



THAI-BURMESE WARFARE DURING THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND THE GROWTH OF THE FIRST TOUNGOO EMPIRE¹

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Abstract

A new historical interpretation of the pre-modern relations between Thailand and Burma is proposed here by analyzing these relations within the wider historical context of the formation of mainland Southeast Asian states. The focus is on how Thai-Burmese warfare during the sixteenth century was connected to the growth and development of the first Toungoo empire. An attempt is made to answer the questions: how and why sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare is distinguished from previous warfare, and which fundamental factors and conditions made possible the invasion of Ayutthaya by the first Toungoo empire.

Introduction

As neighbouring countries, Thailand and Burma not only share a long border but also have a profoundly interrelated history. During the first Toungoo empire in the mid-sixteenth century and during the early Konbaung empire from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, the two major kingdoms of mainland Southeast Asia waged wars against each other numerous times. This warfare was very important to the growth and development of both kingdoms and to other mainland Southeast Asian polities as well.

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The wars with Burma are one of the most haunting historical episodes in the minds of many Thais. Various works have helped to embed Thai-Burmese warfare deep in the Thai consciousness. Innumerable Thai heroes and heroines have been resurrected and reinvented from past conflicts with Burma.

Nationalist ideology is a fundamental concept of mainstream historical writing on the subject. Battles between Thai and Burmese armies, particularly the roles of Thai kings and leaders struggling for and preserving the independence of Thailand from Burma, the enemy of their country, have been copiously narrated. They have inevitably created misunderstanding and fostered negative attitudes towards the Burmese people (cf. Sunait 1990, 1992).

Moreover, most of the mainstream historical writings are analyzed within a Thai-centric historical framework, using centralist historical ideology as a standard in interpreting the warfare. Only the Thai historical background of Ayutthaya, Thonburi and Rattanakosin reigns are emphasized. Yet there were various other significant kingdoms, independent states and principalities, such as the Mon and Lan Na, participating as crucial players in the warfare, as well as the most active one, Burma. Thai mainstream historical writings have hardly thrown light on these factors.

Consequently, Thai-Burmese warfare depicted in Thai historical writings is rather static and has created a stereotypical image of the Burmese as forever an enemy of the Thai.

There are generally three kinds of military history (Griess 1988, 27). The first is known as “pure” history, recounting every event during a battle down to the hourly locations of small units in painstaking detail. The second uses a campaign or battle to study the didactic principles of waging war. Finally, the third is military history viewed as social history, the interaction of warfare and society—what has lately come to be called “new” military history (Cook 1990, 14). Almost all writing and research on warfare studies by Thai military historians is conducted within the approaches of the first and second types. In their works, wars and military operations in the battlefields are removed from their historical contexts and socio-political backgrounds in order to be analyzed separately, with a focus on tactics and strategies only.

While the first two approaches are important, more attention needs to be paid to the new area of “war and society”. Past warfare between Thailand and Burma also needs to be studied in light of the “new” military history approach, since an understanding of state warfare requires a look at the nature and formation of states.

Post-Pagan to pre-Toungoo warfare: rivalries of city-states²

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, most Burmese military operations occurred along the north-south line of the Irrawaddy River. These limited-area wars were directly related to political conditions within the Burmese region.

During the post-Pagan period and before the rise of Toungoo, between c. 1300 and 1530, there was no great state as during the heyday of Pagan. The region was politically fragmented and split into many city-states. Indigenous historical evidence, such as inscriptions (Than Tun 1959, Tin Hla Thaw 1959), and the chronicle of *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* (Kala Vol.I, 1959) support Lieberman's statement that the region remained divided into four more or less distinct geopolitical-ethnic zones, which ignored, brutalized, and allied with one another in a bewildering fashion. At the same time, each zone remained internally fragmented. The four main zones were the Shan realm, upper Burma, Arakan, and lower Burma (Lieberman 2003b, 123–131).

Wars from the post-Pagan to the pre-Toungoo period were essentially rivalries among city-states. During the first half of the fourteenth century, the Burmese rulers of Pinya and Sagaing competitively gained control over a nuclear zone, such as Prome, Toungoo, Toungdwin, Yamethin, Hlaingteik, Kyaukpadaung, Mindon, Sagu, Salin, Salay, Pagan, Talup, Kuhkangyi etc. (Fig.1). (Kala Vol. I 1959, 324) Most of these cities were concentrated along the Irrawaddy River in the areas known today as the Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway divisions.

When King Thadominbya (r.1364–1368) built a new city at Ava in 1364, only Sagaing and Pinya were under his control. Toungoo, Toungdwingyi, Nganwe-gon Pyinmana and Sagu rebelled against him. Pyinmana raided the five well-irrigated areas of Ava's heartland: Yamethin, Petpaing, Pya-gaung, Toung-nyo, and Tamyinhsan. During his entire reign, Thadominbya successfully suppressed only Pyinmana, Toungdwingyi and Sagu. Toungoo remained autonomous and supported Pegu against Ava.

It was King Mingyiswasawke of Ava (r. 1368–1401) who was able to obtain provisional power over other central Burmese polities. Mingyiswasawke appointed his relatives and officers as rulers of the principal Burmese cities.

² We are not covering here ancient Burmese warfare in the early period of the Pagan empire (tenth to thirteenth centuries) because the history of Pagan has its own complicated controversies. Though there were cultural and traditional links between Pagan and the later periods, there was no strong connection between its political structure and that of the sixteenth century. Differences and similarities are noted here between sixteenth century warfare with the preceding period, namely the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

...When he (Mingyiswasawke) was on the throne, he ordered Razathinkyan-nga-mauk to marry his sister, Saw-umma and to govern Toung-pyan-gyi-wa-yin-tut. He ordered Thiwali to govern Yamethin, his brother-Sawyannaung to govern Pyi (Prome), Pyanchigyi to govern Toungoo, Thihapate to govern Toungdwingyi, Sithu to govern Pagan, Razathuza to govern Talop, Thinkathuza to govern Sagu, Bayakyawthuza to govern Nyangyan, Tarapya to govern Pahkangyi, Sithuthambawa to govern four parts of the five well-irrigated areas, Sawhnaung to govern Makhkaya, Razathinkyan to govern Sagaing, Minpale to govern Paunkmyaing, Thinkkaya to govern Waddy, Theikshei-kyawhtin to govern Myeidu, Nganauksan to govern Tagaung, and Thinkkathu to govern Tapeyin or Dipeyin... (ibid., 343–50) (Fig.1)

In addition, Mingyiswasawke expanded his influence over a number of Shan cities by interfering in the Kale-Mohnyin conflicts. Kale and Mohnyin each asked Ava for support. Finally, Ava launched troops to seize them both. Moreover, Mingyiswasawke replaced the rulers of Mohnyin and Kale with Ava officials and appointed the former Mohnyin ruler to govern Tagaung (ibid., 362–3). (Fig.2)

During the reign of Mingyiswasawke, Ava's armies were strong and large, and were able to sustain the series of wars with King Razadirit of Pegu (r.1385–1423). With help from the Myaungmya ruler, who invited Ava to march against Pegu, Ava easily invaded the area of lower Burma. The early battlefields were concentrated on cities in the Irrawaddy delta, i.e. Hlaing, Hmawbie, and Dagon (ibid., 365–7, 372; Nai Pan Hla 1977, 188-190, 192–4). The main armies of Ava were from central Burmese cities, with a few from Shan cities. In the first two attacks, the Ava military consisted of armies from Toungoo, Toungdwingyi, Yaminthein, Pinle, Myingsaing, Kale, Pinya, Nyangyan, Amyint, Prome, Myeihte, Sagu, Salin, Talop, Pahkangyi, Sagaing, Pagan and two Shan cities (Kala Vol. I. 1959, 365, 370–1). Ava also used this army to defend itself when the Shan invaded Ava's key northern cities from Myeidu to Sagaing in 1392 (ibid., 382–3).

Ava's authority over those polities did not last long. As its temporary network of alliances was directly related to the Ava king in person, whenever there was a change of king on the Ava throne, almost all old vassal city-states rose up against the new king. After Mohnyin Mintaya³ (r. 1426–1440) was crowned king of Ava in

³ Mohnyin Mintaya was a member of the Ava royal family. He governed Mohnyin before ascending the throne at Ava. Though his name was Mohnyin, he was not Shan by origin (Kala Vol. II 1960, 55).



Figure 2 The location of some city-states in northern Burmese region mentioned in the text.

1426, the descendants of the Ava kings were no longer able to exercise control over the Burmese city-states. In 1427, Toungoo and Thayawaddy sided with Binnya Ran of Pegu against Mohnyin Mintaya by supporting Binnya Ran's invasion of Prome (Kala Vol. II 1960, 63).

Besides being at war with some Shan cities and with the Chinese from Yunnan throughout the fifteenth century, Ava usually had to wage wars to suppress Burmese city-states such as Toungdwingyi, Prome and Toungoo. Members of the royal family and officials who governed these city-states always rebelled against Ava every time they had an opportunity. These city-states also frequently attacked each other. In 1480 King Dutiyabayin Minhkaung of Ava (r. 1480–1502) was disheartened by saying: "...At the present there are huge Shan armies next to Myeidu, my brothers, Thadodhammadayaza and Minyeyawswa are in rebellion and my uncle, Pyi Min (governor of Prome), has raided peripheral villages..." (ibid., 105).

In sum, prior to the rise of the first Toungoo empire in the mid-sixteenth century, it was hardly possible for Burmese polities to start trans-regional warfare against other polities beyond the Shan plateau and the Salween River. In this period, warfare was still confined to rivalries among Burmese polities, which were sometimes allied with the Mon, Shan and Arakan states.

The rise of Toungoo

The first Toungoo dynasty (1485–1599) comprised four kings: Mingyinyo, also known as Mahathirizeiyathura (r.1485–1531); his son Tabinshwehti, also known as Mintayashwehti (r.1531–1550); Bayinnaung, brother-in-law of Tabinshwehti, also known as Thiriribawanaditara Pandita Thudhammadayaza (r.1551–1581); and Nandabayin, Bayinnaung's son, also known as Ngasudayaka (r.1581–1599).

Toungoo is the name of a city situated in the middle course of the Paunglaung or Sittang River, the basin of which lies between the Irrawaddy and Salween rivers (Phayre 1998, 90). The *Toungoo Yazawin*, or the chronicle of Toungoo ('Introduction' in Pwa 1924, 10–12), records that Toungoo was first established in 1279 by the kings Thawungyi and Thawungne, who were both descended from a Pagan prince (ibid, 3–4; Kala Vol. I 1959, 262–3, Vol. II 1960, 151; Tun Nyo 1998, 1–2; Myint Than 1992, 160). Toungoo prior to the reign of Mingyinyo, founder of the first Toungoo dynasty, was merely a nominal Burmese city-state and a vassal city under the Ava kings. Most of Toungoo's rulers were appointed by Ava. Though there is no evidence confirming that Toungoo paid tribute to Ava, the *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* states many times that Toungoo rulers had to send their armies to help Ava in numerous wars. However, the Toungoo rulers often rebelled against Ava, and were sometimes allied with Pegu (Kala Vol. I 1959, 249–50, 361–2, 368, 382, 428–9; also Pwa 1924, 14–19). There was no continuity, for although the

rulers sometimes intermarried with Ava, Pegu and Prome, no one family maintained itself for long (Harvey 1967, 124).

Toungoo rose to power at the end of the fifteenth century in the reign of Mingyinyo. The rise of Toungoo in his reign related directly to the series of Shan invasions into Ava and upper Burma in the early part of the sixteenth century, when Shan rulers from Mohnyin and Hsipaw dominated the north (Lieberman 2003b, 125). Mingyinyo took advantage of the disturbances in Ava to consolidate his hold on Toungoo.

In 1485, Mingyinyo murdered his uncle who was the former ruler of Toungoo, and then crowned himself king of Toungoo with the title *Mahathirizeiyathura* and established the new city of Myawaddy (Kala Vol. II 1960, 153; Pwa 1924, 43). As soon as Dutiyabayin Minkhaung, king of Ava, heard this news, he tried to keep Mingyinyo as Ava's ally by accepting Mingyinyo as ruler of Toungoo and rewarding him with two full-grown male elephants and other presents (Kala Vol. II 1960, 107, 151).

There were many signs that Mingyinyo was plotting against Ava, such as his expansion of Toungoo territory, increasing manpower by catching captives, and establishing new cities, while Ava was counter-attacking the Shan areas along its northern border. In the early years, Mingyinyo seized the well-irrigated city of Pyinmana and continued further eastward to raid Kyeikthasa town, which was inhabited by Kayin (Karen) people. Mingyinyo's prowess was so well known and frightening that many neighboring states in the Mon and Zinme (Chiang Mai) regions sent Mingyinyo a white umbrella, the five royal regalia, war elephants, war horses, jewels and even their daughters (*ibid.*, 153; Pwa 1924, 43–4).

In 1491/2 when King Dhammazedi of Pegu died and the new king, Binnya Ran (r. 1492–1526) was enthroned, Mingyinyo took the opportunity to raid peripheral villages in the Mon region. Mingyinyo captured many prisoners of war, war elephants and war horses; he kept them and did not pay tribute to the Ava king as was the tradition. Moreover, Mingyinyo established a new city, called Dwarawaddy, in the same year. These signs made Ava's high-ranking officials afraid that Mingyinyo might rebel very soon. The Ava king concurred.

When Mon armies marched to besiege Mingyinyo at Dwarawaddy, Mingyinyo went out on his elephant with his army to fight the Mon armies, and finally won. Mingyinyo's victory over the Mon armies made him even more powerful. Ava's king, no doubt alarmed, still chose to keep Mingyinyo as an ally by accrediting Mingyinyo as a sovereign king with a white umbrella and the five royal regalia. Mingyinyo went on to raid Yamethin, from where he took many captives to Toungoo (Kala Vol. II 1960, 108, 153–4; Pwa 1924, 44–5).

When Ava enthroned a new king, Shwenankyawshin Narapati (r. 1502–1527), the kingdom was in a critical condition. A Shan ruler of Mohnyin

called Mohnyin Salon had forcefully raided Ava's northern boundary, and seized Myeidu—in northern Burma (Fig. 2). Other Burmese rulers, such as those of Prome and Toungoo, seemed more powerful and dangerous to Ava. In 1502, Shwenankyawshin tried to gain loyalty from Mingyinyo by marrying him into Ava's royal family and bestowing on him five well-irrigated areas of Yamethin, together with many other towns. However, Mingyinyo opposed Ava and remained autonomous. Ava then sent armies to suppress Toungoo, but lost the war. Moreover, in 1504, Mingyinyo made an alliance with Hsinbyu Thadominsaw, king of Prome, to raid the southern territories of Ava such as Sale, Singu and Pagan. In 1510, Mingyinyo enlarged Toungoo by building a new city named Ketumati, just northwest of Dwarawaddy (Kala Vol. II 1960, 113–4, 155–7, 161; Pwa 1924, 46–9).

Ava was at its weakest in 1524 because the Shan Mohnyin Salon allied with Prome attacked Ava in strength. At that time, the Burmese rulers of Amyint, Nyaungyan, Yamethin, Wati, Pinle, and Pinya, together with over 10,000 commoners with their horses and elephants, came under the protection of Mingyinyo. Due to migration, Toungoo had become a populous city. People were said to have swarmed to it like bees, according to *U Kala Mahayazawingyi*. Shwenankyawshin of Ava with his ally, Onbaung Sawbwa, sent troops to suppress Toungoo, but failed. In any case, by 1526/7, Ava had entirely fallen to Shan Mohnyin Salon. To defend against a Shan invasion, Mingyinyo rebuilt the city wall and moats. Moreover, he strengthened his manpower and war supplies by sacking the peripheral Mon villages in order to obtain more captives, elephants and horses. In addition, he destroyed all the towns and water supplies on the route from southern Ava to Toungoo. Shan Mohnyin's son attacked Toungoo many times but could not capture the city. Mingyinyo died in 1531. His son, Tabinshwehti, succeeded him (Kala Vol. II 1960, 161–2; Pwa 1924, 50–3).

In sum, the rise of Toungoo during the reign of Mingyinyo was closely related to the Shan invasions and the decline of Ava in the early sixteenth century. The first Toungoo empire originally emerged from the status of a city-state, which rose to power within one generation. The first Toungoo kings can be regarded as competent Burmese military chieftains from one of the strongest city-states, which enabled them to make a great leap forward and expand their small state into a vast empire. However, they had no experience or any effective fundamental administrative structure to control and maintain their gigantic empire. Not surprisingly, the first Toungoo empire was very short-lived and lasted only three generations.

Significant features of sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare

“...Sion (*Siam*) was the Imperiall seat, and a great Citie, but in the yeere of our Lord God 1567, it was taken by the King of Pegu, which King made a voyage or came by land foure moneths journey with an Armie of men through his land, and the number of his Armie was a million and foure hundredth thousand men of Warre: when he came to the Citie, hee gave assault to it, and besieged it one and twentie moneths before he could winne it, with great losse of his people, this I knew, for that I was in Pegu sixe moneths after his departure...”

Cæsar Frederike, merchant of Venice, visiting Pegu during the reign of King Bayinnaung. (Frederike in Purchas 1905, 110–1)

From about the middle of the sixteenth to the first decade of the seventeenth century, the Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya and the Burmese kingdom of Pegu were at war. The wars between the two kingdoms were an extraordinary military operation. Almost certainly, it was the first time that the Burmese kingdom embarked on trans-regional warfare on a grand scale, and it was perhaps unprecedented in mainland Southeast Asia. The battlefields extended over the core of the mainland areas from the Irrawaddy Basin to the Mekong Valley. The armies were large and made use of a multiplicity of arms and men. This sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare distinguished itself significantly from the older patterns of local combat.

The series of Thai-Burmese wars at this time was one aspect of the phenomenal rise of the first Toungoo empire. The expansion of maritime trade throughout Southeast Asia in the sixteenth century moved the inland Burmese leaders to head southward to participate in the colossal maritime trade in the Mon-dominated coastal states. Besides moving the capital city in 1540 to Pegu, the earlier capital city of the Mon kingdom, the first Toungoo empire succeeded in creating a gigantic empire that included Mon and Shan states in the main domain, and was also able to expand its territories to Lanna, Laos and the Ayutthaya kingdom (Lieberman 1984, 23–32).

Sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare was clearly distinguishable from previous local combats in at least three respects: trans-regional battlegrounds; large-sized armies consisting of multi-ethnic troops; and Western mercenaries and Western weaponry, including firearms and cannons.

Trans-regional battlegrounds

The kings of the first Toungoo empire opened a number of new battlefields beyond the Tenasserim Range and east of the Salween River, which former Burmese leaders had probably never attempted before. Wars during the reign of King Tabinshwehti (r. 1531–1550) occurred in a strategic zone of the east-west littorals.

In his initial move, King Tabinshwehti headed south to seize all Ramanya Desa (Mon states), namely Bassein, Pegu and Martaban. After he had raided Pegu four times, he finally seized the city in 1538. In 1540, he moved his court from inland Toungoo to Pegu. Then he launched his army to seize Martaban (Kala Vol. II 1960, 165–84). During this period, he also aimed to gain control over Prome, the southern strategic city on the Irrawaddy River, which had a position parallel with Toungoo on the Sittang River in the east (*ibid.*, 185–209).

Next, Tabinshwehti moved to extend his influence over Arakan by becoming involved in the internal conflict between Arakan's new king, a son of the former king, and his uncle, the ruler of Sandoway. Sandoway's ruler asked Tabinshwehti to send troops to help him conquer the Arakan throne. In 1545, King Tabinshwehti and his brother-in-law, Bayinnaung, led huge armies to attack Arakan in person (*ibid.*, 211–4).

The final battle of Tabinshwehti's reign was the great war with Ayutthaya. Whilst Tabinshwehti was at war with Arakan, Ayutthaya sent armies led by Thamein (Saming) Kanchanaburi and Thamein Tadawka to raid Tavoy. As soon as Tabinshwehti heard of this, he ordered the Martaban ruler to regain Tavoy and to seize Tenasserim—Ayutthaya's western port (*ibid.*, 222–3). This immediate cause propelled Tabinshwehti into war with Ayutthaya.

At the close of 1548, Tabinshwehti mobilized all his armies, which included Burmese and Mon soldiers as well as Portuguese mercenaries, to wage war against the kingdom of Ayutthaya. The 1548 invasion was an extraordinary event. This is perhaps the first time in Burmese military history that the king crossed the Salween River with numerous forces in order to subjugate the important Thai kingdom of the lower Chao Phraya Valley situated approximately a thousand kilometres from the central part of the Burmese base in the Irrawaddy Basin. It was, as noted above, most likely the first time that a Burmese king had conducted warfare beyond the ancient Burmese line of self-defence, the Salween, established during the Pagan era (Sunait 2001, 30–1; Koenig 1990, 14).

The route that Tabinshwehti took into Ayutthaya's territory was called the Three Pagoda Pass route, the Dan-Chedi-Sam-Ong in Thai or Daraik route in Burmese. It started from Martaban, across the Salween River to Moulmein, to Taungpaboun and then to Kanburi (Kanchanaburi) on the distant periphery of Ayutthaya (Kala Vol. II 1960, 225). Burmese armies also used this route in later

periods until the late eighteenth century, for instance the Burmese invasions during King Nandabayin's reign in 1584, 1590, and 1592, and King Bodawphaya's massive invasion in 1785. Burmese armies usually took this route whenever they intended to launch a surprise attack on the centers of the Thai kingdom, namely Ayutthaya and later Bangkok, without allowing the Thais time to prepare their defence. It was stated that if the march was by way of the Three Pagodas Pass, Ayutthaya could be reached in only fifteen days from the time when the army entered Ayutthaya's territory (Damrong 2001, 34).

Though the Three Pagodas Pass route was a short cut to Ayutthaya, it was not a good strategic route to permit the sacking of the city. Along the way from Martaban to Kanchanaburi, the road cut across the mountainous Tenasserim Range, which was very barren. It was impossible to acquire additional food supplies along this route. Using only this route made it impractical for the Burmese to seize Ayutthaya because Ayutthaya was extremely well defended. A year or more was needed for Burmese soldiers to destroy the city walls or to lay siege until Ayutthaya's inhabitants starved and surrendered.

During Tabinshwehti's 1548 campaign, the Burmese took this route to reach Ayutthaya, a high-walled city, surrounded by deep water and strongly fortified. The one-month siege of the city proved to no avail. The matter was discussed among Burmese leaders. In the words of Thadodhammaraza, king of Prome, it was revealed that the army was seriously lacking food supplies and that time was of great concern. Finally, the decision was reached to attack the northern towns first: Kamphaengphet, Sukhothai and Phitsanulok. Only after the capture of these towns would Ayutthaya be raided. Then it could in no way escape from Burmese hands (Kala Vol. II 1960, 233–5). Later in Thai-Burmese warfare, during the Konbaung period in 1785, King Bodawphaya's huge armies that marched along the Three Pagodas Pass route also encountered severe difficulties due to lack of supplies of food. Eventually, Tabinshwehti had to withdraw his main armed forces and marched all his armies back to Burma (U Tin [Mandalay] 1967, 22–39).

Remarkably, there was a big shift in Bayinnaung's reign. He not only regained control over the transpeninsular east-west coastal states, as in the Tabinshwehti period, but also extended his power inward over the trans-Salween inland areas. He was almost certainly the first Burmese king to expand the Burmese mandala beyond the eastern side of the Salween River. In Bayinnaung's reign, Pegu became the most successful kingdom in Southeast Asia. Having consolidated authority over much of the dry zone and lower Burma, Tabinshwehti's more celebrated successor Bayinnaung — known as Victor of the Ten Directions — then pushed his armies up the Irrawaddy in an effort to join upper and lower Burma for the first time since the days of Pagan (Lieberman 2003b, 151).

In 1555 Ava, the heart of upper Burma, which remained a subordinate city

under the Shan Sawbwas during Tabinshwehti's reign, finally fell to Bayinnaung. He immediately sent armies to subdue all the Shan states. First, he attacked those Shan states situated near Ava, such as Onbaung, Mohnyin, Momeit, Bhamo, Mogaung, and Kale. These were the most dangerous to the security and stability of Ava and upper Burma (Kala Vol. II 1960, 290–304). Then, he raided the south-eastern Shan states of the Kambawza area such as Monei, Nyaungshwe, Yauksauk, Naungmon, Thibaw (Hsipaw), Mong Pai and Saga (*ibid.*, 304-9). (Fig. 3)

From Monei, Bayinnaung made great use of the Shan armies to attack Chiang Mai, the center of the Lan Na kingdom on the eastern side of the Salween River. He went further to attack Lan Chang (Laos) situated in the Mekong Valley (*ibid.*, 310–6). Several Shan cities—Theinni (Hsenwi), Tayup, Kaing Mah, Latha, and Sanda—were so fearful of Bayinnaung's power that they paid tribute to him. However, later they rebelled against him (*ibid.*, 318–322). In 1562, Bayinnaung sent massive armies to raid the Ko-Shan-Pyi towns or the nine Shan states of Hotha, Latha, Muang, Tsinguen, Kaing Mah (Muang Mah), Muang Na, Mong Lien and Muang Mao and Taping in the Shweli River valley in Yunnan. In the same year Chiang Tung (Keng Tung) also paid tribute to Bayinnaung (*ibid.*, 332–8).

In 1563, after Bayinnaung had gained mastery over both the eastern and western Shan states, he sent considerable armies to lay siege to Ayutthaya. He did not use the southern war route as in the 1548 invasion, but marched by a northern route from Martaban to Tak province in the Thai kingdom. This route was called the Rahaeng route or Dan Mae Lamao (Mae Lamao customs station). It was also an ancient route linking Martaban with the upper Chao Phraya Valley. From Martaban the route led to the village of Taphu along a river. Thence the army marched overland, crossing the river at Myawaddy, and the Mae Sot River, until it reached the Mae Ping River opposite Raheng village in Tak province (Damrong 2001, 15–6).

From Tak, the Mae Ping River route offers two possibilities. The first goes north to Lampang and Chiang Mai, and onwards to Chiang Rai and Chiang Saen, a gateway to Chiang Tung and Chiang Rung or Sipsong Panna. The other leads south along the Mae Ping River. It reaches Kamphaengphet, one of the biggest and the most important cities located north of Ayutthaya (Sunait 1994, 207–229). Bayinnaung used the southern part of the Rahaeng route to seize Ayutthaya in his 1563 and 1568 campaigns.

After his experience of the 1548 invasion, Bayinnaung adopted a new strategy. He realized that to seize Ayutthaya he needed to engage in siege warfare for a long period. Therefore, he ordered some of his armies to take control over all the northern principalities subject to Ayutthaya: Sukhothai, Phitsanulok, Sawankhalok, and Kamphaengphet. He held these cities as his logistical stations to supply the main Burmese armies with manpower, food, weapons, elephants, horses and so on. This helped the main armies lay siege to Ayutthaya longer and blockaded



Figure 3 The Irrawaddy Basin and Adjacent Regions.

Source: Lieberman 1984, Map 2

the attempts of its nearby northern vassal polities to provide help. He also ordered Chiang Mai to deliver more war and food supplies by boat along the Mae Ping River from Chiang Mai to Kamphaengphet (Kala Vol. II 1960, 339–46). Since Bayinnaung was able to take over Chiang Mai and the upper Chao Phraya Valley, he was able to conquer Ayutthaya both in 1563 and 1568.

Huge multi-ethnic armed forces

Another marked characteristic of sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare was the first Toungoo empire's immense multi-ethnic armies. The Toungoo kings' enormous military organization is mentioned in several sources. According to *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* (Vol. II 1960, 225) Tabinshwehti invaded Ayutthaya in 1548 with 122,000 troops (Lieberman 2003a, 222).

Nidana Ramadhipati-katha, a sixteenth century Mon text which was composed at least in part by Binyadala, one of Bayinnaung's chief commanders, explains that, in 1547, Tabinshwehti "took the field against Ayutthaya with more than 100,000 Shans, Burmans, and Mons and numerous elephants and cavalry" (Shorto in Charney 2003, 201). Fernão Mendes Pinto, a Portuguese merchant adventurer who visited Burma in the 1540s, overstated Tabinshwehti's 1548 Ayutthaya invasion in his travelling account:

...The King departed from the city of Martaban on Low Sunday, 7 April 1548, with this army of 800,000 men, only forty thousand of whom were mounted on horseback and all the rest on foot, including among them sixty thousand arquebusiers. He also took with him five thousand tusked elephants, which are the ones they use for combat in those parts, and a nearly equal number of pack elephants for the baggage, and one thousand pieces of artillery carried alternately by four thousand yokes of buffalo and yak, in addition to an equal number of oxen for carrying the provisions...(Catz 1989, 412)

In some Ayutthaya chronicles such as *Phraratchaphongsawadan chabap Phraratchahatlekha* (*The Royal Autograph Chronicle*) and *Praratchaphongsawadan Krung Sri Ayutthaya chabap Somdet Phra Phonnarat* (*The Somdet Phra Phonnarat Chronicle of Ayutthaya*), it is recorded that the large armies of Tabinshwehti consisted of 300,000 infantry, 700 elephants, and 3,000 cavalry (1999, 73; 1962, 40). While other Ayutthaya chronicles, such as *Praratchaphongsawadan Krung Sri Ayutthaya chabap Phan Chanthanumat* (*Choem*) (*The Phan Chanthanumat Chronicle of Ayutthaya*) and *Praratchaphongsawadan Krung Sri Ayutthaya chabap Phra Chakkrathatdiphong* (*Chat*) (*The Phra*

Chakkraphatdiphong Chronicle of Ayutthaya), enumerated only 30,000 infantry, 300 elephants, and 2,000 cavalry (1969, 42; 1998, 34).

Bayinnaung's armies in the 1563 and 1568 Ayutthaya campaigns were approximately five times greater than Tabinshwehti's armies. In the 1563 invasion, Bayinnaung sent 600,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry. In 1568, Bayinnaung allegedly led 546,000 infantry and 53,000 cavalry against his eastern neighbours (Lieberman 2003a, 222–3). *The Nidana Ramadhipati-katha* explains that in 1563, “the king gave the word to march on Ayutthaya. His forces at this time, not including the Chiangmai rebels, amounted to more than 900,000 men, with 500 tuskers and 4,000 horses...” (Shorto in Charney 2003, 203). Caesar Frederike, the Venetian merchant, stated:

...there is not a King on the Earth that hath more powerful or strength than this King of Pegu, because hee hath twenty and six crowned Kings at his command. Hee can make in his Campe a million and half of men of warre in the field against Enemies... This King of Pegu hath not any Armie or power by Sea, but in the Land, for People, Dominions, Gold and Silver, he farre exceeds the power of the great Turke in treasure and strength... (Frederike in Purchas 1905, 125)

Military statistics stated in Burmese indigenous sources such as Yazawin, or in the chronicles, and Western travellers' accounts, are most likely exaggerated and probably unreliable. Some scholars have made great efforts to prove their reliability or to propose alternative ways in which the indigenous warfare accounts can be read (cf. Lieberman 1986; Charney 2003). This controversy will not be discussed here; we wish rather to point out just one obvious feature of the first Toungoo dynasty's armies, which were composed of various ethnicities, including Mon and Shan. This feature stands in strong contrast to Burmese armies prior to the first Toungoo period. It is particularly striking in the Bayinnaung period. When this king invaded Ayutthaya in 1563–64 and 1568–69 he controlled extensive and relatively populous zones in upper Burma, the Shan hills, and Lan Na, none of which Tabinshwehti had ever entered. His demographic base, therefore, may well have been two, three, perhaps even four times larger than that of Tabinshwehti (Lieberman 2003a, 222). Bayinnaung's armies were much larger and of greater ethnic mix (cf. Kala Vol. II 1960, 341–2).

Besides Burmese soldiers, Shan and Mon troops greatly supplemented the manpower for attacking Ayutthaya. Shan and Mon armed forces provided Bayinnaung's armies with the advantage of their familiarity with and knowledge of the terrain of the upper and lower Chao Phraya Valley. Moreover, a major military

leader who played an important role in conquering Ayutthaya was the Mon chief Binnya Dala (ibid., 344–5).

Western mercenaries and weapons

The other distinctive feature of the first Toungoo empire's methods of conducting war was its utilization of Western mercenaries and Western weapons such as firearms and cannons. Moving the capital from inland Toungoo to coastal Pegu allowed the early Toungoo kings to incorporate Portuguese merchant adventurers into their armies. With superior firearms than those found in the interior Burmese principalities and Shan states, unfamiliar with these new weapons, Bayinnaung could suppress all the states in lower, middle and upper Burma in his reign.

This was also true of the coastal states, including Arakan and Ayutthaya. These kingdoms obtained their own Portuguese contingents, firearms, and cannons, which increased their strength in both offensive and defensive warfare. However, as Lieberman concluded (1980a, 211–2), it is most likely that the kingdom of Pegu was only able to suppress all other states during this period because Pegu became the first to use the new technology for systematic conquest of the interior.

Prior to the arrival of Portuguese and Western weapons, foreign military knowledge and technology had already been experienced in the politics of the Burmese region. Sun Laichen's research (2003, 494–517) on the impact of Ming Chinese firearms on northern mainland Southeast Asia indicates that Chinese firearms and gunpowder had spread to Maw Shan in south-western Yunnan by the 1390s and down to Ava, Prome and Pegu as well. During the Ava period, the Burmese had frequent contacts with the Ming, especially through frontier trade, and their heavy involvement in fighting against the Maw Shan. Therefore there is good reason to posit a Chinese and overland origin for firearms in Burma. Sun Laichen's citation from Wang Ji's memorial indicates that Ava was among the destinations for the flow of firearms from Yunnan (ibid., 499–504).

Whilst the northern region had access to Chinese military technology, the middle and lower parts of Burma, in particular the coastal areas, generally made great use of Indian mercenaries. Burmese accounts show that the most popular mercenaries before the arrival of the Portuguese were Indian Muslims, who often came equipped with handguns and small cannon such as were popular on the subcontinent. The *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* refers to small arms (*thei-nat*), swivel guns (*sein-byaung*), and cannon (*amyauk or mya-tabu*) used by Indian (*Kala*) or Indian Muslim (*Kala-panthei*) soldiers in Burma from the late fourteenth century on. Nonetheless, Muslim mercenaries outnumbered Portuguese troops during both Tabinshwehti's and Bayinnaung's reigns. Their continued popularity proves

that the weapons these soldiers brought with them were by no means ineffective. Yet on the whole they were inferior to Portuguese firearms (Lieberman 1980a, 207, 211).

Sixteenth century Thai-Burmese warfare revealed the noteworthy role of Portuguese mercenaries and weapons as used by the first Toungoo armies as well as Ayutthaya's armies. Mendes Pinto places the number of Portuguese mercenaries fighting for Tabinshwehti at 700, though the figure may well be exaggerated (*ibid.*, 212). *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* states that, in the 1548 Ayutthaya invasion, Tabinshwehti's armies included 100 Portuguese gunners (Kala Vol. II 1960, 227). Portuguese mercenaries led by Diogo Soares de Melo, who once helped the Burmese in the 1546 invasion of Arakan, had joined Tabinshwehti's armies again with five other Portuguese captains and 180 men. Ayutthaya's king, Pramahachakkrapatra, was also assisted by 50 Portuguese led by Diogo Pereira. Tabinshwehti attempted to bribe Diogo Pereira to betray Ayutthaya but his offer was rejected. It was recorded that during the 1548 war 180 Portuguese died in battle. Gonçalo Falcão and Antonio Ferreira were important Portuguese mercenaries who served the king of Toungoo and were mentioned by Mendes Pinto. Antonio Ferreira was a native of Bragança and became the commander of a battalion of foreign mercenaries at Pegu. He received an important salary of 12,000 cruzados from the king (cited in Sutachai 2000, 47–8).

Bayinnaung was helped by a group of Portuguese mercenaries in his reign. He permitted the Portuguese to live in Pegu with their property and all their gifts and later allowed them to build a factory at Syriam in 1560 (*ibid.*, 49). The *U Kala Mahayazawingyi* mentions that Bayinnaung had 400 Portuguese armoured arquebusiers, who guarded him while he was riding his elephant (Kala Vol. II 1960, 271). These Portuguese gunners also played decisive roles in battlefield encounters. For instance, when King Nandabayin (r. 1581–1599) sent his heir-apparent, or Maha-uparaza, to suppress Ayutthaya in the 1592 campaign, while Maha-uparaza was fighting with Pra Narit (Naresuan) of Ayutthaya on elephants, it was recorded that Maha-uparaza was shot by Pra Narit's Portuguese gunner, who guarded him. After Maha-uparaza, the commander of this campaign, died, the Burmese army retreated to Pegu (Kala Vol. III 1961, 91–2).

Apart from the Portuguese gunners, Burmese kings also adapted Western cannons to use in traditional Southeast Asian siege warfare. While artillery was used to destroy stone walls or brick fortifications of castles in medieval Europe, the Burmese usually brought their cannons into play by mounting them on high mounds or towers and then shooting down into the besieged towns (Lieberman 1980a, 211). In the 1563 Ayutthaya campaign, Bayinnaung ordered his great cannons and other firearms to rain down on the cities of Phitsanulok and Ayutthaya by shooting over the walls from atop stockades and mounds (Kala Vol. II 1960, 345,

348). In his second invasion of 1568–1569, the Burmese armies also attacked Ayutthaya with cannons and firearms heavier than those used in the attack in 1563 (ibid., 404–5).

To summarize, the military operations of the first Toungoo empire in the sixteenth century were unlike previous operations, as well as those of other contemporary states in mainland Southeast Asia. These military activities were closely connected to the process of state formation in the first Toungoo empire. State and warfare were interconnected. Indisputably, wars wrought great changes to the state. However, the state itself definitely determined its own outcome in war.

Moving south

The most obvious feature of the growth and development of the first Toungoo empire was that of moving its center from inland to a coastal area. It was the first and the last time in Burmese history that the Burmese kings situated their center outside the Burman interior, in this case at Pegu, the former Mon center.

One of the most significant reasons that motivated the first Toungoo kings to move south was the expansion of international maritime trade along the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, which stirred the first Toungoo kings' interest in international trade (see Lieberman 1980a; 1980b; 1984; 1986; 2003b).

At the time of the rise of Toungoo in Mingyinyo's reign, all northern areas of Burma were in the hands of the Shan rulers of Mohnyin. Moreover, the fall of Ava in 1527 was brought about by a coalition between the leaders of Shan and Prome. Ava was soon reduced to the status of a minor Shan statelet. Finally, Prome became a subordinate city in the Shan realm. During the middle of the sixteenth century, the Shan were very strong in the inland areas, and even if Toungoo had intended to restore Burman superiority and pride by retaining power over the throne of Ava, the Shan would never have allowed Toungoo to do so. Considering that Shan and Prome were blocked off from central and northern Burma, it could be said that there was no better alternative for the Toungoo king than heading south to the Mon region. The initiative to move south took place from the time of Mingyinyo, the first king of the first Toungoo dynasty. As mentioned, especially in his last few years, he habitually raided peripheral settlements of the Mon. This southward policy was continued by his son, Tabinshwehti.

As soon as Tabinshwehti was enthroned, instead of advancing on Ava, he headed south to overcome the Mon states. Compared to the situation in northern Burma, the Mon region had more attractive advantages, in particular its commercial wealth. Moreover, the Mon states were basically fragmented and in continuous rivalry. It was consequently possible for Tabinshwehti to take over the Mon region.

However, Pegu (Hanthawaddy) was very strongly defended with Western weapons and Portuguese mercenaries. Tabinshwehti had to attack Pegu four times. During the third attack, Tabinshwehti raided the western Mon areas of Bassein and its vassal cities, from which he could gain more soldiers, war elephants, war horses and weapons (Kala Vol. II 1960, 167), and finally he conquered Pegu on the fourth attack. Tabinshwehti made use of Mon armies to take control over Martaban, which was also strongly defended by Western weapons and Portuguese mercenaries. Moulmein, one of Martaban's 32 vassal cities, promised Tabinshwehti to remain neutral, without giving any help to its neighbouring city (*ibid.*, 178–184). Though each of the Mon polities possessed many weapons and foreign mercenaries that were superior to the Burmese armies, they did not form an alliance to fight Tabinshwehti. In this way, Tabinshwehti was eventually able to gain control over all the Mon regions.

Unlike the situation in the Mon region, in northern, middle and western Burma, there was an alliance among Prome, Ava, Shan Sawbwas and Arakan at some levels, which made it difficult for Tabinshwehti to gain control over Prome. For example, when Tushintakayutpi, Pegu's king, lost the war and fled to Prome and Tabinshwehti sent his troops led by Bayinnaung to catch Tushintakayutpi and seize Prome, Ava and the Shan Sawbwas also sent their armies to help Prome and Tushintakayutpi, and fought against Tabinshwehti's armies with the aim of restoring Tushintakayutpi to Pegu (*ibid.*, 176). Later, after Tabinshwehti took Martaban, he sent troops to seize Prome again. While laying siege to Prome, Tabinshwehti's armies had to fight with the assistance of the armies of the Shan Sawbwas and Arakan. Furthermore, when Prome had already come under Tabinshwehti's control, Shan Onbaung at Ava and other Shan Sawbwas still sent troops to retake Prome. Although the Shan armies lost many battles, the Shan Sawbwas still controlled Ava and most of northern Burma (*ibid.*, 197–205).

Tabinshwehti himself probably realized this situation, so he did not launch any troops to attack Ava, northern Burma or the Shan states during his reign. Conversely, he showed his great interest in the Mon region by firstly moving his capital to Pegu, secondly, building a new city near Shwemawdaw Pagoda and, thirdly, adjusting himself to Mon culture by adopting a Mon hairstyle and marrying the daughter of a wealthy Mon man (*ibid.*, 177, 208–9). He also made a great effort to expand his power by waging wars with other littoral kingdoms such as Arakan and Ayutthaya.

That the first Toungoo kings initiated wars against Arakan and especially Ayutthaya could be seen as a new strategy and it was the first time that Burmese kings expanded their control over the east-west littoral areas. This kind of confrontation might have been new for the Burmese king, but it did not seem unusual for those littoral states. Moving the center to Pegu made a great change in the

Burmese geo-political realm. Besides gaining possession of the Mon regions' commercial wealth, the first Toungoo kings also became involved in former conflicts among littoral states in between the Arakan, Mon and Ayutthaya regions. Throughout the previous centuries, these coastal states had been competing against each other for control over profitable ports. Consequently, the first Toungoo center in the Mon region inevitably became embroiled in these rivalries.

These littoral states and coastal cities along the eastern Bay of Bengal from Arakan, and the Irrawady Delta down to Tenasserim, benefited particularly from the establishment, early in the fifteenth century, of Melaka (Malacca). The city's role as both a commercial entrepot and a Muslim sultanate helped to foster development of the trade route between Muslim ports of eastern India and the Straits of Melaka (Charney 1998, 3). Several ports in those areas, such as Mrauk-U, Sandoway, Bassein, Dala, Syriam, Martaban, Ye, Tavoy, Mergui and Tenasserim, though not being emporia of the same degree as Melaka, expanded their traditional functions as transshipment and supply centers (Lieberman 1984, 26). Many foreign travellers' accounts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries recorded prosperous trade along these coastal cities (cf. Nicolo di Conti [1875], 20-1; Hieronimo di Santo Stefano [1875], 5-6; Varthema 1510/1928, 74-5, 81).

The flourishing trade in the Arakan-Mon-Tenasserim region was connected to three main commercial networks, namely the Coromandel Coast, Bengal, and Gujarat in India, to Melaka, and to the Gulf of Siam in the South China Sea (Lieberman 1984, 27). Maritime trade benefits helped strengthen those littoral states at some levels. Prior to the advent of Tabinshwehti, they were sometimes at war to compete with the higher-income ports.

By seeking connections with Muslim India, King Naramaikhla (r. 1404-1434) established the Arakan kingdom of Mrauk-U in 1430 (Charney 1998, 6). The next Arakan king, Ali Khan (r. 1434-1459) successfully regained major centers of the Arakan coast, such as Ramu and Sandoway (Harvey 1967, 141), which used to be under the control of the Mon at Pegu at least since the reign of King Rajadirit (r. 1385-1423) (Kala Vol. II 1960, 6-7).

In the Mon regions, it was recorded in *Moattama Yazawin* (Chronicle of Martaban) that around 1438, Tavoy, Mergui, and Tenasserim rebelled against Pegu. Pegu sent armies to suppress and perhaps regain some cities. In the same year, the Pegu armies rebuilt the old port of Ye. This place was supposed to be one of the most important ports of Pegu in the Martaban region, since *Moattama Yazawin* narrated many details about Ye and its various kinds of taxation, including the port tax that the new king of Ye had the power to collect (Pyinnya 1927, 11-22). The Mon kingdom, or Ramanya Desa, came to its zenith from the mid-fifteenth century until the early sixteenth century in the reigns of Shin Sawbu, or Binnya Htaw (r. 1453-1472), Dhammacedi (r. 1472-1492) and Binnya Ran (r. 1492-1526)

respectively. These periods were considered a golden time not only for trade, but also for Buddhism and for political power, as inferred in the great Kalayani inscription of Dhammacedi (Guillon 1999, 175).

Still, the Pegu kingdom's port was often invaded by Ayutthaya, which at that time possessed Mergui and Tenasserim, significant ports on the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. *The Luang Prasert Chronicle of Ayutthaya* (1961, 10) recorded that around 1470 Ayutthaya attacked Tavoy and it fell into Ayutthaya's hands. *The Short History of the Kings of Siam* written by Jeremias Van Vliet, a VOC (Dutch East India Company) official in Ayutthaya, stated that in the reign of King Noophout thae Coun, the twelfth king of Ayutthaya (probably the King No-Phutthangkun or Borommaracha IV, r.1529–1533), foreigners were treated well and the country was at war with Langhas Jangh (Lang Xang) and Pegu. During the last years of the reign, the king marched up to Pegu's boundary and took over the city of Choulock (?) (Van Vliet 2003, 54).

These rivalries continued when Pegu was controlled by the first Toungoo dynasty. Ayutthaya also carried on invading the Mon region until 1545. While Tabinshwehti was at war with Arakan, Ayutthaya sent troops to invade Tavoy. Consequently, Tabinshwehti raided Tenasserim and went further to Ayutthaya.

The first Toungoo empire's wars with Arakan and Ayutthaya during the sixteenth century were part of the same process. In past historical writings, this series of wars has always been studied separately as part of particular area studies or a study of the mutual relations between Burma and Arakan and Ayutthaya. Considered as a whole, the victory of Tabinshwehti over Mon Pegu brought the Burmese into the commercial zone and in direct confrontation with Arakan and Ayutthaya. The first Toungoo kings aimed to strengthen their maritime trade networks and profits both westward along the Coromandel Coast and eastward in ports along the Tenasserim Coast, which had direct inland routes to the Gulf of Siam. Both Tabinshwehti and Bayinnaung continued expanding Pegu's power over these east-west littorals, including Sandoway of Arakan and Mergui, Tenasserim and beyond to Ayutthaya.

In the case of Arakan, the first Toungoo kings were unable to reach their goal. Arakan was a maritime state, whereas Pegu of the first Toungoo empire was a land-based power. Toungoo was inferior to Arakan as it possessed no navy (cf. Frederike in Purchas 1905, 138).

As with Pegu, the Arakan kingdom at that time was strengthened by trade revenues, Western firearms and Portuguese mercenaries. Its capital, Mrauk-U, was in a strongly defended location, which was very difficult for enemies to overcome. Furthermore, for decades before the expansion of the first Toungoo empire, the kings of Arakan had been stabilizing their northern frontier with Bengal, and dramatically increasing central royal revenues through increased trading contacts

with the Portuguese and the possession of the great port of Chittagong, which they occupied in 1539–1540 (Charney 1994, 40–41).

In the case of Ayutthaya, the first Toungoo empire at Pegu was able to defeat Ayutthaya for a certain period. Both Ayutthaya and the first Toungoo empire needed to control ports on the Tenasserim Coast, particularly Tavoy, Mergui and Tenasserim, which were on the trans-peninsular trade routes from the Gulf of Martaban to the Gulf of Siam (Lieberman 1984, 28–30; Sunait 1990, 163–171). The Tenasserim Coast, and especially Mergui, became a major battleground for the rival kingdoms during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Andrew 1962, 4). When Ayutthaya lost the war in 1548, Tabinshwehti demanded that King Chakkraphat of Ayutthaya pay an annual tribute to Pegu of 30 war elephants, 300 ticals of silver, and, above all, the customs revenue of Tenasserim in exchange for the return of the Ayutthayan king's son and son-in-law who had been taken hostage (Kala Vol. II 1960, 235). Like Tabinshwehti, Bayinnaung, after his victory in 1564, ordered Chakkraphat to send him yearly 30 war elephants, 300 ticals of silver, and also the shipping revenues of Tenasserim (*ibid.*, 352). He rearranged the administration of trans-peninsular ports such as Ye, Tavoy, Tenasserim and Mergui. Furthermore, he ordered a group of soldiers to guard the ports and appointed special officials responsible for merchant shipping and for envoys from India, as recorded in *Hanthawadi Hsinbyumyashin Ayeidawbon (The historical account of the struggle for power by King Hanthawadi Hsinbyumyashin)* (1967, 361–2). Much greater than Tabinshwehti, Bayinnaung successfully suppressed Ayutthaya, one of the wealthiest ports in Southeast Asia, under the first Toungoo empire. Bayinnaung brought back with him to Pegu many of Ayutthaya's officials, artists, craftsmen, prisoners of war, war elephants, war horses, weapons and priceless treasures (Kala Vol. II 1960, 352, 420; Than Tun 1995, 94–105).

The pattern of rivalry among these littoral states continued until the early seventeenth century. In the late sixteenth century, when the first Toungoo empire began to decline, both Arakan and Ayutthaya exploited disturbances of the later years of Nandabayin's reign (1581–1599), and expanded their territories to the Mon region. During the years 1598–99, an Arakan king and his ally, a lesser king of Toungoo, half-brother of Nandabayin, plotted a conspiracy against Nandabayin by sacking Pegu, taking Nandabayin to Toungoo and taking control over Syriam through the Arakan army together with the Portuguese leader, Filipe de Brito. For Arakan, the control of Syriam was a major part of the plans of Minyazagyi (r. 1593–1612) for the military, political, and commercial expansion of its power. The Arakan capital of Mrauk-U was an adequate and easily defensible port, but Pegu was previously Burma's chief commercial center for international traders. Syriam was located geographically in a position that could dominate the trade of Pegu, and the natural harbor of Syriam provided Arakan with the ability to expand its

international trade opportunities (Charney 1994, 51). Further, Syriam served as a foothold, from which Minyazagyi could expand Arakan power throughout the Burmese region and further down the Kra Peninsula towards the rival commercial centers of Tavoy and Tenasserim (ibid., 51).

When King Naresuan in Ayutthaya gained his great victory over the Burmese crown prince at Nong Sarai in 1593, he sent his army to take control of Tavoy and Tenasserim. Through the remainder of the decade his campaigns against Burma continued. These included expeditions to the Pegu region in 1595 and against Toungoo in 1599–1600 (Wyatt 1984, 104). It was an exceptional move, because no Ayutthaya king before or after Naresuan attempted to lead the army in person to invade Burmese territory. From now on, Ayutthaya gradually regained its control over the significant ports of Mergui and Tenasserim and could enjoy the income from these ports until its fall.

Moving north: hinterland territories

From the coastal center, Toungoo power was extended to the hinterlands upriver (Kala Vol. II 1960, 290–338). Unlike Tabinshwehti, Bayinnaung made a great shift in expansion strategies by heading inland and taking control over the huge hinterlands of the Shan or Tai-speaking realms from the western end in Manipura, along both sides of Salween River, to the eastern end in Sipsong Panna and Laos in the upper Mekong region. There were at least two critical reasons motivating the hinterland expansion. Firstly, Bayinnaung recognized the necessity of supplementing the manpower of middle and lower Burma with that of the Tai-speaking highlands so as to overwhelm Ayutthaya with a siege operation of unequalled magnitude (Lieberman 1984, 30). More significantly, Bayinnaung aimed to control the gigantic networks of overland trade connecting southwest China to the coastal zone.

Northern mainland Southeast Asia, including modern northern and north-eastern Burma in Sagaing Division, Kachin State and Shan State, modern northern Thailand in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Chiang Saen, northern Laos, and Sipsong Panna in modern China, were strategically located as a gateway of Chinese overland trade during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Major cities in these areas functioned as inland entrepôts, distributing goods back and forth between inland and coastal areas, and as supply centers for local products such as precious jewels, luxury forest goods, metals, etc. According to Sun Laichen (2000), upper Burma and the Shan states connected southwest China or Yunnan to coastal trade by many ways: northwestern mainland Southeast Asia to Bengal via the northern Shan states such as Mohnyin, Mongmit, Bhamo, as well as via Ava to Manipura and Assam (ibid., 116–125). Another route was through northern mainland Southeast Asia via all the

Shan states of modern Burma, such as Bhamo, Mohnyin, Mongmit, Mogaung, Mogok and Hsenwi, to the Irrawaddy Basin and then the Bay of Bengal via the areas of lower Burma. The gems trade heavily depended on this route (ibid., 126–154). The third route was by north-central mainland Southeast Asia via the Tai-speaking states between the east of the Salween River and the upper Mekong region: Jingdong, Jinggu, Sipsong Panna, Meng Lian, Jengtung, Lan Na, and Lan Sang, reaching the sea either at the Gulf of Martaban or the Gulf of Siam (ibid., 155–167).

Chinese sources show that the Tai regions in modern southwestern Yunnan and northern Burma were considered a “source of treasures” by the Chinese, cited by Sun Laichen from *Xinan Yi fengtu ji* written in the 1580s (Laichen 2000, 127):

...In Mongmit, gems and gold are produced in the east, silver in the south, iron in the north, *cuishengwen* stone in the west; Mangshi produces gems and silver as well; Jengtung and Meng Lian produces silver; Mohnyin produces amber, gold, asafoetida, white jade, and jasper; Chashan produces jadeite, Ganya produces black jade; Sipsong Panna produces cowries; Ava and western Ocean produce broadcloth; native brocades are made by all the natives, but the best is made in Gula; elephant tusks are produced in all the native places, but they are most numerous in Laos.

Bayinnaung also saw the huge Shan regions as a source of treasures of the first Toungoo empire. As soon as he had regained control over lower and middle Burma, he sent several armies one after the other to these Shan states. The attacks were made firstly against northern Shan states such as Onbaung, Mohnyin, Momeit, Bhamo, Mogaung, and Kale. Bhamo was the most important trading center, which later brought the first Toungoo empire into tense competition with China and battles with the Ming army (Sun Laichen 2000, 128–9). Then Bayinnaung raided southeastern Shan states such as Monei, Nyaungshwe, Hsipaw and Mong Pai. After that, he attacked Chiang Mai, and Vientiane in Laos. He extended his power up to Sipsong Panna and Maw Shan in Yunnan.

Like the competition for the trans-peninsula trade interests, overland trade between Southeast Asia and southwest China brought the first Toungoo empire at Pegu into another confrontation with Ayutthaya, which had the same desire of possessing Chiang Mai. This was one of the most important hinterland trade centers. Mendes Pinto, the Portuguese merchant adventurer, also recorded of Chiang Mai:

...that all around it there are many mines of silver, copper, tin, and lead, which are in constant production and yield huge quantities of these metals which are then carried by merchants in elephant and yak caravans to the kingdoms of *Sornau*, or Siam, *Passiloco*, *Savady*, *Toungoo*, *Prome*, *Calaminhan*, and other provinces in the interior beyond this coast, that take two to three months to cross and are divided into seigniories and kingdoms, some inhabited by white people, some by light-brown people, and still others by men of a darker complexion; and they return laden with a lot of gold, diamonds, and rubies, which they receive in exchange for their goods... (Catz 1989, 74)

Ralph Fitch, a London merchant who visited Chiang Mai in 1586, stated:

...I went from Pegu to Jamahey [Zimme or Chiang Mai], which is in the Countrey of the Langeiannes, whom wee call Jangomes; it is five and twentie days journey Northeast from Pegu...Hither to Jamahey come many Merchants out of China, and bring great store of Muske, Gold, Silver, and many other things of China worke. Heere is great store of Victuals: they have such plenty, that they will not milke the Buffles, as they doe in all other places. Heere is great store of Copper and Benjamin... (Chapter VI in Purchas 1905, 194–5).

Lan Na had a great volume of trade with its neighbours, including Burma, Ayutthaya, and Yunnan. Artisans from Ava went to Jengtung and Lan Na, and many Lan Na merchants traveled to Burma in the fifteenth century. Trade between Lan Na and lower Burma, and Ayutthaya was also very brisk; Chiang Mai was said to be filled with boats and carts. Lan Na and Lan Sang exported to the south (Ayutthaya, Maottama, and beyond) musk, benzoin, gum-lac, wax, elephants' tusks, and hides (Sun Laichen 2000, 162–3).

Prior to Bayinnaung, Ayutthaya had already sent troops against Chiang Mai. According to the Ayutthaya chronicles, the Ayutthaya kings from the reign of Baromaracha (r. 1370–88) onwards sent many expeditionary forces into the Lan Na kingdom to take Chiang Mai, but they were unable to bring Chiang Mai under Ayutthaya's dominion. King Chairacha (1534–1547), for example, led an army all the way north to Chiang Mai in mid-1545 but failed to take it and, suffering heavy losses, had to retreat to Ayutthaya. Early in 1547, the king resumed his struggle against Chiang Mai and, this time, he took Lamphun but again was unsuccessful in capturing his objective and had to withdraw his army to Ayutthaya (Sunait 1990, 172).

Besides its invaluable trade, Chiang Mai itself was a critical strategic area because it was next to the Mon territory and when it had been taken, Bayinnaung used it as a base for operations against Chiang Rung and Kengtung. Moreover, Chiang Mai was also in a decisive position for opening a long period of siege warfare for the Siamese capital city of Ayutthaya, as it controlled the strategic area north of Ayutthaya and could provide war supplies, especially manpower. The Shan levies, not available to Tabinshwehti, swelled Bayinnaung's army and enabled him to conquer Ayutthaya with comparative ease. In both his campaigns against Ayutthaya in 1563–64 and 1568–69, each division of the king's army had some Shan contingents, such as the Sawbwas of Mongmit, Hsipaw, Mohnyin, Mogaung, Mongnai, Onbaung, Nyaungshwe and Hsenwi, Bhamo and Kengtung, together with the Lao levies from Lan Na (Chiang Mai). The Shan chronicles also speak of their states' participation in the Burmese invasions of Ayutthaya. No less than during the Burmese invasions of Ayutthaya in the sixteenth century, the great invasion of 1764–67 was also considerably helped by Shan armies. It was stated that an army of 20,000 started from Kengtung to invade Ayutthaya in 1764 (Sao Saimong Mangrai 1965, 52). Local Lan Na sources recorded that Hsinbyushin Mintaya (1763–1776), the Burmese king of the early Konbaung dynasty, conscripted many labourers, nearly all people from Chiang Mai, which constituted the majority of the manpower used to overcome Ayutthaya (Sarawadee 1986/1996, 252).

Conclusion: Nature of Empire, Nature of Warfare

Bayinnaung engraved his unprecedented achievement on his bell inscription at Shwezigon in Pagan in 1557, saying that he was the great king of Ketumati, Hanthawaddy, Thayeikhattaya, Pagan, Ava, Mong Mit, Hsipaw, Ruby Land, Mogaung, Mohnyin and Kale (Than Tun 1994, 13–15). He also named twenty gates of his new palace: Zinme (Chiang Mai), Ohnbaung, Mohnyin, Mogaung, Tavoy, Kale, Mone, Nyaungshwe, Thayawaddy, Theinni, Tanintharyi, Ayutthaya, Martaban, Pagan, Bassein, Thayekhattaya, Ava, Toungoo, Linzin (Laos), and Dala (*Nawadei...*1964, 105–6). The first Toungoo empire of Bayinnaung eventually became the ideal model for the Burmese empire and successive kings of Burma, especially those of the early Konbaung dynasty in the late eighteenth century (see U Tin of Pagan 2001, 166–7).

Despite their unparalleled success, the first Toungoo kings failed to impose effective control on outlying principalities, even within the Irrawaddy Basin (Lieberman 1980b, 549). The conspicuous success of Bayinnaung's military program was not paralleled by the development of institutions by which the realm might have been securely integrated (Lieberman 1984, 32). As already noted, the first Toungoo empire emerged from city-state status, which had only been in place for

one generation. Therefore, the first Toungoo kings had no experience of centralized administration as a tool to control their empire effectively. Throughout their reigns, the kings spent most of their time in the battlefields suppressing vassal states and had no time to create a new system of government for their empire. Consequently, the first Toungoo kings had to govern their vast empire with the old-style pattern of patron-vassal relations, which had been used among previous Burmese polities.

To maintain the great empire, the kings needed to build a “network of loyalties” based on personal relations and kinship ties (Sunait 1990, 142). This was a loose control structure. According to Lieberman’s research (1984), the first Toungoo kings’ governing authority was fundamentally divided into three zones. Firstly, their direct control was over merely a core area around the capital, Pegu. Then, the rest of the kingdom was separately ruled as nearly autonomous appanages and vassal principalities. The sub-centers of Ava, Prome, Toungoo, Martaban and Chiang Mai were granted to higher royal members. The rulers of these sub-centers were termed *bayin*, which means monarch or king, and were bestowed the five royal regalia as well as practically self-governing prerogatives. The first Toungoo kings had no effective mechanism to control the *bayin*. Other minor cities were assigned as appanages to lesser princes and to high officials, who were called *myosa*—rulers of cities. Finally, tributary states such as Ayutthaya, Lan Chang and some Shan states continued to be governed by local hereditary rulers. However, these states had to acknowledge the suzerainty of Pegu by rendering specified tribute and military supports etc. (cf. Lieberman 1984, Chapter 1).

Sixteenth century warfare of the first Toungoo empire itself also reflected the nature of the empire. The wars in this period were not waged for the purpose of absolute occupation or plundering like those in the late eighteenth century, but for gathering up more allies, and extending and maintaining the network of loyalties for the empire. Besides trade benefits, Bayinnaung needed to be respected and accepted by all states and kingdoms as “the high king” or “the king of kings”. After each conquest, Bayinnaung generally did not put the old rulers of the defeated states to death. On the contrary, he would appoint the old rulers or individuals from the local ruler’s family to govern their own states again and let these rulers take an oath before the king. As in other Shan realms, after the victory over Ayutthaya in 1563, Bayinnaung appointed Pramahin, a son of the former king, Pramahacakkraphat, to be the new king of Ayutthaya (Kala Vol. II 1960, 350). Later, in 1568, Bayinnaung appointed Pramahadhammaraja, a son-in-law of the former king Pramahacakkraphat as the new king of Ayutthaya (ibid., 420).

However, the network of loyalties, which was directly bound to the great kings in person, could not help the empire last long. Whenever the great kings passed away, the fragile networks automatically vanished; both Bayinnaung and Nandabayin had to spend the early years of their reigns overcoming old vassal

states. Moreover, their attempt to maintain an over-extended empire, ranging from Manipur to Laos, an area far more extensive than was needed for the stability of the Irrawaddy Valley and lowland regions, was also the short-term cause of the collapse of the first Toungoo dynasty. Nandabayin experienced these misfortunes; throughout his reign, the old vassal states within and outside the core area rebelled and attacked the court at Pegu. The worst case of not being able to control his nucleus of manpower within the Mon region was one of the reasons why his military expeditions never restored his prestige. Like others, Ayutthaya also took advantage of these disturbances in consolidating the Ayutthaya kingdom by regaining control over the ports in the Mon region and avenging the first Toungoo empire by raiding Pegu.

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