

THE ROLE OF KYAING TONG IN MYANMAR'S RELATIONS WITH HER EASTERN NEIGHBOURS (1752-1885)

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Abstract

Kyaing Tong is located on the crossroads which linking Thailand, China and Laos. In monarchical days, Myanmar Kings recognized Kyaing Tong as the easternmost garrison town of Kingdom. During Konbaung Period, Myanmar Kings recognized the rule of Kyaing Tong Sawbwas as well as defended the region from invasions of neighbouring states. This paper aims to revisit the position of Kyaing Tong in dispute and friendly relations between Myanmar and her eastern neighbours. This paper also discusses the relations of Konbaung monarchs with successive Kyaing Tong Sawbwas.

Keywords: political history of Kyaing Tong

Introduction

Kyaing Tong, also known throughout history, as Gon², Khun³, Khemarattha, Khemarathhajoti Tongkarapur, Tongka⁴, is the largest and oldest state of Trans-Than Lwin area. It is the mountains, most easterly and culturally the farthest from the Myanmar, and of all the Shan States. The land is located between the Than Lwin and Mekong Rivers. The geographical position forced Kyaing Tong to draw its cultural inspirations from the bosom of Mekong rather than from the lands beyond Than Lwin River.

Materials and Method

The method of critical approach is used to analyze archival materials and other sources to yield the vivid information on the importance of frontier areas.

Result

Kyaing Tong Sawbwas stood as the faithful allies of Konbaung Kings up to King Mindon. The Kings gave protection Kyaing Tong from the invasion of eastern neighbours. This paper yields the importance of strengthening the frontier areas to defend the nation.

Aims and Objectives

This paper aims to shed light on the importance of Kyaing Tong as the garrison town to defend the territorial solidarity of the kingdom of Myanmar in Konbaung period.

Research Question

How and why Kyaing Tong important for the security of the eastern Shan State as well as of the Kingdom of Myanmar?

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² *Jambudipa Oksaung: Jambu Island in a Nutshell*, Than Tun (Comp and Ed), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005, pp. 79- 80, 90

³ This name was derived from the name of the Tai ethnic group who called themselves Khun

⁴ This name derived from the name of Hermit Tong, the Legendary founder of Kyaing Tong

Findings and Discussion

Although Kyaing Tong was founded by Luas, their rule existed only in the reigns of first two *Saw-bwas*.¹ The ruler who firmly established *Saw-bwa* lineage in Kyaing Tong was Phraya Mangrai in AD 1267.² Mangrai was the native of Ngoen Yang in Chiang Rai and in 1261 he became the ruler of Ngoen Yang and also known as the twenty-fifth king of the Lao dynasty. The establishment of Kyaing Tong was followed by the invasion of Chinese. The Chinese emperor dispatched troops under Yu Ve-ya to demand tribute of one thousand poles of rice³ and one thousand elephant tusks or ten elephants and 100,000 silver. During that time of the ruler of Kyaing Tong was Phaya Namthum, son of King Mangrai, who successfully defended the city and drove and the Chinese intruders.⁴

The reign of Sao Nam Thum lasted for eleven years and he was succeeded by Sao Namnam in A.D 1317. He was the longest reigning *Saw-bwa* of Nam Thuam's line and reigned for fifty-three years. In 1317, Sao Samhmunhoy succeed the throne for seven years. He was succeeded by Sao Jaylok who reigned for eighteen years. In 1342 Sao Sainang succeeded the state and died. According to Jengtung state chronicle, there was a long interregnum in Kyaing Tong due to the overwhelming of misfortune.⁵ Chinese emperor demanded tribute from Kyaing Tong. During the reign of his younger brother Sao Sam, (1416-41) the Sino-Myanmar War broke out. Myanmar chronicle *Maha Yazawingyi* mentions that war broke out in Narapati's reign (1442-68) in 1443.⁶ Thus the date of the outbreak of war with Chinese as mentioned in Myanmar source was about two decades later than that of Kyaing Tong Chronicle. During the war, Sao Sam sent one thousand cups of liquor to the Chinese.⁷

The stable situations of Kyaing Tong began to deteriorate after the death of Sao Aylau in 1501. His successor Comsak was a weak ruler who faced with the threat of outside enemy. He fled to Padaeng Monastery and was executed by his rival Sao-Saygho (1520-23). He was succeeded by Sao Saibron (1523-240).⁸ During his reign, the rivalry for succession for the throne broke out. In this situations, Chiang Mai forces were able to occupy the city. The Khuns took the help of Lus to fight against Saen Yi who finally fled to Kyaing Saen.⁹ Although Yun forces from Chiang Mai withdrew and the rival for throne was settled, the situations of Kyaing Tong did not improve under the rule of next Sawbwa. The reign of Sao Kaeuyofanarinda (1524-60) coincided with the rise of Mangbrara Hongsa.¹⁰ After the unification of the kingdom and subduing some

¹ Myanmar word Saswbwa derived from Sao-pha- literally means Lord of the Sky and this term dedicated to the hereditary chiefs of Shan States

² Oongsakul, *History of Lan Na*, Chaing Mai, Silkworm Books, 2005, p.100 (Hereafter cited as Oongsakul, *History of Lan Na*)

³ One carrier pole of rice equivalent to two baskets,

⁴ Sao Saimong Mangrai, *The Padaeng Chronicle and the Jengtung State Chronicle Translated*, Ann Arbor, Center of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1981, p.205 (Hereafter cited as Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*)

⁵ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.231

⁶ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.235

⁷ U Kala, *Maha Yazawingyi* (The Great Chronicle), Three Volumes, Volume Two, Yangon, Yabyei Publishing House, 2006, (Fourth Impression) pp. 77-79

⁸ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.238

⁹ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.243

¹⁰ King Bayinnaung of Hanthawaddy

Shan principalities, King Bayinnaung led on huge expedition to Chiang Mai in 1564.¹ As Kyaing Tong located at the western gate way of Chiang Mai, King Bayinnaung occupied the city, but recognized the Sawbwa as his subordinate chief. Throughout the wars against either northern Tai states or Ayudhaya, Kyaing Tong Sawbwa stood as the loyal ally to king Bayinnaung² and the king took special care to create amicable relation with Kyaing Tong.

The expansion of Myanmar power under the early Konbaung dynasty in the mid-18th century, and the subsequent restoration and expansion of Siamese power under Taksin and the early Chakri dynasty, had a devastating effect on the Tai principalities of Lan Na. at the time, the Tai regions between the Salween and the Mekong Rivers, which had formerly constituted the independent Lan Na Kingdom, paid tribute to the kings of Burma, but were largely independent in practice. Between the Burmese invasion of 1762, and the Siamese counter-invasion of 1775, the Lan Na principalities became almost completely abandoned, losing the majority of their population to war, conscription, or starvation.

The 18th century was a time of conflict and instability for all of mainland Southeast Asia. For Lan Na, however the instability had begun long before the 18th century. In the 16th century, the Mangrai dynasty of Chiang Mai, who had ruled Chiang Mai from its founding and built a large kingdom with Chiang Mai at its center, collapsed, and Lan Na was overrun by the Burmese King Bayinnaung, who went on to conquer Siam and build one of the largest empires in Southeast Asian history. From the 16th until the 18th centuries, Lan Na thus existed in a state of political disintegration, with the emergence of numerous small principalities existing under the loose control of the Myanmar.³ At the beginning of 18th century, these cities, which included the historic population centers of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, and Chiang Rai, were put under the administrative jurisdiction of Chiang Saen, which were ruled by a Myanmar governor, or *myowun*.⁴ The Kings of early Konbaung period made their utmost efforts to secure their rule in above mentioned areas.

During King Myaydu's reign, a massive army under the command of the Myanmar general began a sweep through the Trans-Than Lwin areas, culminating in the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767. Myanmar army settled in for a five-month siege of Chiang Mai, which culminated in the fall of the city. Despite the eventual success of the Myanmar against Ayutthaya, the campaigns devastated the lands and populations of Inwa's Tai allies. The large amount of people from Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan were conscripted into the service of the Myanmar as soldiers or laborers. The chronicles vividly describe a time period marked by political chaos and constant warfare which laid waste to much of the region. During that period, Lan Na, Chiang Mai were fell under in chaotic situation. Most of the villages and fields were deserted, all wild and overgrown. To the south there were tigers; to the north were

¹ (a) U-tha-yaw Amat-kyi, *Hanthawaddy Hsinbyumashin Ayedawbon Maw-gun Udan* (The Achievements and conquests of King Bayinnaung), U Toe Hla (Member of Myanmar Historical Commission) (ed), Yangon, Myanmar Historical commission, 2006, pp. 87-99

(b) The date of the invasion of King Bayinnaung was mentioned in Chiang Mai Chronicle between 1557-58.

² Than Tun, *Nehle Yazawin* (Peripatetic History), Yangon, Pyay Zone Press, 2004, pp.42-43 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *Peripatetic History*)

³ John Sterling Forssen Smith, *The Chaing Tung Wars and Politics in Mid 19th Century Siam and Burma*, Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2013, p.44 (Hereafter cited as Smith, *Chaing Tung Wars*)

⁴ David K. Wyatt and Aroonrut Wichienkeo, tr., *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1998, p.130 (Hereafter cited as Wyatt and Aroonrut, *Chiang Mai Chronicle*)

elephants. The land was unstable, and there was no ruler to take charge; there were but few leaders and few followers.”¹

As mentioned above, King Myaydu (1763-1776) renewed the hostility with Ayutthaya. The resolution of King Myaydu to occupy Ayutthaya was probably inspired by the abortive result of the expedition of his father, King Alaungmintaya. At first, Myanmar armies occupied the surrounding districts of Ayutthaya. Indeed, King Myaydu had already learned the knowledge of the physical geography of Ayutthaya and knew the military caliber of Ayutthaya. Based upon these, the King planned to seize Ayutthaya by the two penetration columns, one from Chiang Mai under the command of Naymyo Thihapate and the second route from Dawe under the command of Maha Nawrahta. King Myaydu sent his twenty-eight battalions under the command of General Naymyo Thihapate to Chiang Mai on 6 February 1764. On reaching Mong Nai, the forces divided into two columns. One made up of three Myanmar and seven Shan battalions² went by Mong Pu-Mong That³ route. The Mai column of twenty-five battalions under Naymyo Thihapate went by Mong Thwin (Mong Hsin) – Keng Ye (Chiang Rai) Route. The whole force captured all fifty-seven districts of Chiang Mai and encamped at Anan (Nan).⁴

The first column of Naymyo Thihapate forces were chiefly made up of Shans. But Myanmar King did not trust on them completely. For one instance, when the political changes occurred in Myanmar, some *Sawbwas* on the Yunnan border were defiant to the Myanmar's suzerainty and they ceased paying tribute to Myanmar and took refuge into Yunnan. On 31 October 1764, Naymyo Thihapate's forces marched to Mainglonkhapin (Luang Prabang) and Linzin. His forces with twenty-five battalions went by the Mekhong River. *Sitke* Tuyin Yamakyaw with ten battalions went by land. King of Linzin submitted under Myanmar General together with such presents as weapons, horses, elephants and his relatives. Then all the forces came back on 25 March 1765 and arrived Lagun (Lampang) on 29 April. Besides King Myaydu invaded Manipur in December 1764 and carried off many war captives to his capital for the purpose of increasing manpower.

Sitke Tuyin Yamakyaw headed towards Ayutthaya on 22 August 1765 with twenty battalions. They marched by the Me Pein River. Ten battalions made his vanguard, followed, by fifteen, and another thirteen under Naymyo Thihapate all fifty-eight marched to Ayutthaya. Many towns and villages of Thai territory which situated along the military route had prepared to defend the Myanmar forces. They all were however occupied by the Myanmar forces and a number of war captives were captured.⁵ The towns of Thai territory can be easily occupied by the Myanmar forces. But some towns strongly defended the Myanmar forces. Town or villages officers who strongly defended the Myanmar were killed and the remain village officers were reinstated in their former ranks and rights. But the conqueror captured many captives from the defeated country. They were added in the Myanmar forces, thus increasing their own strength. Thus, force collected around and attacked Ayutthaya. The local levies were put at vanguard.

¹ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, p.158

² Sawbwas of Mong Nai, Nyaung-shwe and the *Myosa* of Lawksawk, Mong Khine, Laihka, Mong Seik and Mong Pun

³ Present Mong Hsat

⁴ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet Maha Yazawindawgyi*, Volume I, Yangon, Yabyay Press, 2004 (Reprint) pp. 266-276 (Hereafter cited as Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*)

⁵ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, pp.282-3

Myanmar King had forbidden any disturbances to the towns which submitted themselves under their power.¹ All the Myanmar forces coming from the north towards Ayutthaya numbered seventy-one battalions. So the Myanmar forces were able to get nearer to Ayutthaya. The Myanmar forces captured the towns which would be useful to them as bases. When northern capital Chiang Mai, a strategically important town, fell into Myanmar, Thai lost its defence and became in easy prey. Chiang Mai was rich in provisions and resources. So Myanmar forces easily achieved those advantages.

Naymyo Thihapate's column, on the way, met an effective resistance from in village, Bang Rachan. The Myanmar forces fought seven times but failed to capture the village.² Therefore, the Myanmar forces delayed for about five months on their way to Ayutthaya. The fight at this village was a decisive one. This village had halted the Myanmar advance. A Mon, who had bravely fought on Myanmar side, was made a *Thugyi*, village headman by the Myanmar. The Mon *Thugyi* fought the village, Bang Rachan eight times. The Mon *Thugyi* understood that the Myanmar's defeat in the previous fights were on account of the fact that the Thais are "men of the area" and "master of the ambush". Therefore, he built several forts along the road to village. Thus he arranged carefully and led a Myanmar force from fort to fort, slowly taking half a month to reach the village. Although the Thais from the village came out and attacked the Myanmar forces several times they failed to success. The casualties on the Thai side were heavy. In such a bad situation, the villagers had requested to the Thai capital for help. The capital had refused to give help. So Bang Rachan fell in July 1766.³ Although the villagers were "men of their own area," and had given a strong resistance, they were defeated finally. King of Ayutthaya sent two forces- one by land and another by sea to intercept Myanmar forces under Naymyo Thihapate on a bank of the Me Pein River. The Thais were defeated. The Myanmar forces advanced to Pananpathoke village on 14 January 1766.⁴ The Thai made no more attempt to go out and fight against the Myanmar forces. They stood firmly in Ayutthaya.⁵

Meanwhile, the hostility with Chinese Empire broke out. One of the reasons of this hostility has centered at Kyaing-Tong. A Chinese merchant named Law Ta-yi was killed in a dispute about payment; the Myanmar resident offered blood-money and even talked of executing the slayer, but would not hand him over, and the Chinese would take nothing less. Such instances were trivial and could have been adjusted had the town governments been in communication with each other, but they had not embassy system to solve the problem on time. In this situation, Saw Bwas of Bhamo, Thein-Ni and Kyaing Tong ceased paying tribute to Myanmar. Instead, they paid tribute to Chinese Commander Son-Tu and urged to attack Myanmar. When Son-Tu submitted a full report to the Chinese Emperor, a military expedition comprised of 50,000 men and 10,000 horses was sent to Myanmar to attack Kyaing Tong. This event was coincided with the problem created by Kyaing-Ton Saw-Bwa who committed murder against a Myanmar

¹ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.286

² Damrong Rajanudhap, *Our War with the Burmese*, Bangkok, White Lotus 2001 (Reprint), pp.331-6 (Hereafter cited as Damrong, *Our War*)

³ (a) Damrong, *Our War*, pp.336-9

(b) The year 1766 is mentioned in Damrong, 2001. But it can be supposed to be the year 1765.

⁴ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.287

⁵ Damrong, *Our War*, 340

official in a fighting between him and Myanmar officers of Kyaing Tong garrison town Let-we Kyaung-gaung and Let-ya Kyaw-gaung and took refuge to Yunnan.¹

When Kyaing Tong was besieged by the Chinese army, Myanmar Commander Sit-Ke Shwei-Daung-Tet, Ba-Ya Than-Baing, Baya Win collaborated with the garrison forces of Kyaing-Ton for defence and submitted a report to the royal capital. Therefore, Myei-Du Min sent eleven armies under the commanders of Bala Mindin, Artillery Officer, Officer of Cassay Cavalry, Myit-Che-Za, Banya-U, Bala Pya-Chi, Tha-Mein. Set-Ka-Waw, Banya Dala, Potta Sanlon, Ka-Dok-Wun, Let-We Win Hmu. The combined forces of Myanmar armies comprised of two hundred elephants, two thousand horses, and 20,000 men. Myanmar armies left Inwa on 27 December 1765.² Meanwhile another Myanmar armies led by Commanders Thihapate and Maha Nawrahta waged the war against Ayutthaya.³

When combined Myanmar armies led by Nemyo Sithu at Kyaing Tong, two columns were separated; one was led by Let-we Win-Hmu comprising five armies, one hundred elephants, 1000 horses, 10,000 men, and named as “right column”; another column, “left column”, was led by Bala Mindin with same strength and attacked against the Chinese besieging of Kyaing-Ton. In this battle, the Chinese relied on cavalry by it could not withstood the ravage of Myanmar elephants. Therefore, they retreated to Ta-Lao River where they built a stockade to make defence Myanmar attack. In the battle of Ta-Lao Chinese Commander Yi-Ta Law-Ye was killed in action.⁴ And Chinese armies hastily withdrew into Yunnan Province. After the withdrawal, Lord of Kyaing Yon and Lu-Hse-Hnit Panna and Myoza Daw-Ba-Ya submitted to Myanmar commanders and explained that the “Chinese forced them to pay tributes by threatening with armies, the strength of which was superior than that of their forces. However, they would continue to submit tributes to Myanmar King and would serve under Myanmar King.” Let-we Win-Hmu sent a messenger named Ye-Hla Nara to explain the situation. When Ye-Hla Nara arrived Inwa on 8 February 1766, King Hsinbyushin brought back the forces of Let-we Win-Hmu to the royal capital. But he made a precautionary measure to prevent future invasion of Chinese by placing an army led by Bala Mindin at Kaung-Tong.⁵

During The reign of King Badon (1782-1819), the efforts were made to strengthen the Myanmar garrisons at Trans-Than Lwin Area including Kyaing Tong Garrison. Naymyo Kyaw Htin Thin Hkaya was appointed as a commander and given 5,000 men, 500 horses and 2,000 guns to advance the Trans–Thanlwin areas where there were some disturbances broke out due to the invasion of Chaing Mai. King Badon instructed Naymyo Kyaw Htin Thin Hkaya to consult all events with the local chiefs of Cis-Thanlwin Shan areas. Another order was passed on 8 August 1787 regarding the military operation against Siam. The second column was to suppress the rebels led by Kawila of Chiang Mai who have received the help of Siam and they had made a disturbance in fifty- seven districts of Chiand Mai. The city guards were left behind when the armies had advanced to Siam. Maha Thiri Thihathu was left as rearguard in Dawe to guard the town and to collect provisions for the advancing forces.

¹ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.311

² Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.211

³ G.H,Luce, *Chinese Invasion of Burma in the 18th Century*, Bangkok, Myanmar Book Center and Book Promotion and Service Ltd, 1998(Reprint), p.119 (Hereafter cited as Luce, *Chinese Invasion*)

⁴ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.316

⁵ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet I*, p.312

On 29 August 1787, the Myanmar King sent an army to advance to Chiang Mai in order to maintain law and order there.¹ Since the time Myanmar retreated from Siam at the second battle, King Rama I decided to stage a war against Myanmar. He divided two columns. One was sent to the north to relieve Lampang. The second column was headed by the King himself and advanced to Dawe and staged an offensive attack on Dawe but he did not win over it. In the above situation, Myanmar King made arrangements to counter attack the Thai.

Meanwhile Kawila, King of Chiang Mai, decided to revive the north. His first attempt was to repopulate and resettle the Chiang Mai and Lamphun region. Secondly, he had to raid into the northern and western Shan regions controlled by the Myanmar. He came back to Chiang Mai in 1796. The war started again between Myanmar and Siam. On 29 October 1797, Chiang Mai campaign started.² It was because Kawila was reestablished in Chiang Mai twice, once in 1797 and later in 1802. Thai army also helped Chiang Mai to join attack on Myanmar forces. On 31 March 1798, Chiang Mai and the Thais jointly attacked the Myanmar forces. So, Myanmar forces retreated from Chiang Mai.³

In 1802, Kawila invaded Kyaing Tong and carried off many families from there. They all were resettled at farther south. In 1803, the Thais attacked Keng Tung and a large number of people from Kyaing Tong were carried away to Chiang Mai. These people themselves wished for swaying to the Thai sides because they hoped that they would achieve better treatment from the Thais sides than from the Myanmar. This belief made a difficult situation for Myanmar to achieve the strength of the Shans. In 1805, Kawila drove out the Myanmar from Chiang Saen. From 1807 to 1808, the tension mounted between Myanmar and Chiang Mai. The King issued a number of orders⁴ concerning Chiang Mai campaign. On 23 October 1807, the King passed an order to advance to Chiang Mai under the command of Prince Pakhan. Min Kyaw Thiha and Naymyo Nawrahta were appointed as *Sitke*, Regimental Officers for Chiang Mai campaign. Recording to the Royal Order of 26 September 1808, Chiang Mai campaign would be started on 31 December 1808.⁵

On 30 September 1808, the King ordered Banyu Thi to reconnoiter the route of Hsipaw to ascertain which route had to be used in his campaign against Chiang Mai. Moreover, the King also ordered to inform about his campaign to the *Sawbwa* and Chiefs of Kung Ma, Mong Khine and Mong Wun. In October 1808, the King called upon the men who were familiar with the route of Chiang Mai well. On 5 November 1808, the King ordered Mong Nai Commander and Regimental Officers to investigate one of the four envoys who came from Chiang Mai.⁶ The military operation against Chiang Mai was proclaimed on 26 September 1808. On 2 December

¹ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet Maha Yazawindawgyi*, Volume II, Yangon, Yabyay Press, 2004 (Reprint) p.52 (Hereafter cited as Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet II*)

² Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet II*, p.99

³ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet II*, pp.100-1

⁴ The Royal Orders dated 23 October 1807, 26 September 1808, 30 September 1808, 1 October 1808, 3 October 1808 and 5 November 1808. Than Tun, *Royal Orders of Burma (AD 1598-1885)*, Part VI (AD 1807-1810), Kyoto, CSEAS, Kyoto University, 1987, pp.89-90, p.124, pp.128-9, pp.131-2, p.162 (Hereafter cited as Than Tun, *ROB VI*)

⁵ (a) Than Tun, *ROB VI*, pp.89-90, p.124

(b) Dr Yi Yi, "Myanmar Thamaing Atauk-Atar-Myar 1143-81" (Historical Documents of Myanmar 1781-1819), *Historical Research Paper I* Yangon, Myanmar Historical Research Department, 1977, p.106 (Hereafter cited as Yi Yi, *Historical Documents*)

⁶ Than Tun, *ROB VI*, p. 162

1808, the King ordered the Crown Prince to launch an attack Chiang Mai by the way of Mong Nai. The King himself advanced to Chiang Mai on 31 December 1808.¹

Main causes of Chiang Mai expedition were to subdue Chiang Mai King Kawila and his plan to expand his influence into Trans-Than Lwin areas. Particularly Kawila would like to install a new Sawbwa on throne of Kyaing Tong. Meanwhile Myanmar troops gave priority to depose Sao Maha Khannam, Sawbwa of Kyaing Tong. Then they advanced to Lan Na where 4300 troops of Kawila stationed. In 1811 Maha Khannam went across Mekong River to ask help from Lamphung and Chiang Mai. This war prolonged to 1812 when Myanmar troops retreated under shortages of food.² They took people from Mong Yong, Mong Phyat, Mong Lin, Mong Kaing, and Keng Khan as prisoners. Sao Maha Khannam was detained in Chiang Saen.³ Although King Badon enabled to control Keng Tung, he worried upon the stability of his influence on Sao Maha Khannam. At the end of 1812 Sao Maha Khannam was met by his servant Sao Khannam who told him King Badon would like to negotiate for keeping Keng Tung as subordinate alliance.⁴ Other source mentions that Maha Khannam sent his two servants to King Badon to offer terms of peace. As King Badon rejected the offer, Maha Khannam went to Amarapura and submitted twelve elephants. King Badon offered the title of “Sao Phalong Khemarahta Mahathiha Pavarathnddhamaraja Burneindadipatiraja.” The eastern Than Lwin area was pacified with the reinstatement of Sao Maha Khannam on throne of Kyaing Tong.

In February 1845 Chiang Mai invaded Kyaing Tong. Maha Min Hla Min Hkaung Kyaw was appointed as a Commander-in-Chief and sent to Chiang Mai from with 200 horses and 2,500 men by the way of Mong Nai.⁵ Kyaing Tong was situated between Myanmar, Lanna and Yunnan. Because of this situation, he offered tributes to those Kingdoms.⁶ At the beginning of 1850s, the significant events changed Thai-Myanmar relations. Chakri Dynasty, centered at Bangkok, expanded its power to neighbouring states of present-day Cambodia, Malaya and north Kingdom of Lan Na.⁷ Meanwhile, Myanmar's control over Lan Na and Kyaing Tong area was gradually loosened.

When Myanmar suffered military defeat in Second Anglo-Myanmar War, Thai took opportunity and invaded into Keng Tung. King Mongkut appointed Krommaluang Wongsathiratsanit, his younger brother, and Chaophraya Yommarat, at the head of two armies to invade Keng Tung. While they were advancing to Keng Tung, Thai forces recruited men from Nan, Phrae and Lomsak, Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang. Meanwhile Cao Maha Khanan and Myanmar troops prepared to defend the city. Royal capital sent Bala Zeyakyaw and his troops. Local ethnic people such as Tai Yai and Tai Lu collaborated with Maha Khanan.⁸ On 2 May 1852 Thai armies besieged Kyaing Tong. Twelve days after besieging, Thai forces retreated due to suffering of fever and shortages of food, Myanmar armies seized captives and elephants

¹ Yi Yi, *Historical Documents*, p.106

² Smith, *Chaing Tung Wars*, p.44

³ Wyatt and Aroonrut, *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, pp.193-194

⁴ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.259

⁵ (a) Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset Mahayazawindawgyi* (Great Chronicle of Konbaung-Dynasty), Vol. III, Yangon, Yarpay Book Shop, 2004, (Reprint) p. 47 (Hereafter cited as Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset III*)
(b)Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, Thailand, O.S Printing House, 1994, p. 97

⁷ Smith, *Chaing Tung Wars*, pp.51-2

⁸ Smith, *Chaing Tung Wars*, p.115

from invaders.¹ Furthermore on 5 April 1850 *Sitke*, Regimental Officer of Mong Nai informed the news of the Than Lwin River which would be made to be a frontier of Chiang Mai. Therefore, the forces led by Maha Thiha Min Htin advanced to Chiang Mai with 10,000 men. The Thanlwin River was marked as a boundary of Chiang Mai by the side of Chiang Mai. This was informed to the Myanmar King by Mong Nai *Sitke*, Regimental Officer on 5 April 1850. Therefore, a force was sent to crush them.² When the Second Anglo-Myanmar War started on 2 April 1852, the *Sawbwas* who took refuge in Siam gave their aids to the British.³

When Myanmar faced with the British annexation of Bago after the Second Anglo-Myanmar War of 1852, Siam also started their invasion again. Although the Thais invaded Kyaing Tong twice, in 1852 and in 1853, they failed to capture the town. The younger brother of Hsenwibwa, the Lord of Sipsonpanna,⁴ took refuge under Thai King Rama III and asked for help to attack Keng Tung.⁵ Siam wanted to possess Sipsonpanna, which was under the suzerainty of Myanmar through Kyaing Tong.⁶ In this campaign, Thai King sent his younger brother named Kyauk Thiwayit with twenty-four battalions to Keng Tung front. A total strength of 5,000 men from Mong Pon and the Chief of Anan (Nan) marched to Kyaing Tong. The Chief of Mong Han followed behind the main column. The three forces within the city commanded by three commanders namely Mingyi Maha Min Hla Min Htin Kyaw, the *Sawbwa* of Kyaing Tong and Min Kyaw Tasaung simultaneously came out of the city and attacked the enemies stationed at Pyaingsanyat, south of Keng Tung. After seriously fighting with each other, Sao Wanna, the younger brother of the Chief of Chiang Mai and a brother of the Chief Lampang were killed in the field. The Thai forces had to withdraw from Kyain Tong.⁷

Son Hit Kunmun, the Crown Prince of Kyaing Tong and Wunsar Diya Htanit were sent to Keng Tung from with 20,000 men by King Rama IV (1851-1868) of Siam. Mingyi Maha Nawrahta had informed to the capital Amarapura about the invasion of Thai forces to Kyaing Tong. The reinforcements force⁸ joined hands with Myanmar and defended the enemies.⁹ Myanmar forces within the city were well prepared for counter attack on the Thai forces and tried to halt the enemies in order not to approach the city. Therefore, Myanmar forces prepared three defensive actions of guerilla defensive action, outer perimeter defensive action and close defensive action around the city. Within the city of Kyaing Tong, one hundred musketeers were stationed as a close defensive action. The Lord of Mong Late was responsible to defend the city. So, he was stationed inside the city. The Chiefs of Kyephogyi and Baarpaung were stationed at the south of Moby in order to intercept the Thai forces from Chiang Mai route. As far beyond defensive action, another column was stationed at Mong Nyaung (present Mong Yawng). At Mong That (present Mong Hsat), a force of 3,000 men under the head of Min Hla Min Hkaung

¹ Mangrai, *Padaeng Chronicle*, p.262

² Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset III*, 69

³ Bo Kyaw Tint, *Yadanapon-khit Myanmar Naingngancharr Setsanye 1853-78* (Myanmar Foreign Relations During Yadanapon Period 1853-78), Yangon, Dobamar Book Shop, 1975, p. 16

⁴ Northern Lu state of Chiang Hung

⁵ U Ponnya (Sale), "*Yodaya Naing Mawgun*" (Victory over Yodaya (Thailand) which was recorded in the sacred Myanmar Literature called Mawgun), Universities Historical Research Centre Collection (Type Script), No Date, Stanza-23 (Hereafter cited as Ponnya, *Yodaya Naing*)

⁶ Ponnya *Yodaya Naing*, Stanza-32

⁷ Ponnya, *Yodaya Naing*, Stanza-23, 24, 25, 26, 28

⁸ *Sawbwa* forces from the Eastern Shan States.

⁹ Ponnya, *Yodaya Naing*, Stanza-31, 34, 36

Kyaw was stationed as well. At Mong That (present Mong Hsat) the Myanmar forces and Chiang Mai forces seriously fought with each other. Finally, Chiang Mai forces retreated with defeat. A Thai force successfully attacked Mong Nyaung (present Mong Yawng) and then they besieged the town of Kyaing Tong.¹

The Lord of Mong Late and his forces came out of the city and repulsed the Thai forces outside the city. Thai forces retreated in disorder. As they could not continue to stand to meet the Myanmar forces, Thai forces halted for three days and reinforced their forces. Myanmar forces inside the city changed their tactic from defensive to offensive. Before they attacked, Keng Tung Sawbwa himself led his forces and came out of the city and seriously fought the Thai forces. Finally, Myanmar forces successfully repulsed Thai forces. Mingyi Maha Nawrahta, off the supplies line of the Thai Uparit's elephant forces so that the fighting would be ceased. All the Thai forces retreated to their land. They were followed and attacked by Mong Nai Sawbwa. On 26 March 1853,² the ethnic people of Myanmar and Shan joined hands with each other and repulsed the Thai forces from Myanmar.³ This was informed to the King on 27 April 1853.⁴ At a second time, the Chief of Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Phrae and Nan invaded Kengyonegyi (Kenghung) and Kyaing Tong. Therefore, an army was sent there on 6 June 1854 to suppress the enemies. Since 1852 these towns had been invaded by the Thais. King Mindon sent armies Myanmar army to drive the rebels out of Kyaing Tong on 19 June 1854.⁵

Conclusion

As Kyaing Tong is located on the crossroad linking among Thailand, China, Laos and the west of Than Lwin areas, it was invaded by her eastern neighbors since its establishment. The Chinese Empire considered Kyaing Tong as her tributary state. Chiang Mai at the pinnacle of its power also regarded Kyaing Tong as her subordinate state. After the conquest of eastern Than Lwin areas by King Bayinnaung, Kyaing Tong fell under the suzerainty of successive Myanmar Kings. The successive Kyaing Tong sawbwas stood as the subordinate alliances of Myanmar Kings. During Konbaung period, the Kings made attempts to defend Kyaing Tong from invasions of Chiang Mai, China and Ayutthaya. They referred Kyaing Tong as the important garrison of the East. Although the kings after Badon lost control over the whole of Lan Na area, it is found that they made utmost effort to defend Kyaing Tong. The subordinate alliance of Kyaing Tong continued to exist until the rise of King Thibaw.

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¹ Ponnya, *Yodaya Naing*, Stanza-32, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44

² Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset III*, pp.116-7

³ Ponnya, *Yodaya Naing*, Stanza-36, 45, 47, 50, 55

⁴ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset III*, pp.116-7

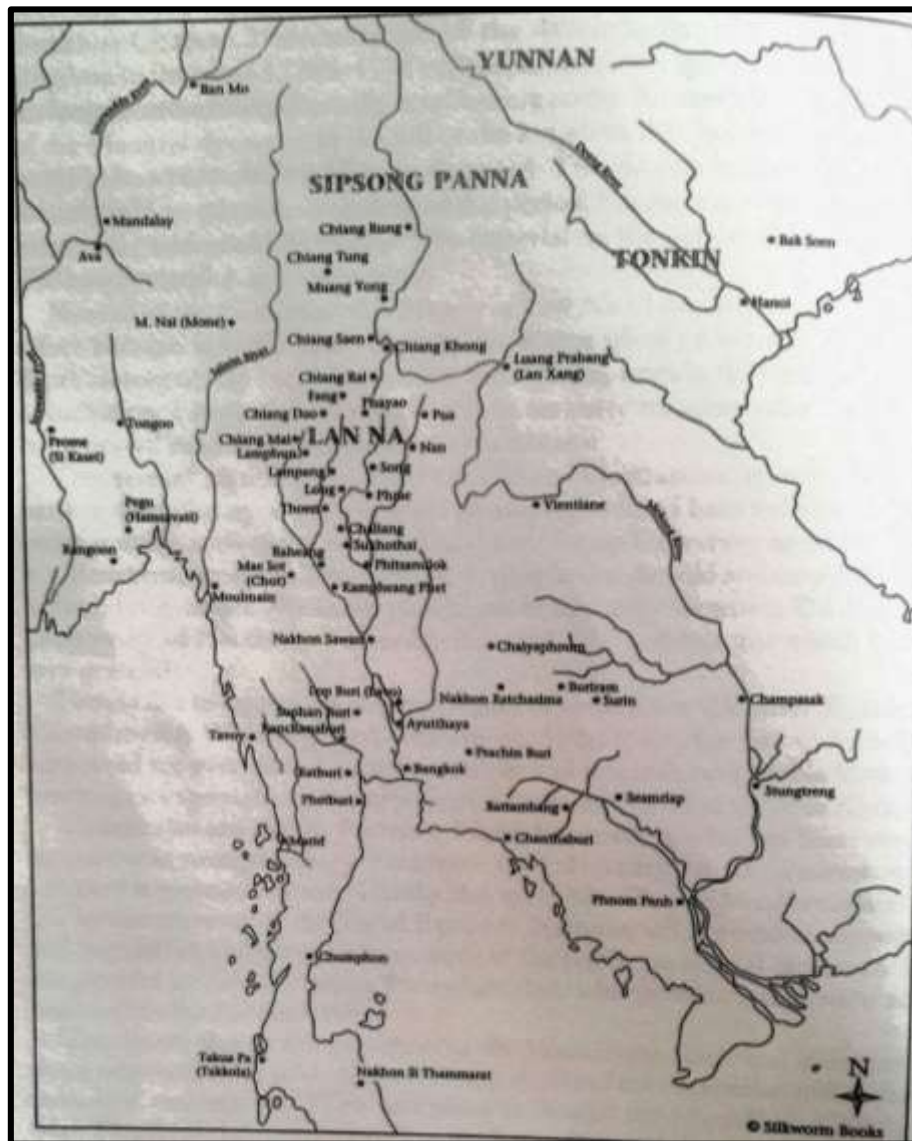
⁵ Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungset III*, p.143, pp.147-8

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Appendix I

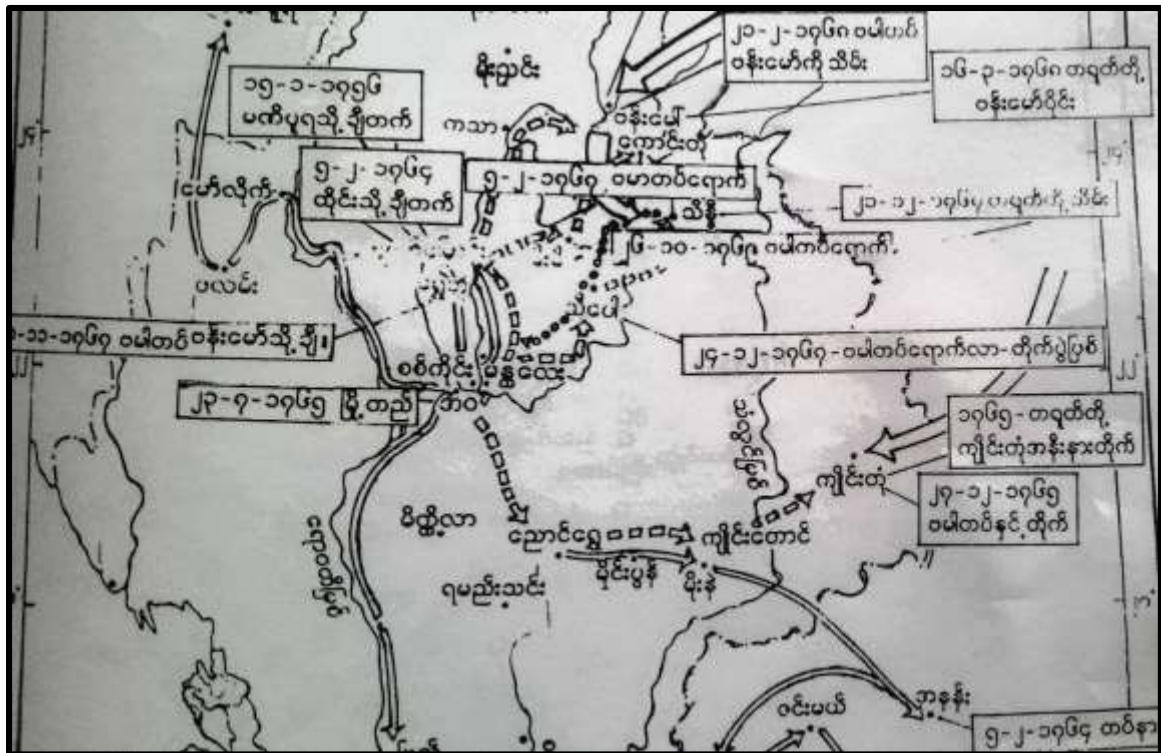
Map of Lan Na



Source: Ongsakul, *History of Lan Na*, Chaing Mai, Silkworm Books, 2004, p. xvi

Appendix II

Map of Kyaing Tong in King Hsinbyushin's War



Source: Than Tun, *Myanmar Thamaing Myeponmya*, (Historical Atlas of Myanmar) ,
Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 2005, p.101