamar. Henry went to Fitzwilliam College at Cambridge University and read Law. On his return to Burma, he married Jane and joined the Foreign Ministry. His last posting was to Washington, where, when he retired, he and Jane started a Burmese restaurant that became well-known in diplomatic circles. Sadly, Henry died in 2003, and Jane and her son kept the *Burma Restaurant* only for the next few years.

Olive Yang was the opposite of Jane. She was tough and boyish, while Jane was slim and delicate looking. During the turbulent years of the 1960s she decided to step into military uniform and to join the resistance, the Kokang Revolutionary Force. She was "a dynamic and forceful character, very much admired for her toughness and ability" wrote my brother, Tzang Yawnghwe,³⁶ and added "she managed to work with the army top brass in Northern Shan States, and made a fortune in the opium-gold trade, obtaining liquor, meat, and other concessions" (1987:245-246).

When her brother Yang Kyein Sai left Kokang after his abdication, Olive Yang administered Kokang State for two years from 1960-1962. When the coup came, she was detained, along with other Shan rulers.

As mentioned earlier, in Kokang, Olive Yang had her own faction of resistance followers, who were not entirely patriotic and whose leaders were more interested in the opium trade than fighting for their state. These included Lo Hsin Han, who became Olive's deputy. One day his caravan of opium was seized by the Tatmadaw. To regain his property, he agreed to set up Ka Kwe Ye (KKY), a People's Defense Force unit, whose primary task was to provide the Tatmadaw with necessary intelligence on all resistance groups, including their defensive and offensive measures. From this time to about 1963, he sided with the Burma army. There was much bloodshed in the ensuing civil war in Kokang. More will be said about him later.

The New Order

Between 1965 and 1968, members of the immediate Yang family and its faction that were involved in the Kokang Revolutionary Force (KRF) were compelled to disband, losing out to young, ambitious and ruthless members of the opposition. Two brothers, Pheung Kya-shin and Pheung Kya-fu, were members of the KRF. Finding their forces too weak to hold out against the combined Burma army's offensive units and the KKY units, the KRF surrendered to the Tatmadaw. Some months later, resentful of their despotic treatment from Burman commanders in Lashio, Pheung Kya-shin decided to return to Kokang and start guerrilla warfare against them. The situation became chaotic from 1966 to 1968, and when the Burman army overran the state, he retreated to China.

³⁶ Yawnghwe (1987).

In 1968, Pheung Kya-shin re-appeared as commander of the Kokang People's Liberation Army and joined forces with the CPB to fight the Burman army. They first gained control of the north and eventually the whole state. From 1968 to 1972, Pheung Kya-shin was the new chief administrator. During this period, the CPB made Kokang their secure base and headquarters from which to attack neighboring areas. It was now Lo Hsin Han and his KKY followers' turn to flee from the communists, back to Lashio. They burned villages during their flight, leaving behind a trail of devastation.

During the 1970s, the Pheung brothers set up heroin refineries. The CPB objected and offered to pay compensation, but Pheung Kya-shin refused to comply. Then in 1989, he mutinied against the CPB, objecting to the manner the CPB officials were treating his Kokang forces and other ethnic people. Seizing upon this rift, the Burma military regime quickly sought to make peace and offered a ceasefire. It was thought that this overture by the Tatmadaw was made to prevent Pheung Kya-shin's Kokang forces from joining the National Democratic Front (NDF), an alliance of ethnic resistance groups formed in 1976.

A cease-fire was signed with the Tatmadaw that allowed Pheung Kya-shin's forces to keep their weapons and to administer Kokang, but they had to assume responsibility for the prevention and eradication of narcotics. Kokang was then transformed into the Northern Shan State Special Region Number One, under the leadership of Pheung Kya-shin. However, despite the ceasefire commitments, not only did mountaintops continue to be ablaze with fields of colorful poppies, but heroin and amphetamines were produced for the international markets.

Despite some infighting during the 1990s, Pheung Kya-shin managed to hold on and by 1994, he was once more in control. Then, in 2009, a major incident left Kokang completely at the mercy of the Tatmadaw.

Since 1989 when he was put in charge of the Kokang Special Region, Chairman Pheung Kya-shin had opposed the integration of the Kokang army with the Tatmadaw, despite continuing pressure from the Burman army. However, his deputy chairman, Bai Xuoqian (Bai Suocheng), was in favor. This caused a major split in the Kokang group, and a new organization emerged known as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). Once again, the Tatmadaw found an opportunity and attacked without hesitation in 2009, ordering the MNDAA to reform into a Border Guard Force under its control. Taking advantage of MNDAA divisions, victory was swift, but almost 30,000 local people became refugees overnight and fled to neighboring Yunnan Province. Having gained full control, the Tatmadaw installed Pheung Kya Shen's deputy chairman, Bai Xuoqian, as the new head of the Kokang Self-Administered Zone.

Subsequently, Bai Xuoqian participated in the 2010 general election and was elected a Member of the Myanmar Parliament. In 2015, however, Pheung Kya Shen sought to revive the MNDAA movement with a younger generation of officers and fierce fighting has since returned to the Kokang region and its capital, Laukkai.

Yang Li sadly laments the break-up of her once proud homeland:

The machinations of the army (Tatmadaw) which divided Kokang into two factions had, to some extent, weakened Kokang's political standing... The social cohesion that had existed centuries before disintegrated. Today they (meaning the Yang clan) are spread all over the globe (1997:102).

KOKANG FAMILY TREE³⁷

I1 Yang Guo Hwa (1814-1874; r 1840-1874)

I2 Yang Guo Chang

I3 Yang Guo Mon

I4 Yang Guo Mei

I5 Yang Guo Fan

I6 Yang Guo Zen

II1 Yang Chun Yon (Rong) (1870-1929)

III1 Yang Wen Pin (1897-1947)

III2 Yang Wen Tsan (Can)

III3 Yang Wen Ying

III4 Yang Wen Shong (Xion)

III1 Yang Wen Pin (1897-1947; r, 1929-1949)

IV1 Yan Kyein Yuan

IV2 Yang Kyein Sai, Saohpa (1918-1971; r, 1947-1959);

m. Lu Shwin Kyin (1925-2007)

V1 Yang Li/Jackie Rettie

V2 Yang Mon Shon

V3 Yang Khuen

V4 Yang Kya Ying

V5 Yang Hui

V6 Yang Mei

V7 Yang Fei

V8 Yang Ka Min

IV3 Yang Kyein Sein/Jimmy (1920-1985); m. Chou Guo Fan/Jean

V1 Yang Nern Chan/Veda

V2 Yang Chan Gui/John

V3 Yang Kya Hwa/David

IV4 Yang Kyin Mei (f)

IV5 Yang Kyein Hsiang (d.1942)

IV6 Yang Kyin Hsui/Olive (f) (b.1927)

IV7 Yang Kyein Hui

IV8 Yang Kyin Pin/Jane m. U Tin Pe/Henry

V1 Thuza m. Christian Heugas

VI1 Annabelle

VI2 Alexandra

V2 Zarni Tin Pe

IV9 Yang Kyein Shuen/Francis (b.1935);

m. Sao Lao Kham/Maggie, Tawngpeng Family

V1 Nang Kalaya m. Bobby A. Wijewickrama

VI1 Tristan R Wijewickrama

V2 Yan Naung

IV10 Yang Kyin Mun

³⁷ Sources: Kokang Family members, Yang Li. 1997. *The House of Yang*, and Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe, 1959.

IV11 Yang Kyein Lai/Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHS

Yang Guo Zhen (Yang Li).



Yang Chuan Yon (Yang Li).



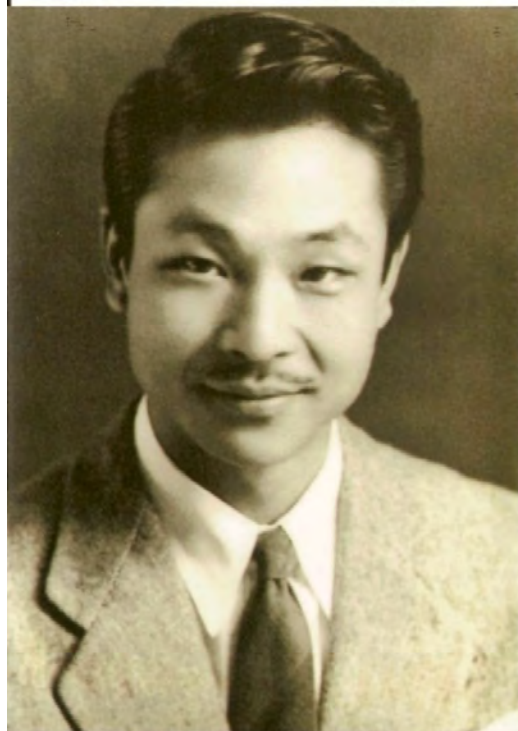
Yang Wen Ping, OBE, Kokang Myosa (1897-1949 r; 1929-1949) (Yang Li).



Chan Chu Min, Myosa Kadaw, wife of Yang Wen Ping (Francis Yang).



Yang Kyein Sai, Kokang Saohpa(r: 1949-1959) (1950s; Yang Li).



Lu Shwin Zhen, Kokang Mahadevi (1950s; Yang Li).



Yang Kyein Sein (Jimmy) as commander of the Shan States Army (1970; Yang Li).

**FORMATION OF THE UNITED NATIONALITIES
LIBERATION FRONT**

25 MAY 1970, Bangkok, Thailand



L-R: U Manh Talin Chairman Chin National Council Chin State	Nai Shwe Kyin Chairman New Mon State Party Mon State	Manh Ba Zan Chairman Karen National Union Karen State	Bo Letya Deputy Chairman People's Democratic Party Burma	General Jimmy Yang Commander Eastern Command Shan State,
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Yang Kyein Hsui (Olive), a commander of the Kokang Revolutionary Army (1970s; Yang Li).



Yang Kyein Shuen (Francis), Kokang Revolutionary Army and Louisa Benson, Karen National Union (1970s; Yang Li).



Donald Yang, an officer of the Kokang Revolutionary Army and son of Yang Wen Tsan (1970s; Yang Li).



Olive Yang (1927-2017) standing in the middle, with her followers (1960s; Kokang Family Collection)



Yang Li, author of *The House of Yang* (2010; Simms Collection).



CHAPTER NINE: THE INNER SHAN STATES

ISOLATION

In former days, despite their internecine wars, most of the Shan States were closely associated with each other, as the princely families intermarried. In war, smaller states had to accept their defeat but, as soon as they could, they rebelled and once again tried to regain their freedom from the aggressor. This was the pattern of existence until they contacted the mightier powers of monarchs.

In fact, unbeknown to the Tai Shan princes, an on-going divide and rule policy was being practiced. When the Burman kings were pleased with a prince, he could be awarded the rule of an additional state, which the monarchy unceremoniously seized. For the chosen victim, displeasure meant imprisonment or the loss of his *mong*, which the monarch gave away as he pleased. When a single prince was treated this way, he simply endured it. However, sometimes two or three adjoining *mong* united to rebel against the king. Although capable of organizing to rebel from time to time against the Burman kings, they had not thought of forming themselves into one strong kingdom to counter belligerent or cruel monarchs who bullied them.

A cluster of states within the Southern Shan States situated to the northeast of Yawnghwe and west of Kengtung consisted of Laikha, Mong Kung, Mong Nawng, Mong Hsu, and Kesi Mansam. Below these states was the larger state of Mong Nai, sitting in the middle with Mawkmai and Mong Pan to its south. Further west of Yawnghwe towards the Burma border, were the Mye Lat States of the predominantly Danu people. Smaller states were situated towards the south where many Pa-O people live. The Padaung/Kayan lived at the end of the Inle.

Unlike the Northern States, which were endowed with natural resources, these Southern States were mainly agricultural communities. Rice was the major cash crop with tea, tobacco, and *thanatphet* 'cheroot wrapper leaves', also grown. One or two states, like Mong Pawn, grew temperate fruit.

In a few states, extraction work had been carried out in mines where such minerals as copper, coal, iron ore, and manganese are found. None of these natural resources outside the main northern region of the Plateau, however, have been extensively exploited although lately, rubies from Mong Hsu and coal in Tigyt have been actively mined.

Before World War II, the Shan States took pride in having as many as 200 schools all over the Shan Plateau, including state, private, and missionary schools. With monastic schools, the literacy rate was well over twelve percent. There were also thirty-three hospitals and dispensaries, mostly located in towns.

Although these smaller Southern States of the interior might have felt underprivileged compared to the larger states, much depended on how each ruling prince carried out his responsible duties and administered his state. Each state was provided with equal opportunities for state schools for the education of their young and hospitals for their subjects.

As already mentioned, the Public Works Department (PWD) took care of both paved and surfaced roads, and the postal and telegraph systems worked well. Unfortunately, most roads only led from one strategic point to the next, with no thought given to building interstate roads for easy access between the different states. There were, however, well-known paths through the jungles and over the mountains that had been used for centuries by different dissident armies, opium caravans, the Tatmadaw, and others. Since the beginning of the Japanese war in 1941, most of this inner region of the Shan Plateau has seen little peace. Even today, despite the Peace Process negotiations, fighting

continues between the resistance armies and the Tatmadaw in states such as Kesi Mansam, Mong Hsu, and Mong Nawng. The Inner States share a border with the two Wa States and Kengtung, where the KMT and the CPB operated. Consequently, the drug trade continues to flourish in this territory and in Special Regions Two and Four.

MONG NAI STATE

Once Powerful

In ancient times Mong Nai was a powerful *mong* extending westward beyond Yawnghwe. Burmese records date its founding from as early as 519 BC, when it was known by the classical name, Kambawza. However, it was well known to the Tai kingdoms of Lang Xang and Lan Na as Mong Nai. In 1551 in fact, Lan Na was ruled by King Meguti/Mae Ku of Mong Nai, a descendant of King Mangrai of Lanna. In 1558, Lan Na was attacked and conquered by Bayinnaung, King of Pegu. But King Meguti was allowed to continue ruling until 1564 as a puppet of the Burman king. For the next two centuries, Lan Na was under tight control of the Burman kings, while Mong Nai State itself was ruled by a succession of Shan princes. Both the state and its rulers grew in importance, chiefly due to having the Bamar viceroy stationed there.

During the latter period of the Alaungpaya or Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1885), a King's viceroy was installed in the Mong Nai State capital, with a *bohmu* 'commander' and a garrison of some 400 soldiers. Known as the *sitke*, the viceroy's main duty was to collect taxes from Mong Nai and other southern states. As the soldiers were poorly paid, it became the duty of the *saohpa* to feed them. The presence of the viceroy signified the importance of Mong Nai, which was adjacent to Kengtung on the west side of the Salween River. The garrison was there to keep the peace, to ensure loyalty from the Shan princes around the region, and to curtail encroachment on the land by the Siamese.

In a pact of friendship, the contemporary Mong Nai Saohpa on his accession to the throne, presented two of his daughters as minor queens to King Mindon at the Court of Mandalay. While Mindon ruled, the Mong Nai Saohpa had influence at court and the state prospered. However, everything changed when the new king, Thibaw, ascended the throne in 1878.

Massacre

Around 1883-1884 the Mong Nai Saohpa, Sao Hkun Kyi, realized that he was no longer a royal favorite. He felt discredited by King Thibaw's interference in the affairs of Mong Nai. On making his objections known to the monarch, King Thibaw commanded him to go to Mandalay, but he did not respond. The prince had received disquieting news that Thibaw indeed held a grudge against him. Feeling aggrieved, the prince acted against the king by carrying out a massacre of the garrison of Burman soldiers who had been stationed in his capital. Thibaw's reprisal came swiftly and brutally. He sent five regiments of his soldiers to burn down the capital of Mong Nai, devastate the state, and slaughter anyone on sight. Neighboring states with kinship ties to Mong Nai were also destroyed.

The prince, Sao Hkun Kyi, however managed to escape to Kengtung. While he was in hiding, an unfrocked monk, Twet Nga Lu, was put in charge of the state by King Thibaw and ruled Mong Nai under the supervision of Burman officials.

Two years later in 1885, the British annexed Upper Burma and the Shan States, King Thibaw was deposed, and the British extended their authority into the Shan States. Consequently,

help became available from the British and, together with the Kengtung Prince and other allies, it was possible to unseat the Burman usurper, Twet Nga Lu, from Mong Nai.

Sao Hkun Kyi ruled twice: from 1874-1884, before the massacre, and then from 1888-1914 when he was reinstated by the British, who recognized him as the legal ruler and declared him to be the Saohpa Long of Mong Nai. The British then awarded Sao Hkun Kyi the KSM in 1899, and CIE in 1902 for his good services. He was supposedly a pious man of courtly manners. He was well-liked by his people, though Mong Nai did not prosper under his rule.

In 1903 with other *saohpa*, he attended the Delhi Durbar and was given the all-important nine-gun salute. Like my granduncle, Sir Sao Mawng, he was a member of the Burma Legislative Council for two years.

After Sao Hkun Kyi died, two princes followed: Sao Hkun Kyaw Sam (1861-1928; r. 1914-1928) and his son, Sao Kyaw Hoe (d. 1948; r. 1929-1948). The British considered Sao Kyaw Sam to be a straight-forward administrator and amenable to advice. He was then awarded the KSM in 1920 for his good services. His son, Sao Kyaw Hoe, was recognized as *kyemmong* in 1916 and on his father's death was installed as *saohpa* in 1928. In 1932, the British government gave him permission to fly the Union Jack as a personal privilege. His son, Sao Pye (b. 1914), was recognized as the heir in 1931.

When his father passed away in 1948, Sao Pye became the Saohpa of Mong Nai and ruled after the war and during the years of independence from 1948 to 1959, when the princes relinquished their powers. Beginning his schooling in Taunggyi at the ABM, he continued his studies at the Shan Chief's School. He left in March 1939 after passing the government's tenth standard exam. During his school days, he excelled at sports, especially football, and had the honor of being chosen to play for the Upper Burma Football Club for four years.

After initially enrolling to become a lawyer at the Civil Administration office in Taunggyi, Sao Pye decided to enter military service. He first joined the Shan Rifles and then transferred to the Burma Transport Army. In 1939, Sao Pye went to India to be trained in the Royal Indian Transport Battalion. On his return, he re-joined the Shan Rifles Battalion and was promoted to captain in 1942. He continued his military service until the army moved back to India. Although he did not accompany them to India, he escorted the retreating members of the Government of Burma safely out of Burma before returning to the Shan States.

When the Panglong conferences of 1946 and 1947 were held, Sao Pye participated in the many discussions and, like the other princes, began taking an interest in the politics of the Shan States.

The Saohpa of Mong Nai were greatly respected. Over time, the families became connected through marriage to a number of other states such as Mong Pawn, Mong Nawng, Mawkmai, Wanyin, and Nawn Mawng. In 1949 Sao Kyaw Hoe's funeral was attended by nearly all the *saohpa* and their families and state ministers who came to honor the old *saohpa*. Even U Nu, the Prime Minister attended to pay his respects and to further cement the cordial relationship that had been established at the Panglong Agreement in 1947 when the Union of Burma came into being.

After independence, Sao Pye took on various appointments. He became a Member of the House of Nationalities and of the Shan State Council. In 1952, he attended the United Nations Assembly as a member of the Union of Burma delegation. He was selected Minister of Home Affairs and Justice in the Shan State Government in July 1956, and was awarded the Thraysithu title for his services to the country.

Becoming thoroughly involved in Shan State and national affairs, Sao Pye took an active part in the All States Conference in 1960, when discussions on reforms and changes to the 1947 Constitution were made. He was also chairman of the Steering Committee for the Revision of the

Constitution. Other like-minded *saohpa* had thought they were working for greater unity within the Union by proposing a new federal composition of eight states.

The Federal Movement, as it came to be known, was the hard work of dedicated ethnic leaders working together for two years to produce a viable plan for a genuine federation, reduce tension between the Bamar authorities and the ethnic nationalities and to restore stability on the Shan Plateau. Unfortunately, neither the majority of the then Union government, nor the Tatmadaw were interested in change and viewed the federal proposals as a plan for the destruction of the Union of Burma. Consequently, a military coup followed in 1962 with Sao Pye and other princes being arrested and detained for up to six years or longer.

MONG NAI FAMILY TREE³⁸

I Sao Hkun Noom Mong Nai Saohpa (r. 1842-1868)

(Below are wives and descendants of Sao Hkun Noom)

IWife1 Sao Nang Num Kham

IWife2 Sao Nang Aii

IWife3 Sao Nang Kham

IWife4 Sao Nang Pwint

IWife5 Nan Mawk Phaw

IWife2 Sao Nang Aii

II1 Sao Nang Lay

II2 Sao Hkun Phoe, Saohpa (r. 1868-1874)

II2Wife1 Sao Nang Phon, Mahadevi

II2Wife2 Sao Phay Mya

III1 Sao Hkun Kiao Zarm, Saohpa (1861-1928; r. 1914-1929)

II2Wife3 Sao Nang Kham

II2Wife4 Sao Nang Yu

II3 Sao Nang Hti

II4 Sao Shwe Kyi/Sao Hkun Kyi, Saohpa (XV) (r.1874-1884) (r. 1888-1914)

II4Wife1 Sao Nang Kham, Mong Nawng Mahadevi

II4Wife2 Sao Nang Phii

II4Wife3 Sao Nang Yan

II4Wife4 Thonze thakinma, Mong Nawng Mahadevi

II2Wife2 Sao Phay Mya

III1 Sao Hkun Kiao Zarm) Saohpa (1861-1928; r. 1914-1929) m. Ma Shwe Yu

IV1 Sao Kyaw Hoe, Saohpa (r. 1928-1948)

IV1Wife1 Sao Saw Yin, Mong Nawng Saohpa's sister

V1Sao Khin Than m. Sao Khun Sein

IV1Wife2 Ma Thein Yin

V1 Sao Pye (b.1914) Last Saohpa of Mong Nai (r. 1948-1959)

V1Wife1 Sao Mya Kyi, Mahadevi, Mong Nawng Family

³⁸ This is an abbreviated family tree. The lineage traces to Sao Hso Phuerk Fah (r. 1567-1568). Sources: Mong Nai Family, Mong Nawng Family Sao Keng Hserng, Nang Khur Hsen, Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe (1959) and SSK (1943).

V1Wife2 Sao Moan

VI1 Sao Htoon War

VI2 Sao Htoon Aye

V1Wife3 Ma Tin Nu

VI1Sao Kyaw Kho

VI2 Sao Sanda

VI3 Sao Sein Huun

VI4 Sao Sein Moan

VI5 Sao San Hun

IV2 Sao Shwe Pwint m. Ma Tin

IV3 Sao Phone Cho

IV4 Sao Mya Oo m. Sao Htun Yin, Nawngmawn and Namhkok Saohpa

IV5 Sao Shwe Hla

IV6 Sao Pyaw

IV7 Sao Lek

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Kiao Sam (r. 1914-1928) (1920s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Hkun Kiao Sam, Mahadevi, and family (1920s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



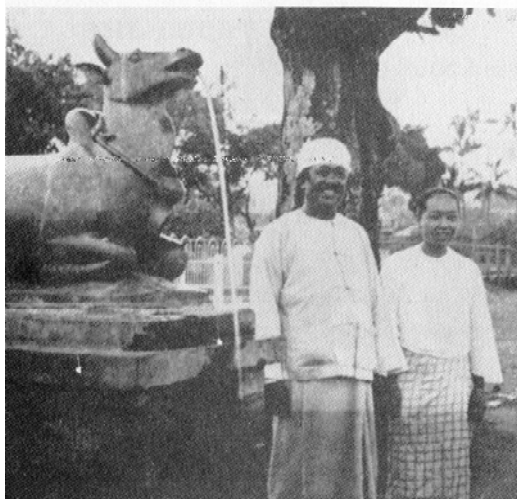
Sao Hkun Kiao Sam and Mahadevi (1920s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Kyaw Hoe (r. 1928-1948) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Kyaw Ho and Mahadevi (1937; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Pye (r. 1948-1959) and his Mahadevi (1930s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Pye and Sao Mya Kyi at their wedding (1930s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Pye's son, Sao Htoon Aye, sitting to the right of his friend, Sai Leng (2011; Simms Collection).



An elder son of Sao Pye, Sao Htoon War, and wife (Shan Herald News Agency).



Mong Nai Haw (1950s; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



The old Mong Nai Haw (1920s; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



LAIKHA STATE

A Gracious Host

The Laikha Saohpa, Sao Num (1906-1986; r. 1933-1959), is best remembered for hosting the first Panglong Conference in 1946 in his State. Panglong, a small village six miles from Loilem, one of the administrative centers, was considered the center of the Shan Plateau. Sao Num generously contributed both his time and money, for he was largely responsible for funding the conference. It was the first opportunity since the Japanese occupation for the princes to be together, ruminate, and make plans. Sao Num was eager to see that there was no hitch to the Conference and seemed the right man to be given the job of organizing the various events. He was a cheery, likeable person and the other princes teased him about his many wives.

Sao Num was the third son of Saohpa Sao Hkun Lai. He was sent to a Shan monastery at the

age of nine and later went to Taunggyi to the Shan Chiefs School. In 1928 at the age of twenty-two, he attended the police academy at Mandalay for a year and went on to study law at the Provincial Training College for two years. Once graduated, he served as a district officer in Meiktila and, in 1930, attended a training course on finance and treasury matters in Thazi. He was sent on to the Treasury Office in Taunggyi where he continued to learn how to draw up budgets for the state.

In 1931, although designated as ruler, Sao Num joined the army and was promoted to lieutenant in the Third Shan Battalion. In 1933, he was finally installed as Saohpa of Laikha. His *mahadevi*, Sao Shwe Bin, was a sister of Sao Kyi, the Saohpa of Mong Kung State.

Sao Num returned to the army in 1940 when World War II was declared. However, when the British retreated he stayed behind making his way back to Laikha, seeking to maintain law and order in his state. Although the Japanese had left him alone during the occupation, he was arrested in 1945 when they began losing the war. He managed to escape and organized resistance groups that eventually joined the US 101st Airborne Division and fought against the Japanese.

In 1947, he was one of the members of the Tai Shan signatories to the Panglong Agreement that marked the unity of the ethnic groups with Burma Proper to gain independence from Britain.

In 1949 when KNDO, Kachin and Pa-O insurgents took control of Taunggyi, spreading south and into eastern regions, including Loilem, Sao Num made his *haw* the headquarters for organizing and planning attacks against the insurgents, and managed to drive them out of Laikha and Loilem, regaining control of both. Together with the neighboring *saohpa* of Hsipaw, Hsenwi, Mong Yai, and Wa in the north and Kesi Mansam, Mong Nawng, Mong Kung, Maukmai, and Mong Pan in the south, he recruited men to fight the insurgents. Many of these princes had served in the British army and were renowned for their various exploits. These civilian volunteer groups were later joined by a division of the Burma army under the command of Colonel Tin Oo, who was commissioned by Major General DA Blake.

Eventually, together with the Tatmadaw, they crushed the insurgents and regained control of Taunggyi. It took until 1951-1952 to defeat the remaining insurgents in Mong Kung and Laikha regions. At that time, Sao Num was the patron of the public treasury committee of the Shan State Government. In 1958, he was awarded the Thraysithu, a medal of honor for bravery and service to the country for his achievements during the insurrections. He was also a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities.

He ruled as Saohpa of Laikha for twenty-six years, when he surrendered his powers to the Shan State Government in 1959. When the military coup took place in 1962, he was detained for six years. He died in 1986 after a long illness.

A State of Many Names

Laikha lies in the middle of the Inner Shan States with Mong Nai to the south, Mong Nawng to the east, and Mong Kung to the north. The main road northward from the two administrative centers of Taunggyi and Loilem passes through Laikha Town, the capital. From Lashio to the China border, the road turns into the highway known as the Burma Road.

Although Laikha was not a large state, it prospered from the passing traffic. In the old days, these were bullock carts, later motor cars and trucks, and more recently mostly military vehicles.

In the Venerable Sao Aggasena's account (1900), Laikha Mong has been in existence for a very long time, stretching back to the beginning of the Tai Shan migrations onto the Shan Plateau. He recorded that Laikha had been ruled by forty-three princes and princesses since that time, with each ruler reigning if sixty to seventy years. Laikha had several earlier names and was known as Weng Kham for a long time.

The etymology of "Laikha," the present name of the state, has several explanations. One is an amusing tale of how citizens of the capital cunningly managed to avoid paying taxes to different princely states: when a Yawnghwe tax collector came demanding payment, locals said that they were already paying Hsipaw and when a Hsipaw tax collector came, they said they were subjects of Mong Nai. Was this ploy successful? We do not know. Nevertheless, since they claimed to be subjects of different states, the inhabitants came to be known as *lai-kah* 'slaves of many masters'.

The state was well known for using local iron ore to make knives, scissors, axes, swords, and other implements needed in daily life. In its heyday Lakhai had an extensive market for these goods stretching across the Shan Plateau. Lacquer and silverware were other cottage industries and the craftsmen were praised for their workmanship and quality.

The building of the Mahamuni Buddha image was an important event. The sacred Buddha statue had to be cast in Mandalay because of its size, although the construction of the pagoda to house it was done in Laikha. Being such a significant undertaking, the then ruling prince considered it necessary to consult both the Hsenwi and Yawnghwe princes, who then generously donated to its construction. The casting of the image took nearly thirty years before it was brought to Laikha.

Much of Laikha's earlier historical annals have been lost. Its recorded history only began in 1794 with Saohpa Hkun Lek. He was well known to the Bamar King, Shwebo Min, and his good connections with the royal court made him a powerful ruler in the Shan States. His reign was a long one. Laikha princes were renowned as able military men and in 1844, Hkun Lek was appointed General-in-chief to lead a large mixed force of men from the Shan States to attack Karenni. Although they fought valiantly it was an unsuccessful venture. In 1854, after a year's absence, he died on his return to Laikha.

While he was away, his eldest son, Sao Shwe Ok Hka, the *kyemmong*, was put in charge. Like his father, he had a reputation as a skillful military leader. He had led the assault against the Siamese forces that had held Kengtung, thus raising the siege of the capital. King Mindon was pleased with the outcome and rewarded him with the states of Lawksawk, Mong Ping, and Mong Kung. Sao Shwe Ok Hka left no heir after his death in 1863. The throne then went to two of his brothers: Hkun Long, who was Myosa of Mong Kung, an adjoining state; and the Myosa of Mong Ping. After the death of the two brothers, Hkun Nawng, the son of Hkun Long, became *saohpa* in 1874. It was a short reign and in 1882, King Thibaw appointed Hkun Lai, the grandson of the *kyemmong*, Sao Shwe Ok Hka, as *saohpa*.

Hkun Lai (1858-1917; r. 1887-1917) did not join the Limbin Confederacy in 1886. As a result, Laikha was attacked and devastated. The prince had to flee but, soon after collecting levies from Mong Kung and Kesi Mansam, he sought revenge, attacking Mong Pawn, a known Confederacy member. The timely arrival of British troops prevented much damage and Hkun Lai withdrew from Mong Pawn. A period of famine followed since the granaries had been looted or burned.

Although Sao Hkun Lai was first confirmed as Saohpa by King Thibaw in 1882, the British recognized him only in 1887. His *mahadevi* was his uncle's widow, the daughter of the famous Nai Noi/Kolan, Saohpa of Mawkmai. As a caring, good ruler, Sao Hkun Lai immediately set about restoring the ruins of Laikha. In 1906, both Saohpa and Mahadevi went to Rangoon to meet Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, later to become Their Majesties, King George V and Queen Mary. In 1911, they also attended the Coronation Durbar at Delhi. The British Government was pleased with Sao Hkun Lai and in 1898 awarded him the KSM, and the CIE in 1909. Saohpa Hkun Lai died in 1917 after a reign of thirty years.

An interregnum followed. The state was then administered by U Hla Gyi, the Myowun 'town minister'/'minister responsible for the town' who, as a young man had been close to the late prince, and had been treated as an adopted son. In 1926, Sao Mawng, the eldest son of the last prince was

installed as *saohpa*, but later he was deposed because he shot his half-brother. An administrator was then put in charge of Laikha. Finally, in 1933, Sao Num, Sao Mawng's brother was installed as Saohpa of Laikha. As mentioned earlier, he had an eventful life, hosted the first Panglong Conference in 1946, and reigned for twenty-six years.

A Learned Abbot

Another Laikha personality is the Venerable Dr Khammai Dhammasami (b. 1965). He is presently the abbot of the Oxford Buddhist Vihara. Born in Laikha in 1965, he became a Buddhist novice in his early teens. He had a deep interest in Buddhist literature and its teachings and decided to stay in the monkhood. A brilliant scholar, he passed various exams at different Buddhist establishments in Burma and left for Sri Lanka in 1990 to continue his postgraduate studies. He continued his studies at Oxford University and obtained a DPhil (Oxon) in 2004. Much respected for his hard work in promoting Buddhist studies, he is Fellow and Trustee at the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Oxford and heads the International Association of Buddhist Universities. He travels the world in that capacity and as teacher and meditation master.

The Abbot has also been the pivot for the Shan Cultural Association (SCA) of the United Kingdom, which he helped establish. The SCA UK concentrates on bringing young Tai Shan students together, and maintaining their links with older members of the Tai Shan community who are resident in the United Kingdom.

LAIKHA FAMILY TREE³⁹

Hkun Lek 1794

I Hkun Shwe (r. 1854-1863)

II1 Sao Mawng

II2 Nang Leng

I2 Hkun Long (1863) Myosa Mong Kung

II1 Hkun Nawng (r. 1870-1879)

II1 Wife1 Khin Nyein, Mahadevi, daughter of Kolan, Mawkmai Saohpa

III1 Nang Htay

I3 Hkun Kwat (1870) Myosa Mong Ping

II1 Hkun Lai (1858-1917; r. 1882-1885) Saohpa, King Thibaw's appointment

(r. 1887-1917) British appointment

II1 Wife1 Khin Nyein, Mahadevi, Mawkmai Family, widow of previous Laikha Saohpa

III1 Nang Htay

II1 Wife2 Sao Shwe Ein, Mahadevi, Mong Kung Family

III1 Sao Num (1906-1986; r. 1933-1959) Saohpa,⁴⁰

m. Sao Shwe Bin, Mong Kung Family

IV1 Sao Soe Tint, Kyemmong;

m. Sao Mya Win/Margaret Hsahtung Family

V1 Sao Hkun Hti/Charles; m. Hey Joo Yang

VI1 Amanada Sao Laikha

VI2 Yordharn Sao Laikha

³⁹ Sources: Laikha Family members, Sao Hkun Hti, and SSK (1943).

⁴⁰ Saohpa Sao Num had other wives and offspring who are not mentioned here.

II2 Sao Htao
II3 Sao Htun

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa, Sao Hkun Mawng (r. 1926-1931) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



Sao Mawng, Sao Hkun Lai with Mahadevi, the boy is Sao Htao, the son (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Laikha, Sao Num (r. 1931-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



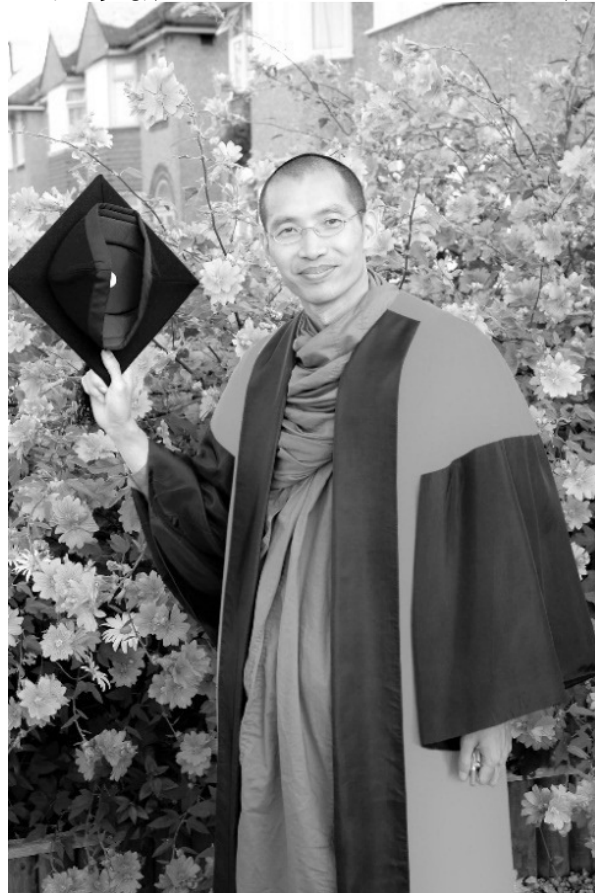
Sao Num on his wedding day, with first wife, Sao Shwe Ein Mong Kung Princess (1933; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sao Num and Mahadevi Sao Shwe Ein, with white umbrellas shading them on a ceremonial occasion (Laikha Family Private Collection).



Dr Khammai Dhammasami (b. 1965), Abbott of Oxford Buddha Vihara, Oxford (2004: OBV).



Laikha Haw as it was before 1962 (Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



Laikha Saohpa with his Mahadevi and family, and Laikha dignitaries. Taken in the late 1930s (1935/1936) after the completion of the Haw. Sitting front row: L-R: Loong Thein Maung (husband of Sao Kyi, a daughter of Sao Hkun Lai), Loong Hpo Mit (chief tax officer), Sao Htao (son of Sao Hkun Lai), Sao Htun Kyaw (nephew of Sao Num), Laikha Saohpa Sao Num, Laikha Mahadevi Sao Shwe Ein, Sao Khin Htay, Sao Htun, Loong Khun Sarm (Panglong Heng), Loong Ba Tun (judicial officer), and Loong Kham Kya (tax officer). Middle row L-R: H. Nong Hee, H. Nar Mang, Saray Jong Yo, H. Toong Hoong, Nar Taet, H. Wan Lur, Saray Kitti, (body hidden), U Hla Tin, (body hidden), and Saray Sangkhyoke, bodyguard. Back row L-R: H. Wan Yoeng, Loong Ba Han (younger brother of Loong (Laikha Family Private Collection)).⁴¹



⁴¹ Some persons were unidentified.

MAWKMAI STATE

A Charismatic Prince

In the early 1880s, it is believed that Sai Kiao, who was originally from Chiang Mai, had settled in Mawksmai with his family. He was respected by the people and was chosen by the King of Burma to help quell rebellions and dacoits, and to keep the raiding Karenni at bay. For his services, the King appointed Sai Kiao as *saohpa*. He ruled until 1818 when he was succeeded by his son and then grandson, who ruled until 1831.

The next in line was Nai Noi, who became famous, and was playfully known as Kolan, translated from Burmese meaning 'nine fathoms'. He was a tall man with a commanding appearance, fearless, adventurous, and much admired by his followers.

Nai Noi had been useful in helping Shwebo Min repel the Karenni, but displeased the king due to his frequent quarrels with the local Burman governors and non-payment of his taxes. Consequently, he was imprisoned in Mandalay. He managed to escape by using a pole to vault over the prison walls and then made his way back to Mawksmai through Eastern Karenni. This escapade explains his nickname.

Another account says that Mawksmai Saohpa Sao Nai Noi was once surrounded by nine different enemy troops, including that of the Burmese, but audaciously managed to fight his way clear. For whatever reason, he came to be known as Koh Tat Lan Sawbwa (Koh Tat 'nine armies'), which was eventually shortened to Kolan.

No longer able to tolerate Burman authority, Sao Nai Noi crossed the Salween River and founded Meesakun and Mongman states in the jungle. During his twenty years there, he did not lead a quiet life, but attacked Mae Hong Son and drove out the Siamese-appointed ruler known as Taikdaga Sa, a Burmese word meaning 'donor of monastery/building'. In those days, it was unclear whether Mae Hong Son was considered Siamese or Burmese territory so there were no repercussions.

Later at the time of Mindon Min's reign, Nai Noi/Kolan was pardoned and eventually returned to Mawksmai. He gave his son the two states he had founded and gave Mae Hong Son to his niece, Nang Mya. With foresight, she decided to reinstate the Taikdaga, as he was a man of some standing and could be of help. After her uncle left, as ruler of Mae Hong Son she realized the advantages to be gained in being under Siamese protection, and accordingly tendered her loyalty to Chiang Mai. Saohpa Kolan did not object, since Mae Hong Son was further away from Mawksmai than Chiang Mai. Furthermore, he would have had to cross the Salween River to reclaim it.

In 1894 when the British and the Siamese governments demarcated the border between Siam and the Shan States, part of Mawksmai State was ceded to the Siamese in exchange for other bits of territory. By then Mae Hong Son, due to Nang Mya's decision, was already under the Siamese. Its range of mountains forms a natural boundary with its neighbors. Present-day Mae Hong Son Province lies snugly high up among its mountains and forests. Its secluded position has limited modernization and tourism, allowing the Tai Shan community there to continue living their lives as before. In this way, they could preserve Shan culture and heritage. There is great contrast between Mae Hong Son, which has enjoyed peace and progress, and Mawksmai within the Shan State, which at present has not enjoyed these benefits and has little to show.

Back in Mawksmai, Nai Noi/Kolan was unhappy about the way he had been treated by the Burmese and joined Mong Nai, Kengtung, and Mong Pan Saohpa in objecting to the establishment of a Burman Viceroy and garrison in each of the Mong Nai and Yawnghwe States.

During the last few years of Nai Noi/Kolan's life, his son, Hkun Long, administered the state.

In 1887, when Hkun Long was killed in a battle against Mong Pan, Hkun Mong, another of Kolan's sons, succeeded and ruled for two years. In 1889, another son, Hkun Tun Peng, was recognized as the heir. As he was too young to rule, the state was taken over by an administrator for a few years. After Hkun Tun Peng came of age, he ruled until 1907. Next, his son, Hkun Leng, was installed as *saohpa* in 1909. The British administration did not find him a satisfactory ruler and removed him in 1913. A grandson of Kolan, Hkun Hkawng (b. 1885), was appointed as an administrator, and later elevated to *saohpa* in 1915.

In former days, Mawksmai, which lay in the valley of the Nam Nyin, a tributary of the River Teng, was a thriving prosperous town. The farmers grew rice, cotton, tobacco, and a variety of fruits on the fertile land, making them the envy of their highland neighbor, the Karenni. However, right through until the arrival of the British, there were constant Karenni raiding parties to take away young men and women to be sold in Siam as slaves. The Karenni also attempted to settle in the fertile valley. Kolan was a good warrior and excelled in battles waged by the Burman kings against the Karenni and because of his reputation, for a time, there were fewer incursions.

After Saohpa Kolan's death, Sawlapaw, a Karenni ruler attacked with a vengeance in 1888, burning down Mawksmai, the capital, and utterly devastating the state. The once wealthy and flourishing place was no more. In the end, it was the British army that drove the Karenni back and finally managed to end the skirmishes.

In 1915, Hkun Hkawng, later to become Myosa of Mawksmai, was appointed as administrator. He was a son of Mong Hsit's ruler and a grandson of Kolan and his wife, a princess from Mong Pawn. Mong Hsit, a small land-locked state, had formerly been part of Mong Nai. It became a State in 1816. Several rulers followed until 1876, when Sao Leng Long, the Kyemmong of Mong Nai, took charge. However, Sao Leng Long did not stay long. In 1883 when his father died, Hkun Hkawng took charge as Myosa of Mong Hsit. He was now effectively the ruler of both these states that were amalgamated under Mawksmai in 1935.

Hkun Hkawng was a Tai Shan Buddhist. Born in 1885 he was confirmed as Saohpa of Mawksmai at the age of twenty-four. The British considered him to be well-meaning and straight forward, though shy and retiring. In 1924, he received the title Kyet-tha-ye zaung Shwe salwe, the Golden Chain/Sash of Honor, the KSM. He had six wives. His daughters married into the families of various princes, including Mong Nai, Mong Pan, Laikha, and Lawksawk.

The next and final Saohpa of Mawksmai, Sao Sam Htun, ruled from 1924 to 1950. Till now no records have been found about him. Sao Sam Htun was not mentioned at the time of the handing over of feudal power to the Shan State Government in 1959, although his son, Sao Htun Hpa, born in 1951 in Taunggyi, was mentioned. Sao Htun Hpa went to St Anne's Convent in Taunggyi at the age of four. As he was a minor, presumably there was an administrator after the death of his father. However, he was recognized as heir and was appointed Kyemmong by the President of Burma in 1956.

MAWKMAI FAMILY TREE (Abbreviated)⁴²

I Nai Noi Yoan Moan, Saohpa (IV) (r. 1844-1887) known as Kolan

I1 Hkun Long/Loang Saohpa (V) died in battle m. Nang Tai, Mawksmai

II1 Nang Say m. Sao Htun Ok, Nawngmawn Myosa

III1 Sao Soe Yin m. Namhkok Myosa

⁴² Sources: Mawksmai Family, Sao Htain Win, Sao Phong Keu, and SSK (1943).

- I²Hkun Yung m. Nang Phyu, Tamhpark Family
- II¹ Hkun Loang m. Sao Khin Myaing, Nawngmawn Family
- III¹ Sao Lon/Khin Maung Gyi m. Sao Khin Ohn
- IV¹ Sao Sein Mya m. Sao Kaeumamong/Sao Kiao Murng (1920-2016),
Kengtung Family
- V¹ Sao Santasiri
- V² Sao Sulamani
- V³ Sao Phong Noan
- V⁴ Sao Phong Kiao/Ouie m. Dr Kyaw Thinn
- V⁵ Sao Kiao Murng Noi
- IV² Sao San Htun m. Sao Aye Kyi
- V¹ Dr Maw Htun
- IV³ Sao Nyunt May
- IV⁴ Sao Aung Nyunt
- IV⁵ Sao Ohn Kyaw
- IV¹¹ Sao Ohnmar m. Sai Pan Aung
(Out of the 12 children only 6 survived)
- I³ Sao Hkun Mong/Munk, Saohpa (VI) (d. 1899)
- II¹ Sao Pa Long m. U Kyaw Sein
- II² Sao Htun Peng, Saohpa (VII) (d. 1906)
- II³ Sao Latt m. Khun Sang Kunna
- II⁴ Sao Hla m. Pa Oh
- II⁵ Sao Hkun Leng, Saohpa (VIII) (r. 1909-1913)
(Married ten wives)
- II⁵Wife¹ Sao Khin Kyi
- II⁵Wife⁹ Nang Khong
- III¹ Sao Yong m. U Law See
- III² Sao Khin Sein Hla m. U San Tun
- III³ Sao Hkun Hti m. Nang Jaing Kham (1) and Nang Kaung (2)
- III⁴ Sao Pawk
- III⁵ Sao Kya Nyunt
- III⁶ Sao Naw Aye m. Daw Nyunt May
- I⁴ Sao Hkun Nhe
- I⁵ Sao Hkun Pwant, Mong Sit m. Sao Khin Gyi
- II¹ Hkun Khwang, Saohpa (IX) (r. 1915 -1924) Grandson of Saohpa of Kolan
- I⁶ Hkun Pyawt
- Eight wives and descendants of
- II¹ Hkun Khwang, Saohpa (IX) (r. 1915 -1924)
- II¹Wife¹ Nang Hom
- II¹Wife² Nang Khin Oh
- III¹ Sao Sam Htun, Saohpa (X) (r. 1924-1959)
- III¹Wife¹ Nang Aye Tin
- IV¹ Sao Htain Win m. Dr Tin Maung
- V¹ Sai Lurn Wun Hpa/Lionel m. Sherry
- V² Sai Lao Wun Hpa/Leonard
- III¹Wife² Sao Mo Kham/Vo Kham, Mawkmai Mahadevi. Hopong Family

IV1 Sao Htun Hpa (b. 1951) Kyemmong 1956
 III2 Sao Hla Win
 III3 Sao Khin Nu
 III4 Sao Khin Hla*
 III5 Sao Saw Ha
 III6 Sao Seng Hon
 IV1 Sao Ying/Sylvia
 III7 Sao Mya Thaung
 IV1 Sao Aung Shwe
 II1Wife3 Nang Hsu/Nang Sae
 III4 Sao Khin Hla* m. Sao Huk, Lawksawk Family
 IV1 Sao Hla Win m. Sao Yan Pye, Tawngpeng Family
 II1Wife4 Nang Saw
 III1 Sao Khin Han
 III2 Sao Hom Seng m. Nang Mai
 IV1 Sao Aung Myint
 IV2 Sao Ying m Sai Ko
 V1 Vi Lon
 V2 Seng Merng
 V Seng Moon
 V Sam
 IV3 Sao Nay Hla
 II1Wife5 Nang Nu
 II1Wife6 Sao Hseng Oo
 II1Wife7 Nang Sein
 III1 Sao Mya Thaung
 II1Wife8 Nang Aung
 III1 Sao Aung Shwe

PHOTOGRAPHS

1 Mawkmai Saohpa Sao Hkun Hkawng (r. 1915-1924) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Mawkmai Haw. (1930s; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



ရှေးလူငယ်မိန်းမောင်, မိ. တေတလားမိတ်တေတလား 'Palace of Mong Mawk Ma

MONG NAWNG/MONG NONG STATE

Separated from Hsenwi

Mong Nawng/Mong Nong, was once under the authority of the powerful Hsenwi State. It was ruled by two *heng*, roughly the equivalent of a district head, known as Heng Long and Heng Awn. Though in general *long* means 'great' and *awn* means 'little', in this instance it refers to their ages with Long being the elder and Awn the younger.

In 1850, Heng Awn was sent to Kengtung to help fight Siamese intruders by the Pagan Min. On his return, he petitioned for Mong Nawng to become a separate state. Since he had been successful in saving Kengtung, his wish was granted. Heng Awn was recognized as *myosa*, which was an elevation from his status as a *heng*. He ruled peacefully for fifteen years, until 1866.

His son, Hkun Kheng, became the next ruler until he was ousted by a rival. Fleeing to Hsenwi, Hkun Kheng managed to recruit men for his cause, although he was still unable to unseat the usurper. However, after requesting and receiving additional forces from the Burman garrison at Mong Nai, he had little trouble in regaining control.

About two years later, Hkun Kheng was sent with other princes to fight in Karenni where a rebel Bamar prince, Myingun was hiding. In the ensuing battle, Hkun Kheng was killed in Loikaw and his son, Hkun Htoon, was appointed as *myosa* by King Mindon. Since he was a minor, a succession of relatives administered the state until 1882.

It was during this period that the Mong Nai Prince's massacring the garrison of Burmese soldiers in 1883 brought the full wrath of the King Thibaw also upon Mong Nawng State, since the Mong Nai prince was married to Mong Nawng Saohpa's sister.

From 1884 to 1886 King Thibaw's appointee, Khun Swe Kham, who happened to be a brother of the previous ruler, took charge of the state. However, with the arrival of British forces, the Burmese army withdrew. The two princes, one from Mong Nai and the other from Mong Nawng, returned from Kengtung where they had taken refuge and Hkun Htoon resumed ruling Mong Nawng.

In 1887, Hkun Htoon decided to join the Limbin Confederacy. With his new allies, he marched on Laikha, Kesi Mansam, and Mong Kung who had declined to join the league, aiming to devastate these states. However, when they heard the British were marching towards them, they withdrew, not wishing to encounter the British forces.

Privy Purse

In 1904, the British confirmed Hkun Htoon as *myosa* and awarded him the title of KSM. He was in ill-health and ruled only for two more years. During that time his son, Khun Long, administered the state. He became *myosa* in 1906 when his father died.

Although a promising ruler, Hkun Htoon had left huge debts and his son found himself insolvent. The British policy was that any prince in such financial difficulties should be removed to Taunggyi where the authorities could keep an eye on them until the debts were repaid.

Khun Long was duly removed to Taunggyi and his son, Hkun Hsa (1876-1944), was left to administer the state from 1917 to 1919. Unfortunately, in addition to the existing debts and having incurred new debts, Hkun Hsa fell into the same situation as his father. He was subsequently accused of malpractice and was no longer allowed to rule the state. Mong Nawng State then came under a council of four officials. But when Hkun Hsa's debts were cleared, he was once allowed to return to his state in 1920.

In the meantime, an *amatchoke* 'chief minister' of Mong Pawn was appointed to administer Mong Nawng State, which he did until 1928. Hkun Hsa was reinstated in 1929, and was confirmed as *myosa*. He served throughout the Japanese period and died in 1944.

Interestingly, Maurice Collis met Hkun Hsa on his tour around the Shan States in 1938. He had first met him at Loilem, later visited him at his capital, formed a favorable impression, and wrote that, "He gave the impression at once of a person of great sense. He was calm, matter of fact, decided, and of few words, there was not the slightest trace of any conceit about him, he was a plain, honest, reliable man" (1938:105).

This remark made me wonder how such a man could have gotten himself into so much trouble over his finances. The reason came to light when I read further that the prince had acquired a new Plymouth, which he drove expertly when he took Mr. Collis around his state. He also had built a new Haw, which was bigger than the palace of the Laikha Saohpa, and he also had more than one wife.

As already mentioned, a ruling prince had to maintain his status. This involved having a certain amount of money. The princes made no distinction. What came into to the State Treasury belonged to them. Later, under British supervision, it became more difficult to help themselves to funds in the State Treasury as they pleased.

It seemed that it was not so much keeping up with the Jones, but the necessity of having to maintain one's status. Perhaps the feeling was, "Why should a *myosa* not have a big palace, a deluxe motorcar, and three or four wives? If *saohpa* could have these pleasurable things, why should one not have the same?" Mong Nawng Myosa was just one of several princes to hold such views and who were careless about their financial affairs leading them into disgrace with the British authorities.

Sao Ohn Maung (1915-1974), a son of Sao Hkun Long and Hkun Hsa's brother, was recognized as Saohpa of Mong Nawng when Hkun Hsa died in 1944. At the age of eleven, he was sent to the American Baptist School in Taunggyi. Leaving school in 1937 he went to the Police Cadet Training School in Mandalay, ending up in Taunggyi for further training at the Commissioner's Office.

In 1939, he joined the Shan Rifles in Maymyo. Later in 1940, he was trained and served in the Royal Indian Transport Army, becoming a second lieutenant and transporting arms and supplies for the Allied troops to the frontline. For his distinguished services during the war, he was awarded the title of CIE and three guns.

Sao Ohn Maung returned to Mong Nawng during the Japanese occupation and was made responsible for the collection of Mong Nawng State taxes. In 1945, as the war neared its end, he managed to join the US 101st Airborne Division to fight the retreating Japanese troops. He was made a *subedar* and chased the Japanese out of Mong Nawng, Mong Nai, Mawksai, and Mong Pan states. Once the war was over, he returned to Mong Nawng and continued to assist his brother in administering the state until 1944. On the death of Sao Hkun Hsar, his elder brother, Sao Ohn Maung, became Saohpa of Mong Nawng.

There was still no peace after the Japanese war. The KNDO troubles came in 1949 and the occupation of some important towns in the Shan State. Sao Ohn Maung was sent by the Head of the Shan State, the Saohpa of Hsenwi, to fight the KNDO with fifty levies at Kun Hin Bridge on the way to Kengtung. Later, he organized people from Mong Nai and Laikha, fought, and finally retook Loilem from the KNDO.

Not much more is known about Sao Ohn Maung after that, other than his abdication in favor of the Shan State Government in 1959 and his arrest along with other princes in the 1962 military takeover.

MONG NAWNG FAMILY TREE⁴³

Sao Heng Awn (r. 1851- 1866) recognized as Myosa of Mong Nawng by Pagan Min in 1851.

Founded Mong Nawng

I Sao Khun Kheng (r. 1866-1868)

II Sao Khun Htoon (r. 1868-1884)

III Sao Khun Swe Kham (r. 1884-1886)

IV Sao Khun Htoon, Myosa (r. 1886-1906)

V Sao Khun Long, Myosa (r. 1906-1919)

m. Sao Nang Kham was 11th wife, mother of Sao Ohn Maung, last Saohpa of Mong Nawng

(He had 14 wives and 14 children)

VI1 Sao Khun Hsa, Myosa (r. 1919-1946) Saohpa (r. 1946-1954)

VI2 Sao Ood

VII1 Sao Htun Lu

VII2 Sao Mya Phong

VI3 Sao Ohn Phe)

VII1 Sao Than Phe

VII2 Khin Than Htay

VI4 Sao Par Sing

VII1 Sao Sai Long/Sao Soe Win

VII2 Sao Khurp

VII3 Sao Shwe Ko

VII4 Sao Kaw/Sao Kyi Sein

VII5 Sao Mahawan

VI5 Sao Saw

VII1 Sao Ohn Kaw

VII2 Sao Kham Noom

VII3 Sao Htoon Laing

VII4 Sao Ohn Tin

VI6 Sao Saw Kyin

VII1 Sao Sai Lek

VII2 Sao Naw Nay

VII3 Sao Gyi

VI7 Sao Pawng

VII1 Sao Saw Long/Sao Mya Ohn

VII2 Sao Kyi Pong/Sao Kyi Win

VII3 Sao Wor/Khin Nin Yi

VI8 Sao Lu/Sao Kham Lu

VI9 Sao Than Sein

VI10 Sao Mya Kyi m. Sao Pye, Saohpa of Mong Nai; (r. 1948-1959)

VI11 Sao Ohn Maung, Saohpa (VI) (1915-1974; r. 1954-1959) m. Sao Nang Mai,

Mahadevi of Mong Nawng

VII1 Sao Kham Khai m. Maung Maung nephew of Yawnghwe Saohpa

VII2 Sao Mong Khorn

VII3 Sao Kham Hsa

⁴³ Sources: Sao Keng Hserng and Nang Khur Hsen, *Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe* (1959), and SSK (1943).

- VII4 Sao Khun Hserk
- VII5 Sao Keng Hserng m. Nang Khur Hsen, Shan writer and historian
- VII6 Sao Kham Yoong
- VII7 Khun Li Mong
- VI12 Sao Leun
- VI13 Sao Nyunt/U Saw Nyunt
 - VII1 Sao Khin Kyi
 - VII2 Sao Khin Yi
 - VII3 Sao Sandi
 - VII4 Sao Sein Nyunt
 - VII5 Sao San Hla
 - VII6 Sao Khin Thi
- VI14 Sao Sai (14)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsa (r. 1919-1945) (Shan Culture Museum Yawnghwe).



Mahadevi Sao Mai (1930s; Shan Culture Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sao Ohn Maung (r. 1954-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sao Ohn Maung (r. 1954-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



Sao Kham Khai, the eldest daughter of Sao Ohn Maung in Taunggyi (2012; Simms Collection).



Sao Keng Hserng, a son of Sao Ohn Maung in Chiang Mai (2011; Simms Collection).



Sao Keng Hserng and wife, Nang Khur Hsen, writer and historian, in Chiang Mai (2011; Simms Collection).



Mong Nawng Haw before the 1962 coup (1950s; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



MONG KUNG STATE

Appointed Saohpa in 1928

At one time, by command of Mindon Min, the Mong Kung State was assigned to Laikha. Consequently, the incumbent, Myosa Hkun Cho, who had ruled for twenty years and was unwilling to submit to being under Laikha, fled to Hsipaw. In his absence in 1863, his brother, Hkun Long, was made Saohpa of Laikha and Heng Kuna (Khun Na) was made Myosa of Mong Kung by the Burman court.

Three years later, Hkun Na's petition to the Mandalay Court requesting that Mong Kung be ceded from Laikha was granted. Mong Kung again became a separate state. After Hkun Na's death, his son, Hkun Hsang Kawn (r. 1869-1879), assumed the title of *saohpa* for ten years. On his death in 1879, his six-year-old son, Hkun Mong, was designated as heir while being brought up at the Court of Mandalay. Meanwhile, one of his cousins was appointed to look after the state. He administered it until 1883.

Hkun Mong (1873-1927) reached his majority, returned from Mandalay, and was installed as *myosa*. His cousin, Hkun San, was discontented at having lost his position and raised a rebellion. The young ruler fled to Kesi Mansam, a neighboring state. The people of Mong Kung supported the young prince and drove Hkun San away, enabling Hkun Mong to return and rule his state.

British officials found that Hkun Mong was capable and energetic, taking an interest in the administration of his state and its development. He was a good ruler and after he had ruled for twenty years or more, he was awarded the KSM in 1904. His status was raised to *saohpa* in 1924. Following his death in 1927 his first son, Sao Num, was appointed Saohpa of Mong Kung in 1928.

Sao Num was educated at the Shan Chiefs School and later joined the army. He served in the

Burma Rifles Battalion as Jemadar for three years. Upon his return to Mong Kung, he was sent for training to Rangoon for one year as an honorary extra assistant commissioner. With his younger brother, Sao Kyi, he visited England for six months. Soon after their return, he fell ill and died. In the same year, Sao Kyi (r. 1932-1959), the *kyemmong* who was serving as State Minister for Tax and Revenue, was confirmed as *saohpa*.

During the fight against the KNDO rebels in the late 1940s, Sao Kyi joined other *saohpa* led by Laikha to fight the insurgents. He and his subjects helped the Union government as much as they could. Mong Kung, situated in the middle of the Shan Plateau, with its mostly non-Burmese speaking population, found itself in difficulties when the military administration took over. The Tatmadaw's insensitive behavior of its mainly Burman soldiers created alarm and despondency. Situated on the main road leading from Taunggyi to Lashio in the north, the town of Mong Kung was in the middle of the fighting, and suffered the chaos and bedlam caused by both the Tatmadaw and the dissident armies using the road.

The Mong Kung Saohpa understood modern politics and realized the need for change from the feudal system. He was one of the princes who wished to achieve an amicable settlement when the princes renounced their powers and encouraged others to consider abdication sooner rather than later.

His son, Sao Lu Mawng, the *kyemmong*, was born in 1931. He was known as Richard in school and married into the Hsenwi family. He died of cancer around 1967 at the early age of thirty-six.

MONG KUNG FAMILY TREE⁴⁴

Hkun Na the founder of Mong Kung, which was formerly ruled by Laikha 1863, became a separate State. Khun Na (d. 1863) established himself as Saohpa.

I Hkun Hsang Kwan (r. 1869-1879) ruled 10 years

II Sao Hkun Mong (1873-1927; r. 1879-1918)

IWife1 Khin Than Yon, Nawn Mawng Family

two daughters

IWife2

II1 Khun Hsar (1890-1927) Myosa (r. 1918-1924) (Saohpa r. 1924-1927)

IWife3 (no issue)

IWife4 Nang Kya Mon

II1Sao Num, Saohpa (1903-1932; r. 1928-1932)

II1Wife1 Sao Lu Mong Nawng Family

II1Wife2 Sao Nyun widow of Sao Indra Kengtung Family

Mahadevi of Mong Kung

II2 Sao Kyi, Saohpa of Mong Kung (1933-1959) brother of Sao Num

II2Wife1 Nang Nyunt

III1 Sao Lu Mawng/Sao Lon Won Hpa/Richard (1931-1965?)

Kyemmong of Mong Kung

m. Sao Yupa Kya Yi/Sao Noot/Nancy, Hsenwi Family

IV1 Nang Ywet Lao m. U Nyan Maung

V1 Sai Aung Min Thant

⁴⁴ Sources: Mong Kung Family, Nang Kham Huk and U Maung Maung Myint/Arthur Shee, *Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe* (1959), and (SSK) 1943.

- V2 Sai Arkar Min
- V3 Sai Han Htoo Maung
- V4 Nang Pinky
- IV2 Nang Kham Huk/Diana Won Hpa
- m. U Maung Maung Myint/Arthur Shee
 - V1 Sai Khun Naw/Samuel
 - V2 Sai Khun Seng/Peter m. Khine Thuza Nyo
 - V3 Nang On On
- IV3 Sai Hso m. Ma Nyunt Nyunt
 - V1 Nang Moe Moe Lin
 - V2 Sai Pauk Si
 - V3 Nang Nge Lay
- IV4 Sai Lon m. Nang Noom
 - V1 Sao Thiri Sandar
 - V2 Sai Moon
- IV5 Nang Yin Yin
- III2 Sao Khin Lat/Sao Nyunt Yin/Esther
- m. Sao Khun Kyaw Hpa, Hsenwi Family
 - IV1 Sao Kham Marn Hpa/Khin Maung Oo
 - IV2 Sao Kay Khine/Sao Nang Sarm Hpu m U Zaw Htun
 - V1 Sai Lin Thet Htun m. Nin Yin Thant
 - V2 Naing Nandar Htun m. Oak Soe Htun
 - IV3 Sao Kham Paing Hpa/Khin Maung Nyunt m. Khin Than Oo
 - V1 Nang Yuzana Lynn
 - V2 Nang Thinza Lynn
 - V3 Nang Sandi Lynn
 - IV4 Sao Kant Kham Hpa/Khin Maung Latt
 - m. Nang Seng Hom/Thida Hlaing
 - V1 Seng Mun Hpa
 - V2 Saw Yoon Kham
 - IV5 Sao Mon Hpa/Khin Maung Lay m. Khin Khin Nyo
 - V1 Sai Pyea Sone Lynn
 - IV6 Nang Htwe/Cherry May m. U Win Naing
 - V1 Sai Thirt Naing
 - V2 Sai Ye Min Hein
- III3 Sao Ngun Lao/Sao Mun Seng/Nelson m. Nang Mu Mu Aye/Sao Awn Kham, Hsenwi Family
 - IV1 Sao Mya Thida/Sao Mun Kham m. Ko Taw Hein
 - V1 Ye Min U
 - V2 Saw Yu Pa Hnin
 - V3 Maung Aung Bin Hein
 - IV2 Sao Khin Oo Hla/Sao Khaing Kham m. Ko Myat Soe
 - V1 Thiri Pyin Myat
 - V2 Maung Myat Thuda
 - V3 Ma Oo Myat Thiri
 - IV3 Sao Hsay Kyaw Hpa m. Nang Pin Pin Aye
 - V1 Sao Hut Kay

- V2 Nang Min Thwa Naung
- V3 Nang Bon Kham
- IV4 Sao Myat KayThi nwe/Sao Sein Htun m. Ko Aung Myint u
- V1 Maung Pyay Htoon Maung
- V2 Ma Saung Way Nyo
- IIWife2 Sao Nang Lu
 - III1 Sao Shwe Than m. Sao Kham Tom, Hsenwi Family
 - IV1 Nang Mo Hom
 - IV2 Sai Nyunt Hpoo m. Nang Mya Eain
 - V1 Nang Yun Le Hpoo m. Sein Khaung Mein
 - V2 Nang Su Lat Hpoo
 - IV3 Sai Nyi Hpoo
 - IV4 Nang Sarm Hom m. Sai Chit Aung
 - V1 Naing Yin Min
 - III2 Sao Mo Kham m. Sai Tha Htay, Mong Pawn Family
 - IV1 Nang Moe Moe Lay
 - IV2 Sai Hla Tun
 - IV3 Sai Hla Win
 - III3 Sai Hsay Holm Hpa/Tommy m. Nang Shwe Htoo
 - IV1Nang Sen Hom
 - IV2 Nang Sam Yeen
 - IV3 Sai Won Lao Hpa
 - IV4 Nang Htilar
 - III4 Sao Sandi m. U Nyi Nyi Lwin
 - IV1 Sai Mai Hark
 - IV2 Sai Mor Hark
 - III5 Sao Khai Hpa m. Nang Kya Nu
 - IV1Nang Khaing Khaing Phyo
 - IV2 Sai Wai Phyo Hein
 - III6 Sao Lon
 - III7 Sao Leik

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Mong (1873-1927) (1920s; Mong Kung Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Num (r. 1928-1932) and Mahadevi (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sao Kyi (r. 1932-1959) and Mahadevi Nang Nyunt (Mong Kung Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Kyi and Family (1960s; Mong Kung Family Private Collection).



Mong Kung Mahadevi with Sao Lu Mawng Kyemmong and siblings (1960s; Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



A younger brother of Sao Lu Mawng, Sao Ngom Lao/Sao Mun Seng/Nelson (stands in the middle) with friends (Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



Wedding day of Sao Lu Mawng/Richard and Sao Yu Pa Kya Yi/Nancy, Hsenwi Princess (1950s; Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Family Private Collection).



Sao Lu Mawng/Richard and Sao Yu Pa Kya Yi/Nancy (Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



Sao Ngom Lao/Nelson and wife, Daw Mu Mu Aye, at their wedding (Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



Saohpa of Mong Kung, Sao Num (r. 1928-1932) (1930s; Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



Boys in ceremonial costume at their ordination ceremony include Hsenwi nephews of Sao Lu Maung's wife, Sao Yu Pa Kya Yi (Nancy), the daughter of Hsenwi Kyemmong Sao Hman Hpa. He can be seen sitting immediately behind the boys with his wife (1960s; Arthur and Huk Mong Kung Private Collection).



The front of the new palace, Mong Kung Haw (Sao Hsang Hpa Namhkok).



MONG HSU STATE

Actively Involved

Mong Hsu and Mong Sang had their own *myosa*. Both were under the jurisdiction of the larger Hsenwi State until 1857. When they separated from Hsenwi, King Mindon put in charge a Burman *myo-ok*,⁴⁵ from Kesi Mansam, where a garrison from the Mandalay Court was situated. In 1874, on the death of the Myosa of Mong Sang, two of his sons, Hkun Kyaw and Hkun Mala, became Myosa of Mong Sang and Mong Hsu, respectively. They were both recognized in 1888 by the Chief Commissioner of Burma.

During 1882 and 1883, both Mong Hsu and Mong Sang suffered heavily at the hands of the Burmese forces that came through to the Shan States to avenge the massacre of the Mong Nai garrison. There was severe punishment from the Court of Mandalay for any state thought to have been involved with Mong Nai.

By 1901, Mong Sang had been amalgamated with Mong Hsu and had only one titular head, Hkun Kyaw, who was the Myosa until 1917. After his death, his son, Hkun Htun, succeeded him in 1920. He married the widow of the Mong Lun Prince, who was a daughter of the then Hsenwi Saohpa, Hkun Sang Tun Hung. He also married Khin Lay Lat/Sao Nang Kham, a daughter of the Mong Pawn Saohpa.

Hkun Htun was considered an able ruler. He had had a good education and had been involved with state administration matters through assisting his father, Hkun Kyaw. For his heir, Hkun Htun chose his second son, Sao Hman Hpa (b. 1922), as Kyemmong in 1937. Sao Hman Hpa at the age of eight, was sent as a border to the Shan Chiefs' School at Taunggyi. At the outbreak of World War II, he left school and returned to his family. In 1947 during his father's illness, he took charge of the state until his father's death in 1952.

During the insurrections caused by the KNDO, Kachin, and Pa-O forces, and later during the troubles with the KMT, Sao Hman Hpa supported the Tatmadaw. Like other *saohpa*, he fought with the Burmese army chasing the KMT forces out of the Shan States towards the borders of Thailand.

By 1953, Sao Hman Hpa was a Member of Parliament for the Shan State to the Chamber of Nationalities having been elected by the Shan State Saohpa Association. From then onwards he was actively involved in affairs of the Shan State. He became Minister for Education and Health in 1954

⁴⁵ From Burmese, *myo* 'town' and *ok* 'officer' 'administrator', hence *myo-ok* translates as 'town officer'. The term was used during reigns of the Burmese monarchy and was adopted by the British.

and in 1956, he was awarded the title of *wunnakyawhtin* for his hard work and achievements. In both 1957 and 1958 he went to Japan as a member of the delegation negotiating the terms of the Japanese War Reparation Agreement. In 1958, Sao Hman Hpa became Minister for Home and Judicial Affairs, and took an interest in education by becoming a member of the Mandalay College Council.

The All States Conference held in Taunggyi in 1961 was of interest to all *saohpa* as it was primarily to request changes to the 1947 Constitution that had been hastily drawn up. However, all who had either played an active role or supported the Federal issue, including Sao Hman Hpa, were arrested when the Ne Win coup took place in 1962.

Mong Hsu Rubies

The Saohpa of Mong Hsu died before enjoying the discovery of the ruby stone tract in his state, the rush to mine these precious stones, and the benefit of the fortunes made from the valuable ruby gemstones found after his death.

Villages along the Mong Hsu Stone Tract have ancient names containing the word *hseng*, meaning 'gems' in Tai Shan, e.g., Nam maw Hseng 'Well of Gems', Ho Hseng 'Head of Gems', and Kawng Hseng 'Hill of Gems'. Apparently, until the rediscovery of the rubies, no one had realized the significance of these names the ancestors had given to the villages, which obviously indicated the location of these precious stones under their villages.

It was only in the early 1990s that a "ruby rush" started when rubies were discovered among pebbles lying on the banks of a river in Mong Hsu State. Most of the Mong Hsu rubies were picked up along the river beds by the Tai Shan and the Palaung villagers living in the area. The villagers had no idea of their true value and haphazardly traded the gems.

The quality of these rubies is considered not as fine nor of as good a color as that of the Mogok rubies. They need to be heat-treated before sale, but still are valuable gems.

When the discovery of these precious stones became widely known, the mines soon became commercialized and the small trade of the villagers came to an end. Instead of making the local people rich, most of them found themselves being turned out of their houses in 1991 when outsiders came in to exploit the mines. Their village land was confiscated by the military when it opened the trade to differing cease-fire armed groups and Chinese traders. The presence of these groups, with their infighting, made it a dangerous area.

There is a particularly sad story attached to the Mong Hsu discovery. In 2005, after heavy rainfalls, a landside killed many workers at the mines, as had happened in Mogok many years before. As the underground work in the mines went deeper and deeper they had become very dangerous. Following this incident, work and further investment stopped and businessmen moved out with their imported labor. The result of this rush of greed was that villages, like those in the north with the discarded jade mines, were ruined. Chemicals polluted local streams and rivers and the whole area became an environmental disaster. If the precious rubies are still being mined here, I hope some form of control has now been implemented making it safer for all.

There have been other discoveries of ruby mines in the northeastern area within Shan State, at Loi Hpaleng 'Redcliff Mountain'. No serious prospecting or exploration have been undertaken due to the fighting between the Burma army and Shan State militia for control of the area.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Kyaw (r. 1888-1917) (Mong Hsu Family Private Collection),



Saohpa Sao Hkun Htun (r. 1920-1952) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Saohpa Sao Hman Hpa (r. 1952-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Hman Hpa and Sao Hom Hpa, Hsenwi Saohpa the Head of Shan State (1959; Mong Hsu Family Private Collection).



KESI MANSAM STATE

Warrior Princes

The State of Kesi Mansam was another state that previously had come under Hsenwi authority. The state was separated in 1837, but it was only in 1869 that the title of *myosa* was created in favor of Hkun Yawt. When he died in 1881, his son, Hkun Hseng, succeeded him. His appointment was approved by King Thibaw.

The Bamar *myo-ok* appointed by the King to look after Kesi Mansam, Mong Nawng, Keng Lun, Mong Hsu, and Mong San had his headquarters in the Kesi Mansam capital. His duties were the same as those of the Mong Nai Sitke, to collect taxes and to keep an eye on these states.

However, during the troubles of the Mong Nai revolt from 1882 to 1883, Hkun Hseng had sided with King Thibaw and joined in the attack on Mong Nawng, destroying it. Prince Hkun Hseng refused to join the Limbin Confederacy. Before long, Mong Nawng took revenge. With Mong Nai, he marched on Kesi Mansam and destroyed the northern and western parts of its territory. Next, Kesi Mansam with Laikha and Mong Kung attacked Mong Pawn (a Limbin League member) in retaliation. However, they were unable to inflict as much damage as they wanted due to the arrival of British forces in 1886. A little later, seeing the strength of the British, Kesi Mansam together with Laikha and Mong Kung thought it prudent to send messages of submission to the British.

In 1888, the British recognized Hkun Hseng, who was ruling the State as *myosa*. Everything seemed well and then troubles erupted in 1896. Nearly all Keng Lun, the neighboring state, which had also been under the rule of Hsenwi, became deserted because of the fighting between the different factions of the Limbin Confederacy. People fled to safety. Keng Lun was then amalgamated with Kesi Mansam in 1926.

When Hkun Hseng died in 1914, his eldest son, Hkun Long, succeeded his father and ruled for eight years. Upon his death in 1922, his brother, Hkun Lu, was recognized as Myosa of Kesi Mansam.

Hkun Lu continued to rule. He was generally considered forward looking as he opened his state by constructing roads and encouraging travel. Hkun Lu's third wife, Sao Sein Wah, a sister of the Lawksawk Mahadevi, Sao Nang Htun, became Kesi Mansam Mahadevi in 1901. She had seven children. After the war, Hkun Lu was elevated to *saohpa*, but died a few years later in 1948.

The next heir was one of Sao Hkun Lu's many sons, Sao Shwe Hmon (1907-1975; r. 1948-1959). His mother was the first *mahadevi*. He started his education at a Buddhist school in Kesi Mansam when he was ten years old. He went on to a Buddhist school in Pyu, and then to a school in Hsipaw to learn English and Burmese. In 1927, he attended the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. When he left school, he was sent on to the police officers' training school in Mandalay. After schooling and training he was finally appointed Kyemmong in 1931 at the age of twenty-four.

Back in Taunggyi at the Commissioner's Office, Sao Shwe Hmon trained in administrative affairs, including law and finance, and worked as a judge for six months. In 1933, he returned to Kesi Mansam and worked as Amatchoke, Chief Minister of the State.

In 1945 towards the end of the Japanese war, he joined the US 101st Airborne Division and helped with levies to fight the retreating Japanese from Mong Yai up to Mong Nai. Sao Shwe Hmon became the new ruler at the age of forty in 1947 when his father died.

In 1949 troubles with the KNDO began. Sao Shwe Hmon helped organize army units based around the jungles at Loilem and near Hopong to fight the KNDO. He was awarded the well-deserved title of *thraysithu* in 1950.

Sao Shwe Hmon was elected as Minister for Education in the Shan Government after the first elections, when Sao Hkun Hkio was Head of State in 1951. He also did some travelling a year later with a group of other princes. He first went to India on a mission with Chief Justice U Myint Thein to study a compensation scheme for princes in preparation for when they renounced their powers. In 1954, he went to Japan with the Colombo Plan to study cottage industry. As chairman of a commission, he toured the Shan Plateau in 1958 to study the effect that the renunciation of power by the *saohpa* might have on the people of the Shan State. With the other princes, he signed the agreement for the transfer of their hereditary powers to the Shan Government held in Taunggyi in April 1959.

From 1960 to 1962, the federal issue was a prominent concern for the Tai Shan and other ethnic nationalities. Sao Shwe Hmon took an active part, becoming a member of the All States Unity Organization.

He married Sao Kyi Oo, Samka Saohpa's daughter. They did not have a son, so he adopted a younger half-brother, Sao Kae Zet, whose mother was Sao Sein Wah. He was recognized as the *kyemmong*.

The Kesi Mansam family also has connections to the Hsipaw and Lawksawk families.

Outstanding Career

An outstanding member of the Kesi Mansam family was Sao Ood Kesi, who died at the age of sixty-five in 2013. He was the son of Sao Naw Kham, the *Kyemmong* and brother of Sao Hkun Lu, the Kesi Mansam Saohpa. His mother, Sao Kyi, was from Nawngmawn, and the sister of Sao Htun Yin, who was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), for his bravery and distinguished services in 1946.

As a young boy, Sao Ood Kesi studied in Taunggyi at the ABM School up to the tenth standard. In 1978-1979, he worked for the Myanmar Commercial Bank. After a year, he decided to join Rangoon University to study Law and received his BA in Law in 1981. Disillusioned and unhappy with the state of affairs in the Shan State, he went underground in 1993 to join the Shan resistance army.

When the Peace talks began in 2011, Sao Ood Kesi was a legal officer for the Restoration Council of the Shan State and Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA). He died in early 2013 while working on ongoing negotiations of the Peace Process inside government control areas. It was sad that he died, leaving his work at the Peace Process talks unfinished, and his ambitions to regain peace and freedom for Shan State unrealized.

After the military take-over, the Tatmadaw, being antagonistic towards the *saohpa*, deliberately tore down or occupied the different *haw*. In Kesi Mansam, the Haw was occupied by the army but, after repeated appeals, it was returned to the prince's family in the 1990s, though it had been completely looted of its contents. Other palaces suffered similarly. The Laikha Haw was taken over by the regime and used as a bank. To prevent further seizures and demolition, one or two other *saohpa* donated their palaces to their respective communities to be used as *wat*, Buddhist monasteries, or hospitals.

KESI MANSAM FAMILY TREE⁴⁶

I Hkun Hseng (r. 1888-1914)

II1 Hkun Long (r. 1914-1922)

II2 Sao Ohn; m. Sao Hke, Hsipaw Saohpa (r. 1906-1928)

II3 Sao Hkun Lu, Saohpa of Kesi Mansam (r. 1922-1947)

II3Wife1 Nang Shwe

III1 Sao Shwe Hmon, Saohpa, (d.1975; r. 1948-1959),

in 1952 was Minister of Education & Health;

m. Sao Kyi Oo, Samka Saohpa's daughter, Mahadevi, 1947

IV1 Sao Kae Set* (adopted nephew)

⁴⁶ Sources: Kesi Mansam Family and SSK (1943).

III2 Sao Naw Kham/Sao Hsing, Kyemmong; m. Sao Kyi, Nawngmawn Family

- IV1 Sao Naw Hpa
- IV2 Sao Kyi May
- IV3 Sao Naw Hla
- IV4 Sao Naw Ka
- IV5 Sao Shwe Kyi
- IV6 Sao Tun Kyaing
- IV7 Sao Oot [SSA-RCCS] (1947-2012)
- IV8 Sao Phonk
- IV9 Sao Htay Gyi
- IV10 Sao Shwe Htoo
- IV11 Sao Naw Leun

III3 Sao Naw Hseng m. Nang Mawn (Wife I); Nang Phyu Wah (Wife II)

- IV1 Sai Kyaw Pwint
- IV2 Nang Sein Wah
- IV3 Nang Neat
- IV4 Nang Seng Lao
- IV5 Sai Kya

(Below are other wives and descendants of Saohpa Sao Khun Lu)

II3Wife2 Nang Nyunt

- III1 Sao Noon Kham

II3Wife3 Sao Sein Wah, from Lawksawk Family, Kesi Mansam Mahadevi

III1 Sao Nyun Ye m. Sao Ywet Gyi, son of Sao Myat Thi from Yawnghwe Family

- IV1 Sao Hut
- IV2 Sao Noom
- IV3 Sao Ying Theingi

III2 Sao Yin Nu m. U Soe Shwe

- IV1 Nang Seng Hom* (adopted niece)

III3 Sao Zam Kham m. Khin Maung Win

- IV1 Sai Nay Win
- IV2 Sai Leik
- IV3 Nang Ying Long
- IV4 Nang Kham Noan
- IV5 Sai Kae Ywet
- IV6 Sai Tun Win
- IV7 Sai Sam Win
- IV8 Sai Htoo

III4 Sao Sein Pwint m. U Maung Maung

- IV1 Sai Thuka
- IV2 Nang Hom

III5 Sao Ohn Khong m. Nang Si Kham

- IV1 Nang Van Tip
- IV2 Nang Kham Mone

III6 Sao Sein Hla m. Nang Nu (Wife I); Nang Shwe Han (Wife II)

- IV1 Nang Seng Hom*
- IV2 Nang Noan Mo
- IV3 Sai Aung Htoo

- IV4 Sai Naw Ngern
- IV5 Nang Kham Hom
- IV6 Sao Pang Pa
- III7 Sao Kae Set*m. Sao Gyi Sein, Samka Family
 - IV1 Sao Ywet Phong
 - IV2 Sao Myat San
 - IV3 Sao Lao Hein
 - IV4 Sao Kyaw Zaya
- II3Wife4 Nang Kya Li
 - III1 Sao Hseng Noan m. Sai Sam Htun
 - IV1 Sai Seng One
 - IV2 Nang Mwe Kham
 - III2 Sao Ohn Maung m. Nang Li
 - IV1 Nang Paue Hom
 - IV2 Nang Lao Kham
 - IV3 Nang Naung Naung
 - IV4 Sai Sai
 - III3 Sao Shwe Thi m. U Aung Than Kyaw
 - IV1 Nang Thida Oo
 - IV2 Sai Aung Myo Kyaw
 - IV3 Sai Zaw Aung Lin
 - IV4 Sai Hla Kyaw Myo
 - IV5 Sai Than Naing
 - IV6 Sai Mya Thant
 - III4 Sao Mone Hsar
 - III5 Sao Hseng Holm m. Nang May Than
 - IV1 Hkun Ye Aung
 - IV2 Hkun Min Cho
 - IV3 Ying Ying
 - IV4 Nyo Nyo Chaw
 - III6 Sao Ohn Nyunt m. Sai Khai Lao
 - IV1 Nang Sam Phu Lao
 - IV2 Sai Mong Li
 - IV3 Sai Leng
 - IV4 Nang Ma Hom
 - III7 Sao Hseng Mong m. Nang Yu San
 - IV1 Nang Seng Zam Ngern
 - IV2 Nang Seng Lao Noom
 - IV3 Nang Seng Zam Phong

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sao Hkun Lu (r. 1922-1948) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Mahadevi, Sao Sein Wah (Kesi Mansam Family Private Collection).



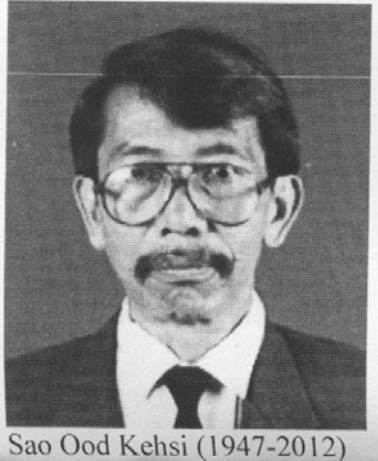
Saohpa Sao Shwe Hmon and Mahadevi, Sao Kyi Oo Samka (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Shwe Hmon (r. 1948-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Oot (SSA-RCCS) (1947-2012) (Shan Herald News Agency).



Sao Ood Kehsi (1947-2012)

Sao Kae Set, Kesi Mansam Kyemmong and wife Sao Gyi Sein, Samka Family with son and daughter (2000; Kesi Mansam Family Private Collection).



Kesi Mansam Haw (1950; Kesi Mansam Family Private Collection).



TAI SHAN RESISTANCE

The aftermath of the 1962 coup for those living on the Shan Plateau was confusion and utter misery. In the Shan State, without their princes and other leading members of society, much had to be re-organized. The administration was taken over by army commanders of different areas with no room for civilians. They soon became a law unto themselves. The uncontrolled soldiers continued to misbehave as they had done ever since they stepped onto the Shan Plateau back in 1949 during the times of insurrection and military administration. In response to the fierceness of the army, more people went underground and ethnic armies were formed in defense of their homelands. The Tatmadaw was in control in many regions but not in all, leaving pockets of areas for resistance armies to move around.

Noom Suk Harn

In May 1958, an underground group called the Noom Suk Harn 'Brave Young Warriors' was formed by a young Tai Shan, Saw Yanda, who was also known as Chao Noi, from one of the Shan states of Yunnan. He gained attention as a hero and became the focus of university students and high school youth, many of whom joined what they considered to be a nationalist dissident movement. This motley group, poorly armed and disorganized, made its way into the jungles and set up camp.

Then came the 1959 Tangyan outburst. The dissidents of the Tangyan insurrection were mostly from Mong Lun, the "tame" Wa State. The dissidents considered themselves Tai Shan rather than Wa. This insurrection was led by Bo Mawng, an officer from the Union Military Police, who was

joined by Sao Kyaw Tun and students from Rangoon University. Sao Kyaw Tun, also known as Sao Hso Won from Mong Yai State, became renowned for his bravery. Tangyan in the northern Shan State was held by the rebels for a few weeks before being routed by the Tatmadaw. Bo Mawng and Sao Kyaw Tun with their followers then marched towards the Thai border where Num Suk Harn and his compatriots had their encampment.

The uprising at Tangyan encouraged dissident Tai Shan youth to join the movement, including a student underground group. This movement gathered strength and exploded into a Tai Shan nationalist movement after the disastrous army take-over in 1962. It rapidly gained support from both young and old and men and women from various walks of life. They also wanted to join the fight for freedom against the occupiers of their homeland, the Burman army, the Tatmadaw. This was to be the beginning of the Tai Shan resistance movement that is now over sixty years old.

A young Tai Shan student from Hsipaw, Hkun Kya Nu, also known as Sao Seng Suk, studying at the Rangoon University, joined the movement. In 1960, he was commander of the newly formed Shan States Independence Army (SSIA). U Kya Bu, a signatory to the Panglong Agreement, a noted agronomist and Tai Shan leader, was Hkun Kya Nu's father. Of his six sons, three went into the resistance army to fight against the army take-over that they considered unjust.

The disillusioned included my younger brother, Tzang Yawng hwe, who wrote:

I myself was swept along by the rising tide of nationalism, initially as a shy and nervous participant... I established clandestine contacts with both the Shan and Karen movements, often slipping into the jungle to meet their leaders. It was a dangerous venture and, in retrospect, of dubious value. However, being young and fired with zeal and patriotism, I did not lose much sleep over the risk I was taking ... The violence of 1962 heralded the supremacy of force, and death of democracy and reason. I felt there was no other choice left but to answer the call to battle - for the Shan, as well as for democracy (Yawng hwe 1987:7).

In April 1963, he went off to join the Shan State Independence Army (SSIA). In July, the Revolutionary Council of the Tatmadaw government under Gen. Ne Win held peace talks with representatives from two Tai Shan resistance groups, the SSIA and the Shan National United Front (SNUF). The talks never went further when the Tai Shan group put federalism on the agenda for the talks. The Revolutionary Council politely said they would study the proposal and make contact again, but nothing happened.

It was from this time on that any mention of federalism became a forbidden word. The Tatmadaw did not take kindly to such sentiments as federations. Using the word meant one was subversive, and often led to trouble.

In the meantime, back in the jungle, splits were beginning within the Tai Shan nationalist movement.

Later that year in 1963, the Mahadevi of Yawng hwe (Sao Nang Hearn Hkam, 1916-2003), Tzang's mother, managed to escape to Thailand⁴⁷ with three of her children. She had returned to Rangoon from England when her husband, Sao Shwe Thaike the Saohpa Long of Yawng hwe, died suddenly under mysterious circumstances in November 1962. Still intensely interested in politics and with a desire to counter Ne Win, she tried to unify the feuding Tai Shan armed groups - principally, the Shan State Independence Army (SSIA), Shan National United Front (SNUF), and the Thailand National Army (TNA) that was based in Kengtung.

In 1964, the SSIA and SNUF joined to form a new force, the Shan States Army (SSA) under the Yawng hwe Mahadevi's leadership. She became the Chairman of the Shan States War Council.

⁴⁷ Chao Tzang Yawng hwe (1987) and Elliot (1999) give accounts of this escape to Thailand.

Although the three forces worked together and seemed to be doing well, they had to struggle against the CPB based on the Shan Plateau. Tzang Yawnghwe (1987) in his book describes his years in the resistance movement and explains the intricacy of Shan politics, and their contact and dealings with the Burman and the Tatmadaw.

The TNA later changed its name to the Shan State Army East, while the Shan State Progress Party was formed in 1971 as the SSA's political wing. However, during the same period, a former SNUF faction also broke away from the SSA, taking the name the Shan United Revolutionary Army and worked with the KMT remnants of General Li Wen-huan's Third Army to fight against the communists.

To break up the dissident groups and to prevent them from coalescing to fight against the Tatmadaw, Ka Kwe Ye (KKY) units were created in mid-1963. It was an anti-insurgency ploy set up as a kind of local defense force or home guard. Donald Seekins explained that:

the regime expected KKY forces to assist in its fight against communist and ethnic insurgents. In return, they were free to engage in the opium trade. The policy went a long way toward fragmenting opposition to the central government in Shan State (Seekins 2007:234).

It was too good a chance to miss and many of the resistance groups joined, gaining immense profits from the drug trade. Greed eventually became a stronger passion than patriotism. Unfortunately, these small units of various ethnic groups became involved in carrying and escorting the consignments of opium from various points in the Shan State to the borders of both Thailand and Laos for onward shipping. Poppy growers were generally hill peoples such as the Akha, Lisu, Lahu, Kachin, Palaung and Wa. Though they earned a meager amount, it was better than nothing. From 1963, the drug trade expanded rapidly until the KKY units were disbanded ten years later.

A great deal was happening at that time. Many of these young men also became mercenaries for the Thai and the CIA fighting the Pathet Lao forces that were Lao communists backed by the Vietminh. Bertil Lintner described the situation aptly: "In this truly entangled imbroglio, it soon became impossible to say where the drug-running ended, and insurgency, counter-insurgency and espionage began" (1999:236).

By now the Tai Shan armies were disorganized and disunited. The *mahadevi* left in 1966 for Canada and her son was to follow ten years later, a disappointed man. He had given the best years of his young life with enthusiasm and hope to regain peace for the Shan State and to liberate it from the grips of the Tatmadaw, but that was not achieved.

These days it is not unusual to meet a Tai Shan in his sixties or more, who has, at one time or the other, been with one of the resistance armies. Young, flush with ideals, patriotism, and aspiration, each fought for freedom for his homeland without a clear idea of how they were going to find funds or organize themselves. Few understood the might of the Tatmadaw.

Young men and women, who felt so passionately about the sad state of their own people that they were compelled to risk their lives by joining the resistance, are to be commended. But where are they now? Are they still fighting for their ideals in whatever way they can? Many have died for their convictions. Others are in prison or are still fighting. Today, the goals that their grandfathers and fathers set out to achieve are as elusive as ever.

The new generation, with more understanding of politics and international affairs, will surely endeavor to see that what their forefathers fought for was not in vain, for the Tai Shan shall attain democracy and peace in time.

Martin Smith (1999) gives excellent accounts of the trials and tribulations of the various Tai

Shan resistance armies, who not only have had to fend off the CPB, the KMT, and the Tatmadaw, but even were at war among themselves. Armed movements were also emerging among such nationalities in the Shan State as the Kachin, Kokang, Pa-O and Padaung. Despite good intentions, there was never unity. Internal political and personal rivalries meant leaders of these groups could never put aside their antagonism towards each other. In addition, especially for the Tai Shan armies, greed and money from opium and drugs was too great a temptation for them to keep on the straight and narrow path towards nationalism.

The Golden Triangle

The opium trade knew no boundaries. Stories of the Golden Triangle are numerous. A vast amount of literature exists on the Golden Triangle that spans across the northeastern and eastern Shan Plateau into north and northwestern Laos and to northeastern Thailand.

It would not take the young armed groups long to realize that by working together with KMT renegades, involvement in the opium trade brought sizeable rewards. From villagers growing the poppies, to caravans guarded by the assortment of armed men on the long passage from the Shan hills to the borders of Laos and Thailand, to the drug dealers - each pocketed payment relevant to their usefulness, with growers receiving the least.

Despite the shortcomings of this remuneration system and the hardship for the growers and the soldiers transporting the opium, the trend was set and was to continue over a number of years that involved many different armies and organizations. After Afghanistan, the Shan State became the largest producer of illicit opium in the world.

Of the local men engaged in the drug trade in those days after World War II, Khun Sa and Lo Hsin Han stand out. They actively encouraged growing the opium poppy, which greatly increased its trade and meanwhile, assiduously lined their pockets. Their lives, fortunes, and misfortunes would crisscross each other over some thirty or forty years.

Khun Sa, originally called Chan Chi Fu, was a half Chinese-Shan who became a notorious drug warlord. He came from Mong Yai State where his father belonged to a minor branch of the ruling family. It was thought his father had served with the KMT and that his son, having also become involved, soon learned the drug trade.

In the early 1960s, Khun Sa was under orders from the Tatmadaw to form a KKY unit in his area, for which the Burma army supplied arms, money, and uniforms. Like other such KKY units, its purpose was to gather information and fight against Tai Shan dissident armies and to keep peace within its area. Inevitably it became involved in the opium trade.

After the 1962 coup, Khun Sa left the KKY and, working alone, formed the Mong Tai Army, known also as the Shan United Army, whose main purpose, he claimed, was to fight for the freedom of the Shan States. His plans were to fight the Tatmadaw who had occupied the Shan State. Although he made money from the opium trade, he did not consider himself a drug baron. He claimed that the money earned paid for clothing and food for his followers, and buying arms to fight the Burman army.

As a maverick, he fitted well into the plans of the big powers, whether it was fighting the communists in China or Vietnam. It is alleged that, while their main allies were the KMT, the CIA found Khun Sa and his "hill tribe militia" a useful buffer against communist expansion into Thailand and Southeast Asia. His presence around the Thailand, China and Laos borders also gained him points. Some American elements reputedly supported him even after the US Government put a price on his head.

In 1969, he was captured by the Burmese authorities. In retaliation, his group kidnapped two

Russian doctors from Taunggyi. Later in 1976, Khun Sa was released and set up camp in Ban Hin Taek, a Lahu village on the borderland, and returned to the opium trade. His success enabled him to invest in the village, and to provide luxuries such as running water and a swimming pool. Through his investments, Ban Hin Taek was transformed into a thriving small town. Not unlike other such traders making money from drugs, he seemed to have a moral conscience - doing something good for his followers by giving them shelter and a living.

By 1980, Khun Sa is believed to have controlled seventy percent of the Golden Triangle heroin business that also included numerous laboratories and refineries. His great wealth led him to become autocratic and set himself up as ruler of his opium kingdom.

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimated around forty-five percent of his drugs through his networks were destined for the United States and decided to act against him. Pressured by the US Government, the Royal Thai army destroyed Khun Sa's base on Thai soil and expelled him. While this did stop the trade for a time, he resumed business in the Shan State. Here he aggressively expanded his territory, often at the expense of rival opposition forces, and in 1985 he joined with the SURA in forming the Mong Tai Army (MTA).

In January 1996, Khun Sa was reported to have left the Shan State, voluntarily surrendering to the Burmese authorities as he did not wish to face drug smuggling charges in the USA. At the time, the MTA was also under military pressure from the United Wa State Army (UWSA), which had been formed in 1989 following the CPB's collapse. It was reported that US officials had offered a two-million-dollar reward for Khun Sa's arrest. On his return to Burma, he was not arrested nor extradited to America. Instead he was given protection and allowed to live comfortably in Rangoon, from where he invested his ill-gotten gains into major ventures inside the country.

Khun Sa was generous in looking after his soldiers and their families and villagers, so perhaps he was not as ruthless as some people thought. It is also alleged that as he was not a brilliant businessman; that he was probably working for bigger bosses. Whatever the truth, his professed love for the Shan State and desire to free it from Burman army dominance never played an important role in life. As a young man, he may have had such sentiments, but money, greed, and self-preservation landed him in many tight spots. He died a very rich man in 2007 in Rangoon. Meanwhile, with Khun Sa's departure, the MTA revived along the Thailand borderlands as the Shan State Army-South under a younger generation of Tai Shan nationalists.

The other notorious drug warlord, Lo Hsin Han, came to prominence through his KKY connections in Kokang and became prosperous. He was under the command of Yang Kyin Hsui/Olive Yang, a sister of the Kokang Prince, Yang Kyein Sai, who had taken up arms against the Tatmadaw by joining the Kokang resistance group.⁴⁸ Lo Hsin Han, using his connections with the KKY, travelled around Kokang, and became involved in the drug trade. He not only encouraged villagers to grow more poppies, but also began setting up heroin refineries. In 1965 when the Kokang KKY collapsed, Lo Hsin Han defected and later fought the CPB with the Burma army, while simultaneously trading in opium. In 1973 when he was arrested by the Thai authorities, he was handed on to the Burman authorities. While he was in jail, Khun Sa took over the prosperous drug trade. It was only in 1980, under a general amnesty, that Lo Hsin Han was released.

The Burmese military intelligence found him useful as an agent and as an intermediary in making ceasefire arrangements. In return, the Tatmadaw gave him permission to run his drug trade without hindrance in the Kokang region, especially following the CPB's 1989 collapse.

Lo Hsin Han wasted no time in building up his drug business, which he had lost fifteen years earlier to his rival, Khun Sa. He allegedly built numerous heroin refineries in Kokang and adjoining

⁴⁸ More details about this family are in the Kokang State chapter of this book.

areas. Once again, a leading drug baron was back on the scene.

His success in the opium trade enabled him to move his wealth into other commercial enterprises in Burma and abroad. He maintained good relations with the military junta and his business concerns expanded all over the country with the blessings of the Tatmadaw.

While both Khun Sa and Lo Hsin Han, now deceased, dominated the opium trade in the Golden Triangle in the twentieth century, new players have currently taken their place. With their ill-gotten gains, they both managed to build up international business empires for themselves, and plowed money into national economic schemes. Khun Sa believed himself to be a respectable warlord doing good for his followers by building villages for their families to settle in.

Today we still hear of them but it was Khun Sa who captured the headlines as the "Prince of Death," "Prince of Prosperity," the "Lord of the Golden Triangle." He, however, styled himself as "King of the Golden Triangle."

He will be remembered by most people as the Prince of Death, but to those he befriended, he will be remembered with gratitude for his consideration of their welfare, during a time of conflict and instability.

PHOTOGRAPHS: THE TAI SHAN RESISTANCE

Sao Tzang Yawngghwe with fellow Shan army officers (1960s) (Sao Tzang Yawngghwe Collection).



Noom Suk Harn founder, Sao Yanda (1959) (Sao Tzang Yawnghwe Collection).



Shan State Army at Mong Tung Camp in Northern Shan State (1970). Back row L-R: Sai Pan (Colonel Boontai) Sai Nyan Win (Major Seng Han) Sai Nyunt Lt. Col. Muang Kon) Sai Myint Aung (Colonel Ongbong) Bo Ngaa Muang and Sao Tzang Yawnghwe. In front row L-R: Bo Hso Gyam, Sai Tun Hlaing (Major Oum Muang) Sao Swy, Sai Kyaw Min (2nd Lt. Kwan Muang) and Captain Sai Naw Muang (Sao Tzang Yawnghwe Collection).



Second Lieutenant Sao Swy Mangrai with fellow officers (1970s; Sao Swy Mangrai).



Standing end of row on right, Second Lieutenant Sao Swy Mangrai with fellow officers (1970s; Shan Herald News Agency).



Khun Sa with followers (1970s; Shan Herald News Agency).



Lt Gen Yawk Suik and Maj Gen Loi Mao SSA (N) (1990s; (Shan Herald News Agency).



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Lt Gen Yawk Suik, Commander of Shan State Army (South) (1990s; Shan Herald News Agency).



Shan soldiers parading in camp (1990s; Shan Herald News Agency).



CHAPTER TEN: THE CENTRAL SHAN STATES

The Central Shan States were composed of eleven states of varying size and status whose rulers were not all Tai Shan. Here live the Pa-O, Intha, Palaung, and other smaller communities. In earlier times, their ethnicity did not matter but, in the twenty-first century, each group feels the right, even responsibility, to befriend and look after their own. The past has been recorded here up to 1962, when a military coup shattered the lives of many. Today, efforts are being made to repair these mishaps that took place over the decades. There is now a semblance of coping and rebuilding of these lives.

YAWNGHWE STATE

The Saohpa Long

Yawnghwe, one of the older Mong within the Shan States, was ruled until 1959 by Sao Shwe Thaik (1896-1962; r. 1927-1959), the twenty-ninth Saohpa Long. When Burma gained its independence from Britain in 1948, he became its first President. As President of the Union of Burma, people within the country and without, hardly knew that he was one of the senior princely rulers of the Shan States.

My father was born eight years after the British annexation of Upper Burma and the Shan States. He was the sixth child in a family of nine. His father, Sao Chon, was a younger brother of the then Saohpa, and held the post of *myosa* of one of the administrative divisions of Yawnghwe State. The Indeind Division, which he administered, was composed of 200 villages of Inle Lake. It was a major village of the Inle and was well known for its large complex of ancient pagodas, a site to which tourists are taken nowadays. It was quite likely that my father spent his early childhood here.

He was a typical Tai Shan of medium height (about five feet and six inches in height), with fair skin, and a round face that seemed to project a feeling of being completely at peace with himself. He had a certain presence that led people to respect him. When old enough he attended the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. This school was especially designed by the British as a training ground for young boys who were expected one day to become either a *saohpa* or a minister of state in their home state. The school was run rigorously along the lines of an English public school, with an English headmaster and Anglo-Indian teachers.

When the First World War broke out, my father, who was then about eighteen, was conscripted into the British Indian Army along with young Tai Shan, Kachin, Chin, and Karen. They formed part of the more than eight million men enlisted from the British Empire for the Asiatic and Egyptian theatres and were sent to Mesopotamia to fight the Turks. He was later promoted to the rank of *Subedar*, an appointment equivalent to that of a captain in the British Army. On his return, he continued to serve in the army from 1920 to 1923 with the Northeast Frontier Service.

In 1927 at the age of thirty-one, my father was installed as Saohpa of Yawnghwe. My granduncle, Sir Sao Mawng, had left Mong Yawnghwe running efficiently and smoothly with the advice of the British Commissioner and the Administrator. It was now my father's responsibility to continue the *status quo* as ruler of Yawnghwe.

When the Burma Round Table Conference was held in 1930-1931, he was a delegate representing the Shan States. After his return from England, he found much to do. He was always

busy, travelling to Taunggyi for the quarterly Federal Council meetings, visiting other princes in their states, and making tours of his own domain. In a few years' time, he was to find the peace and tranquility of the previous reign unexpectedly disrupted. Politics was soon to disturb the peace and then before long, came the Japanese invasion.

Sao Shwe Thaike had married four sisters, who were his maternal cousins. Their father, U Hla Bu, was the Revenue Minister of Yawnghwe, a Tai Shan from neighboring Namhkok State. The eldest sister, Sao Nang Yi, had two sons, Sao Hseng Hpa and Sao Hseng Ong. As the senior wife, she was the *mahadevi* and was usually referred to in the family and in the Yawnghwe Court as Sao Mye Mong, which translates from Tai Shan meaning 'Princess Mother of the Mong'.

My mother, Sao Nang Sanda, was the second sister. When I was not yet three years old, my mother died at the age of twenty-one. As was the custom, the *mahadevi* adopted me and brought me up as her own child.

The third sister, Nang Nyunt May, had no children and the fourth, Nang Mya Win, was young and sent off for further education to Taunggyi, and then on to Rangoon University. She only truly became married to my father, when she returned from Rangoon University just before the Japanese occupation. Nang Mya Win lived with her daughter in Taunggyi. Her son had passed away. She was a teacher for a number of years and was lovingly known as *sayama gyi* 'senior teacher' in Burmese, by many of her former students. In 2014 at the age of ninety-five, she passed away and was mourned by many.

Our family was extended when my father married a princess, Sao Hearn Hkam, from Hsenwi State in 1937. A sister of the Hsenwi Saohpa Long, she was installed as *mahadevi* as soon as her first son, Sao Hso Hkan Hpa, was born. She was to have five more children - three boys and two girls.

For those interested in reading more about our family; Yawnghwe State, its ancient history, and its peoples, *The Moon Princess* provides a summary of important events and incidents.

During British rule, the *saohpa*, including the Yawnghwe Prince, enjoyed participating in the Council of Shan Saohpa and in voicing their opinions. The Yawnghwe Prince's views were often heard at these meetings, both complaining and giving advice. British officials were not altogether happy as he had influence over the younger princes and the British did not want them diverted from their instructions. On the other hand, senior British officials who took a paternal view of the princes did not find him overly disruptive to their scheme of things.

After the end of World War II and the return of the British, my father and a small number of *saohpa* found themselves deeply involved in trying to find ways to make the Shan States more viable. They were members of the Council for the Shan State Saohpa which, headed by the Tawngpeng Prince, included Yawnghwe who was the vice president, and the Hsenwi, Mong Mit, Mong Pawn, Mong Nawng, and Hsahtung princes. Led by Yawnghwe Saohpa with Mong Pawn and Hsahtung, the first Panglong Conference was organized in 1946. Meeting participants were *saohpa*, Tai Shan leaders and politicians, and Chin and Kachin leaders and their representatives. The Laikha Saohpa, Sao Num, acted as host since the meeting was being held in his state, and he also funded much of the event.

Thus, the Supreme Council of United Hills Peoples (SCOUHP) was formed, with my father as its president. Its position was that its members were happy to be associated with Burma on the condition that full autonomy was guaranteed in internal administration within a Federal Government, with all members being equal.

The second Panglong Conference (1947) was held after the Attlee-Aung San Treaty in January. Agreement was reached between Bogyoke Aung San, and the Tai Shan, Kachin, and Chin leaders to demand independence from the British. Independence was granted by the British and hopes were high among the people of the Shan States with promises from Bogyoke Aung San that he

respected equality. In 1948, the Union of Burma was created with Sao Shwe Thaik, a Shan, as its first President. In 1952 when he left the presidency he became the Speaker of the Chamber of Nationalities or the Upper House.

During the 1950s, Sao Shwe Thaik, who had a keen interest in Shan literature, initiated a project to have the Pali Buddhist texts translated into Shan. In many ways, he contributed to the resurgence of Shan national consciousness.

All the time that he was serving the Union, Sao Shwe Thaik probably felt a sense of despair and frustration, for there was little he could do to help alleviate the suffering of either the Tai Shan or the other ethnic nationalities during their times of difficulties. When his public service terms ended, it was already too late. However, recognizing that there was a great deal to accomplish if there was to be peace and progress in the Shan States, he returned to politics. Sao Shwe Thaik again felt free to listen to his subjects and hear their complaints. A traditionalist, honest, and loyal, his approach had always been to abide by the law and to see justice done through constitutional means. But it was too late to prevent further disintegration of relations between the Tai Shan and the Bamar politicians.

Hands-tied

When the 1956 general elections were held, my stepmother, the Mahadevi of Yawnghwe, no longer the First Lady, decided to stand for Parliament. With the backing of both her husband and her brother, the Saohpa of Hsenwi, she easily won her seat, and was elected as Member of Parliament to the Union Parliament for Hsenwi, her northern home state. At the same time, she became a member of the Shan State Council, the legislature of the Shan State.

The situation in the Shan States had stirred her to take an interest in politics and achieve her ambitions to become an MP. In such a position, she hoped to do something for the long-suffering Shan people. The *mahadevi* developed a flippant relationship toward the Burman politicians. She was quite outspoken and not many politicians liked her taunting frankness. Princes squirmed when she asked questions and spoke up for the Tai Shan against the Burman in Parliament. Her contemptuous manner surely did not please the Bamar nor the military. They may have smiled and laughed with her, but underneath lay a vein of distrust and dislike. Politicians were constantly watching her, and the military waited for her to make a wrong move.

The *mahadevi* had not been idle, preparing to put up more motions in Parliament concerning the explosive situation in the Shan States, but when the 1960 elections were held she lost her seat in Parliament. Her brother, the Hsenwi Prince, who was now the Shan Head of State, was no longer prepared to support her. Instead, he made his own brother, Sao Hman Hpa, the new Hsenwi Member of Parliament. Undoubtedly, Sao Hom Hpa was now not about to jeopardize his prominent position, including being on the right side of the army, by some remark his sister, the *mahadevi* might make against the Tatmadaw.

Meanwhile, the newspapers were regularly reporting on events in the Shan States, claiming that the Sawbwas were determined to hold onto power. Much of the reporting was prejudiced and unsympathetic towards the princes, who were blamed for everything that happened in the Shan State. The population was being tutored to think badly about their rulers.

Writing of that period Leslie Glass commented:

The princes were increasingly portrayed in the media - newspapers, magazines and journals, short stories and novels - as despotic, indolent, exploitive, disloyal and feudal reactionaries who plotted with opium warlords, SEATO agents, Thai pimps, American war-mongers and British neo-colonists to destroy the Union

(Glass 1985:114).

How could the *saohpa* refute these allegations when no one was listening? Everyone, including Burman politicians, anti-feudalists, and the Tatmadaw believed the anti-*saohpa* propaganda, which they themselves had probably started. There was no let-up of attacks on the Shan princes and Yawngwe Saohpa bore the brunt of many accusations whether they were related to the secession question or the federal issue.

The effect of these defamations was so profound that even to this day, some members of *saohpa* families are reluctant to declare their kinship in fear of being ostracized.

The seriousness of the plight of the Tai Shan villagers and their suffering were all but forgotten under the harsh treatment of the Tatmadaw soldiers.

From 1960 to 1961, the All States Conference was held to ameliorate conditions in the Shan countryside and stem the flow of young Tai Shan to the jungles. The Conference was attended by all ethnic nationalities for the important matter of amending the hastily assembled 1947 Constitution. This needed to be discussed and agreed upon.

The All States Conference was considered a success for all ethnic nationalities as they shared the same views but their main interest was in finding a viable strategy to restore peace and to equally share the responsibilities in building up a unified and democratic Union. Unfortunately, any hope people may have had was soon dashed when the military seized power.

Unfortunately, both Burman elite and politicians felt that a respected figure such as Yawngwe Saohpa should not be engaging in politics nor supporting the Shan cause. However, moderate Tai Shan politicians were glad that there was at last someone they could talk to and consult.

When Ne Win launched the 1962 coup, the Yawngwe Prince was treated badly. The Tatmadaw soldiers shot-up the house in the belief that he was harboring armed dissidents. Though they found neither dissidents nor arms, they killed a favorite son of his, Myee Myee. What saved my father from also being killed was a great stack of books, the *Tripitaka*, the Pali Buddhist text that had been translated into Shan. Piled up behind the front door the texts had absorbed the gunfire and were riddled with bullets.

The Yawngwe Saohpa faced a lonely and untimely death in solitary confinement. It seemed an unjust end for a man of integrity who was forthright, loyal, and straightforward, who had been awarded the highest accolades and honors such as Kambawsarahta Thiri Pawaramahawuntha Thudamaraza, Agga Mahathraysithu, and Agga Maha Thirithudhamma.

My father's death was never explained. There is no way of knowing why or how he passed away on 21 November 1962.

Yawngwe Founded in 1394

Tradition and local annals say that the Kingdom of Yawngwe was founded in 1359 as Khambojarattha. Before moving to the Shan Plateau, the Tai of Yawngwe had lived in the oldest of the Burmese capitals, Tagaung, near the Irrawaddy River. At some time before 800 CE, an army from China or Tibet captured and destroyed the city. Those who survived split into three groups, one of which migrated to the area around Yawngwe. The *mong* they founded had boundaries that were much larger than those of Yawngwe in the twentieth century.

Sao Si Hseng Hpa, the first known ruler, built his capital, Yawngwe, where it stands today. *Yawng* means 'highland' and *hwe* 'valley' 'Valley among the Hills when translated from Tai Shan. Here an inconsistency has arisen, for Yawngwe has for many years been consistently called by the

Burmese name Nyaungshwe 'bodhi tree golden'. Legend has it that during ancient times a bodhi tree, golden in color, grew in the center of the town bringing prosperity to its inhabitants. Wishing to believe in the myth, the Burmese name was therefore adopted by many. With Burmanization, Nyaungshwe seems to have become the better-known name. I will, however, use our Tai Shan name, Yawngshwe.

The capital, Yawngshwe, which shares its name with the State, is situated in the central region of the Southern Shan States, lying southeast of the old Burmese capital, Mandalay. One of the main routes leading to Taunggyi and beyond into the Central Shan States passes through Yawngshwe State, as does the main railway line with its terminus at Shwenyaung, some seven miles from the capital. Since the army takeover fifty-three years ago, an extension to this railway line leading into the interior has been built solely for use by the Tatmadaw. A line also goes south, leading to Loikaw, beyond Inle Lake.

Nothing remains in Yawngshwe itself to indicate that at one time it was a walled city. An eastern city gate and part of the walls of this ancient capital were still standing when I was young, but no part of that wall exists today.

Over the six centuries since the time of Sao Si Hseng Hpa, the history of Yawngshwe was remarkably tranquil, at least compared with most Asian nations. The *mong* prospered and its territory expanded over the years. In those days, the State of Yawngshwe extended westward into Burma Proper to Yamethin and Toungoo, and ruled over many of the smaller states surrounding it.

The twenty-first Saohpa, Sao Yun, ruled from 1762 to 1818⁴⁹ and issued a royal order in 1808 declaring authority over thirty-nine lesser *mong*, making Yawngshwe one of the largest Shan States. Proof of these claims is found in the Tai Shan families still living near Toungoo. It must have been quite a feat to conquer such a vast area. After Sao Yun, successive rulers seemed unable to control so vast a kingdom. They made new treaties and agreements with subordinate states and the size of the territory of Yawngshwe gradually decreased. During my father's reign, the state covered only the central area of this former ancient kingdom.

By 1852, Mindon Min had become King of Burma and ruled until 1878. In the meantime, in Yawngshwe, there was a conspiracy carried out by one of the Sao Mawng's cousins, Sao Chit Su (1852-1855), to usurp the throne of Yawngshwe that involved a Burmese prince, the Einshe Min 'front-palace prince'. He was successful and upon his death was succeeded by another cousin, Sao Naw Hpa (1858-1864). During these happenings, the young Yawngshwe Prince, Sao Mawng (1848-1926), was adopted by Mindon Min and brought up at the Court of Mandalay. Sao Mawng's other siblings remained in Yawngshwe. From this date, onwards, Yawngshwe became more closely linked to the Court of Mandalay, leading to the assimilation of Burmese language and culture. While Sao Mawng was growing up in Mandalay, Yawngshwe Mong was an unstable state with assassinations and ruled by the usurper. King Mindon later sent a force of 1,000 to regain the Yawngshwe throne. Usurper Sao Naw Hpa then fled to the Karenni hills where he eventually died.

In 1864, King Mindon arranged for his adopted son, Sao Mawng, who was then about sixteen years old, to become Saohpa of Yawngshwe. Sao Mawng ruled peacefully without any major problems for twenty-one years. In 1878, King Mindon, a devout Buddhist and a much-respected monarch, died. Much infighting and intrigue followed and a palace coup brought Prince Thibaw to the throne. His queen, Supayalat, an ambitious and bloodthirsty woman, feared competition and had all the royal family members killed. Wielding a great deal of power, she was a strong influence behind the

⁴⁹ Eastward, the borders stretched to the Nampawn River and Mong Nai; to the west from the Paungdong River, Hlaingdet and Yamethin; to the south from Mong Pai to Toungoo; and to the north, up to the Myitnge River, at Namtu, Hsipaw, and Mong Mit. Both Yamethin and Toungoo are well known towns on the main Rangoon to Mandalay railway line, with Tai Shan inhabitants.

throne. Her deeds and King Thibaw's sadism and irrational behavior towards the Tai Shan convinced a group of *saohpa* that they could no longer tolerate him on the Mandalay throne. Earlier chapters have dealt with the Limbin Confederacy and the action taken against the king.

Meanwhile, Sao Mawng, the rightful ruler who had been injured in battle, returned to Mandalay and left his half-brother Sao On in charge of Yawngghwe.

Enter the British

As Sao On did not join the Limbin Confederacy, Yawngghwe was attacked by the Limbin Confederacy members. Shrewdly, Sao On sent a message to the British saying that Yawngghwe was being threatened by the main army of the Limbin Confederacy and he needed protection. Although there was a shortage of troops, the British decided to help hoping this would speed the establishment of British supremacy over the Shan States. A force was quickly assembled and dispatched under Colonel Edward Stedman (1842-1925) of the 3rd Gurkha Regiment.

Was Sao On conscious that his plea for help from the British was an invitation for the British to enter Shan territory and to annex the Shan States earlier than was expected? Once British forces had a foothold on the Plateau and were seen as strong and powerful, the princes of the League, who had first resisted, and other *saohpa* submitted without further confrontation.

Sao Mawng had to wait for twelve years in the wings until Sao On's death until he was at last recognized by the British in 1897. Despite his earlier feelings towards the British, he did not bear them any resentment. For nearly thirty years Sao Mawng had ruled Yawngghwe with great skill, bringing prosperity and stability. The British were pleased. Recognizing his value, they allowed him to maintain the traditional signs of Tai royalty, including the right to nine white umbrellas. He also received a KSM (1901) and a KCIE (1908). Sao Mawng had a distinguished career and was granted a salute of nine guns in 1906.

In 1903 and in 1911, Sao Mawng attended two *darbar* in Delhi. When Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, later to become Their Majesties, King George V and Queen Mary, visited Burma, he was in attendance in Rangoon with his *mahadevi*. One can imagine how uncomfortable they would have been in the heat of Rangoon in their heavy shimmering ceremonial dress, all waiting in line patiently with the other *saohpa* and their consorts to be presented.

When the Burma Legislative Council was formed in 1909, Sao Mawng was appointed a member until 1922, when the Federation of the Shan States came into being. He then became a member of the Federal Council of Shan Chiefs, which gave him the right to express their views on federal affairs, including the budget, and on more general matters of concern to the new Federation. This council, headed by a British Commissioner as president, worked well, though there were problems.

For the first time in history the Northern and Southern Shan states were joined into a single body. Peace became a new experience for the *saohpa* and the British administrators worked hard to maintain unity within the Shan States.

Sir Sao Mawng had found a young British officer, Mr. FSV Donnison⁵⁰ of the Indian Civil Service (ICS), to be a pleasing, efficient person. Consequently, when he became ill, he requested that Donnison become Yawngghwe's administrator to help govern the state. The order issued appointing Donnison administrator with power of attorney, was written by Sir Sao Mawng (see Appendix 5). When Sao Mawng passed away, Donnison arranged the prince's funeral, which was attended by

⁵⁰ Frank Siegfried Vernon Donnison (1898-1993).

important guests such as the Governor and Chief Secretary. It was to take him nearly a year to sort out settling the *saohpa's* official and personal debts, and "selling for this purpose much of his jewelry - great rubies and diamonds, mostly uncounted" (Donnison 2005:130).

It was little wonder that Donnison found the State Treasury in such shambles. My granduncle was not the only *saohpa* to have misused funds. In those days, no one made a distinction between public funds and personal wealth. In truth, few princes had any knowledge of economics or finances and would not have recognized any wrongdoing in keeping funds that came into the state coffers. Some British officials criticized the few who were accused of such misdemeanors and, in general, did not think highly of the princes.

Since Donnison, much to his credit, spoke Burmese, there was a common language and he got on well with the Yawnghwe State ministers and other local officials to settle amicably what was needed (Donnison 2005:130).

After Sao Mawng's death in 1926, the British decided that his adopted son and the other princes who contested the throne lacked the necessary qualities to succeed Sao Mawng. Consequently, Sao Mawng's nephew, Sao Shwe Thaike, my father was chosen.

Very few visitors in modern times will know that Yawnghwe itself, the place from which they board their fish-tail motor boats to take off for Inle Lake, was at one time the busy capital of Mong Yawnghwe. What will also not be obvious is that to the northeast of the town stands a palace, The Haw, where the ruling prince and his family once lived.

This large, rambling building was built by Sir Sao Mawng in the style of the Mandalay Court. The multi-tiered *pyatthat*, the brightly decorated spire in red and gold, was copied from the Mandalay Palace. Other princes followed this architectural design for their palaces. The older *haw* was burned in 1909, but a new palace was built a few years later. What tourists visit today in the twenty-first century is this latest palace.

The *haw* is a two-story building with four large halls, one behind the other, forming the spine of the building. The front hall, known as the Royal Throne Audience Hall, goes across the whole width of the building. On either side of the inner halls behind the Throne Audience Hall are four wings or apartments. Two are on each side of the inner halls attached by wide terraces.

The two on the northern side were occupied by my brothers, who had the eastern or front wing. My father occupied the wing behind theirs. On the southern side, the eastern wing opposite to my brothers, was where my paternal grandmother lived with her youngest daughter. They occupied both two floors of that wing.

At that time before the war, Nang Nyunt Mae, who was my father's third wife and my third aunt (mother number three), occupied the wing behind. This southern wing was the women's domain and this is where I also lived.

Both my brothers' and my grandmother's wings could only be reached by crossing an open terrace from the Inner Audience Hall and from our wings, by the wide verandas.

Soon after the coup, the soldiers drove out the occupants of the palace and moved in themselves. It was a miracle that it survived the destruction of the Tatmadaw soldiers who occupied it for several years. The Cultural Department of the contemporary regime later turned the *haw* into the Museum of the Shan Chiefs. A few years later it was designated as a Buddhist Museum. In 2012, it was in the process of being returned to a secular museum, known as the Shan Cultural Museum.

The design and architecture apparently had been approved by King Mindon himself. The concerned Burman authorities supposedly realized the importance of Mindon's influence. They felt that destroying the *haw* would have undermined his wishes and authority, since the Burman greatly revered and respected King Mindon Min, who had ruled from 1853 to 1878.

It is commendable that the authorities are taking such care of this more than hundred-year

old building, since few *haw* remain. Some were burned or bombed during the Japanese occupation, while others were destroyed later. The Kengtung Haw, for instance was razed to the ground by the Tatmadaw. Today, a hotel stands in its place. The *haw* that were left standing were converted to monasteries, hospitals, or hotels.

Phaung Daw U Poy

The spectacular Phaung Daw U Festival is the most important festival of the year. It is held in Thadingyut, the seventh month of the Burman lunar calendar, which coincides with dates in late September-early October. This magnificent, much anticipated occasion is now internationally renowned, attracting visitors from all over the world.

The Phaung Daw U Buddha images that usually reside at their monastery in Namhu Village in Inle are carried in the Karaweik Phaung, a golden barge. From the time of Saohpa Sao Si Hseng Hpa in 1359 through twenty-nine successive reigns, it has been the custom to take the Buddha images from the resident monastery around the Inle villages before coming to the capital for three days.

The *karaweik*, a mythical bird, was decorated, as it is today with a multitude of colors. It is a stunning sight as it sits serenely on the clear blue waters, holding a red crystal ball in its beak. Some ten or twelve long dugout boats with hundreds of leg-rowers are made ready. The boats are strung together, stern to prow in a single line, and tow the golden barge. At one time, each of these racing boats supported as many as fifty or sixty leg-rowers. Standing in equal numbers on either side of the waist-high rail that runs down the middle of the boat, the men hold it with one hand, while balancing on one leg. The other leg is wrapped around a long oar. The rower pushes himself forward, dips the oar in the water, and makes swift strokes. They row in unison to the beat of the gong. The cox with a gong in hand is first seen at the head of the boat, then next on the rail, dancing and shouting encouragement to the men.

The participating villages can be distinguished by the flag flown by each boat, or by outfits of the same color worn by the men. Baggy Shan trousers, Chinese style jackets, and turbans are the usual dress. One or two boats of young novice monks in their saffron robes may join the long line of boats. Watching the long procession of racing boats towing the resplendent golden barge in glittering sunshine is an experience never to be forgotten.⁵¹

The Yawnghwe Valley runs north to south with Inle Lake stretching southwards to Samka State. Hills rising to 5,000 feet high along the eastern and western shores hem in the lake as it gradually becomes a river and the waters of the Nam Philu/Bilu Ogre, drain it as it winds its way through Samka. The river flows further south through Karenni/Kayah State and eventually joins the Salween River.

Long channels lead to villages in the interior of the lake. A tall bamboo pole topped with an old tin is the only sign indicating an entrance to a village. Once a channel has been cleared, a boat eventually emerges into an open space revealing a village that is often a cluster of houses seemingly suspended in mid-air.

Most of the villages are built completely in the water, so boats must be used for transportation. There was a daily market at Ywama, one of the larger villages. It was like the Floating Market outside Bangkok where vegetables, fruit, and wet and dried fish were piled into boats and bought by the *viss*, roughly equivalent to 1.63 kilograms. Fish and pork were weighed and strung together by skeins of bamboo.

⁵¹ A full description of the festival may be found in Chapter IV of *The Moon Princess*.

Nampan Village is built half on land and has a thriving five-day bazaar. Tourists and villagers wander around the many stalls at leisure. Pa-O villagers from the hills, often dressed in black costumes with colorful turbans, and others come, as do the Tai Shan who live in and around the lake. The Intha, the lake dwellers, can be seen in their dugout boats standing at the stern on one leg, and using the other to paddle the boat with a long oar. This unique sight can only be seen on Inle Lake.

When the Japanese first arrived and the British retreated, we were fortunate to be able to take refuge in the villages on Inle Lake. Times were difficult for everyone. Japanese officers lived in our Yawnghwe Haw and suspected my father of being a spy because he had been a colonel in the British Army, and two of his sons were being educated in the United Kingdom.

By 1944, the British in India had managed to rebuild their forces, and as if to prove this, nearly every night the RAF launched bombing raids causing us to run for cover in our trenches.

The Japanese occupation was a difficult time for all of us in the Shan States. Once again when the Japanese retreated and the British returned, we sought refuge in Inle villages. During the Japanese occupation, Inle Lake provided a haven where we were safer than other *saohpa* families, many of whom fled for their lives when the Japanese lost the war and their armies were retreating. A few princes and their families were rescued by the timely arrival of the US 101st Airborne Division.

Unlike the princes in the interior of Shan States, we were lucky to have a place like the Inle to go to without the terrifying experience of Japanese soldiers pursuing us through the jungles in the middle of the night. Nevertheless, the festive spirit we experienced when we had all stayed at Ywama Village three years earlier had gone. Falling bombs and news of the retreat of the Japanese forces frightened us all. We waited anxiously for the fighting to be over and for the Allied troops to arrive.

Inle Needs Saving

At present, Inle/Inlay Lake faces ecological and environmental problems. The water is gradually being depleted due to reasons overlooked by the authorities and the lake dwellers themselves. Tourism, overcrowding, failure to clear silt and weeds in the lake, excessive market gardening that requires chemicals to grow and produce vegetables, and the building of more floating gardens and houses to meet the growing population have all contributed.

Climate change has added to the present conditions. The careless cutting down of forests for timber along the lake shores has resulted in less rainfall, causing the normal flow of mountain streams to decrease. The random felling of trees and burning of jungle tracts to grow bio-fuel plantations has also contributed to global warming. Unless proper feasibility studies are undertaken and, instead of pandering to greed, responsible planning and development take place, there is little hope of saving Inle.

Another unprincipled enterprise causing ecological alarm is the coal mine in Tigyit, which lies southwest of Inle, behind Indein. The open cast and underground tunneling have created poisonous clouds and environmental hazards for Inle and its surroundings. Water flowing from these works into Philu Creek contaminates Inle water.

Fortunately, the fertile valley of the Yawnghwe region, focused mainly on agriculture, provides much food. Rice is the main crop. Other crops include wheat, sugar cane plantations around Inle Lake, and many acres of pineapples, betel vine, and coconut palms. It seems possible for more market gardening to be done elsewhere to lessen dependence on the floating gardens of Inle to provide vegetables.

I earlier wrote:

A recent map of the Inlay shows that the expanse of the waters is already smaller than it used to be fifty

years ago. Therefore, there may be a real possibility of the lake disappearing within the next few decades. It would be sad to think of Inle no longer being the shimmering lake we used to know. There is also the real danger of it ceasing to be a tourist attraction and a place of refuge in time of need (Simms 2008:150).

The Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) has given Inle the status of a Heritage Park, heightening its importance. Preservation of Inle Lake with its unique conditions needs to be high priority. It is important to take serious note of what is being said by ecologists and warnings from environmentalists. Growing tomatoes to supply most of the country brings riches, but at what price? The Intha suffer from toxic chemicals and shrinking clean water supplies. Unless something is done to solve these problems, Inle Lake could be desperately short of water in the next decade or so.

YAWNGHWE FAMILY TREE⁵²

Sao Hse U Saohpa (r. 1815-1818) (r. 1821-1852)

Sao Hsu Dewa m. Sao Nang Khin

I1Sao Mawng adopted by Mindon Min ruled twice (1) (r. 1864-1885) (2) (r. 1897-1926)
(grandson of Sao Hse U, Saohpa of Yawnghwe)

I2 Sao On (r. 1887-1897)

I3 Sao Chon Myosa of Indein

I4 Sao U

I5 Sao Kye

I6 Sao Mya Sit Myosa of Hsikip

I7 Sao Chok

I3 Sao Chon, Myosa of Indein

I3Wife1 Nang Hse

II1 Sao Nang Mya Hnit

II2 Sao Nang Mya Yu

II3 Sao Shwe Ok

II4 Sao Mya Thin

I3Wife2 Nang Sa/Nang Ngein

II1 Sao Nang Mya Nyunt m. Sao Maung San A.T.M, Indein Myosa

III1 Sao Nang Ke Hseng

III2 Sao Hseng Ywet (d. 1990) m. May May Thaung

IV1 Peggy Ywet

IV2 Maggy Ywet

IV3 Daphne Ywet

III3 Sao Hseng Hti (d. 2011) m. Ma Khin Nyunt

IV1 Sao Maung Oo

IV2 Sao Hseng Sum

IV3 Sao Theingi

II2 Sao Shwe Thaike Saohpa of Yawnghwe (1896-1962; r. 1927-1959)

⁵² Sources: Yawnghwe family members, Yawnghwe annals, and SSK (1943).

(see below shown separately for descendants)

- II3 Sao Shwe Tin Heho Myosa m. Nang Mya Yi
 - III1 Sao Ohn Kyu (1923-1989) m. U Htun Myint Gale (1921-1997)
 - IV1 Sai Aung Thurein m. Khin Swe Win
 - IV2 Sai Zeya Aung/Ngao Hse Leng (1952-1972)
 - IV3 Nang Sabai Myint Kyu m Tin Kyi Hlaing
 - III2 Sao Kham Le m. U Mya Maung
 - IV1 Myat Phone Shein m. Nang Aye May/Nang Moe Aye
 - IV2 Aung Ngwe Zaw m. Ma Win Kyi
 - IV3 Nilar Mya Naung m. Captain Maung Maung
 - IV4 Myat Phone Lwin
 - IV5 Theingi Mya Naung
 - III3 Sao Kham San
 - III4 Sao Naw Hla/Naung Khar m. U Soe Myint
 - IV1 Arkar Myint Naw m. Phu Phu Thein
 - IV2 Walar Myint Naw
 - IV3 Tayzar Myint Naw
 - IV4 Kaythar Myint Naw m. Nang Khin San Aye
 - III4 Sao Naw Hla remarried U Khun Kyaw
 - IV1 Sai Paing Paing Kyaw m Sunlut Roi Din
 - IV2 Sao Nge Khaing m, Sai Nyan Lin
 - IV3 Sai Aung Aung Kyaw m. Khin Myo Han
 - III5 Sao Mya Wadi m. U Aung Lin
 - IV1 Naing Naing Aung m. Maung Maung Aung
 - IV2 Nanda Aung m. Naw Nwe Hnin
 - IV3 Nwe Nwe Aung m. Nyi Nyi Lwin
 - IV4 Sai Wathone Aung
 - IV5 Nyi Nyi Aung m. Nang Myint Myint Aye
 - III6 Sao Mo Kham m. U Tin Aung Win
 - IV1 Sai Aung Naing Oo
 - III7 Sao Thiha Tint m. Daw Khin Win Kyi
 - IV1 Sai Naymin Aung Swar m. San San Win
 - IV2 Sai Nayhtet Aung Swar m. Myat Myat San
 - IV3 Sai Nayhtet Kyaw Swar m. Lin Lin Htet
 - IV4 Sai Minye Aung Swar m. Naw Kalya Win
 - IV5 Nang Seesar Win m. Hkun Hlaing Myo Kyaw

II4 Sao Myat Htu

II4Wife1 Ma Nu

II4Wife2 Nang Mya May

III1 Sao Sai Long

III2 Nang Mo Hein

II5 Sao Nang Mya Sit m. Sao Sein Hpoo

III1 Sao Hkam Sein

III2 Sao Hkam Man

III3 Sao Hkam Yo

III4 Sao Hkam Htam

III5 Sao Hkam Mong

III6 Sao Hkam Kyan

II2 Sao Shwe Thaike, Sao hpa of Yawng hwe (1896-1962; r. 1927-1959)

II2Wife1 Sao Nang Yi, Mahadevi of Yawng hwe from 1927-1936

III1 Sao Hseng Hpa, Yawng hwe Kyem mong (1923 -1999) m. Sao Shwe Ohn (b. 1928) Hsenwi Family

IV1 Sao Hseng Zanda Siri

IV2 Khin Than Nu (adopted)

III2 Sao Hseng Ong (1925 -2012) m. Sao Hom Noan Lawksawk Family

IV1 Sao Sarm Pao/Mone/Feraya m. Dave Roberts,

V1 Alexander Roberts

remarried David Paul Ullathorne

III2 Sao Sai Pyee/Victor (b. 1953)

III3 Sao Sun Hom/Carol (b.1956) m. Ian Hornsey

IV1 Andrew Hornsey

II2Wife2 Sao Nang Sanda (d.1932?)

III1 Sao Nang Mya Sanda (b. 1928) m. Peter FJ Simms (1925-2002)

II2Wife3 Nang Nyunt May (1917-1999) (No issue)

II2Wife4 Sao Hearn Hkam (1915-2003) Mahadevi (1937-1959) Hsenwi Family

III1 Sao Hso Hkan Hpa/Hso/Tiger (1938-2016) m. Rosemary Otte (divorced)

IV1 Rebecca Otte Robins (adopted) m. Arron Black

V1 Elizabeth Rosemary Black

V2 Violet Eleanor Black

V3 William Gordon Black (b. 2015)

IV2 Hso-Shwe-Thaike/Alastair Simon (b. 1977) m. Kimberley Anderson

V1 Oliver Hso-wan-zeun (b. 2010)

V2 Birch Hso-dewa/Frederick (b. 2013)

IV3 Ying Seng-Kham/Jessica (b. 1979) m. David Wilkinson

V1 Juniper/Juno (b. 2012)

IV4 Hso-Kham-Serk/Benjamin (b. 1981) m. Mallory Anderson

V1 Kamryn Ying Aeng-kham (b. 2008)

V2 Ella Hseng Kham (b.2017)

III2 Sao Hso Lern Hpa/Tzang/Eugene (1939-2004) m. Nang Nu Myint (b. 1942)

IV1 Huung Hpa/Sawangwongse (b. 1971) m. Kris Berendsen (b.1988)

V1 Indira (b. 2014)

IV2 Onjana (b. 1977) m. Shan Plante

III3 Sao Ying Sita (b. 1942)

III4 Sao Hso Hom Hpa/Myee Myee (1945-1962)

III5 Sao Hso Harn Hpa/Harn (b. 1948) m. Helen Willis

IV1 Shannon Keharn (b. 1982)

IV2 Samara Saimetta (b. 1985)

III6 Sao Ratana Hseng Leun (b. 1949) m. Rene Meissl

III7 Nang Htila (adopted)

II2Wife5 Nang Mya Win (1919-2014)

III1 Sao Nang Haymar (b. 1943)

III2 Sao Hseng Wan (1945-1984) m. Sao Than Kyi (b. 1945) Samka Family

- IV1 Sao Lao Wan/Ying (b. 1970) m. Dr Aung Than Sein
 V1 Thar Thar
 IV2 Dr Sao Lern Wan (b. 1972)
 IV3 Sao Hom Wan (b. 1975) m. Captain Tayzar Aung
 V1 Moon Siri (b.2000)
 V2 Lynn Siri (b. 2010)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Sir Sao Mawng, Saohpa of Yawngghwe (1897-1926) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



Sir Sao Mawng and Sao Nang Ya. Mahadevi (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



Sao Chon father of Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa of Yawnghwe (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Mother of Sao Shwe Thaike, Yawnghwe Saohpa (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Shwe Thaike Yawnghwe Saohpa and Mahadevi with son (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sir Sao Mawng and Mahadevi receive guests, with other family members and retinue (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Sao Shwe Thaike's mother with sons and daughters minus Sao Shwe Thaike. Back row: Sao Kher Hsen, Sao Mya Htoo, Sao Maung San, and Sao Shwe Tint. Front row: (sitting) Ah Nu, Sao Mya Nyunt, Nang Sa/Sao Ngein (mother), Sao Mya Sit, Nang Mya Yee, and (girl) Sao Ohn Kyu (1920s; Yawnghwe Family Private collection).



Yawnghwe Saohpa and Mahadevi with Family members, state officials, and courtiers (1930s; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Sao Shwe Tint with wife Nang Mya Yee, and daughter Sao Ohn Kyu (1920s; Dr Sabai Myint Kyu).



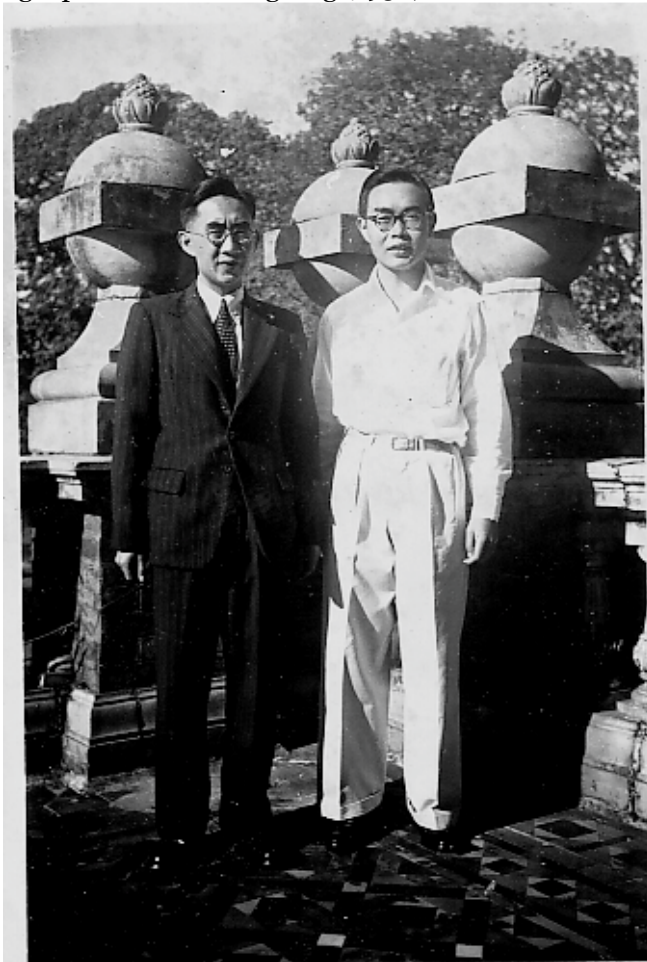
Wedding of Sao Hseng Hpa, Yawnghwe Kyemmong, and Sao Shwe Ohn Hsenwi Family (1950s; Yawnghwe Family Private collection).



Nang Nyunt May (1930s; Arthur and Huk Private Collection).



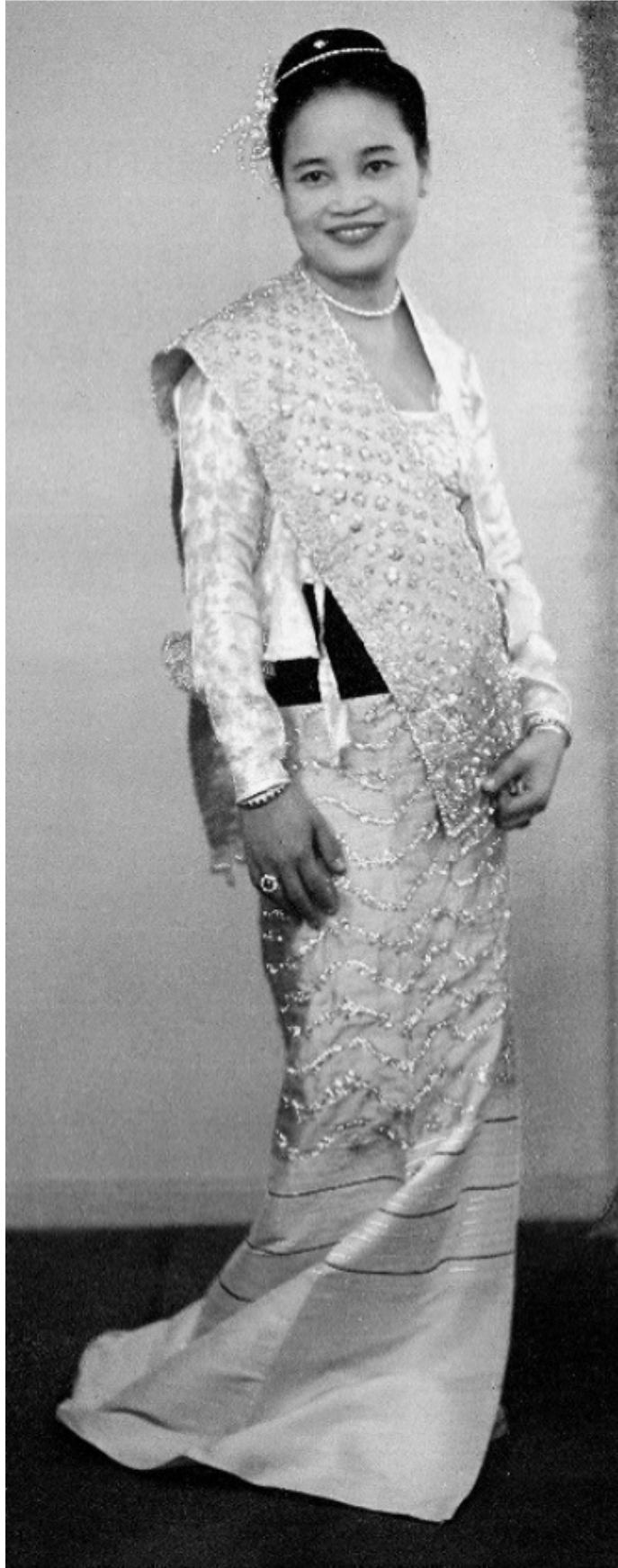
Two brothers, Sao Hseng Hpa and Sao Hseng Ong (1936; Arthur and Huk Private Collection).



The ordination of Sao Hso Hom Hpa/Myee Myee and Sao Hseng Wan/Papu (1955; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Yawnghwe Mahadevi, Sao Hearn Kham (1947; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



As President of the Union of Burma, Sao Shwe Thaik visits Taunggyi (1950; Arthur and Huk Private Collection).



Yawnghwe Saohpa and Mahadevi with Yawnghwe State officials and staff. Sitting front: the two sons Sao Hseng Hpa and Sao Hseng Ong (1930; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



စင်ရွှေသိုက်(ညောင်ရွှေစော်ဘွား)မဟာဒေ
ဝိသခင်မနှင့် မှူးမတ်နယ်စားများ။

Yawnghwe Family group taken in Rangoon. Front row: Haymar, Leun and Harn. Middle row L-R Nang Mya Win, Sao Sanda, Htila, Sao Shwe Thaike, Sao Hearn Hkam, and Ying. Back row: Peter and Tzang (1959; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Siblings in Vancouver: Tzang, Leun, Hso, and Harn (2001; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Sao Hseng Ong departs for England (1936; Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



Sao Haymar and mother, Nang Mya Win (2010; Mark Verfaille).



The old Hawnan that burnt down in 1909 (Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



This photo of the Yawnghwe Haw was taken in the 1960s. After the 1962 coup, it was taken over by the military and transformed into a museum. In 2016, it remains the Shan Cultural Museum (Yawnghwe Family Private Collection).



မြို့တော်အိမ်ရာ၊ ဟော်လန်လူမျိုးတို့က ဆောက်လုပ်ခဲ့သည်။ Palace of Mong Yawng Hwe

MONG PAWN STATE

An Able Statesman

The people of the Shan States were stunned when they heard of the death of Sao Sam Htun (1907-1947; r. 1929-1947), Saohpa Long of Mong Pawn. A cabinet member of the interim government, he was assassinated in July 1947 while only forty years old, together with General Aung San at the Government Secretariat. Sao Sam Htun had been one of the three founding members of the Supreme Council of United Hills Peoples (SCOUHP) in 1946 when the first Panglong conference was held to establish contact with all the *saohpa*, the Kachin, and Chin leaders.

As founding member of SCHOUP, Sao Sam Htun was greatly respected by other princes. It was generally appreciated that it would be difficult to find a young, enlightened prince full of ideas, to fill his place. A quiet unassuming man, Sao Sam Htun was hard working and is remembered mainly for his simplicity, kindness, and friendliness to his people (Simms 2008:121-122).

At the Panglong Conference in February 1947, Sao Sam Htun had been elected Councilor for the Frontier Areas and therefore became a member of the interim cabinet. Known for his serious study of government and current affairs Sao Sam Htun had been chosen as the best candidate to play a role in the modern politics of an independent Burma. Although younger than my father, they got on well and saw eye-to-eye on several points concerning what should be done for their Shan people. Sao Sam Htun would also have been able to help promote progress for all the Frontier Areas people for he had a reputation.

Mi Mi Khaing describes Sao Sam Htun:

For he had a reputation as a hardworking and studious man, his close touch with all Frontier problems" and his easy and affectionate disposition towards all. The jubilation with which he and his friends greeted the appointment at last giving him an opportunity to use his talents can be imagined, so how just more their greatest sorrow at his untimely end.(Khaing 1950:37)

His son, Sao Hso Hom recounted that his father had been shot through the mouth but, as was typical of him, his thoughts were for others. He accordingly told the doctors to attend first to those who were in worse condition than himself. By the time he received medical attention, he was beyond care. He might have survived had there been enough medical staff to immediately attend to all the wounded. As it was, Sao Sam Htun died the following day. With his untimely death, dreams of a better, brighter future for the Tai Shan and the Shan State disappeared.

The Mong Pawn Dynasty

Mong Pawn lay in a long north to south narrow valley and was not a large state. Together with a group of smaller states, it had at one time been under the jurisdiction of Yawnghwe, although a part of the territory was also under Mong Nai with the Nam Pawn River forming the boundary.

In 1816, Mong Pawn became a separate state with Myosa Hkun Hseng in charge, however, it reverted to Mong Nai on the order of one of the minor queens at the Court of Mandalay, who was a daughter of Mong Nai Saohpa.

An Administrator was then appointed to look after Mong Pawn State until 1825 when Hkun Lek, a nephew of Hkun Hseng, reached his majority and became Myosa. He ruled until 1850. After his death, two administrators who took charge began quarrelling. Consequently, a third Administrator, Hkun Hpu, the Myosa of Nawngmawn, took charge.

Until 1882, Hkun Hti (1849-1923), the son of Hkun Lek, continued to administer his state under Mong Nai. However, when the Mong Nai prince massacred the Burman garrison stationed in his capital, the king's swift reprisal sent Saohpa Sao Naw Hpa fleeing to Kengtung. Seizing his chance, Hkun Hti then went to Mandalay and petitioned the king. Mong Pawn became independent again with the raised status of *saohpa*.

Hkun Hti was one of the leaders of the Limbin Confederacy. Said to have been a man of strong personality, a good leader, and an excellent battle strategist, he finally got rid of Twet Nga Lu, the impostor, who was a defrocked Buddhist monk and a Burman appointee ruling Mong Nai. By 1887, Hkun Hti had submitted to British supremacy, and his *saohpa* status was accepted. An energetic, enlightened ruler, he built roads and improved communications, including building a new Haw.

After Sao Hkun Hti's death in 1923, Sao Sam Htun (1907-1947) his third son, was recognized as *saohpa*, although his appointment was only confirmed in 1929 after finishing his schooling at the Shan Chiefs' School and undergoing further training in administration. Four years later he married Sao Khin Thaung, also known as Thiri Sandana of Mong Mit State. His *mahadevi* was the sister of Sao Hkun Hkio, the Saohpa of Mong Mit. They had five children. Sao Khin Thaung was energetic and very well liked. She complimented her husband in his wide-ranging work. With her convent education and excellent English, she ably entertained the British officials and families they had to deal with. Collis met her and the prince and said of them: "Mong Pawn, handsome, teetotaler, prudent about his money, his consort Thiri Sandana, for he disapproved of the old plurality in wives; and the Mahadevi, such a personage, warm-hearted, practical and anxious to learn" (Collis 1938:319).

In 1931, two years after Sao Sam Htun became *saohpa* the adjacent two smaller states of Nawngmwan and Namhkok were incorporated into Mong Pawn State. An official document reported that this action was taken due to "the *Myosas* of those two States having been removed from their chiefship for mal-administration of their States and the Sawbwa of Mong Pawn was recognized as Chief of these two States" (Shan States 1943:26).

As a young, upcoming *saohpa*, Sao Sam Htun showed promise of becoming a remarkable ruler. He did not attend Cambridge as his brother-in-law had, but he had an instinct for what was needed for the Shan States. In Mong Pawn, he had been a well-liked ruler. His subjects found him unpretentious, approachable, and always ready to listen to their problems. His people looked up to and depended on him. He took an equally deep interest in their affairs.

An often-retold story tells that one evening before the Japanese occupation, the prince had been walking on the outskirts of Mong Pawn dressed casually in a pair of old, baggy Shan trousers and an open-necked shirt. A villager driving a bullock cart had got stuck in a deep, muddy pothole in the road. The villager hailed him and asked if *ai sai* 'young brother' would help push the cart out of the mud. The prince happily helped and they managed to push the cart onto the hardened surface of the road. After acknowledging the help given, the villager drove off into town.

A few days later, the same villager had to go to the state administrative offices on business. Imagine his surprise when, on kneeling to let the approaching *saohpa* pass, he recognized him as his helper. He threw himself on the ground asking for pardon, which was granted willingly as the prince had enjoyed his little incognito adventure and was pleased to be magnanimous.

Sao Sam Htun's assassination along with that of General Aung San in July 1947 left a vacuum. As can be imagined, he was a great loss to the Shan States.

At that time the population of Mong Pawn was composed of Tai Shan and Taungthu/Pa-O who were mainly cultivators, with pockets of other, diverse communities. They cultivated rice with cotton and *thanapet* in the valley for their livelihood. Farming was among Sao Sam Htun's many

interests. He was keen and interested in introducing new varieties of fruit, especially temperate varieties such as grapefruit, olives, and avocado grown in Mediterranean countries. He was a supporter of the many agricultural projects that had been set up for the rural people, such as the experimental station in Taunggyi and the Wanyin scheme. The people were encouraged to become more experimental in their fields and to try out new varieties of fruit and vegetables. Growing these enabled them to earn extra income.

During the occupation, the Japanese did not bother Sao Sam Htun and his family. They were left pretty much to themselves. Later, when the prince realized that the war was not going well for the Japanese, he made plans for their escape. They finally fled Mong Pawn on foot to a village in Laikha State where, as expected, Japanese soldiers pursued them. Fortunately, the US 101st Airborne Division had been in touch with them earlier, and arriving at the forward camp, they met the Lawksawk family.

The Mong Pawn and Lawksawk families were flown to Lashio in a small spotter aircraft where they were transferred to a Dakota aircraft normally used for carrying parachutists. Though not that comfortable, it was a relief for both families to be flying to safety. Upon arrival at Bhamo, they met other *saohpa* families, who were being looked after by the Americans. When peace was restored, the Mong Pawn family took their time returning to their capital. Beforehand, at the invitation of the *saohpa*, they visited both Hsenwi and Tawngpeng where they stayed for three and two months respectively.

The Kyemmong

Sao Hso Hom, the eldest son of Sao Sam Htun was named heir to the throne of Mong Pawn. He was born in 1935 and was only twelve years old when his father was assassinated. Consequently, until the Shan State Government came into being, Mong Pawn was administered by his father's elder brother. Sao Hso Hom became Saohpa of Mong Pawn in 1952, when he was twenty-two years old.

Sao Hso Hom's mother's death in 1945 was followed by her well-attended funeral. Being so soon after the war, it was a time of uncertainty and insecurity, leaving the princes in a vacuum. When all the *saohpa* met at the funeral of the Mong Pawn Mahadevi they began discussing their circumstances and doubts about the prospect of the Shan States. It was then that the idea of having a Panglong conference to stimulate plans took shape. The 1946 conference was subsequently organized by three Saohpa - Yawnghwe, Mong Pawn, and Hsahtung.

In an interview in 2010,⁵³ Sao Hso Hom talked about his family and the time during the Japanese occupation. He confided that he had received special attention from the state administration as he was the heir and was thus accorded particular care. He even had an individual bunker to himself when the British came on bombing raids. His father was training him to become a prince of the state. This was admirable, since many young princes had never received proper training about how to behave. Instead, they had only ideas of grandeur and usually fell into disgrace, disappointing those who had looked up to them.

Sao Hso Hom related how in 1947 after his father's assassination, he had been taken to Jubilee Hall in Rangoon to view his father lying in State and to pay respects. It must have been a harrowing experience for a young boy. His father's body was eventually taken back to Mong Pawn for a royal cremation. His ashes now lie in a royal tomb in Mong Pawn and in the Martyrs' Mausoleum in Rangoon.

The Mong Pawn children were left without parents and homeless. However, their maternal

⁵³ From an interview with Phil Thornton in Australia, arranged by SHAN, 12 October 2010.

uncle, the Saohpa of Mong Mit, Sao Hkun Hkio, who was then deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in U Nu's AFPFL Government, took care of them. The young Sao Hso Hom was taken under his wing.

Sao Hso Hom's first school was St. Agnes' Convent in Kalaw. He went on to Kambawza College (the former Shan Chiefs School) in Taunggyi. By 1952, he was ready to leave Kambawza and attend Rangoon University. In 1957, ten years after his father's demise, he obtained his degree and was installed as the Saohpa of Mong Pawn.

However, by 1959 Sao Hso Hom, together with other princes, abdicated their feudal powers as *saohpa*. In 1960 while only twenty-five years old, he was elected Member of Parliament representing Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities/the Upper House. Simultaneously, he was a Member of the Shan State Legislative Council, which met in Taunggyi.

In 1960 he was fortunate enough to have been one of the delegates for the Shan State attending the United Nations Assembly in New York at the time that Fidel Castro addressed the Assembly for six hours.

Over the next two years Sao Hso Hom was deeply involved in Shan State affairs. At that time his uncle, Sao Hkun Hkio, was the Head of Shan State and Sao Hso Hom's brother, Sao Kai Hpa, served as his Private Assistant (PA). At the All States Conference in 1961 at Taunggyi, Sao Hso Hom became a member of the Constitutional Reform Committee.

Unfortunately, the proposals by the ethnic nationalities, known as the Federal Movement or Federal Proposal, were met unfavorably by the Union Government and the Tatmadaw. On 2 March 1962, General Ne Win seized power, throwing out the Constitution and the legally elected government of U Nu.

Sao Hso Hom and other princes were then detained. Sao Hso Hom spent five years in the infamous jail of Insein. Upon his release, he was forced to sign a statement stating that he would not engage in politics, nor write anything detrimental about the regime. Like other detainees, he was not allowed to return to his Mong Pawn State.

Despite efforts to obtain a job, it was a good many years before he obtained a decent post with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). After six years with UNDP, he was allowed by the military government to serve in New York. Two years later, he was fortunate enough to be posted to Fiji where he served for five years. After retiring in 1991, Sao Hso Hom and his family relocated to Australia.

His wife, Sao Khemawadee Mangrai, the daughter of Sao Hkun Mong of Kengtung and Sao Ohn Nyunt of Hsipaw, recently wrote her memoirs, *Burma My Mother: And Why I Had to Leave* (2014). Her mother was made famous by Sir Gerald Kelly's (1879-1972) exquisite painting. In this memoir, Bidy, as she was known at school, recalls her childhood in Hsipaw and Kengtung, her years in Rangoon, and the weary days waiting for her husband, Sao Hso Hom, to be released from detention, and their eventual migration to Australia, where they live presently with their children, under happier circumstances.

MONG PAWN FAMILY TREE⁵⁴

Hkun Hseng, Myosa 1816

I Hkun Lek, nephew of Hkun Hseng ruled until 1850

II Hkun Htee, son of Hkun Lek submitted to British 1887

Saohpa (1849-1923; r. 1887-1923) KSM

IIWife1 Sao Nang Hla, Mahadevi

IIWife2 Sao Nang Oo

IIWife3 Sao Nang Kham

III1 Sao Shwe Pwint

IIWife4 Sao Nang Sein Oo

III1 Sao Mya Tin

III2 Sao Sam Htun, Saohpa of Mong Pawn

IIWife5 Sao Nang Pu

III1 Sao Sam Nyunt, Kyemmong

III2 Sao Htun Ok

III3 Sao Chuuk

III4 Sao Htun Paing

III5 Sao Hkun Yin

IIWife6 Sao Nang Tin

III1 Sao San

IIWife7 Sao Nang Phong

III1 Sao Myat Kyaw

III2 Sao Chit Kyu

III2 Sao Sam Htun (1907-1047; r. 1929-1947) Saohpa of Mong Pawn assassinated in Rangoon with General Aung San in July 1947

m. Sao Khin Thaung, Mong Mit Family; Mahadevi of Mong Pawn (1929-1943)

IV1 Sao Nanda/Peggy

IV2 Sao Hso Hom Saohpa (r. 1948-1959)

m. Sao Khemawadee, Kengtung Family

V1 Sao Seng Sirikit/Seng Awn/Mee Gee

V2 Sao Orawan/Ouie/Mee Lay

V3 Sao Maniratana/Ying Awn/Ma Ma Gyi

V4 Sao Ohn Art/Sai Awn/Thar Gyi

IV3 Sao Kai Hpa

IV4 Sao Ohn Nyunt

IV5 Sao Myint Kyi

IV6 Sao Thar Htay (half-brother)

IV7 Sao Thaung Tin/Kenneth (half-brother)

⁵⁴ Sources: Sao Hso Hom and Sao Khemawadee of the Mong Pawn Family and SSK (1943).

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Hti (1854-1923; r. 1887-1923) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



At the Delhi Durbar (seated) are Mong Pawn Saohpa Sao Hkun Hti with his Mahadevi Sao Nang Hla. Standing between them is Kyemmong Sao San Nyunt, their son (1903; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



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 မိုင်းပိုင်မင်းသားကြီး၊ ခေင်တွင်ထီးနှင့် မဟာခေင်ပြီခေင်သည်။
 မဟာခေင်၊ ခေင်ရဲမင်း၊ ခေင်မင်းထွန်း၊ ခေင်တွင်ကြီး၊ ကျွမ်း၊ ခေင်မင်း
 အာဇာနည်၊ ခေင်ရဲမင်း၊ သီးတော်မိုး၊ ဦးပေ

Saohpa Sao Hkun Hti in his carriage (1900s; Mong Pawn Family Private Collection).



Saohpa of Mong Pawn, Sao Sam Htun (r. 1929-1947) and Mahadevi Sao Khin Thaung with children and her brother, Mong Mit Kyemmong Sao Hkun Hkio (1930s; Mong Pawn Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Sam Htun and Mahadevi with their five children (1940s; Mong Pawn Family Private Collection).



Wedding day of Sao Hso Hom, Mong Pawn Kyemmong to Sao Khemawaddi Kengtung Princess (1959; Mong Pawn Family Private Collection).



Sao Hso Hom, Mong Pawn Saohpa (r. 1957-1959) (2014; Shan Herald News Agency).



On the left is Sao Ying Nanda, a great-granddaughter of Sao Sam Htun, with her family in Taunggyi. On her left are her brother, Sao Sai Nanda, and their parents Sai Hla Maung and Sao Nanda (2012; Mong Pawn Family Private Collection).



Mong Pawn Haw before World War II (Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



HTAHTUNG STATE

Remarkable Prince

My father befriended Sao Hkun Kyi (1901-1947; r. 1930-1947), the Myosa of Hsahtung. He came from a Pa-O lineage, and was half Pa-O and half Tai Shan. That some of the ruling princes were 'mixed' was inconsequential, since many considered themselves Tai Shan in a broad sense. Sao Hkun Kyi was forward thinking and a nationalist who cared for his people. Despite their age differences, my father and he had much in common, and sought ways and means of developing the Shan Plateau. Sao Hkun Kyi spoke frankly about changes that had already come and changes that had to be made in the Shan States.

Sao Hkun Kyi's ancestors migrated from Thaton in Lower Burma around 1057 when the Burman king, Anawrahta of Pagan (1044-1077), conquered the Mon kingdom of Thaton and the population of Thaton was displaced. It is believed that a Pa-O group led by the nephew of the Thaton King had migrated northward and settled in an area east of the Tabet Chaung River. The Pa-O people gave their leader the title Hkun San Oo 'the first king'.

The migrant population increased over the years and many of the Pa-O spread themselves into other areas. However, the main territory where the Pa-O congregated was in the Hsahtung area. During the time of the Burman King, Bodawphaya (1782-1819), by Royal Order the territory was given the name of Small Thaton in Burmese as opposed to the Greater Thaton in Lower Burma. It later became known as Hsahtung in Shan.

On the death of the then ruler, his eldest son, U Myat Aung, succeeded and was subsequently followed by other descendants until in 1839, his grandson, U Naing, was installed as Myosa of Hsahtung by Shwebo Min. U Naing was to be the last of the original lineage. It was during his reign that taxes were gathered for the first time to be paid to the Bamar king.

The founder of the present House of Hsahtung was Hkun Kyaw Law who became *myosa* in 1839. He made Loi Put his capital. He married Daw Nang Zon and had three sons: Hkun Law, Hkun Sein, and Hkun Lwin.

In 1896, Hkun Law, who had married the niece of the Saohpa of Samka, succeeded his father. However, all was not well in the court of Hsahtung. An uncle who felt he had a greater right to the position than his nephew, had Hkun Law assassinated. The British authorities acted and the culprits paid heavy penalties.

Following this incident, the British appointed Hkun Hseng (b. 1879), Hkun Law's younger brother, as *myosa* in 1904. Hkun Hseng married his brother's widow, Daw Ma Ma Gyi. He served with credit in the British Indian army and was appointed Jemadar in the first Shan Company of the Southern Shan States Battalion. In 1910, he was decorated with the TDM. *Thuye gaung ngwee Daya Min*, the Silver Sword for Bravery (Burma) medal.

Hkun Hseng was followed by his eldest son, Hkun Kyi, who was born and recognized as heir in 1901. Educated first at the Shan Chiefs' School in Taunggyi and then at St Paul's Christian school in Rangoon Hkun Kyi next attended the Government Technical Institute in Insein, Rangoon and continued his education in Calcutta, India. His training as an engineer stood him in good stead when he joined the Taunggyi Municipality.

He became Myosa in 1930 and married Daw Aye Thant, a daughter of U Toe Lone, a wealthy Tai Shan merchant from Inle, who had established himself in Moulmein in Lower Burma. This shows how much interchange there was, even as early as the 1920s and 1930s, when someone from the Shan States could establish a business and become a prosperous businessman in Moulmein. Hkun Kyi and Daw Aye Thant had five children: Sao Mya Win, Sao Aung Myint, Sao Kyi Aye, Sao Thant Yi and Sao Kyi Win.

As an engineer, Sao Hkun Kyi was able to plan and develop the capital, Hsihseng, to his liking. He did a great deal for his people, often using funds from his mining and timber ventures instead of relying on state revenue from the taxes that he was entitled to. He was keen to help the farmers and built canals and dams where they were needed. Also, he was a great believer in education and encouraged children to attend classes in the schools he had built for them.

When the Karenni and the Loikaw highways were developed, it became unsafe for his family to remain in Hsihseng because of easy passage gained by dacoits and mischief makers. His family then moved up to Taunggyi where Sao Hkun Kyi built a business base that included a cinema and some shops. Unfortunately, heavy bombing of Taunggyi during the Japanese period entirely wiped out his properties.

Advocating Unity

In 1930 Sao Hkun Kyi was fortunate to serve as Secretary to the Federal Council of Shan Chiefs, presided over by a British Commissioner for the Shan States. The prince was thus in a favorable position to observe the comings and goings of his fellow-princes and to assess their relationships with the British administration. He became concerned as he studied the behavior of his own princely group and the way some of them conducted themselves. To him, they appeared to be unconcerned about their people or the Shan States; they were lackadaisical about their work and generally, only thought about themselves.

When the *saohpa* attended the 1931 Round Table Conference, Sao Hkun Kyi found an opportunity to write a report detailing suggestions on what future steps he felt the Shan States could take when Burma's eventual separation from India occurred. He presented the report to the delegates, hoping that it would help them in their negotiations. Sao Hkun Kyi believed the report was not fully appreciated and that was the reason why the four princes chosen to represent the Shan States, had come back empty handed. This speculation was true enough, as the British authorities never considered the Shan proposals.

In 1935, Sao Hkun Kyi wrote a booklet entitled *Shan Pyay Ahma Pone 'Shan States' Blunder'* that was privately circulated. In it, he stated that he was disappointed that so little was achieved for the Shan States at the conference. It seemed he was the first prince to write such a book questioning the inadequacy of action and lack of deep contemplation by the princes.

Sao Hkun Kyi queried, "Should the Shan States form a united state with Burma, or become independent?" putting forward the pros and cons of both options in his booklet. Overall, he favored sticking with Burma Proper explaining that:

The natural path of outlet for the Shan States is in the direction of Burma. Burma is the center of pilgrimages, economic cultural barter of exchange of the products of thought and intellect, and it naturally followed that contact between Shan and Burman was unfailingly close and constant whatever the state of the political barometer may be...

Complete separation from Burma and the status of an autonomous section of the British Empire is an utopian conception, pleasing to toy with, but impossible of realisation as a matter of practical politics. No country situated as ours is in the midst of a group of the states could possibly survive an isolated existence. We are a small sparsely populated country wedged in between Burma, Siam, China and French Indo China, and if the ideal of isolated self-government raises our enthusiasm, we must consider of stern military necessity. Independence connotes more than anything the ability to stand on our own feet not only from the point of view of numbers but more so from the economic point of view.

Although Sao Hkun Kyi advocated a union with Burma Proper, he maintained that Burman had to show respect for "other ethnic groups or nationalities - I mean, the Mon, Karen, Pa-O, Rakhine, Chin, Kachin etc. dwelling inside and outside the Burmese borders."

Continuing, Sao Hkun Kyi remarked, "A beginning can only be made when solidarity and unity are achieved. Between the two options that I had enumerated for the future of the Shan States, no matter which path we choose, solidarity and unity are a must - an indispensable condition. Sao Hkun Kyi despaired at:

The way the Shan Chiefs [sawbwas] are conducting themselves disgracefully, each doing his own thing, we would be worse than slaves. Some Chiefs have the perception like in the old days, like one trying to dominate another and hatching schemes to get the other party into trouble. But times are not as before, and the Shan Chiefs not knowing what the others stand for and what is involved, to work toward that freedom or independence, we need mutual thrust and unity, and realise how indispensable that condition is. Alas! Among the Shan Chiefs, there is no mutual trust. Like in old times, there is no mutual respect among them and if there is no justice in ruling and administering in their respective states *vis-à-vis* the common people, all these can create a general overall bad impression.

Sao Hkun Kyi was right to be worried and his forward thinking did somehow stir the princes to think a little, although some may have thought him too confrontational. He feared that being only a *myosa*, his proposals would not be noted by many of the *saoHPa*, but he had in my father an ally who appreciated Sao Hkun Kyi's ideas for the future of the Shan States. They were both far-sighted and although many of their dreams fell by the wayside, they worked hard together for their country's progress.

Typical of his down to earth attitude, Sao Hkun Kyi realized during the Japanese occupation that he had to work with the Japanese and show a willingness to co-operate with them to avoid misunderstanding and maltreatment of his people. Since it was impossible to buy new clothes or textiles during the occupation, he encouraged farmers to grow cotton to enable them to weave their

own cloth. Although he was kept busy helping his father-in-law with the family timber business at Loikaw in Karenni and at Moulmein, he was always concerned for the welfare of the people.

Eventually, when the Japanese troops began retreating, he managed to obtain weapons from the advancing British forces and, forming a resistance group that fought and ambushed the Japanese troops as they retreated.

Untimely Death

Sao Hkun Kyi with my father, Sao Shwe Thaike, and Sao Sam Htun, Mong Pawn Saohpa had been joint founders of the Supreme Council of United Hills Peoples, the organization through which the Panglong Agreement came about. However, Sao Hkun Kyi was too seriously ill to attend the Second Panglong Conference nor its signing. Instead it was U Phu, the Head Judge of Hsahtung, who became a signatory of the 1947 Panglong Agreement

Sao Hkun Kyi's untimely death in 1948 robbed the Shan States of one of its aspiring progressive princes and a leading statesman. It was a tragedy to have lost two outstanding princes, Sao Sam Htun and Sao Hkun Kyi, within the space of a year. As Sao Hkun Kyi's son was considered too young to succeed him immediately, U Phu was appointed administrator of Hsahtung State.

Hsahtung Saohpa's son, Sao Aung Myint told me, "My father believed everyone, whoever they were, had the right to be somebody in society." Sao Hkun Kyi was well liked and considered one of Shan State's leading politicians to whom many felt they could come for advice, including other *saohpa* and Shan politicians.

Indeed, Sao Hkun Kyi was known to be friendly and liberal minded and understood much of what the young Shan politicians, such as U Tin E and U Htun Myint, were saying about their own concept of socialism, independence, and progress. Regarding independence, they seemed to share the same outlook, but Sao Hkun Kyi seemed to have a larger perspective. He could foresee the dangers as well as the virtues of joining with Burma Proper.

Sao Hkun Kyi's proposal of having a Council of Commons, or a Shan States Peoples' Council, and not only a Council of the Saohpa, was not taken seriously during the time of the British. However, it was eventually realized when the Shan State Council was formed after independence. Membership was shared equally between the princes and the People's Representatives.

Sao Aung Myint, Sao Hkun Kyi's eldest son, was born in 1934. In 1940, the then British Governor of Burma recognized him as *kyemmong*. His education began at St Anne's Convent in Taunggyi. Following in his father's footsteps, he attended St Paul's School in Rangoon. When the war ended, he went on to Rangoon University and studied Mechanical Engineering and then to the USA to continue studies in Civil Engineering at Case Institute of Technology (now known as Case Western Reserve University) in Ohio. On 1 August 1957, he was appointed Saohpa of Hsahtung by the President of Burma. While Sao Aung Myint was overseas, U Phu, a long-time Chief Minister of Hsahtung, continued administer the state.

When Sao Aung Myint returned home, he worked first for the Shan State Government. He was later transferred to Burma to work on irrigation schemes and became a director in the Irrigation Department under the Agricultural Ministry. He was to be the last Saohpa of Hsahtung for in 1959, all the *saohpa* relinquished their powers to the new Shan State Government.

The Pa-O

There are varying theories regarding histories of the many Shan States and the history of Hsahtung is no different. Writers have speculated on how the Pa-O arrived on the Shan Plateau. In general,

many of the Pa-O, or Taungthu, as they were known earlier, meaning 'hill people' in Burmese, had migrated from Thaton in Lower Burma, which lies south of the Shan Plateau. Of Tibeto-Burman stock, they are related to the Karen/Kayin people, with whom they share a similar background.

When the Burman king, Anawrahta of Pagan (1044-1077), conquered the Mon kingdom of Thaton in Lower Burma in 1057 the population of Thaton was displaced. Many of the inhabitants fled to safety. Most of the Buddhist relics, including the *Tripitaka* 'Buddhist scriptures', were taken back to Pagan. The captive Mon King Manuha/Makuta, and his family were also taken to Pagan with their retinue.

The Pagan monarch treated his new subjects severely. He considered the Pa-O as slaves and forbade them to wear their colorful costumes. Instead, they were ordered to wear black. This may be why the Pa-O still dress in black.

The aftermath of the conquest of the Mon kingdom by the Burman monarch motivated groups of Pa-O to move north, as far away as possible from their previous home. As they made their way to the Shan Plateau, some stopped off in the Karenni Hills, while others settled on the uplands to the east of Yawnghwe, in Hsahtung, and further north towards Hopong. In fact, the Pa-O spread themselves widely over the Shan Plateau, but the majority decided to settle in Hsahtung.

In 1877, two small Shan *mong*, Tam Hpak and Lak Mong, were unable to pay tribute to the Court of Mandalay. The then ruler of Hsahtung being their neighbor, offered to pay the amount owed, thereby making the two *mong* his dependencies. The inhabitants of the newly acquired *mong* were Thai-Shan, but they automatically came under Hsahtung jurisdiction.

Hsahtung State is situated towards the southern end of Yawnghwe State with Mawkmai State to its east, Karenni State to the south, Samka State to its west, and Wanyin State to the north.

Since land along river valleys and plains was already occupied by Tai Shan cultivators, the Pa-O found when they arrived that they had to occupy the highlands where they practiced slash and burn methods of cultivation for their crops. The hill slopes were usually terraced for growing rice and other crops. Though there were hardships, they were healthier and more robust than the valley villagers, who were plagued by mosquitoes in swampy land and suffered from malaria.

Gradually, some Taungthus, as they were called in the old days, began settling down as farmers, growing various crops for both domestic use and commerce. The main cash crop is *thanapet*, since the soil and climate of the hills are ideal for cultivating *thanapet*. Many Pa-O farmers have come to depend on this production. *Thanapet* leaves are sent to Inle villages where small cheroot factories have sprung up. The cheroot fillings are usually chopped up tobacco stems and leaves, fragrant herbs, and sometimes a sprinkling of tamarind juice for added flavor. These are relatively mild and smoked by both young and old. Cheroots are made in varying sizes. The size of the cheroot may also be made to order and are sold at most bazaar stalls.

Presently there are nearly 600,000 Pa-O, who consider themselves the second largest ethnic group in the Shan State after the Tai Shan themselves.

Through the years, little has changed in remote villages. Many Pa-O are Buddhists and small pagodas, *wat*, or a monastery dominate their villages. Travelers can stay the night in the monastery *salop* 'rest-house'.⁵⁵ Houses in smaller villages are on stilts and built of bamboo with thatched roofs. Many houses are scattered over a cleared patch of ground, including a cluster of huts that serve as stalls for the village five-day bazaars.

In these villages, some Pa O women may still wear their traditional black clothes but, in recent times, a sarong or a T-shirt is common everyday clothing for the women. For men, the *pha-so* 'sarong' has replaced *baungbi* 'baggy Shan trousers'.

⁵⁵ *Zayat* is the common Burmese name.

Women dress up in costumes only when attending a festival or a social function, such as a wedding. In former days, the Pa-O women wore black, knee-length, shift-like dresses with a V-shaped neckline, both front and back. They also wore colorful leggings and heavy chunky silver jewelry, and sometimes turbans on their heads. They were attractive costumes.

Restlessness

From 1922 to 1942, during a period of twenty years of British rule, there was peace and relative prosperity in Burma Proper and in the Shan States, but the Pa-O and other hills people had not forgotten the harsh treatment they had suffered under the Burman monarchy and autocratic rulers on the Shan Plateau. In those days, most rebellions were attributed to them.

Previously most hill peoples, including the Pa-O, lived mainly in non-arable and hilly regions. Because of the remoteness of their villages, often away from the fertile valleys, they believed they had been driven into the hinterland. Subsequently, these villagers began to consider themselves badly treated by the princes and their officials. Villagers often refused to pay their taxes, formed groups, raided certain capitals, and sometimes managed to drive the ruler and its administration away. Much of this marauding stopped when the British arrived and the princes sought assistance from the British army.

Russ Christensen and Chū Nhak claim that "The Pa-O weren't the only group to suffer under the *sawbwa* of the Shan States. Nearly all other ethnic minorities, and even the Shan majority, had to endure the vagaries of the Shan rulers" (2006:16).

These two authors (2006:16) state that due to the overwhelming behavior of the Tai Shan, the Pa-O considered them "...the Pa-O's common enemy, the domineering Shan, and was therefore the focus for concerted Pa-O activities."

While this point is debatable, the way the Pa-O may have felt towards the "domineering" Shan and that they were being Shanized is understandable. This is the same feeling the Tai Shan have about the Bamar. In 1947 when the Shan, Kachin, and Chin willingly joined Burma Proper to help get rid of the British and to gain independence, they did not realize that the Burman wanted to be their masters and to dominate them. Just as the Tai Shan feel intimidated by the Burman for Burmanizing them, so those living with the Tai Shan probably feel that they are being Shanized.

In former days, it was recognized that in some ethnically mixed communities, there was a simmering hatred of those who ruled them. Rebellious activities continued into the Japanese occupation. The hill people claimed that the taxes the respective states collected from them were not being plowed back into their villages, but benefited only the ruler and his officials. Annual festivals where gambling was permitted was objected to because it led the villagers, who could ill afford it, to gamble, leaving them destitute. On top of that, opium poppies were increasingly grown on their hilltop village lands, encouraging addiction. The Pa-O's also complained that they were being exploited by the Shan, Chinese, and Indian businessmen who were becoming rich at their expense.

The more aggressive Pa-O claimed that without any form of control on these excesses, the villagers were being driven into the ground. They wanted better futures for themselves, socially and economically, and felt it was the princes's duty to lead them in that direction. During the period before and after the Japanese occupation, the AFPFL supported and primed a rising tide of young anti-feudalist politicians, making it a difficult time for rulers in the Shan States. Many had already forgotten the hard times that they and their families had suffered during the war, and the devastation of the Shan Plateau that needed several years to re-structure and re-build.

This was where Sao Hkun Kyi excelled. He commiserated with the villagers who came to see him and understood their desire to better their lives. He knew his people and understood their

humiliation at being treated in a subordinate manner by state officials in different departments of the administrative offices in Taunggyi. Such bureaucracy caused much friction for most non-Shan people including the Pa-O.

By the late 1940s, the Hsantung Prince was no longer able to stop the aggression and hostility the Pa-O felt towards the *saohpa* and the feudal system. The final agreement of Panglong in 1947 had not considered any of the Pa-O demands, nor were there any indications that their problems would be discussed. Such treatment incited the militant Pa-O to go their own way.

In 1947, a movement known as the Pa-O Lung Bu or Pa-O Solidarity (PLB or PS) emerged. The members of the Pa-O Lung Bu considered themselves separate, rather than a Karen sub-group, and renamed themselves the Pa-O people. They had never been happy being called Taungthu 'the hill peoples'. The party members had gone to see their ruler, Sao Hkun Kyi, to request help before he died that year. He had told them that there was little assistance he could give them and suggested that the best thing they could do was to seek support from Thaton U Hla Pe, the renowned Pa-O politician from the southern Pa-O community.

U Hla Pe, a well-known half Karen and half Pa-O politician, lived in Lower Burma and was close to the Karen leadership, having earlier joined them and fought for their cause. During the Japanese time, he had been a cabinet minister in Burma's "independent" government.

With approval from their prince, the PNO invited U Hla Pe to lead them. The PNO was reorganized and renamed the Union Pa-O National Organization (UPNO/UNPO). By this time, Thaton Hla Pe had become one of its leading figures. Under his tutelage, the earlier group had now been transformed into a strong organization and turned themselves into a sizeable insurgent force.

When the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) came sweeping through in 1949 and the early 1950s, militant Pa-O groups were ready to join the Karen cause. At the height of the rebellion, much of the Mye Lat, as well as a considerable area around the Inle Lake, was in their hands. They managed to collect taxes from villages that the Shan administration had never covered. But when KNDO forces happened by chance to encounter any of the princes' levies - often volunteer fighters recruited by the princes - the rebels fought them fiercely, making every effort to get rid of anyone linked to Shan officialdom within the KNDO controlled areas.

By the time the Pa-O groups joined the KNDO, it seemed that part of their antagonism towards feudalism was now being channeled against the Burman army, the Tatmadaw. Although they hated feudalism it seemed their fundamental fear was of the central Union government's control over them, through the Tatmadaw.

In 1956, U Nu's campaign "Arms for Democracy" led the Pa-O to end "their armed struggle." To achieve this, U Hla Pe and the Tatmadaw probably struck a secret agreement.

After the *saohpa* had relinquished their powers in 1959, the Pa-O's new focus was turned on the reckless behavior of the Tatmadaw towards them.

Then when the 1962 coup took place, as expected, U Hla Pe and other members of his organization were imprisoned. When their request for the release of their leaders failed, supporters of the Pa-O nationality movement took up arms again. In 1966, under new leadership, the organization became known as the Shan State Nationalities Liberation Organization (SSNLO) and began recruiting from other ethnic communities, including Tai Shan. This strategy reflecting the diversity of local peoples, gave them the ability to move around and operate in other ethnic areas of the Shan Plateau. By 1970, the SSNLO had become a powerful force in the southwest Shan State bringing together different ethnic dissident groups to fight the Tatmadaw

The Communist Party of Burma (CPB) noticed their strength and began working with them, hoping to gain control. This later caused the SSNLO to split, with one half allying with the CPB and its leader, Tha Kaley, who was an ethnic Karen, travelling in 1974 to Pangsang, the communist

headquarters in the Wa States on the China border.

Although U Hla Pe was released in 1972, the two sides had begun fighting each other, effectively destroying the ethnic unity he had created. The SSNLO became known as the Red Pa-O while the other half, the Shan Nationalities Liberation Front, (SNLF) now under U Kyaw Sein, was known as the White Pa-O group. Once again, a little later the latter was renamed the Pa-O National Organization (PNO), by which time in 1975 U Hla Pe, who had been living in the jungle, had passed away and one of his sons reportedly had been killed in fighting with the SSNLO.

The PNO was finding it increasingly difficult to obtain funds for its troops and, being hard pressed by the Tatmadaw, signed a ceasefire agreement in April 1991 with the SLORC, the Burman military government. The Red Pa-O, considered to be communist, found their fortunes were no better. When the CPB collapsed in 1989, they also signed a cease-fire in 1994 with SLORC. This released the commanders and their men from fighting, and gave them an opportunity to make the best of their free time by participating in commercial and economic ventures, which they had always wanted.

The Pa-O are presently in a favorable position not only because they are hardworking and determined, but because their leaders have cleverly worked out cooperative deals with the Tatmadaw for the last twenty or more years. Consequently, the Pa-O gained what they wanted and the military has been content. At the same time, they have chosen not to notice the Tatmadaw's divide-and-rule policy directed at them and other ethnic nationalities.

Undoubtedly, having had a Pa-O as head of the Shan State at one time has helped, since it gave them prestige, but more than likely the achievements have provoked envy from other ethnic groups. Indeed, the Pa-O have come into their own. This is evident from the brick and mortar village housing and the grand houses built in Taunggyi and in other towns. No longer fighting the Tatmadaw, they could concentrate on bettering themselves.

Hopefully the Pa-O will not forget their responsibilities and will join with Tai Shan and other ethnic communities to help gain freedom and progress for the less fortunate inhabitants of the Shan Plateau. Only by uniting will its inhabitants be able to live and work together for freedom, in peace, and without fear.

HSAHTUNG FAMILY TREE⁵⁶

Hkun Kyaw Law/Hkun Kyaw Hla, Myosa, founder of present lineage (r. 1839-1891)

m. Daw Nang Done

I1 Hkun Law assassinated 1905 m. Daw Ma Ma Gyi, Samka Family

I2 Hkun Sein/Hseng (b. 1879) Myosa m. Daw Ma Ma Gyi, his brother's widow

I3 Hkun Lun

I2 Hkun Sein/Hseng

II1. Sao Hkun Kyi, Myosa later Saohpa (1901-1949; r. 1930-1947)

m. Daw Aye Thant, Mahadevi

III1 Sao Mya Win/Margaret m. Sao Soe Tint, Kyemmong of Laikha

IV1 Sao Hkun Hti m. Hey Joo Yang

V1 Amara Sao Laikha

V2 Yordharn Sao Laikha

III2 Sao Aung Myint/John (b. 1934) Hsahtung Saohpa (r. 1957-1959)

⁵⁶ Sources: Hsahtung and Laikha families, U Hla Bu of Hsahtung, and SSK (1943).

- m. Ma Nwe Aye, Pangmi Family
 - IV1 Hkun Kyi Htun
 - IV2 Sao Ohn Hseng
 - III3 Sao Aye Kyi/Daisy
 - III4 Sao Thant Kyi/Shirley m. U Kyaw Min
 - IV1 Saw Nyunt Thin
 - IV2 Saw Myat Win
 - IV3 Saw Kyi Min
 - III5 Sao Kyi Win/Dollie

PHOTOGRAPHS

Hsantung Myosa Sao Hkun Kyi (r. 1930-1947) and his Mahadevi Ma Aye Thant (Hsantung Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Hsahtung Sao Hkun Kyi (r. 1930-1947) (Hsahtung Family Private Collection).



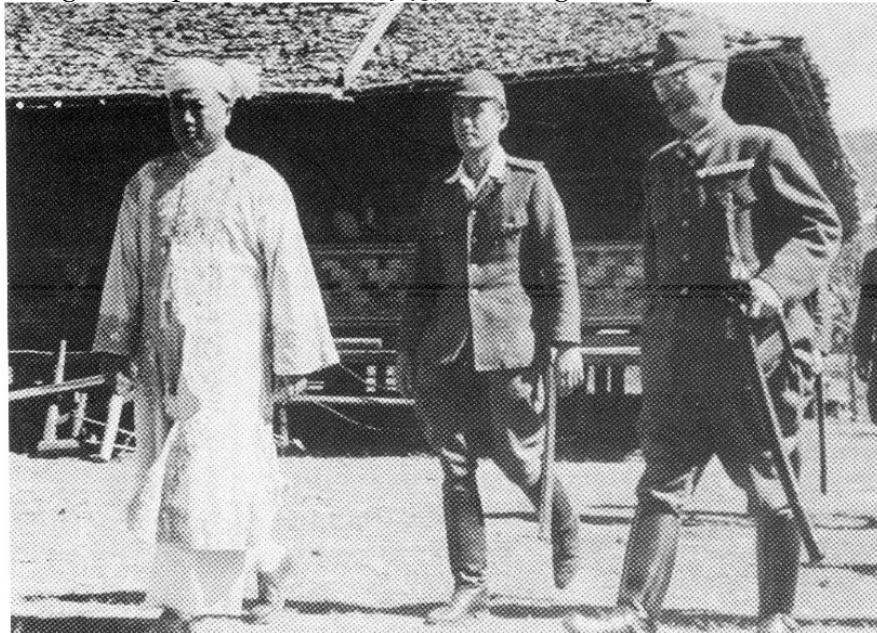
Saohpa Hsahtung with his wife and two children (1940s; Hsahtung Family Private Collection).



Saohpa of Hsantung, Yawnghwe and Mong Pawn with Japanese officials (1943; Hsantung Family Private Collection).



Saohpa of Hsantung with Japanese officials (1943; Hsantung Family Private Collection).



Sao Aung Myint standing in the middle with grandmother and mother sitting, and four sisters (1950s; Hsahtung Family Private Collection).



Family group (back row): Sao Kyi Mya; Sao Soe Tint Laikha Kyemmong and wife, Sao Mya Win; and brother, Sao Aung Myint. Front: Sao Kyi Aye and Sao Kyi Win (1950s; Hsahtung Family Private Collection).



LAWKSAWK STATE

Saohpa of Stature

Lawksawk was an ancient *mong* lying immediately north of Yawngghwe with a senior *saohpa* ruling in the period before World War II and the Japanese occupation. It had once or twice come under the supervision and authority of the then reigning Yawngghwe Saohpa. It was ruled by Kawli Min when it became a separate state.

In 1470, during the Shan Ava Dynasty, Maung Tun Din, a son of the Mong Nai Prince, was the Myosa. He was succeeded by Sao Mong Yai, a son of the King of Ava, in 1540. Lawksawk State was then passed on to other rulers. Eventually in 1847 through intrigues at the Royal Court, the state of Lawksawk was granted to Yawngghwe. It was ruled by Hkun Shwe, a brother of the then Saohpa of Yawngghwe, Sao Hse U. When he died in 1850, one Maung Shwe Kya claiming he was of the original line of rulers - that of Kawli Min - overthrew Yawngghwe's authority. Maung Shwe Kya made himself the ruling prince, but Mindon Min sent him off to Mong Nai to be the *sitke* 'viceroy'.

Lawksawk was then granted to the Saohpa of Laikha by Mindon Min in 1854. When the Saohpa died in 1863 without an heir, it was administered by a *myo ok* from Mandalay. In 1886, King Mindon ordered Yawngghwe Saohpa Sao Mawng to take charge of Lawksawk. Once again under Yawngghwe, Sao Weng, a grand-nephew of Sao Mawng, was appointed Saohpa to rule Lawksawk.

When the Burmese forces marched up to punish the Mong Nai Saohpa who had massacred the garrison stationed in his capital, Sao Weng, who had signed a pact with the Mong Nai Prince, fled to Kengtung, fearing for his life. Encountering the princes of the Limbin Confederacy, he joined them in their mission. He returned to Lawksawk with troops and drove out the Burman appointee who had been ruling in his absence, thus re-establishing himself. By this time the British forces were marching through the Shan States, establishing contact and seeking submission to the British Crown from the *saohpa*.

Sao Weng opposed the advancing British but he was not strong enough to deter their advance and again fled to Kengtung. Although he was requested to return and submit to the British authorities, he refused and went to live in Keng Hung where he died in 1896.

The British installed a new dynasty in 1887. For services rendered, the hereditary Myosa of Tam Hpak, Sao Hkun Nu, was installed as Saohpa of Lawksawk. Coincidentally, the then Saohpa of Yawngghwe, acting as Mye Lat Wun 'Minister for Mye Lat' demanded a greater tribute from Tam Hpak, which could not be paid. The then Ngwegunhmu of Hsahtung offered to pay the amount, whereupon Hsahtung was awarded Tam Hpak State by the Burman *sitke* 'viceroy' at Mong Nai.

When Sao Hkun Nu died in 1900, he had been ruler of Tam Hpak and was also ruling Lawksawk. He left nine sons and daughters. His eldest son, Hkun Suik (1863-1943; r. 1900-1943), was appointed Saohpa of Lawksawk. Sao Hkun Suik enjoyed a comfortable reign of forty-three years through the duration of British rule. He joined the British army and loved being a soldier. In her book, his granddaughter, Nel Adams (2000:18) recalled that "Grandfather, at 23 years of age loved the army life. He became highly thought of by the army officers because he had the necessary skills and aptitude to be a good soldier."

Sao Hkun Suik was a Tai Shan and one of the older princes who had a great personality. He was a tall, sturdy man and, like my granduncle, Sir Sao Mawng, wore a *chin hoa* 'turban' loosely as if it was just placed on the head and had not been tied tightly around the head. This presumably was how the older princes wore them.

He was a *saohpa* of the old tradition, authoritative and commanding, but respected by the British government. He was awarded honors such as the KSM, DSO, and the CIE. The DSO was

awarded for outstanding service - the Distinguished Service Order of the British Empire. He also went to meet Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1906. He died during the Japanese occupation in 1943 when times were difficult. Nevertheless, many *saohpa* made hazardous journeys to pay him their last respects and attended his funeral. His only son, Sao Hkun Hsar, succeeded him.

Sao Hkun Hsar (1895-1961; r. 1943-1959) was educated at the Shan Chiefs School. When he left school, he went to Taunggyi for training at the Municipal Office and then on to the Commissioner's Office to be trained in administration. He was made a judge upon his return to Lawksawk. He also worked in the State Office. Unlike his domineering father, he was quiet, kind, and thoughtful.

He married Sao Nang Ven Kiao, a daughter of the Saohpa of Kengtung. His two eldest daughters married into the Mong Yai and Yawnghwe families, respectively. Furthermore, the Lawksawk family had alliances with the Mong Pawn, Samka, Tawngpeng, and Kesi Mansam Houses. After his *mahadevi*, Sao Nang Ven Kiao, passed away, he married Sao Noom, a cousin of the Saohpa of Yawnghwe. They had twin sons. Sao Hkun Hsar died in 1961, escaping the devastating military take-over in 1962.

Japanese Courtesy

The period of Japanese occupation was unpleasant with everyone suffering. There were, however, exceptions. Japanese behavior towards ruling Tai Shan families varied, depending on the prerogative of the senior officer of the area. In Lawksawk, the Japanese showed a gentler side.

Nel Adams, a daughter of the Lawksawk Prince, wrote that in Lawksawk, Japanese civilians came to set up the 'Nippon Private Company' and that:

it was not clear what the firm traded in. They had a small paper mill, which had employed a few local people, who had been taught to make paper from wood. They also helped by teaching the local farmers to use better methods of growing rice and other food crops in order to give better yields (Adams 2000:75).

The senior members of the company became friends with the family, which was fortunate as they could lead normal lives. Later towards the end of the war, it was one of these Japanese officers who helped the family. He told the Lawksawk Prince that the Japanese had lost the war and that he and his family should escape into the jungles before the Japanese army came looking for them. This kind gesture enabled the family to make an arduous journey to safety. They made it to Laikha, near where the 101st US Airborne Division forward camp was, and met up with the Mong Pawn family. Together with the Laikha Saohpa and his family, they were flown to Bhamo in the north, where they met the Saohpa of Hsenwi and some members of his family there.

In her book, Nel Adams (Sao Noan Oo) tells us about her childhood, her family, and of happier times in Lawksawk. She is now a grandmother and lives happily in Cheshire with her husband, Brian Adams. She keeps busy with matters relating to the Shan State and is very much concerned with the state of affairs there.

After the Panglong Agreement and independence in 1948, Sao Hkun Hsar, the Lawksawk Prince, took up duty as a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities. He did not, however, take an active interest in politics nor the on-going affairs of the Shan States. Like other *saohpa*, he abdicated in 1959 and died two years later. Although times were different and Shan State was under military rule, other princes and his subjects showed respect and honored him by attending his funeral in the tradition of a prince of the realm.

Most of Lawksawk was arable and its inhabitants, who were Tai Shan, Danu, and Pa-O, cultivated vegetables and fruit, especially juicy oranges and mandarins. Extending towards the Mye Lat, the region becomes rolling grasslands, largely devoid of outcrops of trees and jungle. Like Pindaya and its surroundings, its soil is a rich ochre color, with high iron oxide content making it ideal to grow cash crops of potatoes. As in the past, the region continues to grow oranges and potatoes, but other agricultural produce has been added, such as cabbage, cauliflower, oranges, coffee, corn, and wheat.

Most of the produce find its way to the five-day markets in Taunggyi, Yawngnhe, and Pindaya. Although the roads are not completely tarmacked, they are adequate for the trucks and lorries that carry the goods to these towns.

LAWKSAWK FAMILY TREE⁵⁷

I Sao Hkun Nu Saohpa (r. 1887-1900) originally was Saohpa of Tamhparc

IWife1 Sao Nang Mwe; as widow remarried prince of Mong Ping; (son, Sao Huk)

II1 Sao Hkun Suik, Saohpa (1863-1943; r. 1900-1943); m. Nang Myint

IWife2 Sao Khin Di

IWife3 Sao Khin Kyi

IWife4 Sao Khin Mi

IWife5 Sao Maka

II1 Sao Aung Moe

II2 Sao Aung Coe

II3 Sao Aung Soe

II4 Sao Aung Toe

II5 Ma Khin Kyi

II6 Ma Khin Ye

II7 Ma Khin Oh

IWife6 Khin Lay Gyi

IWife7 Pan Khin Le

IWife8 Nang Twart

IWife9 Name unknown

(The offspring shown below are from Wives 6-9, not certain of mothers)

II8 Hkun Siing,*

II9 Sao Hkun Ok,

II10 Sao Mya Ti,

II11 Sao Noom*m. Hkun Pan Sein, Tawngpeng Saohpa

II12 Sao Wa Na,

II13 Sao Khin Me

II1 Sao Hkun Suik, Saohpa (adopted three of his half-siblings; Sao Huk,* Hkun Siing,* and Sao Noom*)

III1 Sao Hkun Hsar, Saohpa (1895-1961; r. 1943-1959);

III1 Wife1 Sao Ven Kiao, Mahadevi (I) of Lawksawk, Kengtung Family

IV1 Sao Nyunt Kyi/Agnes, m. Sao Hso Holm, Mong Yai Saohpa, Mahadevi
(see Mong Yai FT)

⁵⁷ Sources: Lawksawk Family members, Nel Adams (2000), and SSK (1943).

IV2 Sao Hom Noan/Audrey m. Sao Hseng, Yawnghwe Family (see Yawnghwe FT)

IV3 Sao Noan Oo/Nel m. Brian Adams

V1 Kathleen Toni

V2 Brendon Clay

IV4 Sao Sam Cheio/Jean m. Edward Win Kyaw

V1 Sao Htoo

V2 Sai Sai

V3 Marlar/Mi Mi Gyi

V4 Onmar/Mi Mi Nge

IV5 Sao Aung Kham/Desmond m. Dr Lily Hawng

V1 Sonny

V2 Tessa

V3 Michael

IV6 Sao Hkam Hsar/Kendrick

III1Wife2 Sao Noom Mahadevi (2) of Lawksawk, 1957, Yawnghwe Saohpa's cousin, had twin boys

IV1 Sao Han Hseng/Sai Pock

IV2 Sao Han Kan/Sai Awn

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hkun Nu (1887-1900) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Saohpa Sao Hkun Suik (r. 1900-1943), Mahadevi in the background, and Sao Nang Tip Htila (Nel Adams).



Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsar (r. 1943-1959) and Mahadevi Sao Ven Kiao Kengtung Princess on their wedding day (1921; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



ဇနီးနှစ်ယောက်၊ ဝတ်စုံများစတင်ပြီး၊ ချီးမြှင့်ပေးသောမဟာဘိက္ခု နော် နှစ်ယောက်နှင့် မဟာဒေဝီ

Lawksawk Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsar (r. 1943-1959) (Nel Adams).



Mahadevi Sao Ven Kiao, Kengtung Saohpa's daughter (1940s; Nel Adams).



Sao Noan Oo (Nel Adams, author of *My Vanished World*) receiving her BSc Degree in 1953 from the University of Rangoon (Nel Adams).



Sao Hkun Hsar with daughter, Sao Hom/Audrey, and grandchildren, Feraya and Carol, standing in front of their mother. Victor is on his grandfather's right (1960s; Feraya Ullathorne).



Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsar's second Mahadevi, Sao Noom, a cousin of Yawnghwe Saohpa (1960; Lawksawk Family Private Collection).



Twins of the second marriage, Sao Han Hseng (Sai Pock) and Sao Han Kan (Sai Awn), and their families (2012 Lawksawk Family Private Collection).



SAMKA STATE

Ancient Samka

The state of Samka lies south of the Inle Lake with the Nam Philu flowing through the state down to the Karenni or Kayah State. Samka is situated between Loi Long and Hsahtung, with the former to its east and the latter to its southeast.

Few written documents of some states exist, while many of the records that exist are undated, making it difficult to authenticate the accounts that have been found. Some early accounts on the founding of Samka go back to AD 841. It is claimed that Chao Phya Le, a younger brother of Chiang Rai's king, fled to a place near Loi Noi where he founded a city. He also constructed an image of the Lord Buddha and a pagoda that was erected on certain true relics of the Buddha. Chao Phya Le named the pagoda, Samka Shwegu, and the city, Samka.

The Samka chronicles recorded that it was sometime later in 1636 when the next ruler Panyar Bayon, was appointed by the Burman monarch. His descendants continued to rule until 1838, when *Myosa* Hkun Yee was assassinated. Then came Myosa Hkun Soong. In 1859, having been in a brawl and killed someone, he was duly dismissed. He was reinstated two years later.

In 1872 Hkun Soong was commanded by King Mindon to send one hundred men to Hsenwi to protect the silver mines from Kachin raids. Unfortunately, he incurred the monarch's wrath as he did not promptly carry out the command. He was imprisoned in the northern state of Hsipaw and died four years later. Samka State was then given to the Hsenwi Saohpa. In 1873, Hkun Soong's son, Hkun Sein Hpu, was made *myosa* to rule Mong Yok, not Samka.

Meanwhile, Maung Pu, a Bamar with the title of *sitke*, was put in charge of Samka. The people of Samka were angry at such interference, rose in revolt, and killed the *sitke*. The blame was put on Hkun Sein Hpu, who was duly dismissed, though he was nowhere near his home state. Hkun Sein Hpu was then followed by his cousin, Hkun Ne, who did not rule for long.

In 1885, Hkun Sein Hpu made his way back to Samka and declared himself the ruler. The British found him ruling the state and affirmed his position as *myosa*. In 1894, he received the TDM and in 1906 he went to Rangoon for the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The British considered him a good, loyal ruler. His comments on the matters of administration were heard and deemed invaluable. In 1907, he was promoted to *saohpa*. He died two years later, leaving twenty-six children from his many wives.

A Devoted Buddhist

The eldest son, Sao Hkun Kyi (1893-1973; r, 1915-1959), was recognized as heir, but being too young, a minister of the state was put in charge. There were family quarrels and attempts at unseating the chosen administrator, however, by 1915 Sao Hkun Kyi was in his early twenties and invested as *saohpa*.

Sao Hkun Kyi at the age of eight was sent to a Buddhist school to study and then on to the Shan Chiefs School at Taunggyi in 1902, the year that the school opened. When his father, Saohpa Sao Sein Hpu, died he was seventeen years old and sent to train in administration at the Commissioner's Office in Taunggyi.

After independence, he was Chairman of the Shan State Council. A religious person, he soon became involved in Buddhist matters and took charge of religious affairs for the Shan State. He represented the Shan State at two World Fellowship of Buddhists conferences in Ceylon in 1950 and in Japan in 1955. He also went as a member of the Burmese delegation to China in 1955 to present a

relic of the Buddha's tooth to the Chinese. Sao Hkun Kyi was also a vice-president of the Burma Independent Victory Committee. He was awarded the title of *mahathraysithu* by the government in 1958. In 1960, he became the Speaker of the House of Nationalities and was awarded the Thado-Thiri-Thudama title.

One of Sao Hkun Kyi's wives, a princess from Lawksawk, became the *mahadevi*, with whom he had ten children. Sao Kyi Oo, the eldest daughter, married Sao Shwe Hmon, the Kyemmong of Kesi Mansam. Sao Kyi Htoo, another daughter, married the Saohpa of Hsahmong Kham.

Sao Hkun Kyi had other wives and eleven more children. One of the daughters, Sao Than Kyi, married Sao Hseng Wan, a son of the Yawnghwe Saohpa. Another daughter, Sao Myo Kyi with her family, are deeply involved in Shan politics, being members of the White Tiger Party also known as SNDP (the Shan National Development Party).

When the coup took place in 1962, Sao Hkun Kyi was arrested but was released the next day, as this tall, serious looking man was not found to be involved in politics and was seen as being very religious. Sao Hkun Kyi was eighty years old when he died in 1973 in Taunggyi, where he had taken up residence.

His son, Sao Soe Kyi, was born in 1910, and was recognized as Kyemmong. His mother, the *mahadevi*, was from Lawksawk. When he had completed his studies up to the 9th Standard at the Shan Chiefs School, he went on to study Livestock and Agriculture at the Mandalay Agricultural School.

With the advent of World War II, he joined the No. 13 Shan Rifles and went to India as an officer in the Transport Department (M-T).

After the War and upon his return, his father, Sao Hkun Kyi, allowed him to rule Samka State jointly with him. Later in 1948, Sao Soe Kyi was given authority to administer Samka State by himself. During the KNDO insurrection in 1949-1950, Sao Soe Kyi organized and led a Shan defense group from Samka to vigorously fight the rebels and chased them out of Samka State. After the rebellion was suppressed, he took a short break by farming.

In the 1950s, he continued his interest in Shan affairs and took on the post of Secretary in the Finance Ministry of the Shan State Government in Taunggyi. Sometime later, Sao Soe Kyi served as secretary to Sao Hkun Hkio, the Foreign Minister at the Secretariat of the Union Government in Rangoon.

He was married to Nang Ngwe Yee, whose parents were U Toe and Daw Nang Sint from Samka. They had six children. At the early age of forty-seven, Sao Soe Kyi, Samka Kyemmong, passed away in 1959 in Rangoon.

SAMKA FAMILY TREE⁵⁸

Sao Naw Mein (ancestor)

Nang Naw Kham m. Pagan Min, Mague/Magwe Queen

Hkun Saung, Myosa (r. 1863-1873) m. Mong Sit Myosa's daughter

I Hkun Sein Hpu sent to Hsenwi in 1873 by Burman king

re-instated as Myosa was 10th ruler; submitted to the British (r. 1885-1906)

m. Khin Lay Phyu, daughter of Nang Naw Kham, Queen Mague and Pagan Min

II1 Sao Mya Nhit m. Khun Ba, Kayah Family

III1 Sao Hti m. Daw Shwe Mya

⁵⁸ Sources: Sao Than Kyi and other Samka Family members, and SSK (1943).

- IV1 Sao Mya Wadi (Lawyer) m. U Myo Myint (Lawyer)
 - III2 Saw Maung
 - III3 Sao Sein Bwint
 - II2 Sao Hkun Kyi, Saohpa (1893-1973; r. 1915-1959)
 - II2Wife1 Sao Khin May, Samka Mahadevi, from Lawksawk Family
 - III1 Sao Kyi Oo, Saohpa Hsahmong Kham
 - III2 Sao Kyi Htoo, Saohpa Kesi Mansam
 - III3 Sao Soe Kyi, Samka Kyemmong m. Nang Ngwe Yee
 - IV1 Sao Hkun Kham
 - IV2 Sao Hkun Hseng m. Nang Kyi Kyi Sein
 - IV3 Sao Kyi Sein m. Sao Kae Set, Kyemmong of Kesi Mansam
 - V1 Sao Lao Hein
 - IV4 Sao Kyi Su m. Aung San Lwin
 - IV5 Sao Nang Oo m. Aung Kyin
 - IV6 Sao Tun Naing/Sao Yangon m. Hla Hla Htay
 - V1 Sao Thu Zar Nwe
 - V2 Dr Sao Py Thike
 - V3 Sao Pyo Thu Kya
 - III4 Sao Win Kyi
 - III5 Sao Htun Kyi
 - III6 Sao Phoo Kyi
 - III7 Sao Kyi May
 - III8 Sao Kyi Shwe
 - III9 Sao Moe Kyi
 - III10 Sao Htwe Kyi
 - III11 Sao Win Kyi
 - II2Wife2 Khin Mya Tint
 - III3 Sao Shwe Kyi
 - III2 Sao Than Kyi m. Sao Hseng Wan Yawngghwe Family
 - IV1 Dr Sao Lao Wan m. Dr Aung Than Sein
 - V1 Sai Heart Han Hseng
 - IV2 Dr Sao Lern Wan
 - IV3 Sao Hom Wan m. Captain Tayzar Aung
 - V1 Nang Moon Siri
 - V2 Nang Lynn Siri
 - III3 Sao Nyunt Kyi
 - IIWife3 Nang Mya Yin
 - III1 Sao Mya Kyi, Shan politician
 - III2 Sao Myo Myint
 - III3 Sao Myo Tint
 - III4 Sao Mya Kyi
 - IIWife4 Nang Mya Zin
 - III1 Sao Kyi Aye
 - III2 Sao Myint Htwe
 - III3 Sao Myint Aye
 - III4 Sao Myint Htay
- Sao Hkun Kyi's wives 2,3, and 4 were sisters.

He also had other wives and offspring who are not included in the chart

PHOTOGRAPHS

Samka Saohpa Sao Sein Hpu (1885-1915) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



သုရဲခတောင်၊ခွေမိရဲ ဝဿမမြောက် ခံကာ၊ခော်သွာ(ဦး) စင်စိန်ပု၊
(၁၂၅၅-၁၂၅၅)

Sao Hkun Kyi with his eleven daughters and three wives standing behind (see caption below the picture for the names of the princesses) (1950s; Samka Family Private Collection).



BACK - Nang Mya Zin, Nang Mya Tin, Nang Mya Yin,
MIDDLE - Sao Myint Htay, Sao Myint Htwe, Sao Myo Myint, Saohpalone of Samkha- Sao Khun Kyi, Sao Myo Tint, Sao Thura, Sao Myint Aye.
FRONT - Sao Nyunt Kyi, Sao Than Kyi, Sao Shwe Kyi, Sao Myo Kyi, Sao Mya Kyi.

Saohpa Sao Hkun Kyi (r. 1915-1959) (Samka Family Private Collection).

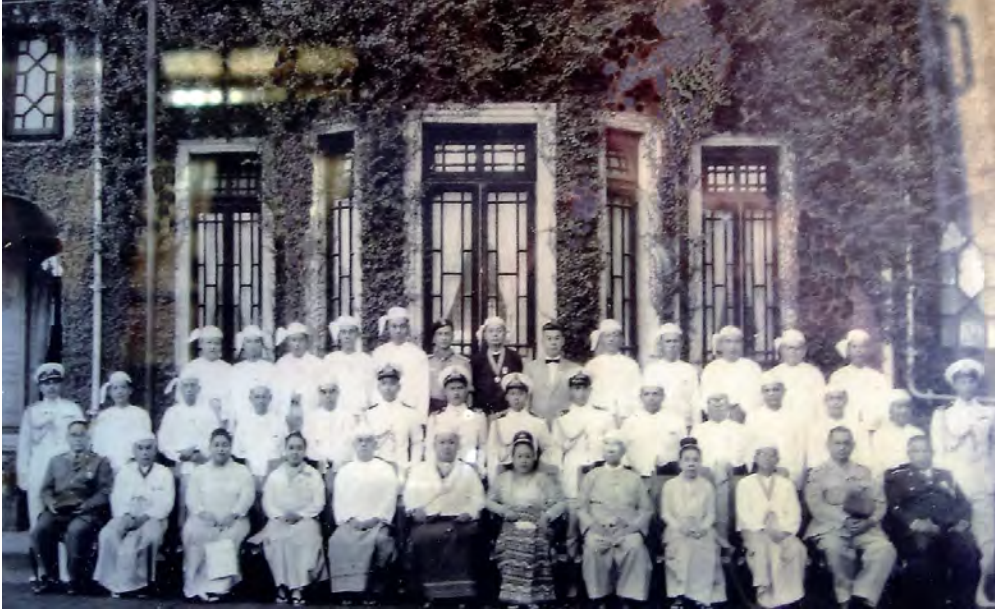


Samka Kyemmong Sao Soe Kyi and wife Daw Ngwe (1930s; Samka Family Private Collection).



စံကာ: ကျွမ်းဝင်စံကာနှင့် ကျွမ်းဝင်စံကာ၏ အိမ်ထောင်စု
(Kyemmong of Samka State- Sao Soe Kyi & his wife Daw Ngwe Yee)

At President House, Rangoon, President U Win Maung and Mrs Win Maung with officials and members of the President House staff. Sao Hkun Kyi sits to the left of the President's wife (Samka Family Private Collection).



Samka Saohpa's daughter, Sao Than Kyi, married Sao Hseng Wan/Papu/Stanley, Yawnghwe Saohpa's son (Samka Family Private Collection).



Granddaughter Sao Kyi Sein married Kesi Mansam Kyemmong, Sao Kae Set (Samka Family Private Collection).



Samka Saohpa Sao Hkun Kyi (left) with visiting dignitaries and Burmese officials (1950s; Samka Family Private Collection).



Sao Hkun Kyi Samka Saohpa behind Chinese Premier, Chou en-lai (Zhou Enlai), with a Burmese minister (1950s; Samka Family Private Collection).



LOI LONG/PINLAUNG STATE

Mountainous Region

Loi Long is Tai Shan for 'big hill' or 'mountain', and is also known as Pinlaung in Burmese. To make it more confusing, the town of Pinlaung was built in 1794 to attract Tai Shan and Pa-O traders, which in time became the capital. Most people nowadays seem to call both the state and capital, Pinlaung.

A series of mountain ranges run through the State with several peaks reaching 6,000 feet. The highest is near the border with Burma Proper at Yamethin. The rivers and streams flowing through to the valleys supply the region with adequate water, providing green lush terrain.

In former days, there were mountain passes that were used for trade with the plains, as the roads were rough unpaved paths. Most likely these roads have been improved recently.

The rivers provide some form of transportation though only during the summer months, when the depth of the water is about two feet. It is then possible to use boats and to float down logs from timber that have been extracted from thick forests. The currents are far too strong at other times and the rivers are then not navigable.

The source of the Nam Philu/Bilu River is in the Laung Sa Mountains. It flows south through Pinlaung Town and then turns west, disappears underground, emerges above ground, and flows north through Thigit to Hsahmong Kham. The river goes underground again and surfaces once again to flow into Inle Lake. At the southern end of Inle, the Nam Philu eventually flows south to Samka and Loikaw.

Unfortunately, due to its shallowness and boulders and stones it is not generally used for transportation. Furthermore, the river banks are high, making it impossible to use the water for irrigation.

Since gold deposits are thought to be in the numerous river beds, people come to pan for gold

and precious gemstones. Wealth in these river beds and mountains may soon be discovered and exploited commercially. Hopefully, such exploitations will be made responsibly with respect to the law, revenues shared equally, and without harsh evictions of villagers.

In the old days, each hill ridge of Loi Long had its own chief. La Sa, accepted as the overall chief of the region, was head of the Sawng Tung nationality group. After his death, the son, La Tein, divided the region into twelve *taungsa* 'pieces of land'. To increase his power and the population of his domain, he invited Shan and Taungthu to live in a new village he had created called Pinlaung in 1794. It was later to become the capital.

Apparently, a treaty was then made between the ruler and a Siamese, known as Pu Hwe Hkam Saw, to increase trade in the region. Pu Hwe Hkam Saw acted as a general agent for both Loi Long and Samka. After a successful four years, he went to Ava and claimed exclusive rights over Samka and Loi Long. The Burman king was pleased and named him *saohpa/Sawbwa* of the two states.

La Tein, the original ruler of Loi Long, made no complaints during the rule by the Siamese *saohpa*, but when he died, his brother, La Tu, objected. He went to the Burman Court where he was graciously received and succeeded in obtaining a Royal Order appointing him as chief over the twelve *taungsas* of Loi Long. It appears that Samka was then left to Pu Hwe Hkam Saw to rule.

On La Tu's passing, his son, La Naw, became the ruler. When he died, two of his sons succeeded the title, one after the other. Until 1856, Loi Long was ruled by other relatives when one of La Tu's descendants, Hkun Nu, was made *myosa*. He ruled from 1856 to 1862. On his death, his son, Hkun Hkam Chok, who was only six years old, was recognized as heir by the British in 1887. Being too young to rule, an administrator was put in charge.

In 1895, Hkun Hkam Chok (1874-1938; r. 1897-1938), was old enough to take charge. He was half Sawng Tung Karen and Tai Shan and a Buddhist. He was awarded the KSM in 1905. A year later, he went to Rangoon for the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, later to become Their Majesties, George V and Queen Mary. He was considered by the British to be well-mannered and intelligent. Hkun Hkam Chok seemingly ruled his state properly and was connected to some of the ruling houses namely, Pindaya/Pangtara and Samka.

Hkun Hkam Chok's mother came from Mong Pai, being the sister of the *saohpa*. His wife, Ma Saw Me, with whom he had two daughters, was Pindaya Prince's sister.

During this period, there were several Karenni raids, also fights that broke out between smaller states, leaving them ruined and defenseless, at which time bigger states tried to incorporate them.

Such was the case of Namkhai and Namtok that had been ruled by a *ngwegunhmu*. Over a period of fifty to sixty years, Namtok had its villages seized by Samka and Sakoi at various times. However, after British annexation of the Shan States, the two were incorporated with Loi Long in 1917 and 1931, respectively, coming under Loi Long's jurisdiction.

When Hkun Hkam Chok died in 1938, Sao Moe Kyaw (b. 1917; r. 1940-1959), a son from his fourth wife was selected as his heir. He was educated at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi, as were the other *saohpa*'s sons. He was born in 1917 and was still undergoing training in administrative affairs in Kalaw and Taunggyi District Officer's offices, when his father died. Therefore, Sao Myat Htun, the *Myosa* of Thigit from Yawnghwe State, was appointed Administrator of Loi Long State.

Combating Insurgents

In 1940 Sao Moe Kyaw became *Myosa* and took charge of Loi Long State throughout the Japanese occupation. Not much more is known about what happened through the three years of Japanese

occupation, a subject few people are willing to talk about.

Little is known about his participation at the Panglong Conferences but, by 1947 he had been elevated to Saohpa. However, it appeared he was well occupied from 1947 onwards, beginning with the invasion of the White Flag Communists, who came through from Pyinmana up to Loi Long State. Sao Moe Kyaw organized and led the state's own voluntary defence force against these rebels. Then in 1948, when the KNDO forces plus the communists again came up from Pyinmana, he provided assistance to some 1,000 refugees comprised of civil servants, soldiers, and ordinary people who had come to Pinlaung to seek refuge. There were also refugees from Loikaw across the border but, importantly, the Commissioner and the government of Karenni were unable to hold back the KNDO and they also fled to Pinlaung. Sao Moe Kyaw extended his help to all of them.

In 1949, insurgents occupied Taunggyi. By order of the President, a levy of 250 men was formed under him and he was sent to Samka to take up duties there. Through the years of 1950 to 1951, despite the numerous times the rebels passed through Loi Long State, Sao Moe Kyaw with his police force and local defence units, was able to expel them and regain their capital and state. For all his efforts in carrying out these duties, the Union Government awarded Sao Moe Kyaw the title of Thiripyanchi.

By 1952, Sao Moe Kyaw was a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities. He also served as a delegate on two missions, once to Japan to study cottage industry and the other, representing the Shan State, went to China. The latter was a goodwill mission to Yunnan and Mong Shih.

His ability to work hard and to maintain good relations with his people earned him much respect and support from his subjects. As a member of the Chamber of Nationalities and member of the Shan State Council, he is said to have worked diligently and effectively.

His first *Mahadevi* was Sao Khin Su, the Mong Pai Saohpa's daughter. With his next wife, Nang Hla Tin, they had four children

LOI LONG FAMILY TREE⁵⁹

I Hkun Kham Chok (b. 1874) Myosa (r. 1895-1938)

IWife1 Ma Saw May, Pindaya Family

II1 Nang Khin Nu m. Hkun Sun Nyo, Ngwegunhmu of Pindaya

II2 Sao Khin Su m. Sao Mya Htun, (b. 1917) Yawngghwe Family, Myosa of Hsikip,
(former Administrator of Loi Long)

IWife2 Ma Nang Nyunt

IWife3 Ma Shwe Lay

II1 Sao Mya Sein

II2 Sao Mya Shein

II3 Sao Ohn Kyin (b. 1925) m. Sao Khin Pyu, Pindaya Family

IWife4 Sao Mya Sit, Samka Family

II1 Sao Moe Kyaw (b.1917) Myosa 1940, Saohpa (r. 1943-1959)

II1Wife1 Sao Khin Su, Mong Pai Family

III1 Son, name unknown

II1Wife2 Daw Hla Tin

III1 Sao Sein Hla

⁵⁹ Sources: Loi Long Family and SSK (1943).

II1Wife3 Daw Aye Sein

II2 Sao Sein Yee (b. 1922)

II3 Sao Mya Than (b. 1926)

II4 Sao Tha Htun (b. 1930)

II5 Sao San Tint (b. 1934)

III1 Sao Aung Myat Oo/Sao Tha Oo

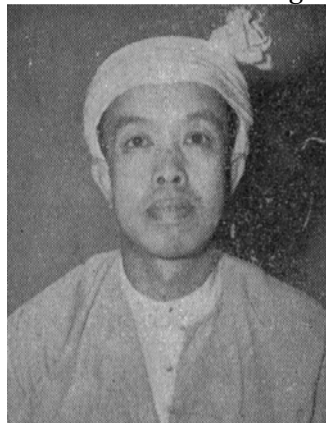
IWife5 Sao Sein Hpu, Samka Family

PHOTOGRAPHS

Loi Long Family group. The three men in the picture are Pindaya Myosa, Hkun San Nyo (r. 1911-1936), Loi Long Myosa, Sao Kham Choke (r. 1897-1938), and Sao Moe Kyaw, his son, standing behind, who became Saohpa of Loi Long (r. 1940-1959) (Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Moe Kyaw (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



The Loi Long Haw, built of wood about one hundred years ago, now in ruins (2013; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



NAWNGMAWN STATE

Nawngmawn State was amalgamated with Mong Pawn State in 1931. Though in earlier days it was an important and large state, with its *saohpa* ruling over Hopong, Namhkok, Wanyin, and Hsahtung. Legend has it that in 1152, a Bamar named Taw Min came to the area and declared himself its chief with the title *saohpa/sawbwa*. During one of the Chinese raids, a descendant, Hkun Hkam Leng who was ruler, was captured.

Thus, resulting in the sub-states later becoming separated, with Namhkok leaving in 1744 ruled by a *myosa*. Hopong and Hsahtung became separate states in 1862 while Wanyin left later. Each state came under its own *ngwegunhmu*.

During King Thibaw's reign the Nawngmawn ruler was made a Myosa and was known as Hkun Wa. He ruled for twenty-four years from 1870 until his death in 1894. His son Hkun Htun Ok, succeeded him in 1902.

Hkun Htun Ok was half-brother to Hkun Myat, Myosa of Namhkok, and the nephew of Htun Hti, the Mong Pawn Saohpa. He was born in 1882 and was a Shan Buddhist. He married Kin Thi, a daughter of the Lawksawk Saohpa. From 1906 to 1914 he administered Namhkok on behalf of his half-brother, Hkun Pwang.

The Myosa was considered hard-working but, unfortunately, was suspended during the 1930s allegedly for maladministration of his state and misuse of state finances. Subsequently, he was deprived of his Myosa-ship and the State was amalgamated with Mong Pawn State and ruled by his uncle, Sao Hkun Hti in 1931.

In 1946, Sao Sam Htun, Mong Pawn Saohpa, handed back both the states of Nawngmawn and Namhkok to their respective rulers.

Sao Htun Yin

Sao Htun Yin, a former Myosa of Nawngmawn, was made administrator for Namhkok and Nawngmawn States after retiring from the British army. In 1946, he was installed as Myosa of Nawngmawn and Namhkok and was automatically promoted to Saohpa. He was a son of Sao Htun Ok, the former Myosa of Nawngmawn and his fourth wife.

Sao Htun Yin who was also educated at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi, joined the Frontier Force as soon as he left school in 1935. He received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his outstanding accomplishment in the Wa area. Later during World War II, he fought with British units trying to prevent the advance of Japanese troops and was wounded at Nyaunglebin, where he lost an arm. He had been with the Frontier Force Battalion, Advanced Force, but was moved over to the Intelligence Unit.

His exploits in the British army continued as he worked behind enemy lines. He was one of the commanders of the US 101st Airborne Division and was soon to earn the nickname 'One-armed General'. His official rank by then was Lieutenant Colonel. Family papers shown to me revealed that he was also the proud owner of many other British Empire awards.

In his biography in *Freedom Way Magazine*, it said that he was not in favor of the Panglong Agreement and accused the senior *saohpa* who were involved of "wanting to make slaves of us" and "lead us into Burmese prisons." Perhaps his long association with the Burman had made him aware of these pitfalls. His warnings and predictions may have come too early for people to have taken notice and to pay attention.

An outspoken man, he had many enemies. He died in 1950 under mysterious circumstances. He was only thirty-eight years old.

After Sao Htun Yin's death, Hkun Phu, another son of Hkun Htun Ok, administered the state. An official publication issued in 1959 when the princes relinquished their powers, reported that Sao Thaug Shwe was the Kyemmong of Nawngmawn. Born in 1942, his parents were Sao Phu, the Saohpa of Nawngmawn and Mahadevi Sao Nang Nweh. It is not clear which wife was Sao Phu's mother of the many wives Nawngmawn Hkun Htun Ok had. Nevertheless, this made Sao Thaug Shwe a nephew of Sao Htun Yin.

At the age of four, he went to study at St Anne's English school in Taunggyi. From 1956 to 1959, he continued his education at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi, which had been renamed Kambawza High School. It was then run by Sao Sai Mong and Mi Mi Khaing. After the turmoil of 1962, he and his wife lived in Taunggyi and have now both passed away.

NAWNGMAWN FAMILY TREE⁶⁰

I Hkun Htun Ok, Administrator of Namhkok States (r. 1906-1914);

later became Nawngmawn Myosa (1894-?; r. 1914-1931)

IWife1 Khin Thi, Lawksawk Family

IWife2 Sao Mye Say

II1 Sao Saw Yin m. Sao Hkun Pwang, Myosa of Namhkok (see Namhkok FT)

IWife3 Nang Phan

II2 Sao Khin Latt m. Sao Hkun Pwang, Myosa of Namhkok (see Namhkok FT)

IWife4 Nang Nyo

⁶⁰ Sources: Namhkok/Nawngmawn Families, Sao Hseng Hpa, and SSK (1943).

- II1 Sao Htun Yin, Myosa of Nawngmawn later Saohpa of Nawngmawn and Namhkok
(r. 1946-1950) OBE, MBE, DSO;
m. Sao Mya Oo, Mong Nai Family
- II2 Sao Mya Koon m. Nang Nge
- III1 Sao Khin May
 - III2 Sao Khin San Myint
 - III3 Sao Khin Sein Nyo
 - III4 Sao Khin Lay
 - III5 Sao Noom
 - III6 Sai Thein Htin
 - III7 Sao Nay Linn
- II3 Sao Kyi m. Sao Seint from Kesi Mansam Family
- III1 Sao Naw Hpa
 - III2 Sao Naw Hla
 - III3 Sao Kyi May
 - III4 Sao Naw Kha
 - III5 Sao Kyi Shwe
 - III6 Sao Naw Kham
 - III7 Sao Kyaing
 - III6 Sao Pont
 - III7 Sao Htay Kyi
 - III8 Sao Shwe Htoo
 - III9 Sao Naw Lern
- II4 Sao Than
- III1 Myint Myint Than
 - III2 Nyo Nyo Than
 - III3 NweNwe Than
 - III4 Hla Hla Than
 - III5 Mu Mu Than
 - III6 Kyu Kyu Than
 - III7 Zin Zin Than/Su
- II5 Sao Yee
- III1 Sai Htoe
 - III2 Hkote
 - III3 Sai
 - III4 Pupu
- II6 Sao Thin Thin
- II7 Sao Aye
- II8 Sao Nyein
- III1 Sao Nu Nu Aye
 - III2 Sao Nu Nu Htay
 - III3 Sao Nu Nu Lay
 - III4 Sao Sai Long
 - III5 Sao Hla Myint Thein/Sao Oon
(famous political cartoonist-harn lay)
 - III6 Sao Hla Myint Than/Tawn
- II8 Sao Thinn Yone

IIWife5 Name unknown?

II1 Sao Nang Hla

III1 Sao Than Kyi

III2 Sao Thein

III3 Sao Hla Kyi

III4 Sao Nyunt Kyi

III5 Sao Myint Kyi

III6 Sao Thaung Kyi

IIWife6 Name Unknown

II1 Sao Ko

II2 Sao Cho

III1 Sao Than Yee

III2 Sao Sai Hken

III3 Sao Myint Kyi

III4 Sao Sai Htay

III5 Sao Nang Long

III6 Sao Sai Twai

II3 Sao Thein Hlaing m. U Tin Aye, a District Officer

NAMHKOK STATE

Like many of the smaller states, as mentioned earlier, Namhkok was formerly part of Nawngmawn State. It became a separate state in 1744. There were four or five rulers before Hkun Puk or Pok and when he died, his son, Hkun Hkam, became chief in 1833. He was then succeeded by his son Hkun Long/Hkun Hseng in 1862.

After annexation, the British recognized Hkun Hseng as *myosa* who ruled until his death in 1900 at which time his son, Hkun Myat, was designated the successor. Being only fifteen years old, the state was administered by his uncle, Hkun Num, and next by Hkun Htun Ok, a half-brother and the Myosa of Nawngmawn who was to remain administrator until 1914 when Hkun Myat took over the state. Unfortunately, he was Myosa for only a year. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his younger brother, Hkun Pwang.

Hkun Pwang, born in 1898, was a Tai Shan Buddhist and was also known as Sao Lek. When he went to attend the Shan Chiefs School, he changed his name to Sao Hkun Pwang.

In 1918, Governor Harcourt Butler recognized him as Myosa while he was still working in the District Officer's office, training to be an administrator. Once installed, he married the two daughters of the Nawngmawn Prince Hkun Htun Ok, who were his nieces.

At this time, most princes were accustomed to making use of whatever funds lay in the State Treasury, not distinguishing between public and private money. In contrast, the British were very strict with financial matters and did not tolerate any mishandling of state or government funds.

Unfortunately, in 1923, Sao Hkun Pwang was suspended due to alleged irregularities in his Treasury and was forced to live in Taunggyi until he had paid his debts, at which time he was reinstated. However, he was once again relieved of his duties by the British said to be for maladministration and sent off again to live in Taunggyi, the administrative center where the authorities could keep an eye on him. In his private papers, he said he suspected foul play and claimed that he had been framed. No official inquiry was carried out to discover more about the

alleged irregularities, therefore, his name could not be cleared.

Nevertheless, in 1931, the title of Myosa was dropped from Hkun Pwang's name and the state came under the jurisdiction of Mong Pawn. Sao Hkun Pwang was pensioned off and returned to live in Taunggyi. He was in Taunggyi from 1942-1945 during the Japanese occupation, while his children returned to live in Namhkok. The unrest in 1949 and the presence of the KNDO and the Pa-O insurgents in the Namhkok area drove the family back to Taunggyi. In 1950, Namhkok was destroyed by the insurgents and the administrative offices of Namhkok were moved to Nawngmawn. By this time, Sao Htun Yin was Sao hpa of both Nawngmawn and Namhkok.

At the age of sixty, Hkun Pwang worked in the Health Ministry of the Shan Government and continued to do so until 1958. He was a member of Shan Literary Association, became Secretary to the Association, and was its president until he retired in 1975. Sao Hkun Pwang continued his interest in the Association and helped to promote Tai Shan language and literature. He died in 1982 at the ripe old age of eighty-four, having furthered the cause of Shan heritage preservation.

Although I do not know a great deal more of the Namhkok/Nawngmawn lineage, I believe the surviving descendants are alive and enthusiastically involved in supporting Tai Shan culture and its literature and language.

NAMHKOK FAMILY TREE⁶¹

I Sao Hkun Pwang/Sao Leik, Myosa of Namhkok (r. 1918-1931)

IWife1 Sao Saw Yin, Nawngmawn Myosa Hkun Htun Ok's daughter

II1 Sao Mya Aye

II2 Sao Pyone Yee/Sao Noom m. Maung Aung Nyunt

III1 Sai Khun U

II3 Sao Nyunt Sein/Sao Took (1928-2016) m. Tin Tin Aye/Nelichu

III1Sao Mawn Hpa m. Dr Nu Nu Thein

III2 Sao Law Ngoon

III3 Sao Phong Ngoon m. Maung Yan Aung (2 daughters)

III4 Sao Wann Hpa

II4 Sao Hla Win

II5 Sao Soe Nyunt

II6 Sao Ohn Myint m. Ma Aye Myint (1), Nang Aye Myint (2)

III1 Sao Khai Hpa

III2 Sao Onmar

III3 Sao Nyan Hpa

III4 Sao Myo Hseng

II7 Sao Hpone Leng

II8 Sao Myat Hpone/Sao Leik m. Nang Kay Leng/Nang Lay Nu

III1 Sao Noan Kham m. Nang Naw Wan

III2 Sao Hseng Hpa/Sao Pea m. Nang Phar/Arn Sengdao

III3 Sao Naw Kham

III4 Sao Sam Hpone m. Sai Toe (1) Dr Thaug Tun (2) husbands

IWife2 Nang Kyi

IWife3 Sao Khin Latt, sister of IWife1, Nawngmawn Myosa Hkun Htun Ok's daughter

⁶¹ Sources: Namhkok/Nawngmawn Families, Sao Hseng Hpa of Namhkok, and SSK (1943).

- II1 Sao Kyi Htun
 - II1Wife1 Sao Khin Nu
 - II1Wife2 Sao Kyi Shwe
 - III1 Sao Sam Hom
 - IV1 Hkun Seik
 - III2 Sao Sam Hein m. Sai Win (4 sons)
 - III3 Sao Naw Wan m. Sao Noan Kham
 - III4 Sao Hseng Hom
 - II2 Sao Nyunt Yee m. Sai Aung Sein
 - III1 Hkun Noot Hseng m. Nang Kham (2 sons & 3 daughters)
 - II2 Khun Seik m. Nang Tin Nwe Khine Oo
 - II3 Sao Myo Myint
 - II4 Sao Myat Swe
- IWife4 Sao Lu
- IWife5 Nang Noan
- IWife6 Nang Mya
 - Parents unknown
 - III1 Sao Hpu, a grandson of Hkun Htun Ok Nawnmawn and Namhkok Myosa m. Sao Nang None; Mahadevi
 - IV1 Sao Thaug Shwe was Kyemmong in 1959

PHOTOGRAPHS

Hkun Pwang (1900s: Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



C

Saohpa Sao Htun Ok (r. 1902-1930) (Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sao Htun Yin, the much decorated and famous "One-armed General" of WWII in fight against the Japanese. (1940s; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



Nyunt Sein (1928-2016) with his grandnephew, Sao Hseng Hpa, in Taunggyi (2012; Sao Hseng Hpa Namhkok).



Sao Thaug Shwe, Kyemmong (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



WANYIN/BANYIN STATE

Wanyin/Banyin was another small state situated southeast of Yawnghwe and southwest of Mong Pawn. It was part of Nawngmawn State until 1826 when it was allowed to separate and became a distinct entity. However, later it was again incorporated into Nawngmawn but, just before annexation, it had become detached again. The ruler at that time, Hkun Hpu, had supported the Limbin Confederacy and had presented one of his daughters to the Limbin Prince. At the time of annexation, the British confirmed him as Myosa as he was already ruling Wanyin.

A son who succeeded did not rule for long and the title went to his grandson, Hkun Han, who was sent to the Shan Chiefs School, but was found not to be suitable to fill the role of *myosa*. However, Hkun Waik a brother of Hkun Han was chosen instead to be Myosa in 1918, and confirmed in 1921. He married into the Mong Pawn family. In 1923, he was suspected of misappropriation of

treasury funds and was suspended from his duties. He was ordered to live in Taunggyi until his debts had been settled. He could not repay his debts within the allotted time of three years and the suspension was further extended to six years. During this period, an uncle who was a police sub-inspector was a temporary caretaker of the state. Hkun Yung, a half-brother of the police chief was made Administrator in 1897 but was dismissed due to his unfortunate connection to an alleged gang of dacoits. However, by 1923, Hkun Waik's debts were repaid and he was re-instated as Myosa.

Such alleged misconduct committed by some princes and the British officials ensuing reprimand was a regular theme. As mentioned earlier, none of the ruling princes had ever made a distinction between private and public funds in former days. Unfortunately for those who got themselves into trouble seemed to have believed that whatever came into the State Treasury belonged to them personally. They were to learn the hard way that it was not so, under the code of behavior of the British administration.

The next ruler was Sao Sein Nyunt, an adopted son of Sao Waik. In 1934 as was usual, he was sent off to Taunggyi to study at the Shan Chiefs School. He was appointed Kyemmong when he left school in 1942. He joined the Allied troops when the British returned, and helped to fight the retreating Japanese in the neighboring states of Nawngmawn, Namhkok, and Hopong.

In 1945, he was recognized as Myosa by the British Administration and went to train at the Commissioner's office in Taunggyi. His appointment as Saohpa was confirmed in 1950. After the first election in 1952, he was elected as a member of House of Nationalities and served as a member on the Finance Committee of the Shan State Government.

Sao Sein Nyunt, Saohpa of Wanyin (r. 1950-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



HOPONG STATE

Hopong was originally part of the northern portion of Nawngmawn, but became a separate state in 1783. Hkun Kya was a *ngwegunhmu* and its first known chief. This title remained in his family from 1809-1851. The last of the line was Hkun Hti. When he died in 1851, three successive *myo-oks* 'town administrators' were appointed by Burmese monarchs to administer the state.

The next known ruler was Hsu-ri-ya, who had been Myosa of Mong Pu and Mong Hsat and ruled until 1885. He was expelled by his subjects allegedly due to bad conduct and excessive drinking. It must be noted that people exerted their powers in those days and were not always downtrodden simply because they lived in feudal times.

During the conflict between those for and against the Limbin Confederacy, Hopong suffered greatly. The capital was burnt down on four separate occasions. Hkun Wa-ra, who was in charge of Hopong, submitted to the British soon after annexation. He was then appointed Myosa and was said to have been a good ruler and managed to restore his state to normality.

Upon his death in 1893, his son, Hkun Hsai, succeeded him and ruled for seven years. When he died in 1900, his son, Hkun Law, was recognized as Myosa. Since he was too young, administrators, including his mother, took charge of the state for some five or six years.

Hkun Law was born in 1897 and was half Pa-O and half Tai Shan. He was first educated at a Buddhist school and later attended the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. Although he was recognized as Myosa in 1918, his appointment was only confirmed in 1921.

No records have been found describing his life and work, but he was a familiar figure at most of the Shan State conferences. There are many photographs of him in the Shan Cultural Museum at Yawnghwe.

Myosa Hkun Law, like other *myosa*, was elevated to *saohpa* after the war. His Mahadevi was Sao Mye Noon with whom he had a daughter, Lena, and a son, Sao Kwe. Three other pretty daughters - Thelma, Noreen, and Bertha - were from other wives he had married.

Thelma, who was about my age, grew up to be a very beautiful woman. When I saw her after the Japanese war some four or five years since we first met, she was tall and slim, and looked like a Tahitian beauty. One of these beautiful daughters married an army officer in the 1960s.

Sao Kwe became the *kyemmong* and had three children - Sao Hkun Oh, Sao Hkun Hpone, and Mya Nandi.

Sao Hkun Oh was born on 27 May 1951 in Taunggyi. His father was Sao Kwe, the previous *Kyemmong* of Hopong. At the age of five Sao Hkun Oh went to study at St Anne's English school in Taunggyi. In order to continue the Hopong lineage, the President of Burma accorded him his grandfather's status on 15 August 1957.

When the *saohpa* relinquished their powers to the Shan State Government in 1959 during the Caretaker government of General Ne Win, it was the young Sao Hkun Oh, grandson of Sao Hkun Law, the *Saohpa* of Hopong, who tendered his abdication as *Kyemmong*.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Nang Shwe Oo (Hopong Family Private Collection).



Hopong Saohpa Sao Hkun Law (r. 1921-1952) (back row) in white suit, third from the right taken in 1940s. With him in the back row L-R are Hsahmong Kham, Kesi Mansam, unknown, Hopong, Laikha, and Pangmi princes. In the front row are two unknown, while Mong Pawn Saohpa is in the middle and Samka Saohpa is to the right (1940s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Kyemmong Sao Hkun Oh (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Kyemmong Sao Hkun Oh 2000s. (Hopong Family Private Collection).



Nang Shwe Oo (d. 2009) (1970; Hopong Family Private Collection).



Sao Kwe, Hopong Kyemmong (Hopong Family Private Collection).



SAKOI STATE

Inhabitants

In the past, the peoples living in Sakoi State were known as the Padaung. Today, most of them prefer to be called Kayan. They are often thought of as a subgroup of the Karenni (in Burmese, *ni* means red) among whom the largest group in the Karenni States, the Kayah, traditionally wore red-colored clothing: i.e., Red Karen people. These hardy people are said to be Mongolian in origin but much research still needs to be conducted on the histories of Karen peoples.

In ancient times, it was believed that the Padaung lived and farmed together with the Mon, along the Irrawaddy and the Salween rivers in Lower Burma. They claim to have arrived on the Shan Plateau many centuries ago. They are also related to the Taungthu who are now known as the Pa-O, and supposedly were part of the general Pa-O migration northwards from southern Thaton. Most of them live around Pekon, the capital of Sakoi, and its surrounding, thick-forested hills. The

majority of the Padaung live around the northwest Karenni/Kayah State borders and are found living scattered in certain Southern Shan States, in and around Pyinmana and in the Karen State at Than Daung.

Sakoi lies adjacent to Samka to its south. Together they form a watershed between the Sittang River on the west and the Salween River to the east. Its territory was just under a hundred square miles though it was believed to have been a larger state of some importance in former times. This small state, is situated near the border with Karenni, now known as Kayah State. Different races inhabit this region today, as they did in earlier days - the Tai Shan, Padaung, and the many different groups of Karenni people. The Padaung are still in the majority in Sakoi.

Although Sakoi is little known, its "giraffe neck" women became famous in the 1930's when they were discovered wearing thick coils of bronze around their necks. Bertram Mills (1873-1938) from England took a few Padaung women there and put them on show in his circus as curiosities. Pascal Khoo Thwe, a scholar and writer revealed that one of these women was his grandmother when shown a photograph of a sculptured head of a giraffe-neck lady from the Bertram Mill Circus (Thwe 2003:295).

Many Padaung/Kayan still follow their own religion and celebrate their traditional festivals. Many however, have become Roman Catholics as Italian missionaries have worked among them since the nineteenth century. There are a few Buddhists to be found scattered around Sakoi.

In the 1980's and 1990's due to conflicts with the Tatmadaw, whole village populations moved to Thailand and many Padaung are to be found living within Mae Hong Son Province.

When the British annexed the Shan States, Hkun Kyan was ruling and in 1878, his son Hkun Htun was recognized by the British to succeed him as Myosa. When Hkun Htun died in 1913, his son, Hkun Nyunt (1880-?), a Buddhist Tai Shan, succeeded him. His mother, Sao Nang Kham, was the daughter of the Namhkok Ngwegunhmu prince.

Hkun Nyunt had two siblings, but he was the only son. He began his studies at the Sakoi Buddhist School at the age of twelve. When he was twenty-five, he served as an official in the Loikaw administrative offices. After the death of his father Hkun Htun in 1913, Hkun Nyunt was appointed as Sakoi Myosa two years later by Burma's Governor, Sir Harcourt Butler. During the Japanese occupation, he was again confirmed as Myosa by the then Japanese commander-in-chief. By the time the first Panglong Conference in 1946 was held, he and with other *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* had been elevated to the position of *saohpa*.

Sao Hkun Nyunt was an elderly ruler with a benign appearance. Little is known about his family and personal life. His son the *kyemmong*, Sao Sein Pwang, later married into the Mong Pai House.

Much is to be learnt from Pascal Khoo Thwe's book. A Padaung himself, the author gives a detailed description of the lives and customs of the Padaung people. He was extremely fortunate to have managed to leave his homeland in the 1990s and after many adventures in the jungle as a dissident arrived in England. An enterprising man, he attended Cambridge University, obtained his degree, and later wrote about his own life and that of his Padaung/Kayan people. The author's family lived in Pekon, the capital of Sakoi State.

Sakoi Saohpa Sao Hkun Nyunt (r. 1913-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



MONG PAI STATE

Mong Pai Amalgamated

Mong Pai State with a long history going back to 1541 was an individual state. Some 400 years later in 1953, it was amalgamated with Karenni/Kayah State by the Burmese military administration that governed the Shan Plateau from 1949 to 1954 following the uprisings of the KNDO, Kachin mutineers, and the Pa-O rebels. The reason given was that Mong Pai's population, the Padaung and those of the Karenni were the same. The military claimed that it made sense for the two groups to merge, making it easier for the military administration to deal with one group of Padaung rather than two. Though the Shan States did not want to lose a member state and Mong Pai did not want to lose its independence, this change was forced upon them and there was no recourse.

Mong Pai is just north of the Karenni State and is the most southern of the Shan States. The larger Mong Pai State and the smaller Sakoi State lie adjacent to each other and were interlocked economically and socially. In earlier times, Mong Pai was larger and included a sizeable part of today's Mae Hong Son in Thailand. Its inhabitants were Padaung and various Karen groups who were closely related to the Karenni peoples. Others living together with them were some Tai Shan.

The history of the State of Mong Pai traces back to the period when Tai Shan kings ruled in Ava from 1287 to 1555. Burmese history books relate that Thohanbwa, also known in Shan as Hso Han Hpa, was considered a bad king. After his assassination, the Ava throne was offered to Sao Hkun Mong, the Saohpa of On Pawng/Hsipaw in 1543. As King of Ava, his regal name was Hkommaing. The new king's aspirations were for a unified kingdom, composed of the existing Burman kingdoms and that of the Shan Kingdom of Ava. To ensure loyalty and control over his lands, he sent his sons, brothers, and nephews to rule in various parts of his kingdom and the Shan Plateau with instructions to adhere to the custom of paying annual homage to Ava. He ruled for three years and was succeeded by one of his sons.

Moby Narapati

Sao Pe, a son of Sao Hkun Mong the King of Ava, was then the Saohpa of Mong Pai. He was brought to Ava when his father died, and crowned King of Ava in 1546. He became known as Narapati III of Ava and as 'Moby Narapati' (Moby being the Burmese name for Mong Pai).

A previous Shan monarch of Ava before Sao Pe's father had come from Mong Yang/Mohnyin

and objected to Sao Pe's ascension to the throne. Mohnyin was a powerful state and had earlier helped to usurp Ava in 1527. For this reason, the Mohnyin Saohpa felt that he had a greater right than Sao Pe to the kingdom of Ava.

Eventually a dispute erupted with the son of Mong Yang/Mohnyin Saohpa, Sithu Kyawhtin, in 1551, who led a rebellion. When he was attacked from the north, Moby Narapati fled to Toungoo to request help from Bayinnaung. Moby Narapati was the penultimate king of Ava and reigned from 1546 to 1552. Sithu Kyawhtin having won then ruled Ava for the next few years. Bayinnaung did not take immediate action but, sometime later, he obligingly answered the call for help from Moby Narapati. In due course Ava was attacked by Bayinnaung who was victorious and, rather than hand back the kingdom to Narapati III, Bayinnaung became supreme ruler of Ava in 1555. Thus, ended the 200 years of the Tai Shan Dynasty of the Court of Ava.

After Sao Pe had left Mong Pai for Ava, events became unpredictable and uncertain. Mong Pai was first ruled by a brother, Kam Kaw, who was followed by a succession of relatives of the Hsipaw family until 1682. Two nominees of the then Burman king were installed as rulers in 1682 and 1692 respectively, but were rejected by the people of Mong Pai. The second candidate was killed, whereupon the king sent his Burman forces to destroy Mong Pai in 1696.

Many years later in 1759, efforts were made to re-settle both the state and its capital, as its inhabitants had fled the Burman assault. By 1763, Mong Pai Town was re-established. Several attempts were made by the people of Mong Pai to install Hkun Pyu of the ancient family as ruler, but the Burman monarch had a grudge against him and was reluctant to give approval.

In the end, the monarch, Singu Min, in 1776, selected the then Myosa of Lawksawk to rule Mong Pai. However, things did not go smoothly and once again Mong Pai was without a *saohpa*. Over a period of nearly thirty years the state was administered by various Burman and Tai Shan officials until 1803. Finally, Hkun Pyu, who had originally been chosen, became Saohpa. He ruled for three years. After his death, a succession of sons of the family ruled. In 1808, Hkun Hkam Leng/Hkun Hlaing was chosen as Saohpa. When he later tried to regain portions of the territory that had been lost over the years of instability, he was arrested and taken to Ava in 1820. A Burman administrator then again took charge of Mong Pai.

When war broke out with Manipur in 1823, the king sent Hkun Hkam Leng off to fight with the Burmese forces and, upon his victorious return, he was rewarded by being reinstated as Saohpa. Mong Pai enjoyed relative peace until 1833 when disruptive Padaung elements from a neighboring state invaded and seized some villages. In 1836 in the ensuing fight to eject them, Hkun Hkam Leng was killed. A year later, both the Padaung and Tai Shan people of Mong Pai chose the prince's son, Hkun Yong, as their ruler.

The dynastic fortunes of the state again disrupted his reign, which was filled with intrigues and infighting. Mong Pai was also continuously being attacked by lawless Padaung and Karen mostly from the neighboring state of Loi Long/Pinlaung. From 1852-1857 there were also disputes with the Karenni and other states. In spite of it all, Hkun Yong the ruler, managed to live through the reigns of four Bamar kings.

In 1887, the British acknowledged him as ruler and the frontier was delimited in 1889. Hkun Yong abdicated in 1890 and died in 1900. His eldest son Hkun Hsuriya took over and ruled Mong Pai. On his death in 1907, his son and Sao Yong's grandson, Sao Pin Nya was recognized as Myosa.

When Sao Ping Nya (b. 1881) was installed as Saohpa later, he married Sao Mya Chit, a half-sister of the Samka Saohpa, and made her his Mahadevi. The family had married into the Sakoi, Samka, and Loi Long/Pinlaung families. However, when Mong Pai was amalgamated with Karenni to form Kayah State, the ill-fated lineage of *saohpa* came to an end.

ATTEMPT AT PROGRESS

Very little development seems to have taken place during the years of upheaval. It is difficult to imagine that if there had been peace, and if only the Tatmadaw had left people alone, might there have been some progress? At least in the agricultural sector? Since not only were there experimental farms and soil conservation stations, there was also a large agricultural project in Wanyin. It had been set up to serve most of the Southern Shan States and particularly in those states that lay immediately to the east of Yawnghwe State. These included Mong Pawn, Hopong, Hsahtung, and Wanyin itself, extending towards Kengtung including two smaller states, Namhkok and Nawngmawn. It was Tai Shan, Danu, Pa-O, and Taungyo territory including other smaller ethnic groups.

The project was designed to teach modern land utilization, the use of semi-mechanized machines, and new methods to be employed in suitable forms of mixed farming. The Union Government had made funds available to the Shan State Government for the project.

One objective of the Wanyin project was to recover soil that had become exhausted from excessive slash and burn methods that had been used for decades by nomadic communities. It was also to encourage indigenous inhabitants such as the Pa-O, Palaung, Danu, and other peoples to move down and settle in the valleys.

The Wanyin project started in 1951. It involved 3,000 acres, and was a cooperative. It had ten tractors and other necessary mechanized equipment for sowing and tillage, while harvesting, for the moment, remained a manual task. The project sought to demonstrate to farmers how to make the best possible use of gently sloping land by contour ploughing that did not require large capital development and could be put under cultivation immediately. A technique requiring only simple instruments to set out the main contour lines was easily taught.

The project covered a "fertile crescent" stretching from Taunggyi though Hopong, Wanyin down to Loikaw, and through Leiktho to Yedashe. This offered those who had survived on subsistence farming with only a small cash crop, the chance to transform themselves into a modern community, and develop large areas of land that then were barely used. The main crops suggested for cultivation were soybeans, peanuts, Indian maize, wheat, garlic, and various other vegetables.

The land was also well suited to cattle and sheep rearing, and if developed, it was believed could be less costly than ordinary mixed farming. There were also plans to have grazing land and a dairy herd. The grasses found in this area, however, were unsuitable for large scale development because once the dry season set in, the grass became too tough. To overcome this, farmers traditionally burnt off patches of grassland to enable the grass to put out new green shoots. Nevertheless, it was planned to introduce varieties of grass from Australia that would provide satisfactory grazing throughout the year.

There was concern that Tai Shan farmers, being Buddhists, might not be willing to raise livestock for slaughter. However, there were already pig producers and small numbers of slaughterers among the Tai Shan who were generally forced to live outside the village limits. It was estimated that less than one percent of the dairy farmers in the Shan States were Tai Shan, and that the main milk suppliers were the Gurkha families who had settled on the Plateau in the past.

Since the Shan Plateau has an agreeable climate and vast stretches of empty spaces, and in the past several projects were planned to improve the local standard of living. Planting tung oil trees was one of the schemes. A variety of the tung tree was indigenous to the Shan States and plantations of tung oil trees were developed in Mong Kung, Kengtung, Hsipaw, Tawngpeng, and the Karenni hills, with considerable success.

Such were the ambitious plans for improvement and development for the Shan States, which

unfortunately had to be shelved, when the whole fabric of the Shan Plateau was torn apart after the military coup of 1962 and instability. Presently, efforts are being made to boost agriculture, including raising cattle and swine.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE MYE LAT STATES: THE MIDDLE LANDS

The region commonly known as Mye Lat lies west of both Lawksawk and Yawnghwe States, acting as a buffer between Burma Proper and the Shan States. Administratively, it covered a larger area taking in some of the smaller states to the south and southeast of Yawnghwe.

Mye Lat 'empty land' was a name used by the Burman kings to describe unpopulated land. A Burmese word, it could also mean 'middle earth' or 'fair earth' depending on the spelling.

Nevertheless, the vast area was inhabited, though sparsely. The Danu recount their history going back to myth. The Danu claim to have been in the region for centuries with heads of families recognized as chiefs of their own groups - Pindaya and Pwehla are believed to be the oldest. Some families kept a continuous lineage. Although they were independent of one another, the lesser attached themselves to the larger groups seeking their protection for practical purposes.

The Danu are said to be of Tibeto-Burman stock though they were thought to have been similar to the Pa-O and the Karenni. They speak a Burmese dialect that is not always recognized by the Bamar as their language.

In 1755, Alaungpaya, founder of the Konbaung Dynasty, marked out boundaries, appointed chiefs, and demanded tribute from them. The rulers were then graded as *myosa*, a title for a lesser ruling prince, which in Burmese literally means 'Eater of Towns'. It was widely used by the Court of Mandalay. As in antiquity, the *myosa*'s main function was to collect taxes. The next grade down was the *ngwegunhmu* 'silver revenue person in charge'.

Many of the Mye Lat rulers owed their positions as *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* by the grace of the Bamar monarchy. It was therefore, not surprising that they were often bullied and harshly treated at the whim of these kings. They were punished by demotion or imprisonment for any disobedience, but rewarded when they pleased the monarch of the time. Although other princely rulers received the same treatment, the Mye Lat states, situated on the western edge of the Shan Plateau, were in easy reach of the Mandalay Court and were more vulnerable. Mye Lat rulers had to collect taxes and had to provide soldiers for the campaigns such as those against Lan Na in 1797 and the First Anglo Burma War from 1782 to 1826.

In 1857, King Mindon sent one of his ministers to hold a *darbar* in Mong Nai where the Sitkedaw gyi held court. *Sitke* is the equivalent of 'viceroy', but in this case he was the *gyi* 'great' *daw* 'royal' viceroy. The minister determined that the Mye Lat rulers were rich enough to pay considerably more revenue than they were then paying. This was because he was made aware of the locally exploited silver, lead, and tungsten/wolfram mines that were scattered in the region. The best known of these was Baw Saing, near Pindaya.

As a result of his evaluation, a separate office at Indein, a southwest village situated in Inle, was established to deal with Mye Lat. U Bwa, the *wun* 'high official'/'minister' of the Mandalay Court, was put in charge and his main purpose was to regulate the payment of taxes from these Mye Lat States.

In 1844 a military post was set up at Pekon in Sakoi State to keep the Karenni raiders in check. By then Mye Lat Sitkedaw's (royal *sitke*) jurisdiction was extended to include such states as Hopong, Wanyin, Hsahtung, and Samka. Tribute had to be paid in silver flowers, bangles, bowls, and cups. Then in 1865, King Mindon fixed the *thathameda* tax to be paid from three to ten Peacock

rupees⁶² per household. The same collection of taxes continued during King Thibaw's reign collected through the Sitkedaw gyi of Mong Nai and the Sitkedaw gyi of Mye Lat.

When the British arrived in 1885, the various Mye Lat chiefs submitted their allegiance, which then numbered some twenty-four states. In 1922, the *Burma Gazette* reported that there were fourteen states. Gradually, some smaller states had been amalgamated with larger ones, bringing the numbers down to eight by 1939. Yawnghwe had historically ruled many such sub-states numbering thirty-nine during Sao Yun's reign (r. 1762-1818), making Yawnghwe one of the largest of the Shan States.

As mentioned above, during the British period the different rulers were divided into the three grades of *ngwegunhmu*, *myosa*, and *saohpa*. However, by the time of the first Panglong Conference in 1946, both the ranks of *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* had disappeared and each of these princes had been elevated to the rank of *saohpa*.

Most of the region is rolling grasslands, largely devoid of outcrops of trees and jungle. There are however, outcrops of mountains that range from 5,000 to 6,000 feet. Its soil is rich ochre color, with high iron oxide content making it ideal to grow cash crops of rice, potatoes, and *thanatphet*. On either side of the road from Aungban to Kyong and Pwehla are marked out fields where different crops in varying stages of growth provides spectacular landscape splashed with hues of ochre, green, golden and ashen patches creating a dashing canvas of colors. There are wooded areas of green, but it is the quilt-like effect of the backdrop that is impressive, panning out over the plains as far as the eye can see. Occasionally, one might see a family group sitting under the shade of a single tree, in the middle of a field resting from their work.

Cabbage, cauliflower, oranges, coffee, corn, and wheat are now grown widely and are sold at the five-day bazaars. Although the thick teak forests are no longer visible, in the past the two teak forests of the region were under the care of the timber trading company, Messrs. Dawood and Co., who also looked after the logging in Mong Mit.

The main states such as Hsahmong Kham, Pwehla, Baw, Pangtara/Pindaya, Pangmi, Yegnan/Ywangan, and Kyong were largely occupied by the Danu, but in general, the population in the past may have been as it is presently, composed of Danu, Daye, Danaw, Pa-O, Taungyo, Intha, Burman, White and Red Karen, Padaung, and Tai Shan and small numbers of other diverse groups.

Aside from touristic promotional materials, not much has been written about the individual Mye Lat States nor their Danu princes. Somehow it was only after the Japanese period that many became much more involved in Shan affairs and governance. In fact, the new generation succeeded where their fathers had failed, lacking modern education and a broad background in politics. The young *kyemmong* were better educated and looked forward to doing their share for the development of the Shan States.

The AFPFL pressed very hard through U Tin Aye and Namkham U Htun Aye, two Tai Shan politicians, to win the Mye Lat Saohpa' support for immediate amalgamation with Burma Proper. There might have been divided loyalties since, in former times, many rulers owed their elevated positions to the Burman kings. Despite the successful outcome of union with Burma Proper, there were others who remained skeptical. The Tai Shan princes probably found the Mye Lat princes too closely aligned to the Burman, and thus to the AFPFL and the Tatmadaw.

Prior to World War II, there was a distinct gap between the Saohpa of the Northern and Southern Shan States, the level of seniority and wealth sharpened the division. There was healthy competition in wanting to show that they, the Mye Lat princes, were just as able as the senior princes. Perhaps the inclusion of both Kengtung and Yawnghwe within the Southern States helped to bridge

⁶² The Peacock rupee was a silver coin with a peacock embossed on one side.

the gap.

After independence in 1948, many of the Mye Lat Saohpa excelled, becoming Ministers of State, Members of Parliament, committee members, leading delegations, participating in projects, and making plans for the prosperity of the Shan State and the Union of Burma.

Experimental Stations

A concerted effort was made on this part of the Shan Plateau to improve the conditions of cultivators with both small and large holdings in the Southern Shan States. An early effort encouraged Tai Shan and other communities such as the Pa-O, Danu, and Taungyo of the Inner Shan states and Mye Lat to learn improved farming techniques.

As early as 1915, an agricultural experimental station had been started in Yawngwe, at the foothills and near the shores of Inle. It was a thirty-seven-acre establishment with roads and drains and buildings, of which ten acres were irrigable and the remainder suitable for dry crops. This experimental farm was founded to help improve potato and wheat cultivation, rotation of crops, introduction of new varieties, storage of grains, and the improvement of paddy fields in Yawngwe and other valleys. There was also a soil conservation scheme.

To interest the farmers, demonstrations of simple and effective implements were offered. New farming methods were introduced and exhibitions were held at different annual festivals in the different states. The 1927 agricultural exhibition for instance, included displays of implements and new variety of seeds with lectures given at the Kuk ku Pagoda Festival, mostly for villagers living in the hills around the area.

In 1928, the Federation Department of Agriculture took over. Officials made annual visits and reported to the Director of Agriculture, Burma, and Federated Shan States.

U Kya Bu, who came from Hsipaw, was the Senior Agricultural Assistant, in charge of the Yawngwe farm. He was assisted by three other officials who worked out of Samka, Aungban, and Pwehla. Suitable students from Shan Chiefs' School, who were usually sons of the princes, were encouraged to take an interest. Some were sent to the Mandalay Agricultural College for further training.

At the 1928 agricultural exhibition held at Bawrethat, the pagoda complex which lies between Yawngwe and the railway terminus, the Yawngwe Saohpa gave prizes for the best exhibits. Since my father took a great interest in agriculture, it must have been an exciting event for him to have seen all the new implements, seed varieties, new varieties of fruit and vegetables, and possibilities ahead for the farmers.

There were plans to extend the railway line from Shwenyaung, some seven miles from Yawngwe, but given that this was uncertain, a decision was made to move the experimental farm up to the hilly outskirts of Taunggyi. It was believed the site near the main road would offer better transport and was a healthier location, since the Yawngwe site was near swamps and attracted mosquitoes carrying malaria.

By March 1929, the move was made. The farm was built two miles north of Taunggyi and consisted of forty-seven acres. Thirty acres of these were kept for demonstrations while the remaining acreage was leased out to Pa-O cultivators, under guidance of the farm superintendent.

The farm team was an enthusiastic group of men who arranged demonstrations of the ridge and furrow method of cultivating potatoes in Heho, Aungban, Kalaw, and Pwehla. Advice was also given on the best kind of potatoes to be used for the different areas. Regular inspections were made to the Yawngwe, Samka, and Mong Nai farms to evaluate their progress.

By 1933, the work of the Taunggyi farm was extended to include agricultural research and

education. It continued running demonstrations and providing general information. Experimental programs included growing coffee from Ceylon in Hsahtung, *thanapet* in Mong Pawn, ground nuts in Baw and Kyong, pineapples in Kesi Mansam, and oranges in Lawksawk and Mong Hsu. Other schemes included growing almonds, walnuts, and pistachios.

Overall the experimental farm was doing well. There were various pilot schemes throughout the inner Shan States and Mye Lat, with a view to finding suitable cash crops. Though stock farming was not popular among Buddhist cultivators, pasture grass and clover seeds were imported from Australia and New Zealand for trials.

These agricultural activities continued even after the upheaval of the Japanese occupation. Men such as the Mong Pawn Saohpa were keen to find new ways for villagers to increase their earnings and raise their standard of living.

There was concern over soil erosion due to haphazard farming by the various villagers of this region and consequently, Soil Conservation Centers were set up near Heho, Thigit, Pinlaung, Pwehla, Pindaya, Khong, and Pinhmi soon after independence. Just like at the old experimental stations, farmers were taught how to make good use of the land and its conservation.

HSAHMONG KHAM STATE

Arrival of the Danu

Hsahmong Kham was the first state that lay along the major road running from Burma Proper to the Inner Shan States. From the plains, the climb was considerable. The hill station of Kalaw is situated over 4,265 feet above sea level and the road then sloped down to the orangey colored flat lands leading to Aungban, the capital, and on towards Taunggyi, another hill station and the administrative center. Tourists who have visited Aungban have become familiar with it, since Heho the airport, lies nearby and they must pass through the town to reach the airport. The railway also passes through here and ends up in Shwenyaung, the terminus. It presently serves as the junction for a branch railway line to Loikaw in Kayah State that was constructed in 1992.

About two centuries ago, over a thousand Danu families climbed up to the Shan Plateau to escape warfare and famine. Their leader was Htun Gyi and they settled in a place that became known as Hsahmong Kham. This group included U Mye Su, a pious and learned man, who lived in Hsahmong Kham. King Mindon was fascinated when he heard about him and commanded his presence at Court. He soon became Mindon Min's favorite and acquired power. He became involved in the affairs of the different Mye Lat States, having chiefs deposed and replaced by his own nominees. The states that suffered were Pangtara/Pindaya, Pwehla, and Myinmati.

There were a number of rulers who ruled for short periods in Hsahmong Kham under the influence of U Mye Su. In 1878, the former chief of Hsahmong Kham, U Shwe Min, was reinstated with the title of *ngwegunhmu*. During the melee of the Limbin Confederacy and fighting between the princes, which was followed by the British annexation of the Shan States, U Shwe Min took the opportunity of seizing some lesser states. On his death in 1886, his son, Maung Po, succeeded as *ngwegunhmu*.

The British confirmed his installation as an *ngwegunhmu* a year later and he was awarded the ATM in 1895. Four years later, he was promoted to the rank of *myosa* with first class magisterial powers. He was fortunate to attend the 1903 Delhi Durbar with other Shan princes as representative of the Mye Lat. The British liked him for his shrewdness, good intentions, and for his industriousness.

When Min Maung Po died in 1923, there was no immediate successor and the state was put under charge of two administrators. The first was the Myosa of Mawnang, known as Bawnin in Burmese, and the second was Sao San Mya, the Myosa of Pwehla, a holder of the KSM. When the time came to select an heir, Min Maung Po's grandson, Sao Htun E, was chosen. He was the son of Sao Hkun Hti Mawnang Myosa and Daw Khin Htar, the daughter of Min Maung Po. Sao Htun E was born in 1914 and was educated at the Shan Chiefs' School in Taunggyi.

In 1931 and 1934, two lesser states, Loi Ai and Mawnang, were incorporated into Hsahmong Khan. Loi Ai was ruled by a *ngwegunhmu*, while Mawnang had a *myosa*. Loi Ai's first known ruler was Maung Shwe, who ruled from 1814 to 1834. When Maung Shwe died, two sons succeeded him. Later, a nephew, Maung Kaing, ruled from 1863 to 1868. He fell into disgrace and was banished. His brother, Maung Kya, then became ruler. Taking pity on his brother, Maung Kya gave him refuge, for which action he was imprisoned in Mandalay. Maung Kya was later reinstated and was *ngwegunhmu* until his death in 1903. He was awarded the ATM by the British for his life's work. In 1913, Maung Kya's grandson, Saw Maung, who was a Pa-O and a Buddhist, was recognized as *ngwegunhmu*. His mother was the daughter of the Mawnang Myosa.

Although Mawnang was not a large state, it had many connections with Mye Lat families. The Myosa Hkam Hon was an ally of the King of Pagan and did not pay tribute. The eleventh ruler, Maung Myat, was a poor administrator and was summoned to live in Ava. Later, Htun Hti, the eighteenth ruler of Mawnang was installed as Myosa in 1907 during the British period. By this time, many of the villages had transferred their allegiance from Mawnang to Hsahmong Kham and Yawnghe because they had been unhappy under Maung Myat's rule.

Defended the State

In Hsahmong Kham by 1937, Sao Htun E (1914-1985) was fully trained to administer his state and was installed as Myosa of Hsahmong Kham (r. 1937-1959). A year later he married Sao Kyi Htoo, the daughter of the Saohpa Long of Samka. They did not have a son so adopted their nephew, Sao Maung Yin, who was recognized as Kyemmong.

In 1939, Sao Htun E was elected to the Shan State Saohpa Council representing the Mye Lat. During the Japanese occupation, he tried to unite the princes of the Mye Lat States and the people to fight against the Japanese. He achieved his wish to fight the Japanese when he came across Bomu Ba Htoo and worked with him. Bomu Ba Htoo, formerly of the Burma Independence Army, was leading a battalion assigned to secure land supply routes in northern Burma. In 1943, Ba Htoo had been promoted to major and later made commander of the Northwest Command.

As Allied troops advanced, Bomu Ba Htoo attacked both the retreating Japanese forces and their supply lines. In acknowledgement of Ba Htoo's bravery and resourcefulness, General Aung San promoted him to colonel. Unfortunately, he was not able to accept the accolade as he died of malaria in a small village in Southern Shan State in June 1945. Later that year to honor him, the Tatmadaw built a town in Lawksawk State to serve as a training center for officers and to provide housing for their families. The place is known as Ba Htoo Tatmyo 'Fort Ba Htoo'.

Also known as Ba Htoo Myo, this large military complex is alleged to be a place detainees fear owing to the many stories about torture and harsh treatment there.

Sao Htun E became more actively involved in Shan State affairs and, at the 1946 Panglong Conference, he represented the Mye Lat and was one of the signatories of the Panglong Agreement in 1947. A year later, he was elected as a Chairman of the Pa-La-Ka-Pha and became the deputy Chairman of the Saohpa' Association, by which time he had been elevated to Saohpa.

In August 1949, Taunggyi was overrun and occupied by the insurgents. In order to drive them

away, Mye Lat princes organized themselves and cooperated with the Tatmadaw to fight the insurgents. Taunggyi was eventually regained a few months later in November.

Politically Involved

By March 1952, Sao Htun E was deeply involved in politics and assisted as Deputy Commissioner for the Southern Shan State. The Union Government was impressed by his efforts and awarded him the title of Mahathraysithu. In April 1952, he was selected as Health Minister for the Shan State Government. In the same year, he accompanied other princes to India on a fact-finding mission. He was deputy leader of the mission led by U Myint Thein, Union Minister of Justice. In India, they sought to observe and learn about the maharajas' work after they relinquished power to the Indian government. The Shan princely delegates wanted to consider the procedures for possible application to their own situation.

Between the years 1954 and 1956, Sao Htun E served as Minister for Shan State's Home and Religious Affairs, Municipal and Social Services, Information services and also dealt with Rehabilitation. At that time, he was also Deputy Chairman of Ya-Ta-Sa-Nya-Pha 'the Shan State Hill People's Organization (SSHPO). From 1956 to 1957, he held the post of Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation and the following year became Minister of Customs and National Identity for Burma.

The Hsahmong Kham prince was kept busy travelling and attending conferences. In 1957, he went to Britain and to the USA, France, Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong, and Thailand on a Fulbright grant. In 1958, he led a Burmese delegation to the UN ECAFE meeting held in Kuala Lumpur.

A diligent and outstanding person he took on a number of tasks for the Shan State. As a Member of Parliament for the Shan State to the Chamber of Nationalities, he worked constantly for the progress of his people. By 1959, like all the *saohpa*, he had abdicated his powers to the Shan State Government. Again between the years 1960 to 1962, Sao Htun E was intimately involved in the All States Conference on federal issues. He was one of the *saohpa* who went to Rangoon to convince Premier U Nu, Burman politicians, and the Tatmadaw that the Federal proposals were for unity rather than disintegration of the Union, which is how the Bamar saw it.

Predictably, he was detained by the Tatmadaw at the time of the coup in March 1962. He passed away in 1985.

HSAHMONG KHAM FAMILY TREE⁶³

I Min Maung Po, Myosa (r. 1886-1923)

II1 Sao Khin Htar m. Sao Hkun Hti, Myosa of Bawnyin/Mawnang

III1 Sao Khin Yin m. Saw Maung

IV1 Sao Maung Yin, Kyemmong of Hsahmong Kham

(Saohpa Sao Htun E adopted his nephew)

III2 Sao Khin Sein

III3 Sao Htun E (1914-1987; r. 1937-1959) Myosa, later Saohpa (r. 1943-1959)

Grandson of Min Maung Po.

III3Wife1 Ma Yee

IV1. Sao Myit Oo m. Sao San Tint, brother of Loi Long Saohpa

⁶³ Sources: Hsahmong Kham Family, U Min Lwin U, *The History of Aung Ban*. Aungban 2013, Saya U Myint Than, *Aung Ban*, Aungban 2012, *Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe*, (1959), and SSK.

V1 Sao Tha Oo

VI1. Sao Thet Nanda Oo

VI2. Sao Ei Sandar Myet

V2 Sao Sit Htoo

V3 Sao New Ni Aye

V4 Sao Khin Sandy

V5 Sao Sanda Theingi

III3Wife2 Ma Kyi

III3Wife3 Sao Kyi Oo, daughter of Samka Saohpa, Mahadevi of Hsahmong Kham
(She had no children but accepted Sao Myit Oo as her own)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Min Maung Po (r. 1886-1923) (Saya Min Than).



အောင်မန်းမြို့တည်ရန်မိန့်ကြားသူ-သာပိုင်းခမ်းစောဘွားကြီး မင်းမောင်စိုးနှင့် မိသားစု
(၁၈၉၇ခု-အမှုထမ်းစကောင်း A.T.M ဘွဲ့ရခင်က ဖမ်းတံတရားကံထားမိသပုံ)

Installation ceremony for Sao Htun E (1937; U Min Lwin Oo).



Saohpa Sao Htun E and Mahadevi Sao Kyi Htoo (1938: Saya Min Than).



မိုင်းခမ်းမြို့စား စော်ဘွား စောထွန်းအေးနှင့်ဇနီး-စောကြည်
 (၁၉၃၇-၁၉၅၈)အတွင်း အောင်ပန်းမြို့အုပ်ချုပ်ခဲ့သူ

Saohpa Sao Htun E (r. 1937-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum, Yawnghwe).



Amat gyi U Saw Maung and his wife, Sao Khin Yin, the sister of Hsahmong Khan Saohpa, with their two daughters (U Min Lwin Oo).



Sao Htun E's sister, Sao Khin Yin, with court ladies (1930s; U Min Lwin Oo).



Hsahmong Kham Haw (Saya Min Than).



၁၉၃၇-ဩဂုတ်လ တရားဝင်အုပ်ချုပ်ခွင့်ရ စော်ဘွား-စောထွန်းအေး၏ ဟော်/ရုံး
(ယခု ကလေးမြို့နယ် သမဝါယမ)

Saohpa Sao Htun E welcomes Prime Minister U Nu (1950; U Min Lwin Oo).



Saohpa Sao Htun E signing the abdication paper (1959; U Min Lwin Oo).



Amat gyi U Saw Maung and his wife, Sao Khin Yin, the sister of Hsahmong Khan Saohpa (Saya Min Than).



Justice U Gone Hman, a dignitary of Aungban (Saya Min Than).



Grandson of Sao Htun E Hsahmong Kham Saohpa, Sao Tha Oo, and wife at Yawnghwe (2013; Simms Collection).



Four women in costumes of 1920's fashion (Saya Min Than).



PANGTARA/PINDAYA STATE

Pindaya Caves

One of the places most visited by tourists in Mye Lat is Pindaya Caves, despite the difficulty of getting there on bumpy and bits of unpaved road. The state sits on the northwest border of Yawnghwe State and the southwest corner of Lawksawk State. The name for the state in Shan is Pangtara. Its capital was known as Pindaya.

It has become the custom to refer to both the capital and the state as Pindaya. The view driving into the town is of a beautiful lake surrounded by trees, houses, and a pagoda and monastery standing along one side. There is a feeling of coolness and tranquility. This changes on a bazaar day with the roar of motor bikes and thongs of people jamming the streets.

The caves are situated outside of the capital in the hills that rise to over 3,200 feet above sea level. On the road to the caves just beyond the town limit, a grove of ancient banyan trees stands with thick trunks that are thought to be a century old or more. The heavy, interlinked branches provide much needed shade in the heat of the day. Once a year the Tabaung Festival is held here. Villagers from afar come to camp there for days. Many also come from Thazi and Meiktila to sell their truck loads of watermelons.

The spectacular caves run north-south on a limestone ridge halfway up the hill. On reaching the caves and looking down across the valley one has an excellent vista of tiny houses, clumps of green trees, and patches of brown fields, dotted with small clusters of white pagodas below.

The cave was always a sacred place. However, in the late 1920s the entrance was dynamited for the construction of a pagoda inside and the placement of hundreds of Buddha images around it. Other Buddha images were placed in crevices and deep inside the cave, where hanging stalactites meet stalagmites. The caves are filled with glittering golden Buddha images, both ancient and modern. They are noted for the different range of styles, which have been adapted for the images and their decorative thrones. They range in size and construction ranging from marble to intricately carved wood. Many interesting sculptures of antiquity are reputed to be there, but they are no longer visible as they have been covered by later addition of Buddha images placed in front of them. Each

year the number of Buddha images increase as pilgrims wish to leave a mark of respect and to gain merit by donating yet another golden statue of the Buddha.

Some of the older Buddha images are believed to have been brought there during the Konbaung period of the Burman monarchy. Pindaya Cave is the only place in the country where images of a specific style, purporting to be Mahayana in tradition are found. A scholarly paper written in the 1930s stated that there were about seventy of these figures and that they were recognizable by the unique styling of the hair and facial features and posture of Buddha holding a seed in his upturned right palm. Accordingly, it was thought that these caves were once used by the Mahayana Bhisakkaguru tradition, though nothing more is known about this speculation.

Pindaya is a center from which tourists can make trekking trips around Mye Lat, visiting tribal communities to learn how people live their daily lives.

The versatile Shan paper is made from mulberry tree bark and is produced here commercially. An information sheet says that the bark is boiled and then pounded to soften it. Once it becomes pulp it is then poured into a square cotton sieve tray. The mixture is quickly spread thinly over the tray to drain the water. It is put out in the sun to dry, at which point it is ready for use. It is a surprisingly multipurpose paper for writing and painting. In the past, Buddhist scriptures were written on the paper. After some treatment, a thicker version of the paper is used for making sun parasols. The parasols, colorfully painted with flora and fauna, were once very popular. The making of paper and parasols are included in tourist itineraries for the Pindaya area. In Thailand, Laos and Nepal, a similar paper can also be found with each country developing its own method for this cottage industry.

The annals recorded that there were four rulers of Pindaya before 1783. Little else is known about them. U Shwe Bwin was believed to have been the *ngwegunhmu* and ruled Pindaya in 1783. There was also another ruler - the Sitke of Mye Lat named U Hlaing - who ruled in 1876. However, when the British annexed the Shan States, Maung Po Khin/U Po Khin, ruled Pindaya. His son, Hkun San Nyo the heir, was only seven years old when his father died. Subsequently the state was administered by U Ohn, a recipient of the TDM.

Hkun San Nyo (1890-1936; r. 1911-1936), the Myosa designate, had been sent to the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi for education and training. When he reached the age of twenty-one in 1911, he was installed as ruler of Pindaya. He married the daughter of the then Myosa of Loi Long/Pinlaung. He was considered intelligent and well-mannered, though a bit lazy and negligent of state affairs by the British. However, he was a good ruler and satisfactorily ruled for the next quarter century.

Becomes Saohpa

When Hkun Sun Nyo died in 1936, his son, Sao Win Kyi, was considered too young to assume responsibilities of Pangtara State. Until war broke out, a British administrator Mr. JC Poulton was put in charge of the State. When Sao Win Kyi (b. 1924; r. 1945-1959) was fourteen years old, he was designated as Myosa, but still too young to rule. As were other *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu*, Sao Win Kyi was elevated to *saohpa* after the 1946 Panglong Conference.

When World War II broke out, the Administrator left with the retreating British. In 1941, Sao Win Kyi returned to his family from school. During the Japanese occupation, the young man began working in the state office gaining administrative experience. After the war in 1945 when the British returned, he trained in administration at the office of the Kalaw District Officer.

From 1947 onwards he was actively involved in Shan State affairs. First, there was the Panglong Conference in 1947 where he advocated uniting to gain independence and to support

Bogyoke Aung San. In 1948, when Taunggyi was occupied by the KNDO and other insurgents, he served with the government's anti-insurgent group and fought together with the Tatmadaw. In the same year, he was elected as a member of the Shan State Saohpa Association and became a Member of Parliament for the Shan State to the Chamber of Nationalities.

Always keenly interested in politics, Sao Win Kyi became increasingly involved in Shan State affairs. His state duties eventually included being on the Public Accountancy Committee, on the Board for Funding of Public Education, and on the Agricultural Land Management Committee. The last involved a soil conservation project that had been set up years before the war, a project involving the Taunggyi experimental scheme.

Sao Win Kyi was about thirty-five when he abdicated his powers to the Shan State Government in 1959 together with other *saohpa*. In 1962 when the military coup took place, he was arrested along with other princes.

PINDAYA FAMILY TREE⁶⁴

I Hkun San Nyo, Ngwegunhmu (1890-1938; r. 1911-1938)

IWife1 Sao Khin Nu, Pindaya Mahadevi, daughter, Loi Lon Myosa

II1 Sao Khin Myint

II2 Sao Mya Khin m. Sao Hkun Oo, Pangmi Family

III1 Sao Kyi Than m. Nang Nwe Lek

IV1 Sao Win Myint

II3 Sao Khin Phyu m. Sao Ohn Kyin

III1 Sai Aung Myint Oo

II4 Khin Maung Tin

II5 Sao Win Kyi (b. 1924) Saohpa (r. 1943-1959) m. Sao Mya The

III1 Sao Yu Naing m. Ma Than Nyunt

III2 Bunny Win

III3 Khin Phu Aye/Vikki

III4 Ni Ni Win m. Maung Aung Myat

III5 Sao Myo Myint

III6 NweNwe Win

III7 Nyunt Nyunt Win

III8 Sao Myo Win m. Myint Myint Ney

III9 Phyu Phyu Win m. U Nyet Lin Aung

II6 Khin Maung Than m. Ma Than Tin

III1 Sao Mya Nyunt m. Khin Mo

III2 Ma Pyone m. Maung Win

III3 Aung Naing m. Myint Aye

III4 Ma Chaw m. Maung Hla Myint

III5 Tun Lin m. Win Win Kyaw

III6 Mya Mya Lay

II7 Sao Mya Tint m. Sein Kya Lay

III1 Nang Aye Myawadi

III2 Nang Cho Myawadi

⁶⁴ Sources: Pindaya Family and SSK (1943).

III3 Nang Thein Than Soe
 III4 Sein Htun Ne Yaung
 II8 Sao Mya Chit
 II9 Sao Khin Nyunt Kyi

IWife2 Ma Hla Gyi
 II1 Ma Nyein
 II2 Maung Hla Min
 II3 Ma Hto
 II4 Yuk Soe

PHOTOGRAPHS

Ngwegunhmu U Po Khin (d. 1897) (Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Myosa Hkun San Nyo (r. 1911-1936) (Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Saohpa Sao Win Kyi (r. 1946-1959) (Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Three siblings of the Pindaya Family, Henry, Bunny, and sister (name unknown) (2012; Simms Collection).



The Pangmi Family. Standing at the back L-R: Sao Hkun Htun Oo, Dr Hkun Saw, Khin Maung Latt, Khin Maung Lay, Hkun Soe Myint, Hkun Soe Win, and Hkun Maung Nge. Sitting in the front row: Dr Sao Mya May, Sao Mya New, Sao Mya Nyan, and Sao Mya Thein (1990; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Mye Lat princes with Bogyoke Aung San (with hat) and Daw Khin Kyi (middle). First row L-R: Pangmi Saohpa Sao Hkun Min, Hsahmong Kham Saohpa Sao Htun E, Bogyoke Aung San and wife, Daw Khin Kyi, and Hsahmong Kham Mahadevi Sao Kyi Htoo. At the back are Pangmi Sao Htun Oo, Pindaya Saohpa Sao Win Kyi, Kyong Saohpa Sao Hkun Saung, and Pwehla Saohpa Sao Htun Sein (1946/1947; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



A group of Mye Lat princes with Sao Hkun Hkio, Mong Mit Saohpa, Head of Shan State in the center wearing a black jacket (1948; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



BAW STATE

Baw le-hse-le-ywa

The state of Baw during the 1940's and 1950's was ruled by the accomplished and dedicated Sao Htun Aung. He remained a minister of the Shan State government from 1950 to 1958, serving under different portfolios.

His ancestor, Ko Thein Shin, well known for his scholarship and good deeds, was said to have been the founder of Baw. He ruled forty-four villages. Baw became known as Baw le-hse-le-ywa (Burmese), which translates as 'Baw, the Forty-four Villages' in Burmese. Ko Thein Shin paid an annual tribute of four *viss* of silver that came from his silver mines to the then reigning Burman monarch. Upon his death, his son, Maung Nyo Hlaing, was thirteen years old. Deemed too young to succeed, Administrators were put in charge of the state. The last Administrator was Maung On Gaing, Maung Nyo Hlaing's great, great grandfather.

In 1886, Maung Ohn Gaing was recognized as ruler, and awarded the TDM by the British. During that period, criminals used Baw State as a safe haven from where they went down to the plains to raid the villages. At one time, it became impossible for the state to control the northern portion of its territory along the foothills on the edge of the Shan Plateau, it was therefore, put under the charge of the Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukse District of Ministerial Burma. This region, however, was duly restored to Baw State in 1895.

U Nyo Hlaing was born in 1860, a second son of U Thein Shin aka Sao Khin Sein. He was accorded the title of Myosa in 1907. He had earlier been awarded the ATM in 1903 and later earned a KSM. His *Mahadevi* came from the neighboring Ywangan/Yegnan State. His sons married into other Mye Lat Houses.

Baw State is situated forty miles north of Aung Ban, the capital of Hsahmong Kham State. Geographically, Baw State may be divided into two parts. There was the low foothill with its own prosperous capital called Myogyi 'Big Town' (in Burmese), and then climbing up 4,000 feet onto the plateau. Ye-U was the capital of the highlands and lay just south of the Burma border near Kyaukse, on the edge of the dry zone.

U Nyo Hlaing preferred living up in the hills. He hardly ever ventured down to the foothills where he found the heat unbearable. Likewise, those living on the plateau never liked going down to Myogyi though it had its various attractions. In reverse, many people living in the low plains found the forest covered plateau too cold. Since Myosa U Nyo Hlaing rarely went to Myogyi, he delegated most of the administration of the state to his ministers.

Most Baw residents were Danu people, who were dry rice farmers, craftsmen, and small cultivators. Possibly now there is a mix of Tai Shan and Burman also living there.

When Myosa U Nyo Hlaing died, his grandson, Sao Hkun Nawng, who was still at the Shan Chiefs School, was designated to succeed him. But being too young, an administrator who was also the ruler of Ywangan State, looked after the state for him. However, ten years later Sao Hkun Nawng was recognized as the Myosa.

An Important Link

Sao Hkun Nawng took charge of Baw in 1937 and succeeded his grandfather Myosa U Nyo Hlaing when he came of age. His parents were Sao Kham Sein and Daw Sein U and he had a younger brother named Sao Hkun Aung.

Like his elder brother, Sao Hkun Aung went to Shan Chiefs' School to finish his education.

Before that he first studied at a Buddhist School in Mandalay and passed his Ninth standard in 1936. Later he went to train in administrative affairs in Taunggyi and was attached to the legal section of the British Commissioner's office from 1939 to 1942.

An able young man, Sao Hkun Aung joined the police force undergoing further training in law and police work. He became a court prosecuting officer, an investigative officer, and served for one year as a judge. By the time, Sao Hkun Aung returned to Baw he was able to assist his elder brother, Myosa Sao Hkun Nawng, as his deputy, gaining hands-on experience in state affairs. When his brother died Sao Hkun Aung (1945-1959) became acting ruler and on the return of the British administration he was recognized as Myosa and later, as Saohpa.

In 1938, he married Ma Hla May, the daughter of a wealthy businessman, U Ba Sein and Daw Mya Yin from Mandalay. They had three sons and a daughter.

He was keen to develop his state and encouraged his people to work hard on their agricultural projects. To promote trade and transport, and social services for his state, he believed the most important project at hand was to improve the transport system. Consequently, in 1945 he undertook to build an improved road from Kyaukse up to Baw. It took six years to complete the thirty-seven-mile stretch between Ye-U in the hills to Kyaukse on the plains. Previously a roundabout journey to Aungban, or through Kyong and Yengan, had been required to go from Ye U, the capital of Baw, to Kyaukse near Mandalay. This roundabout way took a number of hours, even though the two towns were quite near each other. The new road gave easy access to Mandalay and onto the highway, leading down to Rangoon.

Sao Hkun Aung was also devoted to politics. He was a member of the Ya Ta Sa Nya Pha and became a responsible member of the Shan Government. From 1951-52, he was one of the princes who went with U Myint Thein, Union Minister of Justice, on a fact-finding mission to India to observe and to learn about certain measures followed by the Maharajas of India when they relinquished power to the Indian government. The princely delegates wanted to consider whether the same procedures could be applied to their own situation.

He took on other duties and became the deputy Chairman of one of the local air lines, earlier called Heho Airline that no longer exists. He helped in having the Maukmai Saohpa elected, and was on the Committee of the Shan State Government University Educational Funding Board from 1954-1956. His hard work and years of service led to receiving the title *Thiripyanchi* awarded by the President of the Union of Burma in 1953. From 1954 onwards he was Secretary General of the Shan State Hill People's Organization. He was also selected Minister for Information by the Shan State Council in 1956 and served until 1958.

As a Member of Parliament, he became involved in other Shan matters, and became increasingly involved in national concerns. He eventually had no choice but to leave the administration of Baw State, to be administered by U Tin U, his State Secretary. As mentioned previously there were too few educated and trained Tai Shan at that time, leading many of the princes to doing more than one job. As a result, they were kept away from their states and often losing contact with the people they ruled.

In the frenzied years of 1960 and 1961, he was a member of a panel of secretaries, for the All States Conference on proposals for constitutional reforms. He became Minister for Education in the Shan State government in 1961, and took on the mantle of being a member of the interim executive committee for information.

Sao Hkun Aung was one of the most active members from the Mye Lat to support the Federal issue, as was the Prince of Hsahmong Kham. They were both arrested by the military when the 1962 coup took place. Sao Hkun Aung was ill after being released from seven years in Insein Jail, and survived for only ten months.

Baw Saohpa, Sao Hkun Aung (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Baw Saohpa Sao Hkun Aung (r. 1937-1959) (Baw Family Private Collection).



PWEHLA STATE

Rulers of Note

Pwehla's history traces back to Alaungpaya's reign when the first chief was appointed by the monarch during his reign from 1752 to 1765. He was Bo Hnit Ya/Maung Aung and likely a military man. The next known *ngwegunhmu* was Maung Shwe Kyok, the sixth in the line of rulers.

At the time of the British annexation, Saw Nyunt, the Myosa of Mawnang was the son-in-law of the previous Pwehla chief, and was in charge of Pwehla. He was effectively the ruler of Pwehla State and the British accepted him as *ngwegunhmu* beginning in 1886. In 1893 he was awarded the ATM. He was promoted to Myosa in 1902. Representing the Mye Lat princes, he went to Rangoon in 1906 for the visit of Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, later to become Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary. The British considered Sao Nyun an excellent ruler. When he died in 1914 he was succeeded by his eldest son, Sao San Mya (1893-1939; r. 1914-1939), who was educated at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi.

In 1915, he married Ma Khin Twe, the sister of Mawnang Myosa, whom he later divorced. They had no children. He and his second wife, Daw Khin Tint, had several children.

He was conferred a KSM in 1931 and died eight years later in a motor accident. This was unfortunate as he could have contributed much more to Shan State affairs. He was a large congenial man, well-liked by other princes and hard working. Sao San Mya was a Free Mason as were some of the other princes.

During his reign in 1928, the Kyawkku State came under Pwehla. It had been founded around the same time as Pwehla in about 1783. Its first *ngwegunhmu* was U San Bon. Then in 1820, appeared Nga Chit Win who took charge of Kyawkku and administered criminal justice in Pindaya, Mawson, Pwehla, Kyauktat, Kyong, and Namkhom states. Befitting his position, he traveled with forty personal guards supplied from the Burman garrison at Mong Nai. He died in 1848, the year Karenni invaded Mye Lat. His son, Shwe Maung, succeeded him. He was also known as Bogale 'young army officer' (in Burmese) for his efforts in repulsing the Karenni raiders

For a while in Kyawkku things did not go well as Shwe Maung was removed for backing Pagan Min who had tried to dethrone Mindon Min. In 1866 Shwe Maung was reinstated as ruler. There followed a change of rulers until annexation, when the British recognized Maung Thain as *ngwegunhmu* in 1887. He was a Danu Buddhist and died in 1924 after a long rule. He had an extensive relationship through marriages of his daughters to various princes from states such as Mawnang, Hsahmong Kham, and Pangmi, and close relations with his neighbors Ywangan, Pindaya, and Kyong. He was succeeded by his son, Hkun Han, who only ruled for four years as Kyawkku was amalgamated with Pwehla in 1928.

Promoted a Jemadar

When Pwehla Myosa Sao San Mya died in a car accident in 1939, his son, Sao Htun Sein (b. 1921) was recognized as heir but, being only seventeen years old, a British administrator, Mr. JC Poulton was put in charge until Sao Htun Sein came of age. Sao Htun Sein, as were other princes' sons, started his education at the Shan Chief's School in Taunggyi in 1933. At the end of World War II, he joined the army and served in the First Shan Battalion and was promoted to Jemadar. Later after he left the army, he went to train in administration at the District Office's office at Kalaw.

He succeeded his father as Myosa in 1946 and married Daw Me Me Lay, a daughter of a businessman from Rangoon. She became his Mahadevi and they had an only daughter.

In 1949, during the time of the uprisings, Sao Htun Sein went to Taunggyi to attend the meeting of *saohpa* regarding Shan State affairs. On his return, he found the usual route from Heho to Pwehla closed. He and his travelling companion, the Naung Palan Myosa, then detoured via Yawngnhe. On the way, they were attacked by the KNDO and the Naung Palan Prince was killed, while he was shot in the thigh and lost his leg.

Sao Htun Sein was considered a good ruler and his subjects supported him because of his honesty, good character, and determination. In 1952, he was elected as a member of House of Nationalities. In 1958, he was selected as a deputy chairman to the Shan State Council. He was only thirty-eight with a bright future ahead, but he had to abdicate his powers in 1959 as did the other Shan princes. He was detained when the military coup took place in 1962.

In 2011, a new Chief Minister of Shan State, Sao Aung Myat (b. 1963), a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the Tatmadaw was chosen from the Pwehla family. A member of the Party Union Solidarity and Development Party and Constituency Representative, Sao Aung Myat is the nephew of the last Saohpa of Pwehla, Sao Htun Sein. He is a Buddhist Shan Danu born in Pwehla, and a son of Sao Nyunt Aung and Sao Khin Kyi.

PWEHLA FAMILY TREE⁶⁵

Bo Hnit Ya, Ngwegunhmu (I) (1752) (King Alaungpaya's appointee)

Shwe Kyok/Htun Choke/Khun Choke, Ngwegunhmu (VI) (d. 1855)

Followed by three other rulers from 1855 to 1886

I Saw Nyunt, son of Myosa of Mawng married Ma Myint, daughter of Pwehla Myosa,

He became Ngwegunhmu (r. 1886-1902) and Myosa of Pwehla (r. 1903-1914)

II1 Sao San Mya, Myosa (1893-1939; r. 1914-1939) m. Daw Khin Tint

III1 Sao Htun Sein (b. 1921) Saohpa (r. 1943-1959)

m. Daw Mi Mi Lay, Mahadevi of Pwehla

IV1 Sao Eain Nang

III2 Sao Htun Khung

III3 Sao Htun Ohn

III4 Sao Khin Hla Kyi m. Hkun Soe Min, Pangmi Saohpa's son

IV1 Thuza Min

IV2 Malar Min m. Francis Ho

IV3 Ohnmar Min

IV4 Sandar Min

IV5 Myo San

III5 Sao Mya Yee

III6 Sao Nyunt Aung

IV1 Sao Aung Myat, Chief Minister for Shan State (2011-2015)

III7Sao Mya Aye

III8 Sao Mya Htay

II2 Daw Khin Gyi m. Hkun Po Min, Pangmi Saohpa ((r. 1934-1959) Mahadevi of Pangmi

II3 Daw Khin Mu

II4 Daw Khin Kywin

II5 Daw Khin Min

⁶⁵ Sources: Pwehla Family members and SSK (1943).

PHOTOGRAPHS

Pwehla Saohpa Sao San Mya and Mahadevi (1920s; Pwehla Family Private Collection).



Sao San Mya, Pwehla Saohpa and family showing three of his sisters standing behind. Sitting on chairs are his mother and Mahadevi holding a child. Sitting in front are Sao San Mya's children: Sao Htun Sein and brothers, and one sister, Sao Hla Kyi (Coral) (1930s; Pwehla Family Private Collection).



An earlier picture of the Myosa of Pwehla, Saw Nyunt, with two other dignitaries (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Pwehla Myosa Saw Nyunt standing behind Sir Sao Mawng, Yawnghwe Saohpa (1920s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Pwehla Saohpa Sao San Mya (r. 1914-1939) (Pwehla Family Private Collection).



Pwehla Saohpa Sao Htun Sein (r. 1946-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Pwehla Haw (2012; Pwehla Family Private Collection).



PANGMI/PINHMI STATE

The small state of Pangmi is tucked between Yawnghwe and Hsahmong Kham. Its chief, a Danu, was installed as *ngwegunhmu* during the reign of Bamar King Bodawphaya (1781-1819). The state changed hands many times until 1863, when Maung Tha Daung became its ruler. After annexation, the British confirmed his position. Later, his son Maung Nyunt (1871-1934), succeeded him. He married into the Hsahmong Kham family and became connected to other leading families such as Loimaw, Loi Ai, Kyong, and Kyawkku. The British considered him a good chief who managed his state well. He accompanied other *saohpa* to the Coronation Durbar in Delhi in 1911.

Head Prefect and Kyemmong

When he died in 1934, his son Maung Po Min/U Hkun Min, was recognized as *ngwegunhmu* and educated at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi. In 1938, he was elevated to Myosa and, by 1947 after the Panglong Agreement, had become Saohpa. U Hkun Min was married to Daw Aye Nyo. In 1938, their son, Sao Hkun Oo (b. 1913), was recognized as *kyemmong*. He started his education when he was ten years old. He first went to Aungban and Toungoo to learn Burmese. In 1923, he went to the Shan Chiefs School where he excelled in football, hockey, cricket, rugby, tennis, boxing, and gymnastics. He did well, and became a prefect and later, a head prefect with added responsibilities.

After leaving school in 1934, he trained in administration at the Commissioner's office in Taunggyi for the next two years. In 1937, he went to the Mandalay Police College for further training. When World War II broke out, he joined the Burma Rifles and served with the princes of Hsenwi, Yawnghwe, Mong Mit, and Mong Nai. His defence responsibilities took him to both the Southern and Northern Shan States. While carrying out these duties he was promoted to Jemadar then to Subedar, equivalent to Lieutenant and Captain, respectively.

During the time of the Japanese occupation he helped his father administer Pangmi State. When the Panglong Conferences took place in 1946 and 1947, Sao Hkun Oo participated and helped to consolidate relationships between ethnic nationalities and the Burmese people. During the second Panglong Conference, Sao Hkun Oo was responsible for Bogyoke Aung San's security when he attended and signed the Panglong Agreement.

Sao Hkun Oo returned to the army in 1947 having retained his rank as captain. In 1948 after leaving the Officers Training College in Maymyo, he went to Pyinmana and rejoined the Burma Rifles. In 1949, he supposedly served in Mandalay and Maymyo and was then moved to the 1st. Shan Rifles, and served with many other Shan officers in Ahlone (Rangoon), then in Hmawbi and Shwegyin.

In 1947, Sao Hkun Oo married Sao Mya Khin, who was a sister of the Saohpa of Pindaya. They had a son, Sao Thin Kyi and daughter, Sao Win Myint. Although he maintained his position as the Kyemmong of Pangmi State as mentioned in the 1959 book⁶⁶ on the *saohpa* abdications, Sao Hkun Oo never became a *saohpa* because the military had become his vocation.

Following the renunciation of his rights as a *saohpa* in 1959 and after the national elections of 1960, Sao Hkun Oo was assigned as the Assistant Military Attaché to the Burmese Embassy in London from 1960 to 1962. When he returned to Burma in 1962, he was sent to the War Office and later took up the post of commander of Convalescence and Rehabilitation Center in Mingaladon. He retired from the Military in 1972 and passed away in January 1979 in Taunggyi.

⁶⁶ *Shan-pyi-nei-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-cha-pwe.*

PANGMI/PINHMI FAMILY TREE⁶⁷

I Maung Po Min/U Hkun Min, Saohpa of Pangmi (r. 1934-1959)

IWife1 Daw Aye Nyo

II1 Sao Hkun Oo (b.1913) Pangmi Kyemmong m. Sao Mya Khin, sister to Sao Win Kyi
Pindaya Saohpa

III1 Dr Sao Kyi Than/Freddy (1948) m. Dr Nang Noi Leik

III2 Sao Win Myint (1949-1957)

II2 Sao Hkun Saw m. Daw Kham Lu

III1 Sao Khin Kyi/Gladys m. U Myint Thein

III2 Hkun Myint

III3 Sao Mya Phoo m. U Htun Htun Lay

III4 Hkun Kyaw Aye

III5 Sao Mya Ohn

III6 Hkun Kyaw Kaung

III7 Nila Saw

III8 Nadar Saw

II3 Khin Maung Latt m. Daw Khin Myint May

III1 Sao Myat Htoo/Ma Dolly

II4 Khin Maung Lay m. Daw Mya Mya

III1 Khin Ohn Kyi/Colleen m. U Maung Lay

III2 Khin NweNwe

II5 Sao Mya Ngwe

II6 Khin Maung Nge m. Daw Hla Shwe

III1 Sai Aye Min

III2 Nang Khin Win Shwe

IWife2 Daw Khin Gyi, Mahadevi of Pangmi, sister to Sao San Mya Saohpa of Pwehla (r. 1914-1937)

II1 Dr Sao Mya May

II2 Hkun Soe Min m. Sao Khin Hla Kyi, daughter of Pwehla Saohpa (r. 1914-1939)

III1 Thuza Min

III2 Marlar Min m. Francis Ho

III3 Ohnmar Min m. Dr Tin Maung Yi

III4 Sandar Min

III5 Myo San

II3 Hkun Soe Win m. Sao Sein Gyi

III1 Hkun Kyaw Min

III2 Aye Thida

III3 Aye Thandar

III4 Hkun Han Zaw

III5 Sabai Soe

III6 Khaing Soe Win

II4 Sao Mya Nyein/Lily Hkun Min m. U Ohn Kyaing

III1 Tin Ma Ma Kyaing

III2 Myo Min m. Lay Yu

⁶⁷ Sources: Pangmi Family members, SSK (1943), and Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe (1959).

III3 Khin Moe Moe Kyaing
 III4 Aung Myo Htwe
 II5 Sao Mya Thein m. U Tin Maung
 III1 Khin Khin Gyi m. son from Hsahtung Family
 III2 Dr Nang H Maung

PHOTOGRAPHS

Pangmi Myosa Hkun Min (1950s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Pangmi Kyemmong Sao Hkun Oo (Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Pangmi Kyemmong Sao Hkun Oo (Captain) (1960s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Dr Sao Mya May on her graduation (1938; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



Pangmi Family. Last row, L-R: U Lay Thar Din, Sao Hkun Oo, Dr Hkun Saw, Khin Maung Latt, Khin Maung Lay, Hkun Soe Min, Tun Kyi (Sao Mya Ngway's husband), Khun Soe Win, and Hkun Maung Nge. Boy in the center, Freddy Sao Kyi Than. Middle row: U Lay Tun, Sao Hkun Saung (Kyong Saohpa), Daw Aye Nyo, Daw Khin Gyi, Sao Mya Khin, Dr Sao Mya May, and Khin Myint May. Front row: Sao Mya Ngwe, Sao Mya Nyein (Lily Min), Thuzar Min (Khin Soe Myint's daughter), Dolly (Khin Maung Latt's daughter), and Sao Mya Thein (Sheila Min) (1958; Pindaya Family Private Collection).



L-R: Gladys Hkun Saw, Ma Than, Philip Hkun Saw, and Colleen Maung Galay (Colleen and Ma Than are sisters; 2015; Colleen Maung Galay).



Members of the Pangmi family. Standing at the back row L-R: Sai Aye Min, Ma Than, Ma Rossie Liek, Colleen, Dolly, Ma Gladys, Ma Yae, Gyi Gyi Myint, Ko Ko Freddy, Dr Walter Hkun Soe, Philip Hkun Soe, and Lay Lay Ohn Kyaing (Lily Hkun Min's husband) taken in Pangmi (2015; Colleen Maung Galay).



Funeral of U Khun Min in Aungban in October 1958, six months before the princes' abdication. Members of the Pangmi family attending were U Hkun Soe Win, U Khin Maung Latt, Dr Khun Saw, Daw Kham Lu, U Khin Maung Lay, Daw Mya Mya, Sao Mya Ngwe, U Hkun Maung Nge, Sao Mya Nyein and Daw Khin Myint May (1959; Colleen Maung Galay).



YWANGAN/YENGAN STATE

Ywangan/Yengan) has an obscure history. It was ruled by several chiefs, as was the case with other Mye Lat States. It lies on the western border of the Shan Plateau at the head of the Natteik Pass, leading down to the plains. This is the first pass the Burmese armies passed through onto the Shan Plateau and where Tai Shan have fought many battles against Burman forces sent by various monarchs.

In 1860 there was the *ngwegunhmu*, U Htun Lin, who ruled Ywangan/Yengan for some years. His oppression led to a rebellion. Consequently, he was deposed by the reigning Burman monarch. Hkun Nyo Sein succeeded him in 1861 as *ngwegunhmu* and was awarded the title of Myosa in 1884. He was assassinated in 1886. During the ensuing period of unrest and uncertainty, various claimants tried to take over the state. Hkun Nyo Sein's son, Saw Hla Paw also known as Sawlapaw, and his mother, who was the first and chief wife of the dead prince, fled to Pindaya, her home state.

After annexation and when the British arrived in 1886 one of the lesser wives designated her nine-year-old son, Thu Daw, as the heir. This petition was supported by U Ohn Bin, Thu Daw's elderly cousin. Despite claims made by Saw Hla Paw from Pindaya that he was the rightful ruler being the son of the chief wife, the British turned him down.

Subsequently, Thu Daw (b. 1878) was accepted as ruler by the British, but it was U Ohn Bin who administered the state on his behalf. Maung Thu Daw was installed as *ngwegunhmu* in 1898 at the age of twenty, and received the A.T.M decoration - a Medal for Good Service in 1909. U Thu Daw married into a Mye Lat House and was also linked to Baw and Pwehla families by marriage.

With his first wife, who was from Mawnang, U Thu Daw had three sons and two daughters. He also married a sister of the Hsahmong Kham Myosa and it was their son, Maung Po Min, who was educated at the Shan Chiefs School.

Sometime later, Sao Hla Paw who had earlier been refused recognition, returned home and was installed as ruler of Ywangan. His first wife, Daw Khin Thein, was a sister of the Pwehla Saohpa Sao San Mya, with whom he had six children. Later, he and his second wife Daw Aye Si, had six children (including twins). He also had three children with his third wife, Daw Aye Shay.

A son of the first wife, presumably the Mahadevi, Sao Hkun Ye (b. 1912), was designated as Sao Hla Paw's heir. Like his father, he was a Danu. He began his studies in 1920 at the Shan Chiefs School in Taunggyi until the tenth standard. He left school in 1932 and assisted his father in the State Office. In 1934, he became the Chief Judge of the State, a position he retained until Burma gained independence.

In late 1955 he was appointed District Officer in Kengtung State and moved there. A year later upon the death of Sao Hla Paw, Sao Hkun Ye returned to Ywangan and succeeded him as Saohpa in 1956.

As Saohpa, Sao Hkun Ye was elected as a member of the House of Nationalities by the Shan State Saohpa Association in June 1956. He was later selected as a delegate of one of the Parliamentary Goodwill Missions to China, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and North Vietnam.

He married Ma Nyaing Mya, the daughter of a businessman from Ywangan and had two sons and four daughters. During the coup, he was detained with the other princes for six years. He passed away in the early 1980s a disillusioned man.

YWANGAN/YENGAN FAMILY TREE⁶⁸

Sao Nyo Sein Ngwegunhmu in 1881

I Sao Hla Baw/Sawlapaw son of Sao Nyo Sein (1881) founder of lineage

returned from exile circa 1886, installed as Myosa of Ywangan then Saohpa (r. 1928-1956)

IWife1 Daw Khin Htut, Pwehla Saohpa Sao San Mya's sister

II1 Sao Khun Zaw

II2 Sao Khun Ye, Ywangan Saohpa (1912-1982? r. 1956-1959)

III1 Sao Khin Myint

III2 Sao Thaik

III3 Sao Khin Tin

III4 Sao Htait

III5 Sao Nu Kyi

III6 Sao Aung Mo

II3 Sao Khun Kyi

II4 Sao Hto

II5 Sao Khin Myaing

II6 Sao Khin Sein

IWife2 Daw Aye Sii

II1 Sao Hkun Zaw

II2 Sao Khin Nyo/Mary

II3 Sao Khun Hpu

III4 Sao Khun Nu

III5 Sao Khun Tun

III6 Sao Mya Win

III7 Sao Mya Hnin/Elizabeth

IWife3 Daw Aye Shey

II1 Sao Khin Twe

II2 Sao Khun Thein

II3 Sao Khun Aye

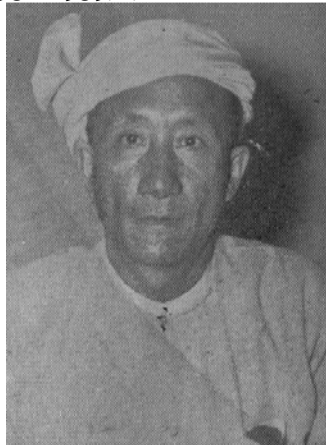
⁶⁸ Sources: Ywangan/Yengan Family and SSK (1943).

PHOTOGRAPHS

Ywangan Saohpa Hkun Hla Baw (r. 1928-1956) (Ywangan Family Private Collection).



Ywangan Saohpa Sao Hkun Ye (r. 1956-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Ywangan Saohpa with family with the Haw in the background (1940s; Ywangan Family Private Collection).



Ywangan Saohpa Sao Hkun Ye and wife (1960s; Ywangan Family Private Collection).



Performing for the school concert at Kingswood. Sao Khin Nyo is in the middle with Sao Sanda on her left. Sao Hla Kyi of Pwehla is the probably the other dancer (1939; Ywangan Family Private Collection).



A later Ywangan Haw (1960; Ywangan Family Private Collection).



A reunion in Kalaw after seventy years. L-R: Vicky from the Pindaya Family and the Ywangan sisters, Sao Mya Win, Sao Mya Hnin/Elizabeth, and Sao Khin Nyo/Mary in a jacket. To Mary's right are the Yawngghwe sisters, Sao Haymar and Sao Sanda. Behind Sao Haymar is a Yawngghwe cousin (2012; Simms Collection).



Sao Mya Hnin/Elizabeth of Ywangan and Sao Haymar of Yawngghwe in Kalaw (2012; Simms Collection).



Meeting in Kalaw after seventy years: Sao Khin Nyo/Mary of Ywangan and Sao Sanda of Yawnghwe (2012; Simms Collection).



KYONG STATE

With only twenty-four square miles of area, Kyong was one of the smallest Mye Lat States and of the Shan States. It had an impressive twenty-six rulers. Tucked away between Pwehla and Hsahmong Kham it is without much forest. Despite its size, a number of different diverse tribes have elected to live there - the Danu, Pa-O, Daye, Taungyo, and Tai Shan. Its population in the 1950's was said to number just over 3,000.

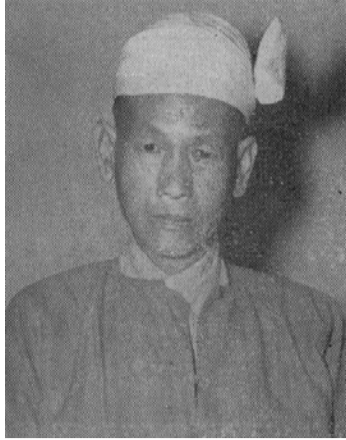
In 1867, Maung Po ruled Kyong. But by 1917 the twenty-sixth ruler of Kyong was Myosa U Pho Tin (1873-1946), a Danu Buddhist, who ruled from 1917 to 1946 and was popular with his subjects. During British times and when the Japanese occupied the Shan States, his eldest son, Sao Hkun Saung (b. 1904), assisted him in the administration as Chief Minister of the State.

By the time the first Panglong Conference was held, U Pho Tin and the other *myosa* and *ngwegunhmu* had been elevated to the higher rank of *saohpa*. When U Pho Tin died in 1946, Sao Hkun Saung was installed as Saohpa. He became a Member of Parliament for the Shan State in the Chamber of Nationalities in 1948 and held this post until his abdication in 1959. He helped his people when he could and was well liked. However, the pressure of work from state and national duties, and feeling his age, he appointed his eldest son, Sao Hkun Than, Kyemmong of Kyong in 1953, investing him with all administrative powers to rule the state.

Saohpa Sao Hkun Saung's mother was Sao Khin Hnin, a daughter of Pangmi Saohpa. He had two sisters - Daw Khin Kyi and Daw Khin Ye. He also had two brothers - Hkun Than (better known as Pwe sa Than 'Merchant Than') who became a successful businessman, and Sao Khin Maung.

Sao Hkun Saung's Mahadevi was Daw Aye Myit. They had four sons - Sao Hkun Than who was *kyemmong*, Sao Hkun Sein, Sao Hkun Than, and Sao Ne Win. Through intermarital links, the Kyong family is related to other Mye Lat families

Kyong Saohpa Sao Hkun Saung (1946-1959) (Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



CHAPTER TWELVE: SHARING THE PLATEAU

THE TWO WA STATES

Introduction

In former days, the two Wa territories belonged to the so-called "tame" Wa and the "wild" Wa. The former known as Mong Lun/Mong Lon became British after annexation in 1886 and was ruled by a *saohpa*. The other, which stretches over mountain terrain further north, was left undemarcated and that was where the "wild" Wa lived.

The two Wa States lie immediately north of Kengtung, with the Salween to the west dividing them from the old state of Hsenwi and China to their east. The people here are more related to the Chinese and are not of Tai Shan stock.

During the last decades, these two states have been transformed beyond recognition chiefly due to the massive drug trade galvanized by the opium poppy. Most of the Wa land is hilly with some peaks exceeding 7,000 feet and lies mainly on the eastern banks of the Salween River. Yunnan is its northeastern neighbor while just west is Hsenwi State. All this area including Kokang formed a vague triangle, which eventually came to be known from the 1960's onwards as the notorious Golden Triangle.

The mountainous terrain they lived in lent itself to isolation. It was common to see patches of poppy being grown for opium, since little else grew well on the sparse, infertile soil. Ever since the time of the British, opium has been grown in these mountainous areas. In the olden days, opium poppies were not grown on a large scale and villagers depended on their small production of opium for their livelihood. The main users were generally older people using the opium for medicinal purposes. But such idyllic conditions were soon to change.

The "tame" Wa, who were like the Tai Shan, lived in Mong Lun and had settled to lead normal lives becoming farmers. Many became Buddhists adopting the Tai Shan language and culture.

Very little is known about the "wild" Wa. A century ago, they were believed to be the original inhabitants of this area of the Shan Plateau and were of the Palaung-Wa group of the Mon-Khmer race. They became renowned for headhunting. There was generally a fear of them and Tai Shan villagers fled or hid whenever they heard they were on a hunting trip. They were not cannibals; they only took heads as offerings to spirits to ensure their crops did not fail. They often lived in fortified villages on top of steep mountain ridges as high as 4,000 feet above sea level. The path leading up to the local ruler's abode was usually lined with skulls of their victims. Most Wa villagers lived isolated from each other, though they did attend the five-day bazaars that were treated as "neutral" ground.

In those very early days when little was known about them, outsiders dealing with them never felt safe; not knowing whether one would be treated as a friend or foe, and not knowing when one might suddenly become a sworn enemy, and be attacked. It may not be politically correct but without exaggeration, about a hundred years ago, the male members were usually big hulking men wearing only loin cloths. They used to drink a lot of rice wine and were considered more primordial by other communities who got to know them.

Although practiced only in some parts of this mountainous, isolated region, the Was were described as savage and commonly known for head-hunting. This practice had ceased for some years after 1930, though it did not truly stop until the 1970's, when Wa leaders came under the influence

and control of the Communist Party of Burma.

Due to legendary tales head-hunting became a custom connecting it to a form of sacrifice performed in order to have better crops and harvests so that no one went hungry.⁶⁹ In later days a chicken or a pig were also killed. Similar customs are practiced by other tribal peoples living in Southeast Asia. It is quite probable that once they become Buddhists or converted to Christianity, these sacrifices were no longer carried out.

The Wa region has become increasingly better known. With the population, more exposed to the outside world, circumstances have changed a great deal. In their villages, they live as other highland people, cultivating and growing their own food. However, there is still opium poppy being grown in areas where the soil is not able to support arable crops.

This Wa territory maintained its opposition to the British by periodic armed resistance and the Wa were left very much on their own. It was not until 1935 that they were brought under British administration and became part of Shan States. Later in 1947 during talks for independence, one of its leaders was reported as saying that the "Wa are Wa and the Shan are Shan" and they did not wish to be part of the Federated Shan States (*Frontier Areas* 1947:36).

Across the border in China the Wa who live there are known as the Awa and have lived there for many years. They adopted Dai customs and became Buddhists though they continued spirit worship. Most of them are farmers growing dry rice, maize, buckwheat, and other crops. They continued living in bamboo houses as they did in Mong Lun. Since 1962, many groups of Wa have joined them. Chinese census figures of 1990 recorded that there were more than 350,000 Wa living in Yunnan. A large number of ethnic Chinese have also moved to live in the Wa States and beyond for economic reasons.

Wa women may be identified by their decorated garments and silver jewelry.

The Wa speak at least three different dialects of the Mon-Khmer language, according to Dr Justin Watkins, compiler of *Dictionary of Wa* (which features translations into English, Burmese, and Chinese):

The northern Mon-Khmer language Wa is a group of dialects spoken by about a million people on the China-Burma border. ... The dictionary is alphabetised in the Wa orthography officially adopted by the authorities in the Wa Special Region in Burma, a revised and improved version of the spelling first devised for translations of the Bible in the 1930s.⁷⁰

An early transcription of Wa was devised by William Marcus Young, a missionary from Nebraska with Sara Yaw Shu Chin, one of his converts in 1931. Their purpose was to translate the Bible. Latin was used for the first Wa alphabet and its first publication in 1933 was of Wa hymns and in 1938 the Wa New Testament was published. It was a practice that helped diverse communities acquire a written script with the support of Christian missionaries.

Since then a revised orthography has been adopted and has become the official Wa spelling used for the Wa script. This transcription is widely exploited by the Wa Special Region 2 in Pangkham with the intention of improving the literacy of its troops. At the same time, it has enabled young Wa to communicate with each other and to create their own social networks. . However, many Wa people in the towns can speak Chinese and use Chinese characters. In general, where schools are available, the children are often educated in Chinese, whether they live in the Wa States or in Yunnan.

⁶⁹ For a Wa perspective on Wa culture and history, including headhunting, see <https://goo.gl/GBtrCG>, accessed 23 February 2017.

⁷⁰ <https://goo.gl/FE0xRO>, accessed 23 February 2017.

After British annexation of the Shan States, Christian missionaries made their way north towards this region. Subsequently, many villagers were converted to Christianity and they became less hostile. Some went off to live in Tai Shan villages along the Salween River Valley, and were soon assimilated into Tai Shan culture. Many became Buddhists while others remained animists. Other inhabitants in the Wa territories are ethnic Chinese, with ethnic groups such as the Lahu, Akha, and Hmong living among them.

During the Japanese occupation, the population of Wa State had little to do with the Japanese nor did the Japanese want to deal with them.

MONG LUN/MONG LON STATE

A Wise Ruler

The Salween River divides Mong Lun State into a larger eastern and a smaller western section, where mainly Tai Shan and Wa live, respectively. It lies below the "wild" Wa territory, with Kengtung State at the southeast end and Mong Yai, Mong Hsu, and Mong Nai to the west.

In the Shan States and Karenni reports published by the British administration it said that an ancestor of the present lineage was Ta Awng who had made his money from the gold and silver mines situated there. He had rebelled against an earlier ruler but had failed in his attempt to take over. Eventually he was helped by the Hsenwi ruler to gain Mong Lun. In settlement, he had to pay an annual tribute to the Hsenwi ruler and to place 500 men at his command, when needed. In 1849 due to some confusion over succession to the Hsenwi throne, the annual tribute to Hsenwi ceased to be paid by Mong Lun.

Ta Awng then proclaimed himself Saohpa. When he died in 1822, Hkun Hseng, a nephew became the ruler. For the next thirty years he was Saohpa and his new capital was Pang-yang. He had six wives and each of them gave him a son. The sons were named Hpa Taza, Naw Hpa, Ton Hsang, Hseng Kyaw, Sao Mala Na Lao, and Ratana.

There were disputes between the brothers over succession when Hkun Seng died in 1852. The eldest son ruled briefly, then Naw Hpa the second son rebelled and took over western Mong Lun and the southern portion of Mong Lun. The remainder of the state went to the third son, Ton Hsang. Despite family bickering and minor border disputes, peace seems to have been maintained within the state. Naw Hpa died in 1859 and Ton Hsang became ruler of all of Mong Lun State.

Ton Hsang then gave each of his three younger brothers a section of the territory on the west side of the Salween River, known as Cis-Salween. Later Ratana, the youngest brother, died and Hseng Kyaw fell into disgrace. These two territories without rulers then came into the possession of Sao Maha Nalao, who thus gained control of the entire Cis-Salween tract. At the time of the British annexation, Sao Maha refused to submit to the British saying that "as the state had never been a tributary to either Burma or China," he was determined to remain independent (Mangrai 1965:265)

By 1890 Sao Maha was openly hostile to his brother Ton Hsang who ruled Western Mong Lun and having made a failed attack on his brother, he fled into the hills in 1892. Eventually, the British allowed him to return, not to Mong Lun but to live in South Hsenwi until his death in 1911.

In the meantime, Ton Hsang continued to rule Mong Lun, he welcomed the British, and became the recognized ruler. Sir George Scott accepted Mong Lun's submission to British supremacy in 1892. Like other Shan States, Mong Lun was a feudal *mong*, composed of other sub-states, each with their respective rulers.

Ton Hsang nominated his son, Sao Som as his successor and this was approved by the

Lieutenant-General of Burma. Sao Som married a daughter of the North Hsenwi Saohpa in 1901.

In the early 1900's, there were complications politically within the ruling families. This led the British Assistant Superintendent of Mong Yai to take charge of the state for a time, though he did not interfere in Mong Lun's internal affairs.

When Sao Som died in 1918, his brother, Sao Hkanan (1892-1928), was installed as Saohpa and ruled for twenty-one years. Upon his death in 1939, his son, Sao Hman Lek (b. 1919) was declared ruler. He was given a good education, and apart from Chinese, was fluent in Burmese, English, and Tai Shan. This gave him the advantage of being able to deal with British officials, other Tai Shan princes, and the Burmese military. Though Wa by birth, he considered himself more Tai Shan than Wa. He was considered a good administrator and respected by his people. He had five children and sent them all away from Mong Lun to be educated.

Towards the end of the 1940's a new division was made of the Shan States that resulted in the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Shan states. The latter consisted of Kengtung, Kokang, Mong Lun, the Wa States, and Mong Pan, which all lay east of the Salween River, the one exception being part of Mong Pan.

In 1947 after the signing of the Panglong Agreement, another meeting was held in Maymyo by the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry. The representative sent from Mong Lun was the chief minister, who was also a chief from Ving Ngun. It is noteworthy that Sao Hman Lek himself did not attend, though he must have attended the Panglong Conference.

The representative from the northern Wa State was nonchalant about independence, progress, and welfare of the Wa people. He told the Committee that they were "wild people" (Frontier Areas 1947:39) and they had not thought about such things. Obviously, they were speaking the truth. Coming from the remote corners of the Shan Plateau, they may have never thought of politics or any kind of development for their community. However, things were to change dramatically after forty years.

In 1953, the Kuomintang marched through Mong Lun creating trouble within the state, but the prince was then able to protect his people. During this period, there was a general malaise throughout this region and in most of the eastern part of the Shan States. Despite his modern outlook, Sao Hman Lek did not seem particularly concerned about the politics of the Shan States. He was, however, eager to express his loyalty to the Union Government and offered to help as much as he could whenever he was needed to do so.

What happened to Saohpa Sao Hman Lek after the 1962 coup is unknown. What is known is that he handed over his feudal powers to the Shan State Government formed after the renunciation of feudal powers by all the *saohpa*, during Ne Win's Caretaker government in 1959.

Although this book is not focused on the post-1962 period, a great deal happened in Mong Lun as it was caught up in the insurgencies, resistance armies, the KMT forces, and drugs. In order to understand more about the Mong Lun situation we must look back first to 1949 and 1950 to the time when the Tai Shan uprising took place in 1959.

Only a very brief account will be given here about the two Wa States as much has already been written about the complex situation in these States, and their connection with opium and drugs (Smith 1999).

When the Tai Shan uprising took place at Tangyan, Maha Sang, a son of the Ving Ngun family, became involved. It was a spontaneous rebellion started by young men who were Tai Shan and Wa from Mong Lun State. Led by a one-time police officer and a Rangoon University student, they captured the town of Tangyan across its borders in Northern Shan States. It was only an intense counterattack by the Burma army and air force that the occupation of Tangyan ended.

The Tangyan incident immediately started small pockets of rebels. They were young Tai Shan

students joined by other young men who were at loose ends. They had earlier been recruited to fight in certain parts of the Shan Plateau, which had been occupied by the KNDO and their ally, the Pa-O. Most of them were distressed about the bad conduct and atrocities committed by Burman soldiers of the Tatmadaw against Tai Shan and other ethnic villagers. They believed that fighting for freedom against the occupiers of their homeland, was the only answer to their plight. They called themselves the Noom Suk Han 'Young Warriors'.

To counter these nationalist fighters, new units were forcibly formed from among the other dissident groups under Tatmadaw command. These were the KKY units formed in 1963. In theory, they were local army units protecting their own areas. In practice, however, they were expected to fight other resistance armies that were in opposition to the Tatmadaw. They were allowed to keep their own arms and command, they soon became involved in the lucrative opium trade. Before long they were fighting amongst themselves. It was a clever move by the Burma army to disorient these groups and to stop any concerted effort of forming a united opposition.

Maha Sang of Ving Ngun from Mong Lun, a Wa nationalist, was taken in by Tatmadaw propaganda. He believed that by creating a KKY unit, he would be able to keep the communists under the CPB out of his territory. Unfortunately, this did not happen. When the KKY was disbanded after some ten years, Maha Sang's Wa movement lost ground.

During this period, the *Tatmadaw* had moved towards Mong Lun and disarmed many of the Wa resistance, but were unable to subdue Maha Sang's group. Later, his Wa National Army (WNA) became a member of the federal-seeking National Democratic Front, but supporters remained largely based in the Thai borderlands. The WNA remained a marginal force, a plight highlighted by the emergence of the powerful United Wa State Army (UWSA) following the 1989 collapse of the CPB. Maha Sang died in Thailand in 2007.

Eastern Special Region No. 4

At present, Mong Lun is known as Eastern Special Region No. 4 with its capital at Mong La. To learn more about this remote area, see *The Trouser People* by Andrew Marshall (2002) who gives a vivid account of what it was like in Mong La in the late 1998's. Drug money not only fills the pockets of local opium warlords, but also those of international cartels. Because of the drug trade, enormous changes have taken place in this far corner of the Shan Plateau.

When a ceasefire agreement was reached with the Tatmadaw in 1989, Mong La, a former stronghold of the CPB, was transformed into a boom town under the control of the newly-formed National Democratic Alliance Army (sometimes referred to as the Shan State Army-East) complete with casinos, hotels, brothels, and a golf course that immediately drew droves of Chinese tourists and shoppers from across the border. Much of the financing had come from opium money and technical aid from Yunnan that had been manipulated by the local warlord, Lin Mingxian (Sai Leün, U Sai Lin). He is Shan Chinese, and was a Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Mong Lun mostly supports a Wa and Chinese population, but there are also other ethnic people living there such as the Tai Shan, Lahu, Akha, and Lisu. Although most of them speak their own languages, overall since the collapse of the CPB and the rise of Lin Mingxian, Chinese has been the official language, including street signs and government employees. The only currency used is the Chinese *yuan*.

News reports on Mong La have not always been flattering, claiming that the economic boom had brought in lawlessness combined with drugs, prostitution, and trade in endangered species. To help in the development of Mong La, the UN in 1994 installed running water, and the Chinese later provided electricity and telecommunications. Little good came out of it. Though the standard of

living for its inhabitants improved, the prosperity lined the pockets of the rich.

Other ethnic armies such as the Shan State Army (SSA), Kachin Independence Army, and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) not only operate among their own nationality in areas to the west, but are also in contact with the UWSA and other forces along the China border.

Thus it is not a surprise that the Tatmadaw is making a concerted effort to enter these areas as fighting continues between it and the ethnic armies. On the other hand negotiations for the Peace Process continues. The Tatmadaw contend that it is their right to control, and the ethnic armies contend that they must fight to protect their own peoples from the over-bearing harsh policies of military-dominated governments.

Following the advent to office of the NLD in March 2016, there was hope that a nationwide ceasefire would be signed and real political dialogue would begin, but there are still many more hurdles to jump.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Saohpa Sao Hman Lek (1928-1959) (1959; Shan Cultural Museum Yawngghwe).



Sao Hman Lek and wife (Mong Lun Family Private Collection).



Wedding of Sao Hman Lek's daughter Sao Htain to Sao Shwe Khoo, nephew of Hsenwi Saohpa (1960; Mong Lun Family Private Collection).



NORTHERN WA STATES

The other Wa States - known as Special Region No. 2 in 2015 - are immediately north of Mong Lun and border China. The northern boundary commences just south of where the Salween River enters China and extends approximately 180 kilometres further south. The Salween River forms much of the western border. In spite of the generally infertile soil on the hills, there are areas of limestone on which the opium poppy thrives.

This area no longer resembles what it was some fifty or sixty years ago, when locals liked living in isolation and working out their own lives. In these modern days, the region can still be divided into the north being inhabited mainly by Wa with a mixture of Tai Shan, Lahu, and Akha and Chinese. The Chinese lived mainly in the towns as they do now. In the south, about half the population are Lahu; the others are Wa, Tai Shan, Chinese, and Akha. Upland or dry rice is grown in these inhospitable hills along with maize, but opium poppies are a major crop.

As to be expected, China has generally influenced Wa culture extending to their daily life since Chinese is the main language used in administration, commerce, and finance. There was no great need for the Wa to be conversant in either Burmese or Shan in the old days and less so presently.

After the uprisings of 1949 and 1950 when this region was brought under Tatmadaw control, Captain Naw Seng with his Kachin followers fled to China as did some leaders of the Burmese communists. In their fight with the Tatmadaw, the CPB lost their bases in central Burma, but following anti-Chinese violence in Rangoon in 1967, its supporters were able to re-establish Chinese aid for themselves in this northeast area of the Shan Plateau within the Wa region spreading into Kokang. For some time, the Wa top echelon were sympathetic towards the CPB and supported them, as did China. Sometime later there was a mutiny by non-Bamar members within the Burmese communist group. This gave the Wa together with Kokang, an opportunity to rebel against the CPB leadership, forcing them to flee to China.

UWSP and UWSA

In 1989, the Wa formed the United Wa State Party (UWSP) with its military arm the United Wa State Army (UWSA). When it broke away from the CPB, it found itself well-endowed with weaponry as it inherited the vast arsenal that China had given to the CPB.

Since that period in the late 1980s, the Wa have had a ceasefire agreement with the Tatmadaw. This has allowed UWSA the freedom of expanding their operations, including trafficking of drugs. They were not slow in conducting businesses and constructing buildings wherever they wanted, thus giving them advantages over other ethnic groups. The UWSA claims that their aim is to establish themselves as an autonomous zone within the state of Burma, with Pangshang as their administrative capital.

The UWSA is the largest ethnic armed group with 20,000 to 30,000 soldiers. It is common knowledge that China has for years backed the UWSA and continues to supply its heavy armaments.

Earlier, the Tatmadaw looked on as UWSA continued their fight against the Mong Tai Army that in the end gave UWSA sizeable territories north and south of Kengtung, near the border with Thailand and where they have remained. Such operations have continued against the Shan State Army-South, the MTA's successor, with Tatmadaw encouragement until the time of the government of President Thein Sein. The UWSA, in contrast, has always been close with the Shan State Army-North.

In 1999, after much disapproval from the United Nations of their on-going drug trade, Chairman Bao Youxiang of the UWSA agreed to the eradication of opium and to force an end to growing opium poppies in his region. Since the early 2000's the World Food Program (WFP) and other UN agencies have gone in to help resettle and introduce new crops to be grown by the villagers.

Reportedly, even China gave assistance to former poppy farmers. However, it was established that there were difficulties in finding suitable crops for food and for income to, replace opium poppies. A reduction in opium poppy production however, was noted. Unfortunately, drug traders have not given up easily. While a market for opium and drugs exists, it will not be easy convincing farmers to give up growing their lucrative crops of opium poppies, and poppy cultivation has since spread to other parts of the Shan State.

Since 2009, Burma's military regime has been pressuring the Wa army to accept the proposed Border Guard Force plan. But the UWSA has been dragging its feet, rather than giving an outright answer of non-acceptance. The Tatmadaw's sudden occupation of Kokang in the same year has made the Wa more watchful.

The UWSA ordered its frontline units to be on alert and ready to defend Wa State. There is contact between the UWSA and the incumbent civilian Burma government about signing a new ceasefire agreement. However, UWSA is not giving anything away, insisting that all the Wa want is to have an autonomous state. The situation is fluid. Will there be peace, stalemate, or continued fighting?

Despite the on-going negotiations for a nationwide ceasefire, the Burman government is not pressing the UWSA/UWSP to join in the talks, as it fears China through the UWSA is able to influence ethnic thinking. The Tatmadaw has always been wary of China's close ties to the UWSA.

Meanwhile in 2014, it was reported that Bao Youxiang, was not in good health. Though as commander of the United Wa State Army (UWSA) he still remains high on the list of drug barons and the US government has categorized the UWSA as a narcotic trafficking organization. It is considered a region where drug laboratories are still operating producing methamphetamine and other drugs. Tatmadaw-backed militia have also been openly involved in the narcotics trade in the Shan State.

Just as the enormous drug revenues gave Khun Sa and Lo Si Han an entry into international trade and commerce, so has it done for two enterprising Wa men - Ho Chun Ting (Aik Haw, Hsiao Haw), the son-in-law of Bao Youxiang, and We Hsueh-kang (Wei Xuegang).

In the twenty-first century, critics allege that the drug trade has continued to underpin many aspects of the economy of the Wa State and elsewhere. We Hsueh-kang for instance, has expanded into a range of commercial interests based in Pangshang and Rangoon, and in other big cities.

Ho Chun Ting reportedly runs construction projects also in Rangoon and owns Yangon Airways. Vast drug riches have been channelled into Burma in many ways. Since these investments are contributing towards a mini-boom in the country, authorities tend to turn a blind eye, ignoring the source of the money. Seeing the economy improve, many people no longer seem to question the founding of such business ventures. In this manner, whether one likes it or not, trade in drugs in its many forms, is encouraged to continue. It is also very difficult for local people to speak out against powerful vested interests, despite the terrible damage that illicit narcotics cause in many communities.

THE KARENNI/KAYAH STATE

For centuries, the Karenni stood alone and never paid tribute to the Burman kings. In 1875, King Mindon and the British Imperial Government agreed that the Western Karenni should remain separate and independent without interference from either of the two nations. About the same time in 1889, Sawlawi, the *kyemmong*, became ruler of Eastern Karenni and submitted to the British Crown. Thus the state came under British protection. Karenni State, however, was not fully incorporated into the administration of colonial Burma.

Karenni State lies on the edge of the Shan Plateau at Mount Nattaung to the east of Pyinmana, near the new capital Naypyidaw. On its south and west lies the Karen State, known also as Kaw Thoo Lei. Its immediate neighbors to the northwest are Mong Pai and the Sakoi States. Its eastern international border is with Mae Hong Son, Thailand. The waters of Inle Lake flow down the Nam Philu 'Bilu Chaung River' through Samka and Sakoi on to Loikaw. The other river, the Nam Pun, joins the great Salween River before flowing out through Karen State.

The country's mountainous terrain is still largely inaccessible. The main mode of transport was generally by river. The Nam Philu is navigable throughout the year only for local small boats going up to the point where the waters disappear underground. There were not many good tarmac roads in the old days for travel around the country, but there were well-known paths that had been in use for centuries by locals. However, an existing road that linked Loikaw, the capital of Karenni to Taunggyi skirting the northern shores of Inle, is still much used today. The most important road was from Toungoo to the Mawchi mines that was built especially for exploiting the mines and for the exportation of the product to Rangoon and beyond.

Three Karenni States

Bawlake, Kantarawadi, and Kyebugyi states made up the Karenni States and they were ruled by *saophya* and *sawbwa/sawpya*, with a feudal system similar to the Shan States. Kantarawadi, the eastern part of the Karenni was the most powerful of the three states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Traditionally, they have not always been friendly with each other. There were battles between them for territory and riches.

The three Karenni states were well endowed with ancient forests of teak and pine, and were considered of great value, especially in Kantarawadi where the terrain is rugged hills with stretches of green timber tops as far as the eye could see.

A thriving trade in timber has existed since ancient times, with these forests of teak yielding substantial revenue. Consequently, these teak forests, including stick lac⁷¹ attracted a great number of merchants from throughout Burma. During and after the Japanese occupation, illegal logging became rampant. Over the last six or seven decades, large swathes of valuable forests have been denuded, leaving parched, brown hillsides.

A range of agricultural produce including rice, millet, groundnuts, and maize had a market and were a valuable source of income for those who cultivated them. The main groups who had chosen to make Karenni their home to exploit its wealth were various Karen related groups, such as the Kayah, Kayow Padaung/Kayan, and Pa-O, as well as Tai Shan. Nowadays, there are also other ethnic groups, including the Burman and Chinese, who have settled in the towns.

The mingling of different races living in Karenni is nothing new. It has been going on for centuries. Martin Smith explained that

The estimated 240,000 inhabitants of the modern day Kayah State present one of Burma's most complex political problems. This results from an unusual historical anomaly. Their traditional name, Karenni (Red Karen), is taken from the brightly-coloured clothing of the largest ethnic group, the Kayah. However, over a dozen ethnic groups live in this rugged mountain region of 11,730 square kilometres (1994:47).

Trying to define the ethnicity of each group has been a consistent problem, since there are several names for each people group. Apart from the main Kayah group, Karenni is inhabited by the Bwe, Geba (White Karen), Manumanaw, Yantale, Zayein (Lahta) Geko, Yinbaw, Paku, and the Padaung/Kayan.

Padaung women have been famous since the 1930s for the coils worn around their necks. When they were first noticed, they were taken to England to be shown as curiosities in Bertram Mills's circus, as mentioned earlier. Roman Catholic missionaries have lived among them since the early 1880s and many Padaung have been converted to Catholicism while many Kayah have become Baptists. Thus, the tradition of wearing these coils might well be given up before long, in keeping with modern trends.

There are several theories about why the bronze neck rings were worn. Some say it was for beauty, others say that it was to make the women ugly and thus less desirable to marauding tribes. Another explanation is that it protected the wearer from tigers and other wild beasts going for the throat.

These rings were historically fitted on to the necks of girls at the age of five or six. Although tradition dictated that young women followed the custom of wearing such bronze rings, many no longer do so. Nonetheless, some who are attracted to the good money to be earned being exhibited to tourists have begun wearing coils again.

Once the coils have been worn, they are seldom removed unless it is to replace the old coils with new ones. Some Padaung women say they consider having a long neck beautiful.

The costumes that are worn by women on ceremonial occasions are full of color, consisting of a turban, a shift dress, and leggings or brass rings. Their jewelry is of silver as is the case with other ethnic groups

⁷¹ Lac refers to a resin like substance secreted by certain insects. This substance is used in varnishes and sealing wax. Stick lac is lac in its natural state as scraped off twigs and dried.

Kantarawadi

Kantarawadi in recent times is considered the largest state with an area of 3,015 square miles, although in the past it had been part of Bawlake. The fifth chief, Po Byu Hla, was overlord of Bawlake. It was during his reign that Bawlake became divided into Eastern and Western Karenni. At that time, there was a Talaing/Mon man, Maung Pon, who claimed royal descent and came to live in the capital. He grew influential and afraid that he might cause trouble, the Bawlake chief sent him off to the east of the Nam Pawn River to rule, thus effectively dividing his *mong* into two.

Maung Pon, who called himself Papawgyi, was eventually to become the first in line of the Kantarawadi chiefs. He was succeeded by a son and grandson but, by the time the Burman court had recognized him in 1866, Saopya Sawlapaw/Sao Hla Paw, a great grandson had been ruling since 1863.

About this time the Bamar Myingun Prince and his brother who had failed in their attempt to assassinate their father, Mindon Min, had fled to Kyebugyi in western Karenni. With help in the form of arms and men, they had hoped to attack the Burman outposts in Mong Pai and Sakoi. However, Mindon Min commanded Sawlapaw of Eastern Karenni to join the Shan forces that had been assembled by him to fight the Myingun Prince. The battle was successful and the Myingun Prince fled to Rangoon for British protection. Sawlapaw made a case for promotion and was installed as Myosa of Kantarawadi by Mindon Min. Afterwards, the two Burmese outposts, one in Loikaw and the other at Nammekon, were closed and transferred to Mong Nai garrison.

In 1875, Sawlapaw attacked Bawlake and was summoned to the Court of Mandalay. Knowing that imprisonment awaited him, he sent his grandson, Sao Lawi/Sawlawi in his place. When Sao Lawi duly returned, the king rewarded him by making him a *kyemmong*.

After the annexation of Upper Burma and the Shan States in 1886, Sawlapaw ignored the British and showing his contempt for the British invaded Mawkaik State. The then Assistant Superintendent, George Scott, accompanied by a force of fifty Sepoy managed to reinstall the Mawkaik Prince. Sawlapaw remained defiant and attacked Mawkaik again in 1888. When British forces marched into the Kantarawadi he fled into the jungles.

Sawlapaw wanted to have nothing to do with the conquerors so the Kantarawadi elite elected his grandson, Sao Lawi (I), as Myosa in 1888. In due course, Sawlawi signed the submission of Eastern Karenni to the British. Afterwards, Kantarawadi was ruled directly by the Governor.

Aware of the unsettled conditions the Siamese took advantage of the situation and occupied trans-Salween Karenni from 1891-1892, saying that they were co-operating in the fight against Sawlapaw. Eventually they withdrew. Western Karenni was brought under British control once the Siamese forces left. The western states were then established as feudatories. Through the years of British rule, neither the eastern nor the western states were included within the administration of Burma.

Sao Lawi was a capable and loyal ruler and peace reigned. The British awarded him the TDM in 1903 and promoted him to the rank of Saohpa. He went with other *saohpa* to Rangoon in 1906 to meet Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales. He received the KSM in 1907 and died the same year. He had ably ruled for nineteen years and his death was a great loss to his subjects.

His stepson, Hkun Nan, took over the state and married Sawlapaw's daughter, Sao Khin Yin. He was not considered a pleasant man and after squandering her wealth, died two years later. In 1910 Sawlawi's son, Hkun Li, was designated as Saohpa. Not yet of age, the state was administered by a council under the direction of a British Assistant Political Officer. Hkun Li was born in 1891 and attended the Shan Chiefs School. He was installed as Saohpa in 1913. He died in 1930 after ruling

for seventeen years. He married six wives and had seven children. Three of the sons were considered candidates for the throne, but Sao Lawi II was chosen.

Sao Nang Htay, Hkun Li's fifth wife and Mahadevi of Kantarawadi, was Sao Lawi II's mother. He was born in 1920 and recognized as the *kyemmong*. He first attended St. Patrick School in Moulmein at the age of three. He next went to a private English School in Kalaw. In 1932, he went to the Shan Chiefs School to continue his studies.

Since the *kyemmong* was too young to rule, the state was administered by a board of officials of the Government of Burma, but the real power was in the hands of a senior member of the board, who was Sao Wunna, a half-brother of Sao Lawi II. Later Sao Wunna became the Head of State for Kayah State.

During the Japanese occupation, Sao Lawi II served in Force 136, a clandestine British army organization to fight the Japanese.

At the end of World War II, Sao Lawi II was given the responsibility of administering three out of the nine sub-divisions of Kantarawadi. He also became politically involved and was president of the first ever political party, the Karenni State Independent Party. Later in 1946, he formed the Karenni-Burmese Solidarity Organization for discussions with Bogyoke Aung San on national issues. In April 1947, Sao Lawi II participated as a representative of Karenni State in the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry in Maymyo after the signing of the Panglong Agreement in February.

Sao Lawi II was installed as Saohpa of Kantarawadi in 1948 and after Burma's independence, he became a Member of Parliament in the Chamber of Nationalities in 1951. Later in 1960, he was Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Kayah State. In 1957, he joined a parliamentary delegation on goodwill visits to the USSR and the Eastern bloc, as well as China and Vietnam. In 1961, he was a member of the Burmese delegation to the Sixteenth Session of the UN. A devoted Buddhist, he was President of the Karenni Buddhist Society from 1956 to 1960, and became the Chairman of the Karenni Monetary Affairs Committee.

In 1952 he married Sao Khin Oo and had a son, Sao Lo Phaw, and a daughter, Sao Khay Mar Wadi.

He relinquished his powers to the Shan Government in 1959 and retired as Parliamentary Secretary following the military coup in 1962. After an interesting and active life in politics and administration, Sao Lawi II passed away at the age of sixty-seven in 1987 in Loikaw.

Bawlake

Bawlake, no longer a large state, was ruled by a chief named Paban in 1872. He was a Yangtalai, an indigenous group of Karen, and liked to live in seclusion. He was still the ruler when the British arrived and, although the British did not consider him a good ruler, they awarded him the KSM in 1908. He died in 1916.

His son, Hkun Nge, was born in 1894 and studied Burmese before attending school in Moulmein. He did most of the state work for five years before his father's death. In 1916, he was appointed Myosa, but proved to be an unsatisfactory ruler. He was thought to have been unbalanced and thus had little authority. Hkun Nge and his son, Sao Nge Du, the heir, both lived in Kantarawadi. Consequently, the state was administered by a Karenni representative, the State Magistrate, U Bee Tu Re, who was acknowledged as the virtual ruler. However, during the Japanese occupation in 1942, Sao Nge Du was recognized as Saohpa.

Kyebogyi

Kyebogyi the third Karenni state was also a part of Bawlake in earlier times. It broke away in 1845 when Bawlake was fighting Burmese troops. One of the state ministers in charge of Kyebogyi decided on his own initiative to submit to the Burmese Court. He was made Myosa and given Kyebogyi to rule as a reward.

In 1908 when his father, the late Myosa died, Hkun Saw was installed as ruler of Kyebogyi. On his death in 1926, Hkun Bya became ruler. There were various descendants designated as rulers with one or two ruling as *myosa* until 1945, when Kyebogyi was administered by a board under the state of Kantarawadi. In 1945, the returning British Military Administration installed Sao Shwe, a son of a former ruling prince, as *myosa*.

During the 1880's in Kyebogyi a town named Ngwe Daung 'Silver Hill' (in Burmese) stood behind a fortified wall because it was a town of wealth and robbers were constantly attacking it. The town was famous for the beautifully crafted bronze drums made by Tai Shan craftsmen. The people of Kyebogyi highly regarded these drums, which were important in their ritual and social life. They also served as a status symbol, for only a person of standing could afford them.

These drums became known to the outside world and there was a fair amount of trade of these drums variously known as *pha si* 'frog drum' (in Burmese), or *kha* drum in Lan Xang and Siam. This industry was disrupted and finally ceased in 1949 after the town had been burnt down a number of times during conflicts with its neighbors.

Many of the genuine drums are only found in museums these days. Much has been written about these ancient drums by historians and art experts, including Sir George Scott. In modern times, these drums are sold worldwide and decorate the grand halls of large hotels in Bangkok.

Becomes Kayah State

In early 1946, U Nu visited Loikaw and was followed by Bogyoke Aung San, President of the AFPFL in December, to persuade the Karenni people to join the proposed Union of Burma. When the Panglong Conference was held in February 1947, the Karenni leaders did not attend, though they had been invited. Therefore, the Karenni States did not become part of the Union of Burma then as they had not signed the Panglong Agreement with the other nationalist leaders to join Burma Proper, to obtain independence.

While talks were continuing in Panglong, the Karenni leaders were firm on their position, letting the Burma Office in London know that they did not want to join Burma Proper in their demand for independence. To confirm this position, U Bee Tu Re and Saw Thein/Sao Thein, representatives at the Constituent Assembly in Rangoon, stated in a circular dated 26 June 1947, Loikaw: "When Burma has achieved independence; Karenni will be prepared to enter into treaty of alliance with her, or with whatever party is in power at that time" (IOR/M/4/3023 BL).

It was only at the last session of the Constituent Assembly in September 1947, which the Karenni *saophya*/sawbwas attended that they realized they could not stand alone. There were many disagreements among themselves. Those who attended the assembly were accused of having been enticed by the AFPFL to co-operate. There was now a split in the Karenni leadership.

Despite strong objections, Sao Wunna of Kantarawadi and his group decided that the Karenni should join the Union of Burma. Some claim that it was forced upon them by the AFPFL. Nevertheless, the three Karenni States were amalgamated into a single constituent state of the Union of Burma to become Karenni State. Like the Shan States, it was given the option of secession after ten years.

U Bee Tu Re of Bawlake was never in favor of joining. He wanted independence for Karenni and formed a nationalist movement known as the Karenni National Organization (KNO). Later as a separatist group, the Karenni National Resistance Government was formed and backed by the KNDO. In 1948, its Karenni leader, U Bee Tu Re, who had fought against Kantarawadi's decision, was arrested by Union military police and it was alleged that they killed him. Afterward, the Union government was feared and loathed in Karenni.

Sao Lawi, who had also been appointed ruler of Kyebogyi in 1945 by the returning British Military Administration, joined the resistance. He was opposed to joining Burma Proper and decided to take up arms against the AFPFL-backed administration of Sao Wunna of Kantarawadi. Consequently, martial law was immediately established in Karenni.

The Karen National Union (KNU) advocated "the right of ethnic self-determination for all of Burma's races" (Smith 1999:140) and sent forces to help both Sao Shwe for the Karenni and to Thaton U Hla Pe for the Pa-O dissidents. Sao Shwe and the KNDO were soon in control of Loikaw and the Mawchi mines region. With support from the Pa-O militia south and east of Inle Lake, Karenni nationalists and the KNDO marched into the Shan States. In August 1949, the Karen, Karenni, Pa-O, and Kachin combined forces took Taunggyi, the administrative center for the Shan States.

In 1951, the Constitution Amendment Act renamed Karenni State "Kayah State," after the largest ethnic group that were living in the state. Most Karenni peoples claimed that this was an attempt by the AFPFL Burmese Government to deny Karenni's historical claim to independence and to create a rift between the Karenni and the Karen who were their brethren and allies.

In the same year, Sao Wunna of Kantarawadi became Head of State of Kayah State. He was well-liked by U Nu, and was the longest serving minister in the AFPFL government. In 1959, together with the Tai Shan princes, the Karenni Saophyas, agreed to renounce their traditional powers as rulers. Later, when the 1962 coup took place, Ne Win had Sao Wunna arrested and he was to spend six years in jail without trial.

The independence faction meanwhile continued their resistance. Sao Shwe died from malaria, but in 1957 the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) was formed and its military arm, the Karenni Army, became a prominent force under the leadership of Saw Mah Reh. It claimed that its aim had always been to resist the unlawful occupation of their land and to regain control of their own state, its traditions, culture, and languages.

In 1978 the KNPP split and a rival left-wing group, the Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), emerged. By 1982 they were fighting each other over territory and influence. Although the KNPLF was close to the CPB, it denied that they were communists.

Another armed group of note was the Kayan New Land Party, a movement initially based in the former Mong Pai and composed mostly of Kayan Christians. Like the KNPLF and SSNLO, they also allied with the CBP, but broke away in 1989 when the communist movement collapsed. Unlike the KNPP, the KNPLF, Kayan New Land Party, and SSNLO subsequently made ceasefires with the post-1988 military regime.

In 1995 the KNPP, which remained the main nationalist voice, was unable to hold off the Tatmadaw and agreed to a brief ceasefire. The Tatmadaw policy of Four Cuts was a counter-insurgency policy that had been introduced in the 1950s and was used against all dissident ethnic armies and in regions they controlled, which meant most of the Shan Plateau. The aim was to cut communication lines between the dissident guerrilla groups and their local villages and families. The Four Cuts consisted chiefly of cutting food and money supplies, recruitment, and intelligence about Tatmadaw movements. The Tatmadaw spared no effort at extracting information from the villagers on insurgent movements and their whereabouts. Atrocities undertaken to achieve this aim

meant that the KNPP resumed fighting against the merciless soldiers, to help its own Karenni people.

Such an unhappy, unresolved situation in the region is not unique. Throughout the Shan Plateau over the last six decades such havoc has been a nightmare for the people, who have lived in fear and uncertainty.

In February 2011, the KNPP joined the United Nationalities Federal Council representing fifteen ethnic groups with the aim of strengthening their positions in negotiation with the central government for a democratic federal union. In June 2012, the KNPP participated in the "Peace Process" set up by President U Thein Sein, and signed a ceasefire to promote peace. The participating Karenni leaders were pleased that they were at last able to communicate with the central government and were permitted to voice their concerns.

Karenni's Wealth

For decades, such names as Loikaw, the Mawchi mines, Bawlake, Kantarawadi, and Kyebogyi, were familiar and generally considered Tai Shan words. The Karenni states were considered within the Shan orbit, although they were not. This misconception may be due to rulers having aligned themselves to the *saohpa* for generations and assimilated Tai Shan culture and customs of the princely courts. Anthropologists describe the Karenni as a Karen-related people with a Shan-related history.

The Tai Shan and the Karenni were culturally and economically interrelated from at least the days of the Burman monarchy. Those years were both good and bad. In earlier times, the neighboring Shan *mong* lived in constant fear of raids from various Karenni groups that resulted in women and children being carried off and enslaved by the Karenni, or traded onwards to Siam. Sometimes the Shan retaliated by banding together, but in vain. In the end, it was the combined forces of both Burmese and Shan that curbed these raids. By 1887, the British annexation of the Shan States and ensuing British protection brought an end to such raids.

The first exploitation of the Mawchi Mines was in 1911 by a British syndicate that mined tin and wolfram. Staffed by Europeans, the average output was 130 tons per month from 1926-1927. By the 1930's, the Mawchi Mines were world famous for its wolfram/tungsten ores. It was the largest source in the world for such minerals. The Mawchi Mines of some eleven square miles in area lie near the Burma border within Bawlake, with a section extending into Kantarawadi.

Although the mines had been exploited earlier, it was only in 1939 that a contract was signed with Mawchi Mines Ltd of the City of London stipulating a thirty-year lease that expired in 1970. The mines had the capacity of producing 160,000 tons of ore per annum. The mixed tin and wolfram concentrate was shipped to England for separation of the metallic content.

Royalties from the Mawchi Mines were paid to the British Commissioner and then divided, with the bulk going to Bawlake State and a lesser amount to Kantarawadi. These two states therefore benefited from the revenues of the Mawchi mines.

There were British concerns around the 1930s that the Karenni states might not have been capable of controlling the 11,000 imported mine laborers who were mostly Indian. This raised the question of the possibility of the British annexing the Karenni to maintain control, however, in the end no action was taken.

The wealth from the exploitation of the lead and wolfram mines was short lived. World War II brought the Japanese invasion and ended work at the mines. Though the mines are being worked at present, it is difficult to exploit them effectively and to achieve pre-war standards of production given the unrest in the Kayah and Karen states.

Today, a railway goes from Aungban, near the Heho aerodrome, to Loikaw. Originally built for trade and commerce, it is mostly used for military purposes today. The Tatmadaw has firmly established itself in these states, believing it a strategic point from which to control the Karenni/Kayah State, the Karen State/Kaw Thu Lei, and the eastern Thai border.

After the first uprisings in 1949, there was more confusion in trying to identify the ethnic groups. Martin Smith wrote, "The large influx of KNDOs into the forces of Kyebogyi Sawbwa, Sao Shwe, and the KNDOs were virtually indistinguishable" since by then "members of the KNPP, included Kayah, Kayans, Pakus, Sgaws and even Pwo Karens and Shans" (1999:145) living among the Kayah people. The central government began to worry that such a transitional population might bring more Karen from neighboring Kawthulei into Kayah State. On the off chance that they might have been able create a larger Karen brotherhood, they kept a wary eye.

Sadly, over five decades of fighting in the region and ill-treatment of its inhabitants have left most of the Karenni State in poor economic and social condition, and lacking in basic infrastructure. There is little communication with the outside world. Although roads are being built, the general state of transportation is poor. It was only recently that travel to Loikaw, the capital, was permitted by the central government. Even so, most visitors are allowed only to travel within a limited radius of the capital.

The Kayah State is also known for the large hydropower plant at the Lawpita Dam built in 1950 by the Japanese as war reparations. Located twenty miles out of Loikaw at Lawpita Falls, it generates a quarter of Burma's total hydroelectric power. Not surprisingly, its electrical output is mainly directed to Rangoon and to central Burma.

Progress must continue, but at what cost? Concerned ecologists and international reports confirm that the projected construction of a series of electricity-generating dams on the Salween River will wipe out prime farmland in Kayah State and will submerge its ancient town of Bawlake. An estimated 30,000 people from diverse communities could be relocated. The likelihood is that after all the upset, the electricity generated will not be used in Kayah, but in Thailand and China.

The Kayah people's fate is no different than that of the Tai Shan and other ethnic people who have formed their own nationalist armies since the late 1950's to protect themselves and their homeland. Peace cannot be achieved until there is recognition by all concerned that ethnic voices must be heard. The mighty Tatmadaw must consider the wasted decades of war and stop the ill-treatment of people. In 2017, there is still hope for peace, democracy, and progress for the peoples of the Shan Plateau, wherever they live.

KANTARAWADI FAMILY TREE⁷²

I Salapaw/Sao Hla Paw Saopya/Saohpa 1886

II1 Sawlawi/Sao La Wi l (r. 1888-1907)

III1 Hkun Nan (r. 1907-1909) step son, m. half-sister

III2 Hkun Li (r. 1913-1930)

III3 Sao Khin Yin m. Hkun Nan, half-brother

III1 Hkun Li, Saohpa (r. 1913 -1930)

IIIWife1 Nang Maw Mya

IV1 Sao Khin Oo

⁷² Sources: Kantarawadi Family and SSK (1943).

IIIWife2 Nang Shwe Pwint

IV1 Sao Zina

IIIWife3 Nang Pu

IIIWife4 Nang Myaing

IIIWife5 Nang Htay, Mahadevi

IV1 Sao La Wi II, Saohpa (r. 1948-1959)

m. Sao Khin Oo, Mahadevi, half-sister

V1 Sao Lo Phaw

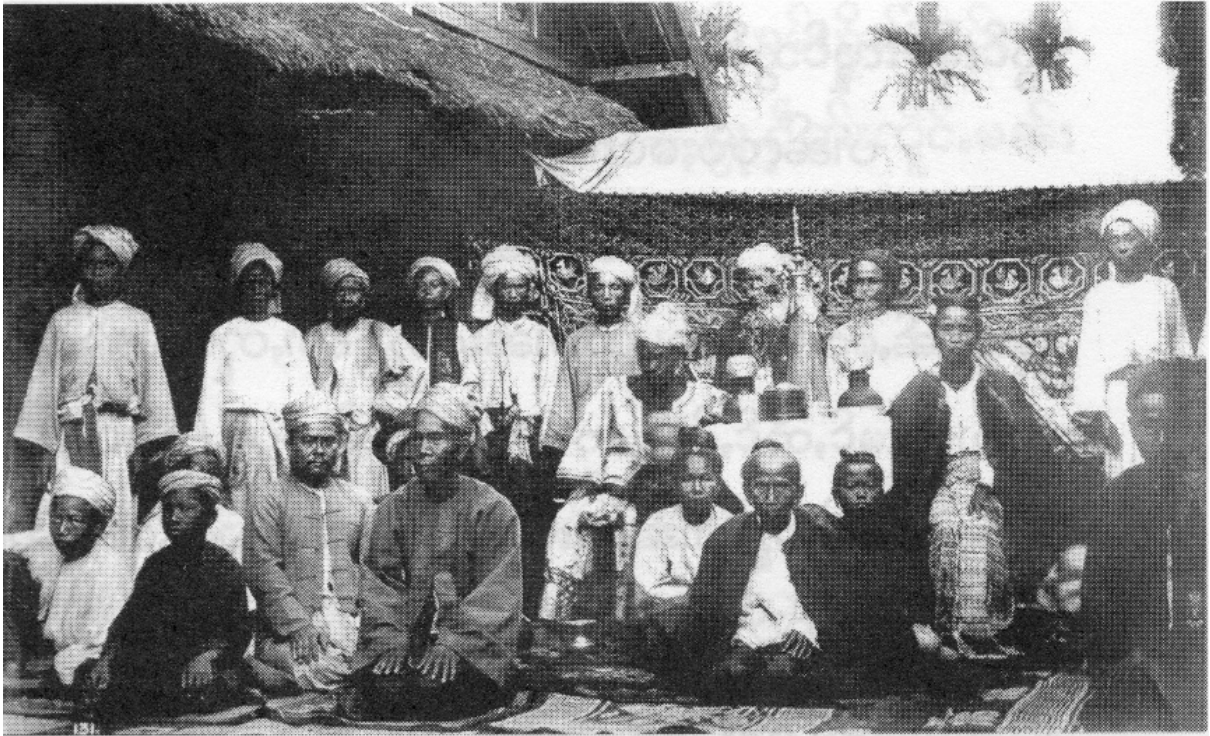
V2 Sao Khay Mar Wadi

IIIWife6 Nang Saw Mya

IV1 Sao Wunna, Head of Kayah State, (1948-1962)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Karenni leaders and their retinue attending the China/Burma border mission (1899; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Kantarawadi Saohpa (1899; Wat Fah Wiang Inn).



Sawlawi/Sao La Wi, son of Sawlapaw (1888; Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



Sao La Wi II (1921-1987) and wife, Sao Khin Oo (1918-1976), taken in front of the Haw built in 1912 (Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



Sao La Wi Kantarawadi Saohpa with his three sons, Sao Hkun Li, Sao Shwe Ho, and Sao Lin Hkam (1920s; Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



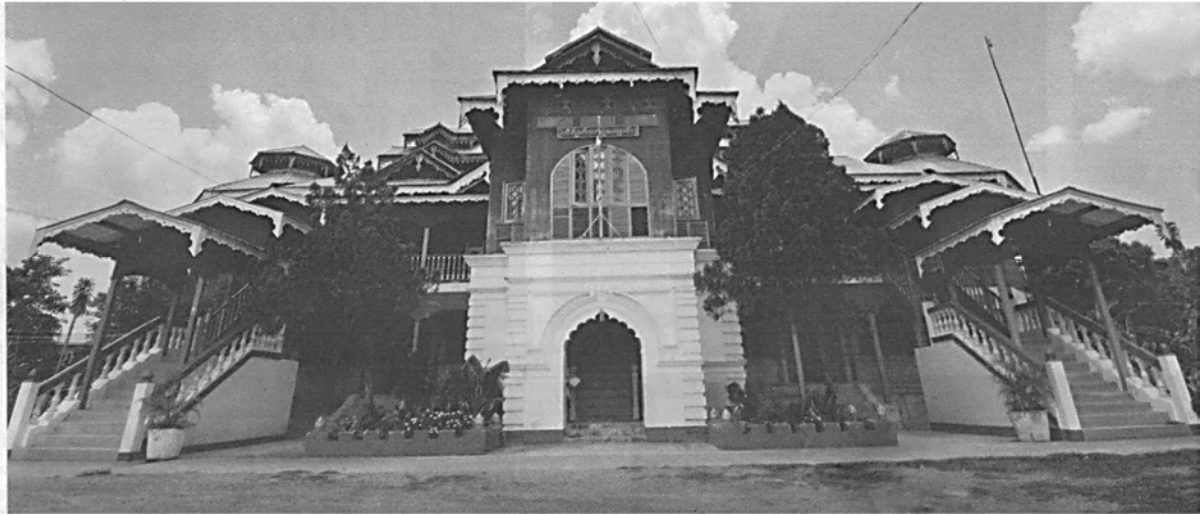
Saohpa of Kantarawadi, Sao La Wi II (Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



Sao Khin Oo, wife of Sao La Wi II (Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



New Kantarawadi Haw, turned into the Hsirimingalar Museum (Kantarawadi Family Private Collection).



Sao Hkun Li, Sao Wunna's grandfather (Sao Wunna Family Private Collection).



Sao Wunna, Head of Kayah State (1950s; Shan Cultural Museum Yawnghwe).



Sao Wunna and wife, with father-in-law (Sao Wunna's Family Private Collection).



DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Tribes and Kinships

Over the years as mentioned earlier, the Tai Shan absorbed many of the ethnic communities living among them. They have also accepted smaller diverse communities scattered over the Plateau. Since they lived side by side with the Tai Shan in the valleys, they benefited during good times but they suffered together when times were bad. Although they were of different ethnic origin, they were all regarded as Tai Shan. Many adopted Tai Shan culture and customs. Most spoke their own language, but also spoke Tai Shan. Nowadays, many have likely acquired Burmese.

These groups of diverse peoples are to be found spread over the Shan Plateau living among other larger ethnic groups, such as the Kachin, Palaung, Padaung, and Wa. Ethnologists estimate that there are over a hundred different groups living on the Shan Plateau.

It is possible that many of these diverse people have recently crossed the borders into Yunnan, Laos, and Thailand, the last especially, in search of a better life, free of harassment from both the Tatmadaw and ethnic nationalist armies.

Kengtung is a vast state with differing topography and has attracted and been host to many diverse communities over the centuries. In addition to the Tai Khun, Lui/Tai Lui, and the Tai Shan who have settled there, the Akha/Kaw, Lahu, Tai Neua, Wa, and many others also live there. The Lahu are also found further north among the Kachin and Lisu communities.

In former times by paying taxes to the different state governments, many generations of these diverse peoples have continued to occupy areas that they selected for themselves. Each has carved out a territory of their own, living in small villages hidden away on mountain slopes and tops. Most villages are quite inaccessible except to themselves. Clearly, mountain dwellers share common problems and lead lives somewhat akin to each other, yet they are separate entities, valuing their own identities.

Many communities are similar, with residents living in communal long houses with extended families sharing daily chores. Sometimes a group may practice endogamy and marry within their own group, others are more lax and marry into other communities. In this manner, some have married into Tai Shan families and thereby adapted Tai Shan ways and customs. Although many still practise ancestor worship and are animists, some have become Buddhists. For many years, Christian missionaries have been with these communities, and subsequently a fair number of them have converted to Christianity.

The practice of slash and burn agriculture means that whole villages may move to another site once they think their land is no longer fertile. This has caused ecological problems. Each time they move, which might be once a year, the method involves cutting and burning forests to create fields and space for their families. To avoid deforestation and depletion of large areas of land these communities are being encouraged to settle permanently and adopt regular farming techniques.

The major crop is usually mountain rice, but corn/maize, tea, tobacco, cotton, and poppy for opium are also cultivated. These days, the latter crop earns them more cash than the others. Understandably, they cannot be self-sufficient, therefore, tend to rely on the nearest five-day bazaar in a large town to trade their wares and buy what they do not produce themselves. For many going on foot, it was a whole morning to a day's walk. But the benefit of meeting up with other members of the family and friends, and acquiring what was needed, encouraged them to make the trips to the five-day bazaar.

Troubled Relationships

In later years, these peoples who had accepted feudal rule and its administration began showing open resentment towards the Tai Shan and had become anti-*saohpa*. The older generations of Tai Shan who had accepted these different communities had never thought of making distinctions nor imagined them as being separate peoples.

Complex political reasons explain the changed attitudes. For instance, the princely rulers may have been heavy-handed and cavalier in their manner towards the villagers and had not paid enough attention to their complaints. Did they feel ignored and slighted? Were they incited by political activists? Did the Tai Shan who opposed feudalism, and therefore the ruling princes, find a way to ferment trouble by saying, for example, that villagers could not hope for a better life under the *saohpa* who gave them little attention? Villagers were encouraged to think that the princes were indifferent and collected taxes simply to spend on themselves and their families.

The dissidents even had Western writers believing that there was only one school in the Shan States - the Shan Chiefs School founded mainly for the children of the princes. Despite what some might believe, there were Buddhist monastery schools even before arrival of the British. After annexation, as explained earlier, there were, hospitals, and dirt roads to the bigger towns where there were more and better amenities.

Depending on the size of the state and the ability and size of their state purses, the princes provided what they could to varying degrees. Much of the monies for use in running the states was determined by the allowance that came from the Federated Shan Council, along with revenues from taxes on agriculture, commercial activities, and gambling tables during festival times. The amount contributed to state funds depended on the size of the state, their state purses, and how the princely ruler divided the proceeds for private and public use.

A life of subsistence farming did not bring great riches. Observing others much better off than themselves surely aroused envy. Nevertheless, many who lived simple lives were satisfied if there were the essentials such as rice, oil, and salt. On the whole people, did not starve as the climate and habitat provided fruit and vegetables and various herbs that they could forage from the hills and countryside or grow themselves. Hill villagers hunted game and brought their catch to the five-day bazaar to barter or sell for what they needed.

The extended family was also a boon. Anyone in need was looked after. No brother or cousin was ever down and out, or left to beg. Each family looked after their own. I suppose even if they were lazy or bad, no one went hungry. I am not sure whether during these hard times, the same largesse is still bestowed upon the needy as was done in the olden days.

World War II and the Japanese period opened all avenues of politics and activities into the Shan States and other ethnic regions for Burman traders. It was a fertile ground for the elite Burman politicians to spread their propaganda. Young Tai Shan students, politicians, and in fact anyone who was willing to listen were ready for such intrusion.

The political situation which developed disturbed people's old traditions; their daily and customary routines. Changes in governments and uncertainty of where their loyalties should lie - with the feudal lords or the new politicians who promised them a better life - created a dilemma. They had to seriously to consider who they could rely on for their future welfare.

Again, the discontent could have been created by the unintentional moral teachings of the Christian missionaries who considered gambling, using opium, and having more than one wife as wicked.

The comfort and solace missionaries have accorded to those in need over the past years has been a boon. Many have been given new lives with a chance to settle abroad with their families. Had

they still been in their villages, they would never have had the opportunity of stepping into the twenty-first century to show that their abilities were equal to others in the outside world.

We are fortunate to have books written by missionaries who have lived and worked with local ethnic people. Paul and Elaine Lewis wrote that: "Despite the fact that they share many common features ... they have developed cultures unlike one another, and have become distinct ethnic groups" (1995:26).

A short introduction follows, giving an overview of a few of these tribes/ethnic communities who live in the border areas. It is not possible to determine which exact area belongs to which group, since they often live near each other. The more settled groups usually live in lower mountain areas while the others tend to live at higher altitudes.

Akha

The Tai in Southeast Asia refer to the Akha people as Kaw or Ekaw, which the Akha themselves do not like. In the Shan State, they are mostly found in Kengtung State. Those living in northeastern Laos are known as the Kha Kaw. They also live in Thailand and southwest Yunnan.

They were the most numerous in former days of the different communities living in Kengtung. Although today the Akha, E-Kaw or Kaw are mostly Christians and have become more sophisticated, Mi Mi Khaing writing some sixty or seventy years ago describes them as she saw them in Kengtung:⁷³

They are darker-skinned, though this is said to be due more to their dislike of baths than to a natural hue, shorter, with more pronounced noses and rounder eyes. They almost always wear a stolid, honest and somewhat stupid expression. The men also wear small pigtales. The women are the visiting photographer's delight. They bare their midriffs to a very large extent in the bitterest winter winds of their hill-tops, wear short knee length kilts, smoke pipes, and indulge in the most riotous decoration of their blue garments. (Khaing 1959:6)

Paul and Elaine Lewis were missionaries of the American Baptist Church and lived and worked among the Lahu and Akha in Kengtung. They wrote (1984) that the Akha had no written history, but by learning and reciting the names of their ancestors for generations, they were able to describe their history. The young are taught to revere their ancestors as it is believed the spirits guide and help them cope with daily life. The Akha believe that each of them is a link in the chain of life. Just as the present generation looks back to the ancestors in their hour of need, so too will future generations look back and take care and rely on the present generation.

The Akha originated in Yunnan, and it is where they are largely to be found today but, over the centuries, many have migrated southward. The Akha are also known as Kaw or Ekaw in Thailand and in the Shan State, while in Laos they are known as Kha Kaw. Their language is of the Yi (Lolo) branch of the Tibeto-Burman family.

The Akha live in mountain areas away from streams and rivers because they fear water spirits. The soil on the high ground is not particularly fertile, but they manage to grow enough dry rice to feed themselves. The opium poppy is also an option and brings income as a cash crop.

Nowadays, women are equipped to sell handicrafts such as bags and clothing using their traditional designs and method of weaving. This cottage industry should be encouraged to keep their

⁷³ <http://goo.gl/ZhZsln> (accessed 8 November 2016) provides a very different description of this group of people.

tradition and heritage alive. Unfortunately, many have found it difficult living in today's political climate of the Shan Plateau, and have left in search of a better life in Thailand and Laos.

Lahu

The Lahu are known as Mussur 'Hunter' in Thailand, and as Kwii in Laos. They have other names, too. The Chinese refer to them as "tiger hunters." They are divided into subgroups, each denoting a color. The two most important are the Lahu Na (Black) who live mostly on the Shan Plateau and Yunnan; the Lahu Nyi (Red or southern) found in Thailand as well, and the Lahu Shi (Yellow) who live in the three countries. Unlike certain other tribes they do not have clans but function around their own immediate and extended family group.

They are believed to have originated in China near Tibet. As have other tribes, they have migrated south for the last two centuries into the Shan State, Thailand, and Laos.

They are noted for their prowess as hunters. In the days before the gun, they used crossbows and poisoned-tipped arrows to kill wild boar, deer, tigers, and snakes, which they ate. Thick tropical jungles in rugged hilly areas were favorite hunting areas. Opium poppies are grown for income. In Kengtung State, their villages are spread among the Akha and the Wa. Others settled along the foothills above the valleys and grow wet rice. Others practice slash and burn agriculture.

Traditionally they believed in spirits, and even when they became Buddhists they still kept their belief in spirits. However, with the coming of Christian missions, the American Baptist Mission in particular, many were converted to Christianity. Once in the hands of missionaries, some began to learn rudimentary English from the Bible. They went to schools and generally began learning hygiene and Western medicine. The Lahu coming under Christian supervision, were more eager to learn to better themselves, and more diligent in their studies than the young Tai Shan who tend to be easy going, leading a fairly comfortable lifestyle, and needed to be pushed.

During the early 1950's, the fear of communist domination led the CIA to train many of these tribesmen to carry out clandestine work. Since the Lahu and the Yao could easily traverse the borders without hindrance or searches from the Chinese authorities, they became very useful. Along with trained technicians and spotters, they were sent into Yunnan to tap telephones, check road traffic, gather intelligence, and to report generally on military movements and conditions of Communist China.

Lisu

The Lisu are believed to have migrated south from China many centuries ago. Paul and Elaine Lewis wrote that the Lisu believe they originated near the headwaters of the Salween River and migrated south along its course. They are sometimes thought of as one of the minority Kachin groups. The Lahu and Akha speak similar Tibetan-Burman languages. They are also known as Yawyin/Yaw yen by the Kachin. The Lisu are composed of over fifty-eight clans with their own family names. They live along high mountain ridges and are to be found in the northern region of the Shan Plateau.

Traditional slash and burn agriculture carried out by the Lisu has led them to move in search of better soil. During the nineteenth century, many moved east to Thailand and west to Arunachal Pradesh in India, where Tai Shan communities continue to live.

Due to commercial logging and state road building and other developments, the Lisu and other tribes can no longer move freely looking for new land. They have had to settle. The Lisu live in villages scattered among other ethnic groups. Although they are farmers keeping animals, growing

rice, buckwheat, and vegetables, they also grow opium poppies. With the Meo/Hmong people, the Lisu are generally considered to be one of the larger opium producing tribes.

Ancestor worship is still practised, though some have become Christians. During World War II, some Lisu battalions fought alongside British troops.

Tai Neua

The Tai Neua or Tai Shan Tayok, as the Burmese call them, are the Shan-Chinese people, who have lived in Kengtung for a very long time. They also dwell in Hsenwi State near the Yunnan border at Muse, Namkham, and beyond in the Chinese Shan states. They are farmers keeping both swine and poultry. They also grow market produce providing the community with meat and vegetables, since others prefer only to cultivate the land. The Chinese trait of keeping the family together, working hard, and being thrifty is evident in the Tai Neua.

They have their own language and literature. Their alphabet is different from that of the Tai Shan. The long, elongated characters resemble bean sprouts, explaining why the script was called *leik hot ngok*.

DIVERSION

Muong Sing to Luang Namtha

I have not been fortunate enough to meet many of the diverse communities described in the last chapter in the Shan States, but when my husband, Peter Simms, and I spent six months walking and riding in different parts of Laos in 1955, we met a few of the people described. Many we met may have been relatives and friends of those who lived on the Shan Plateau. Although this trip was made later, I am sure very little has changed since the early 1930's and 1940's for the communities described here.

Many of these diverse people living on the Shan Plateau are likely akin to the Akha/Igor, Kwii, Kha Kaw, Kwen, Lamit, Kamu, Meo/Hmong, and Yao we met in Laos. These communities have different names depending on the countries they reside in. It is not always easy to trace who they are or where they come from. There has always been much crossing of boundaries as they walked over hills and valleys, and crossed rivers to visit relatives, or in search of better land and places to live.

I now want to introduce a piece Peter Simms wrote about our encounter with some groups in Laos on our journey from Mong Sing to Houie Sai in northeast Laos in 1955. It is an extract from a book written on our travels in Laos that was never published.

•••

With the Chaomuong 'Head of the Muong' we walked for the last time along the main street of Muong Sing. We stopped at the corner where Ou Mao and his wife were waiting and said goodbye to them. Ou Mao had originated from Kengtung and had married the daughter of the old Chaofa of Muong Sing, and they had entertained us royally the day before. A white buffalo had been sacrificed and a *kinari*⁷⁴ dance performed for a propitious new year. The *kinari* is a mythical bird believed to bring good fortune.

At the little bridge where Muong Sing ended we found the horses waiting for us. They were small mountain ponies. With difficulty, we decided which was the smaller and Sanda mounted it. Mine came only up to my hip, but I made a pretence of vaulting on to it, tucked my knees up by its mane, and prayed that it was strong enough for my weight.

⁷⁴ The *kinari* is a mythical bird believed to bring good luck.

With a wave and a last farewell, we were off at a jingling trot across the plain to catch up with our Lui porters who had gone ahead an hour before with our luggage.

So for another hour we went through woodlands of temperate climate trees and clusters of tall bamboos, until we had covered the small foothills and were about to start on the climb of 3,000 feet to the first ridge. Here we stopped by a small stream, the horses were unsaddled and set free, and we laid out our lunch. The first meal is the time when you begin to find out the kind of men you have with you. The way they sit down to their meal tells you immediately whether they approve of you or not.

They may sit with their backs towards you and start unrolling their packs of food wrapped in banana leaves without a single apparent glance in your direction. But that is not a bad sign for they *may* be proud and unwilling to give you an opportunity to *think* that they are making overtures.

On this day, they sat down in a circle a little distance from us. As we unpacked the glutinous rice, the dried meat, and the inevitable tin of sardines, we could catch an occasional glance. It was obvious that they were watching us as closely as we them. We carefully took out half of the sardines and passed the tin to them with the remark that we hoped they would give us the pleasure of sharing our food. One of them quickly picked up some pickled green stuff and handed it to us. As they started to eat, we said, "*Sern*."⁷⁵ They replied, and though some three yards separated our two groups, we knew that we were eating as a family and that all would be well.

Up till then the path had been fairly broad but now as it grew steep, it became narrower and narrower until at times there were only about six inches of level ground, with the hill rising sheer on one side and falling on the other, some twenty or thirty feet until it was masked by the tops of trees, that must have been a good sixty feet high. The small path climbed up the hillside with a sheer drop of many hundreds of feet. There were horrible moments when one of the pony's feet slipped, and for an endless moment one seemed poised against the emptiness below.

About halfway up we took a last look at the rounded hills of China. They seemed so self-assured and so certain of their inviolability, unmoving, unsmiling they appeared to be mocking us, for we had wanted so badly to see more than just their crests. Then we went on for another hour and the valley of Muong Sing in its turn was lost to us. In a few minutes, we had passed the first crest and began to descend. Then suddenly the whole landscape changed. The thick tropical jungle gave way to semi-tropical pampas grass and deciduous trees, the track wove in and out among clumps of tall grass, a breeze sprang up and we seemed to be wandering in a deserted paradise that stretched for miles and miles over the undulating Plateau.

The numerous sharp climbs and steep descents as we topped one hillock after another, made our small party spread out and, at times, Sanda and I were half a mile apart. By midday we had reached a high col and decided to rest as soon as we found some shade. Among some trees we could see some smoke rising, so we went on and found a large caravan. They were a group of Thai Neua and Lui traders. One was an old friend from Muong Sing who had set off a day earlier with bags of jaggery,⁷⁶ which he hoped to exchange for bales of black and red cloth that the mountain tribes always want.

First Encounter

We were just beginning to sit down, when Sanda very excitedly pointed out three women and some men and boys who were sitting apart from the group. They were members of the Kwii Song 'High Kwii', who are a nomadic people moving from year to year after burning off the jungle, planting their mountain rice

⁷⁵ The Laotian term *sern* is customarily used when food is served and generally means "Please help yourself to the food."

⁷⁶ Jaggery is a concentrated date, cane juice, or palm sap without separation of the molasses and crystals. It may be golden brown to dark brown in color. Jaggery is mixed with such ingredients as peanuts, condensed milk, coconut, and white sugar to produce various locally marketed delicacies.

and harvesting it. They are the poor relations of the Meo and Yeo, and from their appearance would seem at one time to have intermarried with the Kha.

The women wore long-sleeved blouses and skirts of thick black cotton. The top part of the skirts was decorated with bands of color, which are repeated to the bottom of the blouse, and decorated with heavy silver coins. Like the Meo they carried most of their wealth on them. The women fasten their blouses on the right-hand side, while the men on the other side. They were very shy, and obviously looked down on by the Thai Neua and Lui, who regard them as one of the gypsy groups of Laos.

We came down into the Namtha plain and the track immediately widened out into a dusty road. There were tall bramble bushes and hedges on each side. For a while we could hear a river running close beside us, and then there were voices. My horse recognized that we were near the ford and immediately broke into a trot. We rounded the bend at full tilt and were down into the middle of the stream before I realized that we were among a party of women who had stripped and were bathing naked. For a moment, there was a horrified silence. As Sanda came around the corner she was just in time to see a crowd of screaming women rushing to the bushes to grab their clothes. The horses refused to move on until they had been watered and the women came out of the bushes, now with their sarongs tucked over their breasts, joking and laughing. They told our guides that they had been into Namtha with loads of wood to sell, and on their way back were so hot and dusty that they could not resist having a swim.

The track to Houei Sai was the equivalent of a main thoroughfare. During the morning, we went hardly two or three miles without meeting a line of people slowly travelling to Namtha. One very charming group was a party of Thai Dam girls carrying baskets of lime on their heads for sale in Namtha. They walked with all the majestic poise and smooth grace of people who have been trained from childhood to keep their heads erect. As they passed they laughed happily with us and wished us a good journey on the long road to Houei Sai.

At about four we came to a lovely valley of rich grassland where there was an abundance of water and seemed ideal as cattle pasturage. It was a gloriously beautiful place with low ranges on the left without a sign of cultivation. To the right, small hillocks rippled gently swayed as far as one could see. Here we stopped for a while so that the guides could collect fodder for the horses and, an hour later, we arrived at Sala Nam Ha.

The *sala* was nothing but a platform raised two feet off the ground. Some matting was at the back, and it had a roof that was twice the width of the platform so that the horses could be tied up at one's feet.

In the fading, light the guides collected together as much dry wood as they could find and cooked a meal. They were worried by a rumor we had heard on the journey that a tiger was in the area. They spread out their blankets on one side of ours. Laughingly we said that it would be interesting to see which side the tiger started from. Up till then we had never seen or heard a tiger and in such surroundings, like an English glade, it seemed impossible to believe that there was any real danger. We had only just settled down when we saw a number of lights across the Nam Ha and the party began to call out to us as they splashed across.

It was the Nai Khong 'village headman' of Phou Kha, a village one day ahead, who had been at the Namtha celebrations. After dodging the Chaokhoueng 'Governor of the Province' for most of the morning, he had seen them and ordered them sent post-haste after us to make certain that we reached Phou Kha safely.

We got up and helped them prepare a meal and were just going to lie down again, when we heard a tiger call, followed immediately by the warning cry of barking deer and the sound of their hasty retreat from the river where they must have been drinking. Everything became very still and the men said that most probably the tiger had come down to the river to drink.

The horses moved about restlessly, and then one of them began kicking and trying to break free, neighing wildly. At that moment, there was a growl that seemed to be just on the edge of the darkness. There was another growl, and then a shot rang out. Five minutes later we could hear someone crossing the river, and an old Meo appeared in the firelight. He told us that the tiger had been stalking on the other side and he had fired off his gun as a warning to any other lone hunters like himself. He stayed for a while and then disappeared. Once again we tried to go to sleep.

Tiger Women

The next day, when we stopped for lunch, a group of Meos were already occupying the *sala*. Among them were two very old women. A group of some ten or twelve Kwen sat some twenty yards away under a tree. They were all dressed in stripped *pha-sins* 'tube skirts' with loose fitting blue jackets that fastened diagonally from the left shoulder to the right waist. The borders of their jackets and *pha-sins* were gaily decorated with strips of blue, yellow, green, and red. We were surprised when our guides went over and sat with them.

We had hardly started our meal when the Meos began packing up and in a few minutes, had left. One of our guides came running over and immediately asked if we had not seen that the two old women were wearing lead bangles around their ankles.

"But didn't you know?" he asked. "Meo women with lead bangles are acknowledged sorceresses. You have only to look into their eyes and they can capture your soul and make you do what they want. And worse still they are tiger women. That is why the other Meos have fastened the bangles on them."

We had heard something of tiger women, but it was not until we arrived at Houei Sai that we learned the full story from the Chaomuong there who, incidentally, assured us that he believed every word of it.

The Meos have long been famous for their complete fearlessness in the jungle at night, going out alone armed with only a knife or an antiquated homemade gun, to hunt or sleep in tiger infested parts with complete impunity. The only explanation that other people can give for this, which is firmly believed, is that the Meos themselves are related to tigers. When they are young they have plenty of produce from their fields to offer to their spirits. As a reward the spirits have taught them magic words that allow them to change into a tiger at will.

The belief goes on that when a Meo has a long journey to make he leaves the village as an ordinary man then, as soon as he is in the jungle, he murmurs the secret formula. As a tiger, he then performs the journey four or five times as fast as any man could. When he approaches his destination, he turns himself back into a man and walks innocently into the village he is visiting.

We decided to stop in Phou Kha for two days. The Nai Khong was one of the best cooks we have ever met. As soon as we arrived, he told his wife to leave the kitchen and entertain us. The first meal to the last he cooked with his own hands and was hardly to be seen at all. On our first evening, he produced some most wonderful paddy field birds, roasted to a beautiful golden brown.

For our last evening, he had told the villagers to bring in all the hill people we had met so that Sanda could make drawings of their costumes. It was perhaps rather an autocratic way of having a party. But as it turned out, the hill people were just as interested in examining us at close quarters as we them.

At first the party was very quiet and entirely restricted to sidelong glances but soon, with the Nai Khong translating, it began to brighten up and then musical instruments were produced, *shaum*, a distilled rice wine was passed around, and the braver ones began to ask us more questions than we could ask them.

Many of them were Kwens who were settled in villages on all the nearby hillsides. The Nai Khong had spent a lot of time in persuading them to make more economic use of the land and to give up their nomadic habits. They are cognate to the Kha Kaw and the Kwii whom we had met previously, and also related to the Lamit and the Kamu whom we were to meet in the next few days. But they were still a very

simple people without any written language of their own and strongly animistic. No Christian missionaries had ever reached them and Buddhism has apparently, no attractions for them at all.

Sign Language

From Phou Kha the trees closed in and there was only a narrow track winding over a number of ranges. It was largely Kwen country. Like the others they have no written language, but they have devised a code that they use on journeys. They strip about three feet of bark from a tree by the side of the track to tell others who are behind them, or out hunting, where they have gone. One of the first signs we met had ten horizontal lines followed by an "X", six chevrons upside down, three chevrons the correct way up, and a circle with a dot in it. This we were told by our guides meant that a party of ten led by an elder ("X"), included six men (inverted chevrons), and three women (chevrons) and a child (circle and dot) had come from a village near Phou Kha, some months before and was on its way to Kengtung in the Shan States.

We looked carefully at the tree but saw no other symbols so we asked how they knew all the additional details of departure time and destination. The guides immediately said that they were not Kwen and could not tell us. For the rest of the morning we read off signs, sometimes letting them tell us. Each time the same designations for the party were used, but each time our guides could tell us additional facts for which we could see no other symbols at all.

This sign language has been adopted by all the neighboring tribes in the area so everyone knows who is travelling, and what their neighbors are doing.

By evening we reached a small valley with a river. At one end was one of the most beautifully clean and well maintained *salas* we had found on our journeys. Sanda and I were just congratulating ourselves on the end of another day's journey, when the young guides came up and asked why we were stopping at this miserable *sala*, while only three miles up the hill lay the most beautiful of villages called Pang Pot. There we would be welcomed, a meal cooked, and we would be able to sleep in perfect comfort.

We were by this time out of the Kwen and Kwii country and among the Lamit. They are great mountain rice growers and have gained an immense reputation among the peoples of north Laos for the quality of the rice wine they brew and for the gargantuan celebrations that they hold.

It was obviously the wine that was attracting our guides and, after talking about it for a few minutes, our curiosity got the better of us and, we started up the steep side of the valley.

As we got within about a mile of the village the narrow track was lined by small bamboo houses set on posts. A foot beneath the floor as a capital to the post was a large round piece of wood or stone that was concave beneath and convex above. It prevented rats from breaking in and ravaging the paddy and the great jars of wine that were fermenting. At the sight of these our youngest guide could not restrain himself and ran on ahead to warn the village.

We went to the guesthouse to find it already crowded. As honored guests, we sat on a small wooden platform. Our guides sat around us, the *nai ban* 'village head' ceremoniously opened a bottle of *shaum* and presented us with half a dozen boiled eggs. The rest of the village squeezed in or crowded about the doorway. They all seemed very happy at the thought of a party.

After an hour, we decided that our curiosity was satisfied and the thoughts of the cool *sala* by the river were too much for us. We left the guides with strict instructions that they must bring the rest of the baggage and the horses by six o'clock the next morning, so that we could be off by sunrise

A Holy Man

When we got back to Nam Sali we found a group of Lui had arrived. They courteously made room by their fire for us to cook our meal. We shared our food with them and sat drinking tea afterwards. They told us that they were on a two-day journey to do some trading. As we were talking, a very old man came out of the forest. He came straight up to us, knelt, and prayed that the Buddha's blessing would be with us

always. The Lui had already put some food and a candle on one side for him. Taking these he again blessed us before walking off to a little hut he had built for himself a few yards away,

The Lui told us that the old man had come to Nam Sali some ten years before from Muong Sing, where he had been a very important person. There he had become disgusted with the way men behaved to each other and had dedicated himself to a holy life. We fell asleep to the sound of the old man saying his prayers, striking a gong as he concluded each one. Whether we were merely more tired than usual, or because the personality of the old man had pervaded the site, I do not know but, that night passed without any anxiety. It was the most refreshing of the whole journey. We often think about him and wonder how much of the stories that were told about him were true.

For two days, we rode through an area that refused to acknowledge the authority of the government. They merely said that they were sick of the KMT, of the Communists, and of the government that allowed them to be molested. Until these troublesome people had been cleared away they were not going to pay taxes, nor did they want anyone to visit their villages.

At every path leading to such a village there was a large *taleo*, the generally recognized sign in Laos for one of innumerable reasons that a place is taboo. As we rode we could hear the drums in the villages on the hillsides telling the villages in front that we were coming along the road in their direction. On one occasion, we stopped just beneath a *taleo* for a short rest, but within a few moments a man stepped out from some bushes and walked up to the bamboo fence across the path. Silently he leant on it watching us. One of the guides offered him a cigarette, but he merely shook his head, and when they tried to speak to him he refused to answer. A few minutes after we had started again, the drums began once more and were answered from in front of us. We never found out who they were.

A day's walk beyond these people and we came to the Kamu village of Nam Ne, which was only thirty kilometers from Houei Sai. Fortunately, there were two *salas* at Nam Ne. By the time we arrived we found four other groups of travellers - a party of seven Lui, nine Thai Dam, fifteen Kwen (a family group of three generations), and a party of at least twelve Lamit. They were all old friends, for we had passed and re-passed each other many times in the last few days so they made room for us willingly and offered their fires for our meal.

There were no horses in Nam Ne so we walked the last day into Houei Sai. Soon after the meal at ten o'clock, Sanda decided that she could no longer bear the ambling pace of the men who were carrying our baggage. We told them not to try to keep up with us and to rest when they wanted. Leaving some cigarettes with them Sanda started off into the lead. She had eyes for nothing but the road ahead and thoughts only of our arrival in Houei Sai.

But even she had to stop when we came into a Lanteng village that looked as though it were entirely inhabited by artists. On every side of the road and the river bank stood great easels, all facing towards the sun. The Lanteng are a distinctly mongoloid race like the Meo, but have even more pronounced slit eyes and features. The main occupation of the women was the manufacture of paper from a weed that they find in the streams. This kind of paper is found in Thailand, as well as in the Shan States. It has no generally recognized name. It serves as an excellent wrapping paper and is often sewn together to make mattresses for travellers. The easels were used to dry the new sheets.

But even the Lanteng could not hold Sanda back for more than a few minutes and then she was off once again at her galloping pace so that it was only two o'clock when we entered Houei Sai. We had covered thirty kilometers in six hours' walking time. Over an hour later our porters staggered up to the Chaomuong's house and dropped our bags. They had never seen a woman walk so fast, and could only gasp with surprise when one of the servants told them how long we had already been there.

They left us firmly convinced that Sanda was one of those dreadful tiger women.

•••

On our journey in 1955, Peter and I met at least eight different groups of people, all happily going their own way. They kept in contact with each other and formed friendly relationships. It was idyllic riding and walking through the wonderfully scenic countryside with them. We had relaxed and had begun enjoying the simple life. No one in 1955 could have foreseen the tragedy that was to sweep through this paradise.

Unhappily, it is these diverse communities that have suffered. Their land has been devastated, serving as battlefields for fights against the communists and the KMT, the Royal Lao Government troops, the Pathet Lao forces backed by the Vietminh, and opium wars between warlords. Finally, within the Shan State, these tribes are caught in the crossfire between the Shan resistance armies and the Burma army. The unbelievable atrocities committed daily against them has been by the Tatmadaw.

Now in 2015, some sixty years later, travel from Muong Sing to Namtha and to Houie Sai is much more convenient. Regular air flights and buses transport local people from one place to another. I do not know if the people of the villages still prefer walking gently along the route or have become modernized and appreciate the convenience of twenty-first century transport and way of life.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Tai dam women, Sam Neua, Laos (1959; Simms Collection).



The wife of Meo Nai Ban (village headman) and Sao Sanda, in a village outside of Xieng Khouang, Laos (1955; Simms Collection).



Measuring a Meo woman's skirt, Laos (1955, Simms Collection).



Outside a Meo village, a day's march from Luang Prabang Laos (1955; Simms Collection).



A village in Luang Namtha Province, Laos in 1955 where the Lantan people live and where paper making frames were used (1955; Simms Collection).



I am unable to identify the tribal/ethnic affiliation of this group I met in southern Laos (1955; Simms Collection).



Palaung, long-necked women (1930s; unidentified photographer).



A fashion show of various tribal costumes of women of the Shan Plateau (1993; Anonymous contributor).



EPILOGUE

It is now 2017 and much has happened since the book was started a few years back. The book, as explained earlier, generally does not go beyond 1962. Consequently, a brief account of what has transpired since 2011 under civilian rule is offered here.

A new scenario emerged in 2011, when a so-called civilian government was installed under President Thein Sein, and then a bi election took place in April 2012, in which Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed to participate. This gave her and her National League for Democracy (NLD) legitimacy to function.

In the following years, there has been a semblance of progress, mainly in the economic sector, with frantic investments in hotels, condominiums, and industrial estates in cities. There is a sense of rapid growth with Rangoon, the commercial center, expanding upwards with high-rise buildings and outwards beyond its inner-city limits. Traffic jams and liberated youth in jeans and mini-skirts, are indications that Rangoon has joined in the rat-race with other fast-growing neighboring countries.

Foreign investments have tripled providing an opportunity for work for the eager young. In addition, much of the boom has been made possible by the lifting of some sanctions leading sadly enough to an increasing division between the haves and the have-nots.

Nevertheless, future hopes for the country has been the eighty percent of votes won by the National League for Democracy in the November 2015 General Elections that gave Aung San Suu Kyi a clear mandate to form a new civilian and democratic government. On 30 March 2016, the much awaited democratically elected NLD government was sworn in thus ushering in a new era of hope ending over fifty years of military dictatorship.

Presidency

The position of President that Daw Aung San Su Kyi so desired was, in the past, not what it is today. The 1947 Constitution created this post as a titular one without political power. The all-important position was created by General Ne Win when he carried out the coup in 1962 and threw out the democratically elected government of Premier U Nu. Later in 1974, Ne Win declared himself the President. Those military leaders who followed Ne Win were, of course like him - dictators. When a quasi-civilian government was established in 2011, General Thein Sein became the President of Myanmar, assuming a most significant role. As specified in the 2008 Constitution, he held the combined position of both President and Prime Minister. As leader of the Union Solidarity and Development Party, he led the USDP government for five years.

The 2008 Constitution consolidated military power by retaining twenty-five percent of all parliamentary seats including reserving for the Tatmadaw such key ministries as defence, home affairs, and border affairs. It stressed that no constitutional amendments could be made without the approval of more than seventy-five percent of members of parliament voting in favor of such a proposal.

A provision in the Constitution that barred those with foreign children from office conveniently blocked Daw Aung San Su Kyi from becoming President. Though denied the title of the President, undeterred she currently holds equal powers through being elevated to State Counsellor. As such her position is equal to, or above that of President Htin Kyaw, thus giving her entree into

the heart of the government. As supreme ruler, she now has the power to show what she can do for the country.

President U Htin Kyaw is a longtime companion and faithful NLD member, alleged to be someone Daw Aung San Su Kyi completely trusts and has her full confidence.

Nonetheless, there is much speculation on how Daw Aung San Su Kyi intends to run the country. Will she make all the decisions and will President U Htin Kyaw do as he is bidden? Or being an intelligent, knowledgeable and politically-wise man, act by himself at times? Nevertheless, it would seem some mutual understanding must have been reached between the two, for such a complex undertaking to work satisfactorily.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD government have a difficult task ahead in trying to balance her relationship with the Tatmadaw, in restructuring the existing militarized civil service into a civilian one, and meeting the demands of the populace who have looked up to her for so long. The challenges facing her are indeed many and need serious contemplation.

Panglong Agreement and Federalism

In the early months of 2015, two important agreements were endorsed. On 12 February 2015, the Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation was signed by the President and members of his government, including three Tatmadaw representatives, together with ethnic armed groups, ministers, and representatives of political parties. Remarkably, it was the day of the Panglong Agreement of 1947, also known as Union Day.

Then came the government's signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) on October 2015. Unfortunately, out of the fifteen major ethnic militias, only eight signed a cease-fire, making the agreements less effective and binding.

However, there might be progress culminating from the hard work put in over the past recent years by participants of the Peace Process. Surprisingly, the Panglong Agreement and Federalism, the last, a forbidden word for the last fifty-three years since 1962, were on the agenda and discussed in earnest at the negotiation table. Seemingly though, the Thein Sein government was not entirely sold on true federalism and had dragged its feet.

In whichever way the 1947 Panglong Agreement is interpreted, it is hoped that the subsequent 21st Century Panglong Conference, a process started by the NLD government in August 2016, will be meaningful with careful consideration given to outstanding issues that have plagued the good will between the Bamar and the ethnic nationalities for over half a century. It is essential to recognize that the 1947 Panglong Agreement lay the foundation for a federation of equal partners sharing equal responsibilities to develop and democratize the country, the Union of Burma.

Ethnic Issues

The signing of the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was the outcome of the last five years' efforts put in by all participants trying to make the Peace Process work and subsequent political dialogue to include all ethnic groups. As pointed out in the book, it has been a continuing struggle not only for those dwellers of the Shan Plateau, but for other nationalities as well, in demanding equal rights and responsibilities in rebuilding the country that is shared with the Burman/Bamar.

The 1947 Panglong Agreement signed by the Shan, Kachin, and Chin with Bogyoke Aung San gave them expectations for the future since it was assumed they had been promised freedom, equality, and self-rule with no outside interference. Alas, this did not happen.

Sai Aung Tun (2009:479-481) confided that in the text of the speech to have been made on

the day of the 1962 coup, Dr. E Maung reflected the view of the Union Party and U Nu's Government, casting doubts on the Federal Proposals. He claimed that Bogyoke Aung San had at an earlier stage explained to the ethnic leaders how the Union was to be formed, pointing out that although all the states would have their own separate administration, Burma Proper would not be one of them.

It is unlikely that the ethnic leaders fully understood what the Bogyoke meant, nor indeed if this was the exact explanation. It was only later that they realized that whatever they had expected had not happened and that the central government was holding all the power. In fact, a unitary government had been created and it was not what the non-Burmans had demanded - a true federal union.

Subsequently, attempts to make amendments to the 1947 Constitution in 1961-62 failed, resulting in the 1962 coup d'etat of General Ne Win.

Since then, and for the first time in over fifty years, during the tenure of President U Thein Sein, discussions on federalism were on the agenda. The State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President Dr. Htin Kyaw in their Lunar New Year messages announced NLD's commitments to the Peace Process, constitutional amendments, and for the provision of a true federal union government. She has emphasized the need for lasting peace as people suffered and lived continually in poverty where there was fighting.

However, the persistent offensives of the Tatmadaw against the non-state armed groups in the Shan State have led many to believe that the Tatmadaw intends to use territory thus gained as a stepping stone to move further into the Shan Plateau. Meanwhile since March 2016, major non-ceasefire groups such as the Kachin Independence Army, National Democratic Alliance Army, Shan State Army-North, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Arakan Army (AA) have met with the United Wa State Army (UWSA) at their headquarters in Pangshang to discuss their participation in peace talks. Many battles, however, have continued.

Maybe it is also time for the ethnic groups to consider how to unite and channel their concerns. For inhabitants of the Shan Plateau, although made up of diverse people, it has become imperative that they will also have to learn to live and work together again, putting aside their differences and making necessary sacrifices. Surely the recent results of the 2015 General Elections have made obvious that the lack of unity within has led to losing out to those who were more motivated and better organized, consequently depriving the people of the Shan State an effective voice to speak for them.

Another twenty-first century Panglong conference is due to be held in May 2017 to discuss and negotiate the signing of the all-inclusive ceasefires and the implementation of a genuine federal state. As can be seen, no longer are the ethnic people who were neglected for decades, uneducated and politically naive, nor are they to be considered backward. Their banishment has strengthened their lives and resolve. For nearly seventy years, the aspiration of the ethnic people has remained the same as they have always been, for a federation of equal partners and shared responsibilities. Their anticipation is that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, with her NLD government, will honor her father General Aung San's promise for federation and a united country.

One can only hope that in time, through continuation of the Peace Process and continued talking between stakeholders, an understanding may be reached and peace will prevail.

Conclusion

Agreements with the ethnic nationalities require approval from the Tatmadaw since it has the power of veto e.g., excuses were made for the 1962 army coup on the grounds that it was carried out because of the Federal Movement. Extreme care should be taken not to ruffle the Tatmadaw's feathers.

It is encouraging to hear that the ruling NLD has recognized the fundamental rights of the ethnic peoples. "Our land is a land of equal rights and correct policies. How can peace be achieved unless and until ethnicities and Bamar [majority Burman] enjoy freedom, justice and equality on equal terms," commented Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, the authorized NLD spokesman in an interview (*Irrawaddy*, 21 March 2016).

He added that in NLD's dealings with the Tatmadaw, it would have to accommodate them from time to time to maintain a close and friendly working relationship.

In the intervening time, many contemplate the country's immediate future with opposing views. Optimists say that there has been improvement in the standard of living, but short on human rights and change to democracy has been slow. Although transformation is not expected in four or five years, hopefully positive change will not require decades. Pessimists though, see people still living in fear and longing for peace and tend to interpret the continued fighting between the ethnic armies and the Tatmadaw as reflecting a lack of serious interest on the part of the Tatmadaw to send its soldiers back to their barracks nor to give up their overall powers. Experts with an inclusive view of the country, warn that Burma is entering a crucial phase and urge the NLD government to resolve decades of fighting with ethnic armies.

Though there is movement in Burma and the Shan State towards transition, the question remains if promises made in this new era of hope, will reap lasting results. For my part, I am glad to have finished this book that allowed me to recount different epochs that peoples of the Shan Plateau have experienced, be they rulers or the ruled in times of peace and turmoil. It has given me an opportunity to record the grave difficulties the Shan princes faced in their determination to gain a true federal union instead of having to continue living under the existing unitary system.

Whatever critics may say about the *sawbwa*, the princes never desired the disintegration of the Union of Burma. They were dedicated to making the fragile relationship between the Bamar and non-Bamar stronger. In fact, they deserve credit for not taking sides in political conflicts and in rebellions that could have tipped the balance. The then government of U Nu was only held together by the loyalty of the Shan *saohpa* and their resolve to save the Union of Burma.

As a Tai Shan, my concern has always been for the Shan State and its inhabitants. Despite on-going change and attempts at promoting peace, my opinion remains the same that until Burman/Bamar attitudes and prejudice towards the Tai Shan and other ethnic nationalities are modified, a lack of trust and difficulties in working together will continue.

Let us fervently hope that under present optimistic circumstances, sincere and constructive dialogue will continue. One cannot stress too often that what is needed is real, lasting peace for all peoples of Burma, and that whoever they may be and wherever they may live, people are given back their freedom and their livelihoods with an ability for them to live without fear and in peace. Once this has been achieved, one can then truly say that democracy and progress have finally arrived on the Shan Plateau and elsewhere in the country.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT 1947

Dated: Panglong, 12 February 1947

A Conference having been held at Panglong, attended by certain members of the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, all Saohpa and representatives of the Shan State, the Kachin Hills, and the Chin Hills.

The members of the Conference, believing that freedom will be more speedily achieved by the Shan, the Kachin, and the Chin by their immediate co-operation with the Interim Burmese Government.

The members of the Conference have accordingly, and without dissidents, agreed as follows:

1. A representative of the Hill Peoples, selected by the Governor on the recommendation of representatives of the Supreme Council of the United Hill Peoples (SCOUHP), shall be appointed a Counsellor to the Governor to deal with the Frontier Areas.
2. The said Counsellor shall also be appointed a member of the Governor's Executive Council without portfolio, and the subject of Frontier Areas brought within the purview of the Executive Council by Constitutional Convention as in the case of Defence and External Affairs. The Counsellor for Frontier Areas shall be given executive authority by similar means.
3. The said Counsellor shall be assisted by two Deputy Counsellors representing races of which he is not member. While the two Deputy Counsellors should deal in the first instance with the affairs of their respective areas and the Counsellor with all the remaining parts of the Frontier Areas, they should on Constitutional Convention act on the principle of joint responsibility.
4. While the Counsellor, in this capacity as Member of the Executive Council, will be the only representative of the Frontier Areas on the Council, the Deputy Counsellors shall be entitled to attend the meetings of the Council when subjects pertaining to the Frontier Areas are discussed.
5. Though the Governor's Executive Council will be augmented as agreed above, it will not operate in respect of the Frontier Areas in any manner which would deprive any portion of these areas of the autonomy which it now enjoys in internal administration. Full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas is accepted in principle.
6. Though the question of demarcating and establishing a separate Kachin State within a Unified Burma is one which must be regulated for decision by the Constituent Assembly, it is agreed that such a State is desirable. As a first step towards this end, the Counsellors for Frontier Areas and the Deputy Counsellors shall be consulted in the administration of such areas in the Myitkyina and the Bhamo Districts as are Part II Scheduled Areas under the Government of Burma Act of 1935.
7. Citizens of the Frontier Areas shall enjoy rights and privileges which are regarded as fundamental in democratic countries.
8. The arrangements accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial autonomy now vested in the Federated Shan States.
9. The arrangement accepted in this Agreement are without prejudice to the financial assistance which the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills are entitled to receive from the revenues of Burma, and the Executive Council will examine with the Frontier Areas Counsellor and Deputy Counsellors the feasibility of adopting for the Kachin Hills and the Chin Hills financial arrangements similar to those between Burma and the Federated Shan States.

Shan Committee [Signatories]

Saohpa Long of Tawngpeng State, Khun Pan Sing
 Saohpa Long of Yawnghwe State, Sao Shwe Thaike
 Saohpa Long of Hsenwi State, Sao Hom Hpa
 Saohpa Long of Laikha State, Sao Noom
 Saohpa Long of Mong Pawn State, Sao Sam Htun
 Saohpa Long of Hsahmong Kham, Sao Htun E
 Representative of Hsahtung Saohpa Long, Hkun Pung

People's Representatives

U Tin E
 U Htun Myint
 U Kya Bu
 Khun Saw
 Khun Htee
 Sao Yape Hpa

Kachin Committee [Signatories]

Sinwa Naw (Myitkyina)	Zau Rip (Myitkyina)
Dinra Tang (Myitkyina)	Zau La (Bhamo)
Zau Lawn (Bhamo)	Labang Grong (Bhamo)

Chin Committee [Signatories]

U Hlur Hmang (Falam) U Thawng Za Khup (Tiddim)
 U Kio Mang (Haka)

Burmese Government [Signatory]

Aung San

 APPENDIX 2: SAO HARN YAWNGHWE'S ACCOUNT

This article, mentioned earlier, was written by my brother, Sao Harn Yawnghwe, describing what happened on that fateful night of 2 March 1962. Before this time, it has not been published, only circulated within the family. The account includes comments from his siblings who were in the house that tragic night and what they recalled. Harn has also described the arrest of my father, Sao Shwe Thaike, and what the situation was at four AM that morning. It was not a happy experience for my young siblings.

...

74 Kokine Road, Rangoon
2 March 1962

It is claimed that the Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Army, General Ne Win, launched a 'bloodless' coup when he seized power on 2 March 1962.

During the coup, Burma Army troops surrounded the Rangoon home of Sao Shwe Thaike, first President of the Union of Burma (1948-52), former Speaker of the Chamber of Nationalities of the Union Parliament (1952-1960), last hereditary ruler of Yawnghwe (1936-62), and alleged leader of the 'Federal Movement' to amend the Union Constitution, in order to take him into 'protective custody'.

It is also claimed that Burma Army troops had to open fire in self-defense when the guards in Sao Shwe Thaike's home fired on them. The return fire accidentally killed his son.

Given the known self-serving propaganda of the Burmese military, I had always assumed that no one would ever believe the official account. It is much like the claim by the military that they fired only 16 shots (as reported in *The Shan of Burma*) on 7 July 1962 on the campus of Rangoon University to disperse demonstrating students. Eye witnesses including my older brother Chao Tzang reported more casualties. It is now accepted that over a hundred were killed that day.

Generally, I have only spoken of what happened at our house on March 2, 1962, when asked. I would clarify that we had no guns in the house and that we could not have fired on the soldiers first even had we wanted to. In fact, we were awakened by the first gun shots.

I am now writing this account to set the record straight because a noted Shan historian, Sai Aung Tun, has given the following account in his book, *The History of the Shan State: From its Origins to 1962*, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2009-pp. 484-485.

Please note that the quote below is not an attempt to discredit Sai Aung Tun or his scholarly work on the Shan. In his book, he quoted official accounts of what happened on the night of 2 March 1962 at the Yawnghwe family residence. Unfortunately, the official accounts he relied on are inaccurate regarding this event:

But when army units arrived at the residence of the Saohpa of Yawng Hwe, Sao Shwe Thaike, at the corner of Kokine and Goodliffe Roads in Yangon, they met with gunfire. Upon their arrival the troops shouted out in the Shan language to the security guards not to resist. But as guards opened fire, the troops returned fire, and Sao Shwe Thaike's seventeen-year-old son, Sao Myee Myee Thaike, died from bullet wounds in the head and leg. There were no other casualties. Concerning Sao Myee Myee's death, his elder brother Sao Tzang (Eugene Thaike) went to report to the Yankin police station that at about 2 am on March 2, 1962, that unknown men in uniform had entered their house and opened fire, killing Sao Myee Myee Thaike alias Sao Hom Hpa (sic). The Yankin police station opened a murder case under section 302 of the Penal Code.

...

My brother, Chao Tzang Yawnghwe (aka Sao Tzang; Eugene Thaike) in *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan Exile* (2010:9) stated:

I was rudely awakened at about 4 am on the morning of 2 March 1962, by sounds of gunfire, faintly at first but growing louder as I grew more awake. The gunfire was directly outside the home, and bullets smashed through window panes and frames, thudded against or ricocheted off walls. A military unit had crept up to our home in the dark, surrounding it on two sides, had opened fire. My younger brother, Chao Mee who was only seventeen years old was killed "while resisting the armed forces in its performance of duty", according to the authorities concerned.

Patricia Elliot in writing about my mother, Sao Hearn Hkam, the last Mahadevi of Yawnghwe, *The White Umbrella: A Women's Struggle for Freedom in Burma* writes (305):

At 2:00 AM Tzang marked his last exam paper for the night. Exhausted, he threw himself on his bed. Within moments, he was in deep sleep. It was still dark when Tzang awoke. He looked at his clock: 4:00 am. Something had wakened him. Then he heard it again, in the distance. Gunfire. There was no mistaking the sound. He lay listening, eyes still closed, unable to put his tired mind in gear. The sound drifted in and out. Then two short, sharp cracks jolted him to consciousness. What was happening? He heard voices in the garden, feet running, someone shouting in Burmese. Heart pounding, Tzang bounded to his feet and ran out into the hallway. The rest of the family was already awake and gathered in the large entrance hall. They looked at each other in confusion but there was no time to talk. The men outside opened fire...

... When the shooting stopped, they heard heavy boots outside the door. Prince Shwe Thaike stepped out from behind the books. Tzang followed his father outside under the portico, where the air smelled of cordite. From the darkness, two men dressed in Burma Army uniforms stepped forward and leveled their bayonets at the prince. Then they marched him across the garden, Tzang hurrying behind them...

...Next, the soldiers searched the house. Tzang led them from room to room. All they found was a pistol in a fancy case, a gift to his father when he was president. It had never been used. Outside, a gray dawn streaked the sky. As the soldiers made their exit, Tzang saw a figure lying in the grass beside the portico. It was his younger brother Myee, face down with a Naga lance in one outstretched hand. The family kept the lance, another souvenir gift, in the main hall for decoration; Myee must have grabbed it for protection before going outside to investigate the first furtive noises. Tzang leaned over the boy. He saw a small rifle wound in his ankle. It was just a tiny hole, but there was blood everywhere and Myee wasn't moving. Then Tzang saw the large execution-style bullet wound in the back of Myee's head. His little brother was dead.

Although the above is a third-person narrated account based on interviews of what happened on the night of 2 March 1962, the essential facts are correct. We had no arms in our house and we did not open fire on the Burma Army troops surrounding our house.

...

In a letter to the Editor of the *New York Times* published on 13 August 1988, my sister, Sao Ying Sita, Princess of Yawnghwe, wrote:

Ne Win's coup in Burma 26 years ago was not "bloodless," as stated in your news accounts of July 24 following his departure from power. My 16-year-old-brother, Prince Myee was killed on the day of the coup, March 2, 1962, when Mr Ne Win's elite troops riddled him with bullets. I saw his body afterward.

My brother was unarmed and in his pajamas. He had been awakened by noise (of the troops) outside our Rangoon mansion, and he went out to investigate. Afterwards, Burmese soldiers who mowed him down were overheard saying gleefully, "It felt very good to shoot."

Armored cars and heavily armed units had opened fire in dead of night on a defenseless house (and its sleeping inhabitants, myself included) in the heart of the capital city. Ostensibly their mission was simply to arrest my father...

...

For some reason we, as a family, have never collectively discussed our personal experiences of that night. Maybe the grown-ups did, but I was never part of such a discussion. My mother was receiving medical care in England at that time. My oldest brother, Chao Hso (Tiger Yawnghwe), was studying in the UK. Chao Tzang, who was there, died of a brain tumour on 24 July 2004 in Vancouver. My oldest half-sister, Sao Sanda, author of the *Moon Princess*, was in Laos with her husband, Peter Simms, at the time. And given that my two sisters, a half-sister, and an adopted sister who were all there in Rangoon on the night of 2 March 1962, have not spoken about their experience (other than the letter in the *New York Times* by Sao Ying Sita in 1988), I feel an obligation to recount my experience for future generations.

...

[The following is an account Harn wrote in 1989 about that night:]

An Awakening

Myee and I were fooling around with our father's two new automatic pistols, when one of them accidentally fell to the floor. The impact set the firing mechanism off and the pistol started firing wildly in all directions. I screamed, "Myee, get down. You will get hit!" and woke from my dream into a real life nightmare.

Bullets were flying everywhere. The deafening noise of automatic weapons being fired at close range had awakened me. Through the windows, I could see the bullets streaking up and lighting the night sky. Instinctively, I dove off my bed and crawled to Myee's. But his bed was empty. Realizing that I was alone in the room, I crawled behind the headboard of the bed to at least put something between me and the bullets ricocheting off the walls.

Although I was just about to turn fourteen, I was familiar with guns. But being helpless at the receiving end of a machine gun was something I had never contemplated. I found myself trembling uncontrollably. I was not afraid. I was angry and wanted to fight back but I could not stop myself shaking.

"Myee, Myee, are you there? They are shooting at us." It was one of my sisters - perhaps Ying or Htila, calling softly but urgently from outside our bedroom door. I quickly crawled out into the huge upstairs hall in the middle of the house. Most of the household were already there taking cover. But no one knew what was going on and where Myee was. I then found out that my father had gone downstairs and we settled down to wait for his return. Little did I know then that I would never see him again - alive.

I was indignant that the robbers were so bold as to be attacking us in the middle of the capital, Rangoon. "Where are the police?" was my first question. It did not make sense. As the firing continued, I could hear the noise of engines and some traffic on the road outside. Surely, the police can hear the gunfire and would arrive soon, I thought. I was also certain that the neighbors must have alerted the police. My impression that we were being attacked by robbers was reinforced by the wild yelling in Burmese that accompanied the shooting. "Young Shan girls, come on out. Come out. Open up or we will

shoot with cannons," and a number of other unintelligible shouts. I was eager to defend ourselves and said, "Let's get the Czech pistols out." They were locked in a cupboard in my father's bedroom. But fortunately, wiser heads prevailed and we hugged the floor in the huge central hall and waited for the police to arrive. The shooting seemed to go on forever. At one point there was a thud under my body and the floorboard lifted slightly. But I did not pay it much attention until we found out in the morning that a bullet had penetrated the ceiling downstairs near the spot where I had lain. I was shocked and grateful that the bullet had lost its momentum just then.

Suddenly, the shooting ceased. We heard someone say in Burmese, "This is the Tatmadaw. There has been a coup." We were so relieved that it was not robbers after all. But then a long uncertain silence followed, and we waited, not daring to move. Eventually, Tzang who slept downstairs told us to come down. As I came down the broad front stairs with my younger sister, a soldier lifted up his Bren gun, cocked it, and pointed it at me yelling, "Put up your hands and come down one at a time." I was both shocked and angered. How could he behave so rudely towards me? I don't think I have ever felt more humiliated. But I quickly obeyed and raised my hands. We were all herded onto the front lawn and told to sit on our haunches with our hands on our heads. I wondered if we would all be shot and killed since some of the soldiers were very rough and callous. One of them even said loudly, "It was great fun to shoot."

As all the children and women folk came out of the house, the soldiers seemed surprised that there were no men in the house other than my sixty-six year old father and Tzang, then twenty-three. The MIS (military intelligence) man in civilian clothes asked, "Where is the Mahadevi (my mother)?" He seemed equally surprised to learn that she was in England.

The soldiers searched the house, finally leaving at daybreak. We were told that my father had been arrested and taken away. No one knew where Myee was. The children were told to go inside while the grown-ups searched for Myee. He was soon found. I was curious and went upstairs to peep out of a window overlooking where Myee had been found. I don't know what I was expecting to see, but when I saw the white sheet covering his body just by the side of the house, I quickly withdrew in fright. Over the years, I have often wondered if Myee was shot at the instant I was trying to warn him in my dream.

•••

[Harn continues giving details of what happened that night:]

Arrest of Sao Shwe Thaike, Saohpa Long of Yawnghwe.

At the time of the coup in 1962, my father had already retired. The armed police guard that had provided for his security around the house had been withdrawn for some time before the coup - maybe even a year previous. The three close retainers - one Burman, two Shan - who had been trained as police officers and became his official bodyguards, had also retired. The retired Burman bodyguard lived by the official front gate of our nine-acre compound. He made his living as a mechanic. The entrance to his workshop was by our front gate. Anyone could enter and leave our compound if they were visiting his garage. We generally used the side gate that was near the house. The guardhouse there was deserted at the time of the coup.

The other retired Shan bodyguard lived at the far end of the compound where we kept our milk cows. He made a living selling coffee and tea. Again, anyone could enter our compound at any time by visiting his tea shop. Upon retirement, the third bodyguard had gone back home to his village. Not far from the tea shop lived our Gurkha cowherd and his family. He fed and milked our twenty or so cows and sold their milk for us to our neighbors and in the market. The only other building in our compound was the three-story building at the back where my half-sister, Sao Sanda,

lived on the top floor with her journalist husband, Peter Simms. They were away in Laos. The ground floor was occupied by their employees and their families as well as our drivers and their families - most of them were Karen. Only the maids, who were mother's distant relatives, lived with us in the big house.

On the night of the coup, Burma Army troops detained everybody living in our compound before advancing on our house. From a distance of less than one hundred feet, they indiscriminately opened fire with automatic weapons from all directions. The confused gunfire continued for a time - I do not know exactly how long, but at that time I thought it was for forty-five minutes to an hour. I could be wrong. It may have been for a shorter period. But no one to this day knows exactly why the troops opened fire and why they just as suddenly stopped. It is possible that my brother, Myee, heard the soldiers creeping up on the house. He had complained of stomach trouble before going to bed the night before. It may have kept him awake. He might have taken the spear to defend himself when he went out to investigate. The nervous soldiers may have seen him, panicked, and opened fire, setting off a chain reaction. Or my brother could have been killed as the troops opened fire according to a pre-determined plan.

At the first sound of gunfire, Chao Tzang rolled off his bed and crawled out of his bedroom into the main hall. His bed was directly in front of an open window. Had he sat up instead of rolling off the bed, he too would have been killed. His white mosquito net was riddled with bullet holes. As he crawled into the front hall, he found the front door wide open. My father, who had learnt that Chao Myee was not in the hall upstairs with the rest of the family, had gone downstairs to look for him. He found Chao Tzang by the open front door. Together they shut the door, locked, and bolted it. In the morning, we found the front door riddled with bullet holes. How my father or Chao Tzang managed to escape being shot is a mystery.

When the shooting stopped, the soldiers brought Gopal, an Indian, employed by my half-sister Sao Sanda, to the front door. He told my father in Burmese that it was the Tatmadaw. There had been a coup and the officer in charge ordered the door to be opened. My father did so and was arrested. He and Chao Tzang were then escorted through a field to the opening the soldiers had made in the high hedge surrounding our compound. My father was taken away in a car and my brother was brought back to the house. An officer told Chao Tzang that they had shot somebody and that maybe the victim was Chao Tzang's brother.

We were all told to come out of the house and sit on the front lawn in rows with our hands on our heads. The soldiers then started a search of the house. But one of their bullets had hit the fuse box and much of the house was in total darkness. Fearing an ambush, the soldiers made Chao Tzang enter each room ahead of them. They found nothing except for two automatic pistols that had been presented to my father by the Czechoslovakian government on one of his official visits. They were both locked in a cupboard in my father's bedroom for safety.

While we were waiting, an officer ordered the soldiers to pick up their spent cartridges. Later in the morning, after the soldiers had left, we kids went searching and found over a hundred empty shells that had been overlooked by the soldiers in the dark under some bushes and trees. After the soldiers had completed their search, we were allowed back into the house.

As the day broke, the soldiers left and a search began for Chao Myee. His body was found in a flower bed to the left of the front porch. He had been shot in the head and foot. A ceremonial Naga spear was found near his body. Chao Tzang went to the local police station to report a murder. The police said that they had been prevented from coming by soldiers who had taken over the police station. They filed a murder case and came over to investigate.

Everyone who saw the damage to our house agree that my whole family could have been killed. The shots were not fired into the air with the intention of scaring the inhabitants. The soldiers

shot to kill. The shots fired at the ground floor were horizontal and anyone crouching or standing would have been hit. The shots fired at the upper floor had the intended trajectory of penetrating the upper walls of the ground floor and hitting anyone hiding on the upper floor. We did not repair the bullet holes assuming that at a later time, a proper investigation could be carried out. Unfortunately, shortly after we escaped to Thailand in 1963, a fire broke out in the vacant house and destroyed everything. The Ne Win regime then confiscated the nine-acre property and divided it up amongst the top generals who built houses on it. Since then, houses have been built on our property and sold numerous times. Today a road cuts through the property and five giant modern condominiums stand on it.

The press also arrived. They were shown around the house and were fully informed about what had happened. But when they got back to their offices, they were prevented from reporting the true story. Instead, the Revolutionary Council issued a statement that said troops carrying out their duty had met with armed resistance and had been forced in self-defense to open fire, accidentally killing one of Sao Shwe Thaike's sons.

Harn Yawngghwe
February 2010
Montreal, Canada

APPENDIX 3: SAO SHWE THAIKE'S LETTER, 1960

Saohpa of Yawnghwe Sao Shwe Thaike's letter presented to Dr E Maung, the Minister for Justice, at the opening of the Constitutional Amendment Committee, 22 December 1960 in Rangoon, sets out his personal views on the amendment of the Constitution:

During the practical application of the Constitution of the Union of Burma, for the past 13 years, it was found that the Constitution permitted the practice of racism. It appeared that Burma proper had not become a constituent state of the Union, but had taken the place of the British in the administration of the Constituent States. It also appeared as if these States did not join together in a voluntary union but were brought into subordination of Burma proper. These Constituent States had to request Burma proper to provide for their needs. There is not a single right of self-determination given to the States by the Constitution and all administrative matters have had to be undertaken in accordance with the wishes of the Union Government.

As no financial powers were given to the States, nothing could be done for the development of the States; for example, as only Kyats 125 lakhs had been allotted as annual contribution to the Shan State, it appeared that the Shan State deserved only that amount, and no more. The Shan State had no voice in matters relating to the benefits accruing from the finances of the Union Government. All other States were also in the same position.

According to the principle of federation, Burma proper should be one of the Constituent States and enjoy only those rights which the other States enjoyed. But because, under the present Constitution, Burma proper exercised the power and rights of the Union Government, which are greater than those enjoyed by the States, the States are dissatisfied. No one in the States has the intention of destroying the Union. If Burma proper becomes a Constituent State of the Union, on an equal footing with other States, the dissatisfaction will gradually disappear. Therefore, a true Federal Constitution should be drawn up in all sincerity.

APPENDIX 4: LETTER FROM SAOHPA SIR SAO MAWNG, 1926

Order of 1 Dec. 1926 by
Saopha Sir Sao Mawng, Yawnghwe Maharaja Sawbwaqvi

I, Sir Sao Mawng, Maharaja Sawbwaqvi of Yawnghwe, Southern Shan States, who held charge of 39 sub-states with the title of "Kambawza Yahta Thiri Pawara Mahawuntha Thudama Paja" and was honoured by His Majesty the King-Emperor by being invested with the title of K. C. I. E., K. S. M., and two gold Delhi Durbar medals, hereby issue the following order to my sons, nephews, grandsons, other relations, Myosas, ministers, hengs, htamons, ne-oks and ywa-oks etc.

O R D E R .

Mr. Donnison, I. C. S., Assistant Commissioner, a trusted officer of the Government, who had worked as Assistant Superintendent, Yawnghwe Subdivision, for about 4 months, is, I believe, a polite, hard working and patient officer. As I am getting old, I am anxious that the administration of the State may not go wrong. I am unable to go about in the State for inspection. I also desire that my sons, nephews, cousins, grandsons, other relations, Myosas, ministers and officials should learn how to administer the State well and so make them fit to succeed me. I, therefore, consulted with the Commissioner, Federated Shan States, for appointing a "Kozale", who will guide them and teach them. The Commissioner has placed the matter before His Excellency the Governor, who gave orders that I should be allowed to appoint one, whom I approve. Accordingly, I have obtained permission to appoint Mr. Donnison I. C. S., Assistant Commissioner, and I hereby delegate my powers in Civil, Criminal, Revenue and Public Works matters to him and he will exercise the same powers as myself but in important matters he will consult me before issuing orders and hereby appoint him "Kozale Amatchok Kvi" to carry on the work from Wednesday, the 12th, Lasok Tasaungmon 1288 B.E., the 1st December 1926.

A photocopy of this order was supplied by F.S.V. Donnison.

APPENDIX 5: LETTER SHOWING SHAN CONCERN, 1947

From,

The Committee Members,
Executive Council of Saehpas,
Federated Shan States.

To,

Yawngluwe

The Director,
Frontier Areas,
Rangoon.

Dated Lashio, the 29th December 1946.

We understand from the Honourable U Aung San that the Burmese Mission visiting London will ask for control of the Frontier Areas. If this is the case we wish to state emphatically that neither the Honourable U Aung San nor any of his colleagues has any mandate to speak on behalf of the Frontier Areas. Whether and when the Frontier Areas will amalgamate with Burma is a matter for the people of the Frontier Areas alone to decide. We are at present deliberating on this subject with leaders of other areas and we will make our views known to H.M.G. and to the Burmese people through our properly constituted councils.

If matters concerning the Frontier Areas are to be settled in London during the visit of the Burmese Mission we insist on the right to send our representatives simultaneously. Please inform us on this point immediately to enable us to make our plans.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. President,
Saehpaleng of Tawngpeng State. | Sd/ Hkun Pang Saing. |
| 2. The Vice-President,
Saehpaleng of Yawnghwe State. | Sd/ Sae Shwe Thaik. |
| 3. Saehpaleng of North Hsenwi State. | Sd/ Sae Hm Hpa. |
| 4. Saehpaleng of Mengmit State. | Sd/ Sae Hkun Che. |
| 5. Saehpaleng of Mengpaw. | Sd/ Sae Sam Htun. |
| 6. Saehpaleng of Hsatung. | Sd/ Sae Hkun Kyi. |
| 7. Saehpaleng of Laihka. | Sd/ Sae Nem. |
| 8. Saehpaleng of Hsamenghkan. | Sd/ Sae Htun Aye. |

TABLES

Table 1: Land Area and Money: The Shan States in 1939,⁷⁷ with details of each state's annual contribution to the Federation of Shan States and taxes each collected.

State	Area (sq. miles)	Gross Revenue (Rs)	% Contribution to FSS ⁷⁸ lakhs)
NORTHERN			
Hsipaw	4,591	7,75,590 ⁷⁹	35
Hsenwi	6,422	6,90,889	35
Mong Yai	2,351	1,18,344	35
Mong Mit	3,733	2,30,838	35
Tawngpeng	938	6,45,634	35
EASTERN			
Kengtung	12,400	4,27,879	27.5
Mong Pan	2,988	20,172	30
Kokang ⁸⁰			
INNER			
Mong Nai	3,100	1,11,524	35
Laikha	1,566	1,15,624	35
Mawkmai	2,557	86,744	35
Mong Nawng	1,646	1,29,057	35
Mong Kung	1,593	93,128	35
Mong Hsu	470	4,674	30
Kesi Mansam	551	39,011	30
CENTRAL			
Yawnghwe	1,393	3,79,129	35
Mong Pawn	366	38,059	30
Hsahtung	471	37,335	35
Lawksawk	2,362	76,353	35
Samka	314	20,923	35
Loi Long	1,098	53,550	35
Nawngmawn	28	14,738	35
Namhkok	108	25,520	35
Wanyin	219	33,676	35
Hopong	212	37,358	30
Sakoi	82	4,674	30
Mong Pai	730	33,906	27.5
MYE LAT			
Hsahmong Kham	449	67,742	30
Pindaya	86	33,007	35
Baw	741	14,872	35
Pwehla	178	31,770	30

⁷⁷ Source: *Shan States and Karenni, List of Chiefs and Leading Families* (1943).

⁷⁸ The percentage of gross revenue taken by the FSS (Federation of Shan States).

⁷⁹ I.e., seven lakhs, or 75,590 rupees. A lakh is equal to 100,000, which is written 1,00,000 in the numbering system used in India.

⁸⁰ No data is given for Kokang, which did not become a state in its own right until 1946.

Pangmi	30	6,168	35
Ywangan	359	18,625	35
Kyong	24	9,820	35
OTHERS			
Mong Lun	3,360	31,083	250 (fixed grant) ⁸¹
Kantarawadi	3,015	88,107	5,025 (tribute) ⁸²
Bawlake	565	2,72,661	250 (tribute)
Kyebogyi	700	28,787	100 (tribute)

⁸¹ This was an annual contribution to the FSS.

⁸² The States of Karenni were not part of the FSS, thus tribute was paid directly to the British Government.

Table 2: Approximate dates of reigns of rulers from British Annexation in 1887 to the formation of the Federated Shan States, through the Japanese Occupation until their abdication of powers in 1959. Princes who began their reign before 1922 are shown in the first column and those after, in the second column. Names appear in both columns if their rule overlapped a few years before and after the Federation in 1922.⁸³

STATES	1887 - 1922	1922-1959
BAW	U Ohn Gaing 1886-? U Nyo Hlaing 1907 - ?	Sao Hkun Nawng 1937-1945 Sao Hkun Aung 1945-1959
HOPONG	Hkun Hsai 1893-1900 Sao Hkun Law 1921-1952	Sao Hkun Law 1921-1952
HSAHTUNG	Hkun Hseng ?-1929	Sao Hkun Kyi 1930-1947 Sao Aung Myint 1957-1959
HSAHMONG KHAM	U Shwe Min 1885-1886 Min Maung Po 1886-1923	Sao Htun E 1937-1959
HSENWI	Hkun Sang Tun Hung 1888-1916	Sao Hom Hpa 1925-1959
HSIPAW	Sao Kya Kai/Sao Hkun Hseng 1886-1902 Sao Hke/Che 1906-1928	Sao Hke/Che 1906-1928 Sao Ohn Kya 1928-1938 Sao Kya Seng 1949-1959
KENGTUNG	Sao Kwang Tai Intaleng 1897-1935	Sao Kwang Tai Intaleng 1897-1935 Sao Kwang Tai 1937-1937 Sao Sai Long 1947-1959
KESI MANSAM	Hkun Hseng Hkun Long 1914-1922	Hkun Lu 1922-1948 Sao Shwe Hmon 1948-1959
KOKANG	Yang Chun Yon 1916-1929	Yang Chun Yon 1916-1929 Yang Wen Pin 1929-1949 Yang Kyein Sai 1949-1959
KYONG	U Min Maung Po 1867- U Po Tin 1917-1946	U Po Tin 1917-1946 Sao Hkun Saung 1946-1959

⁸³ Sources: SSK (1943), Sao Saimong Mangrai (1965), *Shan-pyi-Pyi-thu-awk-chok-ye-Pa-net-kha-pwe* (1959), Scott and Harding (1899), *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, and from family members of the relevant states.

LAIKHA	Sao Hkun Lai 1887-1917	Sao Hkun Mong 1926-1931 Sao Num 1933-1959
LAWKSAWK	Hkun Nu 1887-1900 Sao Hkun Suik 1900-1943	Sao Hkun Suik 1900-1943 Sao Hkun Hsar 1943-1959
LOI LONG/PINLAUNG	Hkun Hkam Chok 1895-1938	Hkun Hkam Chok 1895-1938 Sao Moe Kyaw 1940-1959
MAWKMAI	Kolang Saohpa 1868-1887 Hkun Hmom 1888-1915 Hkun Hkawng 1915-1924	Hkun Hkawng 1915-1924 Sao Sam Htun 1924-1950
MONG HSU	Hkun Kyaw --? Hkun Htun 1920-1952	Hkun Htun 1920-1952 Sao Hman Hpa 1947-1952 acting 1952-1959
MONG KUNG	Hkun Mong 1907-1927	Hkun Mong 1907-1927 Sao Kyi 1932-1959
MONG LUN	Ton Tsang --? Sao Hkanam 1918-1928	Sao Hkanam 1918-1928 Sao Hman Lek 1928-1959
MONG MIT	Sao Khin Maung 1906-1936	Sao Khin Maung 1906-1936 Sao Hkun Hkio 1937-1959
MONG NAI	Sao Hkun Kyi 1871-1884 1899-1914 Hkun Kyaw Sam 1914-1928	Hkun Kyaw Sam 1914-1928 Sao Kyaw Ho 1929-1948 Hkun Kyaw Sam 1914-1928 Sao Pye 1948-1959
MONG NAWNG	Hkun Long 1906-1919 Sao Hkun Hsar 1919-1946 Myosa	Sao Hkun Hsar 1919-1946 Saohpa Sao Hkun Hsar 1946-1954 Sao Ohn Maung 1954-1959
MONG PAI	Hkun Yong 1887-1890 (abdicated) d.1900 Hkun Hsuriya 1891-1907 Sao Pin Nya 1907-1952	Sao Pin Nya 1907-1952

MONG PAN	Hkun Num 1888-1918 Sao Hkun Ong 1918-1947	Sao Hkun Ong 1918-1947 Sao Shwe Kyi 1947-1959
MONG PAWN	Hkun Hti 1887-1923	Sao Sam Htun 1929-1947 Sao Hso Hom 1957-1959
MONG YAI	Sao Naw Mong 1888-1913 Sao Sone 1918-1946	Sao Sone 1918-1946 Sao Hso Holm 1946-1959
NAMHKOK	Hkun Myat 1914-? Hkun Pwang 1918-?	Sao Htun Yin 1946-1950
NAWNGMAWN	Hkun Shwe Wa --? Sao Hkun Ok 1902-1930	Sao Hkun Ok 1902-1930 Sao Htun Yin 1946-1950
PANGMI/PINHMI	Hkun Min Nyunt 1901?-1934	Hkun Min Nyunt 1901?-1934 Hkun Po Min aka Hkun Min 1934-195 Sao Hkun Oo Kyemmong
PANGTARA/PINDAYA	Maung Po Khin 1888-1897 Hkun San Nyo 1911-1936	Hkun San Nyo 1911-1936 Sao Win Kyi 1945-1959
PWEHLA	Saw Nyunt 1886--? Sao San Mya 1914-1939	Sao San Mya 1914-1939 Sao Htun Sein 1943-1959
SAKOI	Hkun Kyang ?-1878- Hkun Htun 1878-? d.1913	Sao Hkun Nyunt 1915-?
SAMKA	Hkun Sein Hpu 1885-1909	Sao Hkun Kyi 1915-1959
TAWNGPENG	Hkun Hseng Awn 1905-1926	Hkun Hseng Awn 1905-1926 Sao Hkun Pan Sein 1926-1959
WANYIN	Hkun Waik 1918-? 1923-?	Sao Sein Nyunt 1950-1959
YAWNGHWE	Sir Sao Mawng 1864-1885 1897-1926	Sir Sao Mawng 1897-1926 Sao Shwe Thaike 1927-1959
YWANGAN/YENGAN	U Thu Daw 1898-1909 U Ohn Bin	Sao Hla Paw 1928-1956 Sao Hkun Yi 1956-1959

GLOSSARY

BURMESE TERMS

amatchoke	chief minister
bo	army officer/ commander
bogyoke	supreme commander
dacoit	brigand
daw	denoting royalty
daw	aunt, equivalent to 'Mrs.'
godown	warehouse
Inle	lake small
Intha	lake dweller, inhabitants of Inle Lake
kyat	currency
longyi	sarong, worn by both men and women
mintha	male dancer
minthami	female dancer
myook	official in charge of a district
phaung daw u	front of royal barge
phongyi	Buddhist monk
phongyi kyaung	Buddhist monastery
sawbwa	Shan ruler
sitke	equivalent of viceroy
Tatmadaw	Burmese army, military
thakin	master
thakin-ma	mistress of the house
thanakha	bark known as <i>limonia acidissima</i> , herbal cosmetic
U	Mister, Mr.
wun	minister at Court
zat	theatrical performance
zayat	rest house

OTHER TERMS

bazaar	market held every five days
chummery	a boating house
duwa	Kachin ruler
farang (Thai)	foreigner
gweilo (Chinese, guilao 鬼佬)	foreigner
howdah	seat on elephant's back
mahadevi (Sanskrit)	Great Goddess, senior consort of a Saohpa
sangha (Pali)	Buddhist monks
sanad	a grant awarded by the British
saophya	ruler in Karenni
Tripitaka (Pali)	Buddhist scriptures

SHAN TERMS

Haw	palace
Heng	headman of group of villages, a small district
kham	gold, golden
kham san	ordination ceremony
Khun	male, of nobility
Kyemmong	heir apparent
mong	kingdom, country, principality or state
Myosa	prince, ruler [middle rank]
na peuk	white face, Caucasian
nang	female, of nobility
Noom Suk Harn	Brave Young Warriors, first dissident group
Ngwegunhmu	prince, ruler, collector of taxes
Pii	a spirit
poy/pwe	festival
Sai	term of address for male
salop, sala	rest house
Sao	prince or princess
Saohpa	lord of the sky, prince, ruler
Saohpa long	great lord of the sky, great prince
Sao U Hpa	Lord Father of the Sky
Sao Mye Mong	Princess Mother of the Kingdom
sin	sarong
tang luk	shortcut
tawmaw	pavilion
wai	gesture of courtesy, putting palms together
wat	monastery

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⁸⁴ From Wat Howeng, Laikha in Tai Shan. Sao Aggasena said his research was from old Tai Shan manuscripts, live sources, and from what he remembered. Kham Indra translated this paper for me.

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