

RAJADHIRAT'S MASK OF COMMAND: MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN BURMA (C. 1348-1421)

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1. Introduction

The reign of the Mon king Rajadhirat (r. 1383-1421) was an exceptional period in Burma's history. Rarely has one person exerted so much influence over the events of an era. Lower and Upper Burma were locked in endemic warfare for almost forty years during his reign. Unlike his father and predecessor, Rajadhirat was forced to wage war to obtain power. Once in power, he had to continue fighting to maintain power. During the critical first seven years of his rule, Rajadhirat consolidated power in a series of conflicts with other members of the ruling elite. The war that Rajadhirat waged had its origins in a succession crisis, a common problem plaguing the transition from one political regime to another in many societies (Ferguson, 1999, 402). Upon the death of a king, members of the ruling elite typically competed for the vacant throne and in general:

Unless the rules of succession are carefully spelled out...that period between the death of the old king and the crowning of the new is extremely precarious for the group as a whole. A state recently formed out of a number of chiefdoms might revert to smaller units. Moreover, when two competitors can garner relatively equal support, there will almost certainly be civil war. Thus, too much rigidity in political succession threatens the polity because of weakness at the top; too much flexibility may rend it in pieces. This is the fundamental problem of political succession (Lewellen, 1992, 84).

In Rajadhirat's succession, the flexibility nearly rent his father's fragile kingdom to pieces. Koenig's (1990) detailed analysis of succession crises during the better documented early Konbaung period (c. 1752-1819) clearly shows that succession crises at the death of kings were a constant and unchanging feature of Burmese politics for hundreds of years and that the succession struggles and inter-elite strategic behavior of the Rajadhirat era was not merely an imaginary overlay.

In the contest of political succession, Rajadhirat's adversaries and allies were the ruling elite of Lower and Upper Burma. Commanders and strategists like Byat Za and Deinmaniyut exerted a formative influence on Rajadhirat's strategy. The headstrong princes of Ava, Theiddat, Hsinbyushin and Minyekyawswa acted independently of their monarchs providing an impetus that sustained conflict. Lower status ruling elites, installed as local rulers in conquered domains were quickly deposed

or defected to the other side and worked to fragment Rajadhirat's power in Lower Burma.

Strategy was important in this quickly changing environment. Rajadhirat's history is a part of the *ayeidawbon kyan* genre of Burmese historical literature, which stresses the strategy and heroic role of king as military commander:

"(1) How individuals of prowess consolidated their power and fought to obtain the throne. (2) How these kings retained their power by military means and other endeavours like diplomacy, alliances and stratagem, (3) How rebellions were crushed, (4) How wars were waged for the expansion of their territory, (5) Important achievements of a particular king like building new towns and cities, pagodas and palaces, etc" (Thaw Kaung, 2004b).

Goldsworthy's (2000) description of the premodern warfare of Punic Spain applies equally well to the Rajadhirat era. The power of ruling elite:

...does not appear to have been fixed, depending instead on personal charisma and particularly on reputation as warriors and leaders of warriors. Strong leaders who had proved themselves in war, might control many settlements in both their own and many other tribes' territories, the area loyal to them changing in size as their prestige, and that of rival leaders fluctuated (Goldsworthy, 2000, 246-247).

This influence of military prowess is also at the core of the "heroic style of military leadership" military historian John Keegan describes in his treatise on military leadership "The Mask of Command" (Keegan, 1987, 10-11). The heroic leadership attributes, "aggressive, invasive, exemplary, risk-taking," were common during the Rajadhirat era.

The aim of this paper is to provide the historical background necessary to compare the heroic style of military leadership of the Rajadhirat era with that of other historical eras and regions. In doing so, it also seeks to extend the analysis of "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" as a source for military history that Charney (2004) began in his survey of Southeast Asian warfare (c. 1300-1900) and his article on the evolution of river-based warfare in Burma (Charney, 1997).

Some comments on the texts themselves are in order. There are two main sources for the Rajadhirat era of history: 1. "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon," the biography Rajadhirat translated into English recently in an as yet unpublished manuscript by the Burmese scholar San Lwin (San Lwin, n.d.; Binnya Dala, n.d.), and 2. the Burmese chronicle, which adds detail from Ava's Upper Burma perspective. U Kala's *Mahayazawingyi*, one of the first and most complete versions of the Burmese historical chronicle, will be used here (U Kala, 1961). Note that the

Burmese pronunciation of Rajadhirat is “Razadarit.” Than Tun’s (2002) calendar is used for all dating. To conserve space, elephant, horse-cavalry, and troop-soldier counts are abbreviated like thus “(E: 50, H: 3,000, S: 20,000).”

There is evidence that texts of the *ayeidawpon kyan* genre of historical writing were based on extensive archival records kept within the Burmese royal palace. U Thaw Kaung (2004a) shows that in the case of the “Bayinnaung Ayeidawpon,” a very similar text to the “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon,” detailed historical records were inserted into the composition of the historical narrative. Perhaps “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon” was based on a body of similar, long since destroyed records. Only philological detective work and detailed comparisons between the actual manuscripts themselves can reveal any hidden strata of authorship. San Lwin’s translation notes several differences between different manuscripts in its footnotes. Hopefully, future access to manuscripts at the National Libraries of Myanmar, Thailand, and the British Library will facilitate more comparisons.

An early controversy over the authorship of “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon” was supposedly resolved authoritatively once and for all with the authorship being attributed to the Mon general Binnyadala writing in the court of Bayinnaung. Blanket statements by scholars that “there is not a controversy” does not necessarily mean that there should not be (Thaw Kaung, 2004b, 27). The historical materials needed to back up such a statement are certainly not available to historians of Burma, with the collections of the national libraries of Burma and Thailand being effectively off-limits and the manuscripts at the British library still not catalogued or made available. Even if Binnyadala was the author of a work that remained unchanged to the present day, there is still the issue of the primary sources used to write “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon.”

When we read of Rajadhirat and his exploits we can never be quite sure whether we are reading historical fact or fiction. The history of Rajadhirat’s era may have been transformed in very significant ways by successive copyist-authors, but as the historian Leopold von Ranke would say, something actually did happen during Rajadhirat’s reign six hundred years ago and it is the historian’s job to find out what that was, through detailed textual comparison and philology. Historians have a responsibility to historical truth, even if historical truth is irretrievably split Rashomon-like between three or four irreconcilable ethnic perspectives, even if the historical record has been rewritten so many times, filtered through so many mentalities of indigenous historians that the resulting “ethno-history” that we now have has to best be characterized as indigenous intellectual history, not the history of events at all. This intellectual history can still be recovered from texts and this essay will attempt to make a start in this direction. Hopefully this essay will stimulate interest in publishing an edition of

the Burmese scholar San Lwin’s translation of the “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon.”

2. Rajadhirat’s initial struggle for control over Lower Burma (c. 1383-1390)

The loss of power of Rajadhirat’s father Binnya U (c. 1348-1383)

Rajadhirat’s initial struggle for power began at the court of his father Binnya U, king of Martaban (r. 1348-83) slightly southwest and down the coast from modern-day Yangon. At that time, Martaban was the most important port in Lower Burma. Binnya U possessed a white elephant that was kept at the court of Martaban and in the Burmese language Binnya U is known as “Hsinpyushin” which means “White Elephant Lord.” At the beginning of Binnya U’s reign, Chiang Mai attacked Martaban. There is no record of this invasion in the *Chiangmai Chronicle*, so the invader may have been some other northern Tai state (Wyatt and Wichienkeeo, *Chiang Mai Chronicle*, 66-67).

Chiang Mai invaded Martaban’s domains with forces numbering eighty thousand men under the leadership of U Paik Lam Sa in 1356 and destroyed the towns of Sittaung [Thittaung], Taikkala, Dun Vun [Wun], and Lagun Pyi. The court of Martaban prayed to the white elephant at court to communicate with them through a dream and instruct them how to drive away the invader. The dream told them to place the white elephant under canopies arrayed with umbrellas and pennants on the top of a high mountain and to sprinkle perfumed water from a gold basin over the enemy. Binnya U did exactly as the white elephant had requested in the dream and the enemies were promptly defeated. Immediately afterwards, the king sent a request to Sri Lanka for relics of the Buddha to enshrine on the mountain peak where the white elephant had defeated the invaders. The pagoda erected there was named “Kyun Pun Kyat Cana.” Three years after the Chiangmai invasion the white elephant at court died. The future king Rajadhirat was born in 1367 [729 BE] (SL 11-13)

King Binnya U was in the habit of leaving Martaban for long elephant hunts in the jungle. While he was away on one of these elephant hunts, one of the smaller local rulers near Martaban named Byattapa who ruled over the town of Tari (near Lagun Pyi) took over the town of Martaban and called on the rulers of Sittaung, Taikkala, and Hlaing to join him.

As Binnya U made his way back to Martaban from the elephant hunt, Byattapa’s brother E Bya Poun, ruler of Lagun Byi, decided that it was more judicious to join the rebellion than to remain loyal to Binnya U so he marched quickly to Martaban before Binnya U’s return. Binnya U was left with only the men he had taken with him on the elephant hunt, so he called on the ruler of Pegu to come and help, but the request went unan-

swered. Binnya U then moved to the city of Wun, the appanage of his brother-in-law Byathabaik (SL 13-14; UKI: 348).

With as many men as he could gather together, Binnya U laid siege to Martaban and cut off the town's food supply, but the town walls were well-defended, so they could not take Martaban. Byattapa managed to have Byathabaik poisoned, so Binnya U turned to the ruler of Hmawbi for help and forged a marriage alliance with him. Their attempts to regain Martaban were also thwarted.

Binnya U then fortified the town of Wun. This spurred Byattapa to seek an alliance with Chiang Mai. Binnya U sent his daughter Talamithiri together with five young male elephants to forge a marriage alliance with Chiang Mai and hold off an invasion. After ruling over Wun for six years, Byattapa managed to overcome the defenses of Wun so Binnya U was forced to relocate once again, this time to Pegu.

Binnya U made Pegu his capital sometime between 1364 and 1369. Pegu had not been an important Mon capital since 1287 when it passed under Pagan's control and in 1369 it was only the size of a large village (SL 16). Ava as a capital of Upper Burma was founded roughly at the same time (1364) as well as the Ming dynasty of China (1368), so larger scale forces like climate, disease, precious metal flows, or agriculture may have been at work causing similar political change in far-flung places during this period. Binnya U was finally able to retake Wun during a time of mourning and temporary weakness in the town.

Lieberman proposes that silting in the river around Pegu may have made Pegu more attractive for agriculture. Environmental change, increased carrying capacity, and food supply might have been important factors:

Pegu supplanted Martaban as regional leader after 1369 in part, because by connecting estuarial islands and extending the coast, post-1300 desiccation joined ongoing sedimentation to increase the agricultural and demographic potential of the once swampy eastern delta. Similarly, silting would later help move the chief port from Pegu to Syriam to Rangoon, and in the Chaophraya basin would assist a shift southward from Ayudhya to Bangkok (Lieberman, 2003, 130).

Intrigues at court and Rajadhirat's assertion of independence (c. 1383)

Court intrigue plagued the last years of Binnya U's reign. The Maha Devi or "Great Princess," Binnya U's sister and Rajadhirat's aunt, was at the center of these intrigues (SL 16, 19). The Maha Devi's relationship to Rajadhirat was that of a mother until events at court drove a wedge between them and put them at odds.

The Maha Devi's rise to power clearly shows that women could wield critical power at the Mon court of

Pegu. Binnya U learned that Talamithiri, the daughter he had sent to Chiang Mai in a marriage alliance, was unhappy there, so he sought her return in exchange for five viss of gold and five elephants. On her return, Binnya U sought a marriage partner for her and the young nobleman Smin Maru presented himself as a candidate hoping to ally himself with the king. He was chosen because both his parents were dead and Binnya U felt that this might prevent any distress in the future for the princess (SL 17-18).

Only three years after marrying the princess, Smin Maru was rumoured to be adulterously involved with the older Maha Devi. This supposedly is the origin of the Mon proverb: "The old peahen climbs up a tree to lay a clutch of eggs; the old woman brazenly steals another woman's husband." Rajadhirat's relationship with the Maha Devi and Smin Maru soured from this time. Smin Maru swore fealty to Rajadhirat, claiming that he will ask for Martaban as an appanage when Rajadhirat became king, but at the same time he secretly laid plans with the Maha Devi for his demise and the future usurpation of the throne of Pegu.

Facing increasing danger from the Maha Devi and Smin Maru, Rajadhirat fled from Pegu to Dagon on the night of the third waxing of the moon in the month of Nayon in 1383 [745 BE] (May 4, 1383). The king was informed and Zeip Bye, a nobleman, was ordered to march to Dagon and deal with the problem. Zeip Bye claimed that since the monsoon season had already arrived, all his men were in their rice fields engaged with the harvest at the moment and that by the time he could gather them into a fighting force, Rajadhirat would have already mobilized the populace of Dagon and prepared defenses. An attack now would be too late. An attack would merely end up augmenting Rajadhirat's military resources of horses, elephants, and men with those of Zeip Bye (SL 30). He also suggested that efforts be made to coax Rajadhirat back peacefully before a military expedition was sent since Rajadhirat could evade capture easily by fleeing to Upper Burma or the Shan states.

At Dagon, Rajadhirat's motherly wet nurse Moe E Law came to visit him. He asked whether he should go up to Pegu after worshiping at the Dagon Pagoda. She advised that the Maha Devi was planning to murder him and have Smin Maru installed as king after his father, who was very ill, died. She was gathering together armed support including Baik Kamyin from Martaban and Laukpya, lord of Myaungmya, both of whom she advised could be bought off with gifts. Zeip Bye was already on Rajadhirat's side (SL 41-42).

Rajadhirat's struggle against Smin Maru (c. 1383)

The Maha Devi and Smin Maru, by now fully exercising control over Pegu on behalf of Binnya U who was ill and quickly approaching death, ordered Byattapa from Martaban and Laukpya from Myaungmya to march to

Dagon by the end of the month of Nadaw 1383 [745 BE] (May 1383). Smin Maru left Pegu for Dagon. Laukpya left Myaungmya and passed through Dala on his way to Dagon. The ruler of Dala, Manyi Gam Gaung, strengthened the town defenses of Dala and sent presents in deference to Laukpya.

The three sides, Laukpya, Byattapa, and Smin Maru, converged on Dagon and surrounded Rajadhirat in his stockade. They made no initial assault and after ten days Rajadhirat was anxious so he asked his advisor Man Kan Si what to do. Man Kan Si advised him to use diplomacy so Rajadhirat sent a high-ranking monk as an ambassador. When the monk sat down for discussions on an elephant howdah, the seat broke, so they gave him a gilt howdah for him to sit down on. After the monk arrived back, everyone agreed that the broken howdah meant that Rajadhirat would have to fight once, but after that he would be victorious. Smin Maru was put off guard when he received a false report that Rajadhirat had fled to Prome. Laukpya summoned his sons and sons-in-law to dinner and discussed with them which side to choose, the Maha Devi and Smin Maru or Rajadhirat (SL 42-51). Dala Chitthin, one of Laukpya's men expressed his opinion:

Smin Maru is only the son of a mandarin. It would be like a cracked pot that will not retain water for a long time. Binnya Nwe, on the other hand is a direct descendant of a monarch and like the acidity of a lime, he will grow stronger with time. When a plant has just begun to sprout and whose leaves have just begun to open is not snipped with the fingers, would it not require an ax to cut it down when it has grown into a tree? (SL 51).

Laukpya decided to end the siege and return to Myaungmya the next day. Eventually the remaining forces from Martaban withdrew also. Rajadhirat finally had an opportunity to confront Smin Maru directly and defeat him in the month of Nadaw 1383 on the 10th day of the waxing moon (May 9, 1383). Smin Maru was caught and executed and Rajadhirat quickly ascended the throne of Pegu (SL 56-59; UKI: 438).

Deinmaniyut lectures Rajadhirat on legitimate rulers and authority to evade execution (c. 1383)

The very day that Rajadhirat ascended the throne of Pegu, the "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" gives the reader a little political theory. The nature and impact of political subordination among the ruling elite was investigated. Immediately after his coronation in 1383, Rajadhirat called his father's minister Deinmaniyut to his presence and ordered his execution. The minister demanded to know why he was to be executed, claiming that "only by executing those who committed wrongs would a king's power and glory increase." Rajadhirat explained that,

unlike other members of the ruling elite, Deinmaniyut had not approached him before he became king to show his "respect and fealty".

Rajadhirat accused the minister of opportunistic behavior, "Now that you come to me only when I am at the pinnacle of kingship with your sweet words, this is your great mistake." The minister countered that the behavior that Rajadhirat expected of him was in fact opportunistic and drew a clear picture in Rajadhirat's mind of the incentives he would be putting in place if he carried out his decision to execute him:

I had been a servant to your father, the king and had enjoyed his trust. In return I had been awarded the fiefdom of Syriam (Thanlyin). I pay court only to a king who wears a white umbrella, not to one who is without this emblem of kingship. If you should take umbrage for this and have me executed, I lose nothing more than my life but the underpinnings of good administration would be uprooted for good. People would point out my fate as an example of losing one's life and leaving one's wife destitute for being loyal only to a crowned king and omitting to make overtures like offering advice to a pretender who later becomes king (SL 59-60).

Rajadhirat understood that he would be setting a bad precedent, so he withdrew his decision to execute Deinmaniyut. The soundness of this logic is proven in subsequent years as Ava and Pegu tried to win over local rulers. Often the economic calculation is explicitly given for not changing sides, hinting that short-sighted political cunning and gamesmanship similar to that found in the writings of Machiavelli often superceded more far-sighted moral principles like Deinmaniyut's.

Ava attacks Pegu for the first time (c. 1386/87)

After his coronation Rajadhirat called the ruler of Wun, Than Laik, to Pegu to take an oath of allegiance. When there was no response to this summons, Rajadhirat marched to Wun to deal with this matter, but was called away almost immediately to meet an imminent threat from the north. After Rajadhirat took power at Pegu, Laukpya had sent a message to the king of Ava proposing an alliance. The purpose of the alliance would be to put an end to Rajadhirat's state-building before it became a greater threat, literally:

...march against him.... before he has time to consolidate his kingdom while I lead a maritime assault on him. If we are successful my lord shall take the core of the spoils while I will be satisfied if you will give me the rind (SL 60).

Laukpya's betrayal of Rajadhirat had a strategic dimension to it. In his history, Harvey depicts Laukpya as

a duplicitous family member who started a long series of Pegu-Ava wars that lasted for decades. He neglects to mention that Laukpya's change in loyalties in 1383 helped Rajadhirat overcome the succession crisis at Pegu, overthrow the well-entrenched powers at Pegu after his father's death, and secure the throne of Pegu. Laukpya had ruled rather independently under Binnya U, under an Ava overlord from whom he would once again be independent (SL 60, 16-17).

The first series of engagements between forces on the Pegu and Ava sides were plagued by a lack of coordination. The Ava troops advancing against Pegu via Toun-goo and the Sittaung river valley quickly overcame Pegu's resistance at Pankyaw (SL 61). Mingyiswasawke, the king of Ava, traveled down the Irrawaddy via Prome and Hlaing. The ruler of Hmawbi intercepted some of the forces in a ravine and engaged them in a skirmish. The ruler of Pinle on the Ava side was pierced by a lance while fighting from his elephant and died there giving the ravine its subsequent name: Zayaung Pinle. Minkyiswasawke's forces joined together at Talein (SL 61; UKI: 440-441).

Rajadhirat took on the Arakanese forces at Pankyaw, but failing to make any progress, he withdrew to a siege position. Laukpya, leading troops from Myaungmya, failed to coordinate with his ally Ava. He arrived to provide reinforcements at Pankyaw, but missed the main body of Ava's forces. Rajadhirat made one more attack against the Arakanese forces but withdrew.

Meanwhile, at Talein the Ava and Mon forces were positioned on either side of a stream. Rajadhirat's forces were so small that Mingyiswasawke suspected a stratagem and ordered his troops not to cross the river and attack. Rajadhirat took the initiative crossing the stream and attacked, scattering Ava's forces and putting them to rout. Laukpya withdrew with his forces. Rajadhirat sent a submissive letter with gifts to Mingyiswasawke, but Mingyiswasawke read it as a delaying tactic to get Ava to withdraw while Rajadhirat consolidated his hold over Lower Burma, so he ignored it (SL 62; UKI: 444-447).

In their next attack, Myaungmya and Ava made an effort to coordinate better: "On this occasion I will come up to Pan Alwe while my lord brings up at Panhlaing. We will then join forces and take Hlaing." They planned to take the settlements of Lower Burma near modern-day Yangon in the following order: Hlaing, Hmawbi, Dagon, and Dala (SL 62).

Rajadhirat gathered together a strong garrison at Hlaing and Ava forces laid siege to the town for more than a month. To put an end to the siege, Rajadhirat led cavalry and elephants out of the town for a skirmish. The main body of Ava troops were stockaded at nearby Hmawbi. The gates of the Ava stockade were opened as a challenge to Rajadhirat to enter the stockade. Taking the challenge, Rajadhirat led a charge into the stockade and overcame the Ava side. Myaungmya, on hearing of

Rajadhirat's victory at Hmawbi, hastened a retreat and Rajadhirat pursued the retreating Ava forces all the way to Prome (SL 63).

A delaying action by the ruler of Wun

Rajadhirat's dealings with the town of Wun deviated from the typical pattern of warfare. Wun was given a respite from Pegu's subjugation when Ava invaded Lower Burma after the ascension of Rajadhirat. After Ava retreated, Rajadhirat marched once again to Wun, but the ruler of Wun refused to submit. Rajadhirat negotiated a settlement reminiscent of the negotiated settlements that ended western sieges in early modern European warfare. Note that "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" is quite explicit about the reasons why Rajadhirat bypassed Wun. Than Laik, the ruler of Wun:

...protested that he was only holding the town that he had won and that he was not a rebel like those Martaban, Lagunpyi, Tari, and Thanmaung, that he would not obstruct the king's march and if he would attack after capturing the aforesaid towns, he would not find it an easy proposition.

Together with his advisers Rajadhirat decided to accept this settlement because: 1. "The approach to Wun was too restricted," so it "would be difficult to mount an attack against it." 2. Than Laik had given them right of way. 3. Than Laik "did not deny vassalage to the king." 4. "Boats and barges from Wun and Taikalla were to be requisitioned for transport of provisions to Pankataing."

As Rajadhirat approached the town of Tari by land and river, one member of the Mon ruling elite of the town fled to Myaungmya by boat while another two fled to Martaban leaving Tari to Rajadhirat. Rajadhirat's success at Tari convinced the ruler of Thanmaung to submit also. Tari was garrisoned with a force of five thousand which was enough to resist several attacks by Martaban after Rajadhirat had left (SL 64).

When Rajadhirat finally directed his attention to Wun again, the ruler there, Than Laik, proved resistant to his entreaties, holding that he owed no allegiance to Rajadhirat even though he had been a loyal vassal to Rajadhirat's father. When they finally were able to breach the defenses of Wun, Than Laik set off for Martaban with three hundred men, but the elephant Byat that Than Laik rode was in musth and slow, so Rajadhirat's men were able to overtake and slay him (SL 64-65).

Pegu takes Martaban (c. 1388/89)

After the town of Wun, Rajadhirat marched to Lagun Pyi. Arriving in the town, he filled a nearby elephant shed with dry weeds and hay and lit it on fire around noon and the wind carried the conflagration to the stockades of the town. Baw Goon, who controlled Lagun

Pyi at the time, left the confines of the city riding an elephant to put out the flames, but the elephant was spooked by the flames and ran away. Out of control, the elephant ran under a house (presumably raised on stilts) knocking Baw Goon off and killing him. The town of Lagun Pyi surrendered, but Magyan, the governor of Thanmaung who had been reinstalled, attacked some of the outlying troops of Rajadhirat at night with a force of five thousand men. Rajadhirat sent Mathalon, a warrior from Lagun Pyi that Rajadhirat had just taken into his side, on a mission to kill Magyan. Mathalon returned with his head (SL 65-66).

In 1388 [750 BE] Rajadhirat launched an attack against the formidable Martaban that his father had ruled from only twenty years before. Realizing that the superior manpower of Martaban could result in great battle casualties, Rajadhirat remained in Lagun Pyi and sent seven columns to attack Martaban. Martaban forces attacked Rajadhirat's forces at midnight surprising them. Five of the columns Rajadhirat sent were scattered, leaving two intact. A frequent outcome of battles in mainland Southeast Asia during this time was a rout followed by mass defection, effectively scattering the forces. These two remaining columns concealed their existence and made the Martaban leader believe that all of the forces had been scattered, when there were actually two columns left to attack with. Then a surprise attack was launched on the Martaban forces while they were collecting plunder on the battlefield (SL 66). The ruler of the town fled by boat and Martaban having lost its ruler, surrendered. Rajadhirat traveled from Lagun Pyi to Martaban. The tax payments that were in arrears that should have been paid to Rajadhirat's father were collected in silver and gold and a new governor was installed. New governors were also installed at Moulmein, Tari, Lagun Pyi, and Thanmaung. The commander responsible for the victory was given the title Byat Za and would from this time on have an illustrious career as Rajadhirat's top strategist. In the same year, the town of Martaban was devastated by famine (SL 66-67).

Rajadhirat's first efforts to subjugate Bassein and Myaungmya (c. 1388/89)

Rajadhirat had a difficult time asserting control over the western delta region of Lower Burma. After Martaban was taken in 1388, news reached Rajadhirat that the governor he had appointed to rule Dala had allied himself with Myaungmya, so Rajadhirat had the governor executed. Myaungmya, however, seemed beyond his reach, being well-protected defensively, with ample manpower to wage war, and a ruling elite that had a high level of solidarity and family ties. Rajadhirat decided to attack Bassein first. Bassein was controlled by three members of Myaungmya's ruling elite: Nawratha, Smin Bya Gyin, and Laukshein.

Rajadhirat's assault on Bassein is said to have been repelled by "sailing ships manned by foreigners who fired their weapons at them causing much casualties." Since this was before the arrival of the Portuguese in the Bay of Bengal around 1509, this has been interpreted to mean Muslims from Indian were present in Bassein. Meeting strong and unexpected resistance at Bassein, Rajadhirat realized he had misgauged the relative power of the two towns and decided to try an attack first against Myaungmya. After Myaungmya was taken, he would have the resources to move against Bassein. When Bassein learned of this change in strategy, it sent a contingent of warboats to aid Myaungmya. Rajadhirat sent Lagunein to intercept the Bassein warboats along the way at Daungpaung Lulin with a small fleet consisting of only about one hundred boats with "two heavily armed warboats, four high-sterned galleys and forty fighting boats" as well as supply boats. The Myaungmya side led by Laukshein, numerically superior with five to six hundred warboats, was encamped upriver at Panpin.

Planning to overcome the numerically superior Myaungmya side with a stratagem, Rajadhirat had stakes planted across the river from one side to the other with enough space that his warboats could pass through them leading Myaungmya boats in pursuit onto the stakes. A small group of light boats that could easily pass through the narrow channels of the river was sent with Lagunein to lure the Myaungmya boats into the trap. As the tide was rising Lagunein paddled upriver and drew the Myaungmya side downriver in pursuit. When they reached Daungpaung Lulin where the trap had been set, the pursuing boats saw the forces on land and thought that Lagunein's men had abandoned their boats to flee by land and they paddled harder:

Lagunein's men sped deftly through the staked area but the boats pursuing them were impaled on the stakes and those coming up later rammed into them turning that part of the river into a melee of sinking boats and men with those still afloat hopelessly snarled among the wreckage forcing their occupants to abandon them (SL 69).

A portion of the forces were positioned on the banks of the rivers and attacked when warboats hit the stakes.

Byat Za pursues Laukshein to Arakan around 1388/89

Around 1388, after several military victories, Rajadhirat advanced on Bassein in the western delta. He was welcomed at a distance before arriving to the town by members of the ruling elite who pledged loyalty to him. The ruler of Bassein, Laukshein, had already fled to Prome with as much transportable wealth as he could collect together ("ten elephant loads of gold and silver"). A contingent was sent out under the leadership of Ra-

jadhirat's general Byat Za to intercept Laukshein. Finding his path blocked, Laukshein fled to Sandoway in Arakan instead of Prome.

Byat Za pursued Laukshein all the way to Sandoway, but was not able to take the town on his first assault. A long siege seemed imminent, so Byat Za started negotiations with the ruler of Sandoway. After an agreement was reached, Laukshein was handed over to Byat Za along with his family and possessions. Byat Za withdrew and the siege ended (SL 72-73; UKI: 469-471). Arriving back from Arakan, Byat Za was upbraided by Rajadhirat because he had not taken Sandoway. Byat Za lectured Rajadhirat on a doctrine of limited war:

There are two aspects of war. One is to settle matters through the exercise of diplomacy and the other through the force of arms. In this affair it was settled by negotiation and the enemy was handed over only after taking an oath. If we had broken our word and attacked them, we would be denied the chance to settle things through negotiation if another occasion should arise in connection with Sandoway. Then it would have to be carried through by force of arms only at risk. One who habitually goes back on his given word will die from the potency of the asseveration made and even if he is spared, his life can never be peaceful not will he be able to serve his master for long. I would like to serve you for a long time to come and that is why I had returned (SL 73-74)

Rajadhirat accepted this explanation and praised him for his far-sightedness. The reasons that Byat Za gave have a very modern-sounding ring to them. Rajadhirat claimed that of his generals, Byat Za and Lagunein were experts on offensive strategy and Re Thinran an expert in defensive strategy (SL 129). In the passage, Byat Za honors his oath and withdraws from a siege exhibiting the same strategic idea of "limited warfare" for political objectives that Clausewitz popularized in the West. As Clausewitz held: "War is a mere continuation of politics with other means," an idea that goes all the way back to the political philosopher Machiavelli (and most likely other traditions of political philosophy in other cultures) (See Beatrice Heuser (2002) "Reading Clausewitz", 37, 44).

The year 1390 is a turning point in the narrative of the "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon." By this time, Rajadhirat had finished consolidating his control over Lower Burma with military campaigns. He paused for a short time to make religious acts of merit and hold festivities. In his *History of Burma*, Harvey offers a concise summary of the events in the narrative of "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" which goes on at great length about Rajadhirat's abandonment of his wife and the execution of his son:

In 1390 he [Rajadhirat] was at the height of his power.

He had driven off repeated Burmese attacks, quelled rebellion everywhere...he built shrines at the Shwemawdaw pagoda, feeding a thousand monks throughout a seven days festival and offering his weight in gold...the king of Ayutthia sent him a white elephant...he also proceeded to be crowned again with a favourite queen; some of his queens were from prominent families in Chiangmai. He grew wary of his first love Talamidaw the sister who had so befriended him during his unhappy youth; he took away all her jewels down to the family rings bequeathed her by their father, which she tried to hide in her hair, and seeing that she was finally cast aside she poisoned herself with a mixture made pon-mathain a camphor shrub. Worried that his son by his sister, Bawlawkyantaw, might rebel, Rajadhirat had him commit suicide by drinking the same poison (Harvey, 113-114; SL 73-75; UKI: 454)

Pegu pushes north against Myanaung (c. 1390/91)

Rajadhirat paused only briefly in his push to assert military control. His next move was to head north along the Irrawaddy and attack Myanaung. In 1390 [752BE], Rajadhirat mobilized troops, weapons, and boats from the now subject domains of Bassein, Myaungmya, and Khepaung to attack Myanaung [Kudut] a fortified town south of Prome controlled by Ava (SL 74; UKI: 454-457). After Myanaung had been taken, its defences were strengthened against Ava with a wooden stockade and a garrison of troops.

The king of Ava considered Myanaung part of his domains, so when he learned of Rajadhirat's attack and occupation of the town, that the town had been garrisoned by Rajadhirat, he mustered land and naval forces and traveled downriver to assert his control. When he encountered the strong Mon naval forces at Myanaung, he quickly moved to the cover of his land forces. The river forces were attacked by archers and some of the boats were captured, some were set fire to, while others abandoned (SL 75). Ava's land forces, strong with cavalry and elephantry and now commanded by the king himself, were not attacked.

After the initial success of Rajadhirat's forces against Ava, a rather curious truce was reached between the two sides. There was a negotiated settlement in the form of a gift exchange which on the surface allowed both sides to maintain face, but through which, in actuality, Rajadhirat's commanders gained the upper hand. According to the settlement Rajadhirat's side returned the booty taken in their naval victory and sent a letter to the king of Ava which declared that if 1. Rajadhirat's commanders had known that the king of Ava accompanied this fleet they would not have attacked and 2. if their king Rajadhirat learned that his commanders attacked the king of Ava in this fashion, Rajadhirat would be angry, and 3. They wished for the king of Ava to have

Myanaung and wanted no conflict (SL 76-77). Through the cunning of this negotiation ploy, the Mon side obtained Myanaung and the Ava forces returned home.

3. Ava's succession crisis, Pegu's offensive, and a truce (1400-05)

Ava's succession crisis (c. 1400-01)

Mingyiswasawke (r. 1368-1401) though not the founder of the Ava dynasty (c. 1364-1555) laid the political and administrative foundations for the dynasty during his thirty-three year rule. The founder Thadominbya (r. 1364-68) died of smallpox shortly after founding the dynasty while campaigning south of the capital.

Mingyiswasawke died at the ripe age of seventy in 1400 [762 BE] and the crown prince Hsin-pyu-shin became king (UKI: 462). Hsinpyushin did not have support among the ruling elite and could only hold onto power for seven months. He was assassinated by a royal palace attendant and ruler of Tagaung, Nga Nauk Hsan, who took control of the palace (UKI: 463; SL 77-78). All the ministers and generals gathered together, talked and decided, in turn, to assassinate the assassin and install as king the younger brother of Hsinpyushin, Minhkaung ruler of Pyinsi.

Minhkaung had been sent away from court to keep him out of harm's way from his older brother Hsinpyushin, so he had no power at court (Bagshawe, 1981, 51). The more powerful ruler of Yamethin, Maha Pyaut, decided to challenge Minhkaung's succession and with sixty attack elephants, eight hundred horses, and ten thousand soldiers, ordered the court nobles to make him king and hand the palace over to him. The ministers and generals at court quickly abandoned Minhkaung's side for that of the new challenger's.

Theiddat, the younger brother of Minhkaung, went to his older brother Minhkaung and vowed to help him (UKI: 464). Maha Pyaut encamped at Saga Mountain with strong military forces. Theiddat gathered together troops and attacked Maha Pyaut, defeating and killing him. With Maha Pyaut out of the way, the ministers and generals put Minhkaung back on the throne in 1401 [763 BE]. Minhkaung's younger brother Theiddat, however, was never satisfied with the reward he had received for helping his older brother, a lingering resentment that would later rear its ugly head (UKI: 465).

The monk Thakyaw of Binnya convinces Rajadhirat to abandon his offensive against the north (c. 1401)

Rajadhirat planned to exploit Ava's weakness while the succession crisis left the royal institutions of state exposed and vulnerable, so he quickly invaded Upper Burma. He built a fleet of river vessels and set out for Ava in 1401, transporting elephants and horses by river craft also. When Rajadhirat reached Ava, the king of

Ava declined to meet him in a pitched river battle, believing his own forces were inadequate. Rajadhirat sent forces raiding up the Irrawaddy River as far as Tagaung (SL 79).

The monk Thakyaw of Binnya pledged to help extricate Minhkaung from this predicament. The monk first presented many gifts on behalf of Minkhaung and then presented a homily on just war to Rajadhirat (SL 79-80). The monk told the story of the Buddha's hair relic that was enshrined at the Shwedagon pagoda and how a Pagan king had traveled downriver to obtain it, but had returned when he learned that it was "not preordained for him to obtain it." The monk then asked Rajadhirat why he had made such a difficult trip to Ava at such great human expense. Rajadhirat replied that there were four reasons: 1. "I want the enemy king to suffer," 2. "I want to take over his realm," 3. "...to increase my manpower and might," and 4. "I had heard that Pagan and Ava are rich in the numbers of pagodas enshrined with Buddha's sacred relics." The monk smiled. Rajadhirat asked why he smiled. The monk explained:

...sentient beings are full of greed. They take another's territory for their own. They take another's wife for their own. They take what property another man has for their own. That is known as greed. Your majesty has given me four reasons for coming here out of which there is only one that Buddha will commend because it is based on good reason and he will not be pleased with the remaining three. Only your objective of coming here to worship at the pagodas will be accepted by any Buddha...ancient kings used to send envoys to befriend them and to establish peaceful relations among their nations, to promote trade and commerce, that the rich, the monks and Brahmins may be prosperous and live well so that it will be fruitful in their present existence as well in the coming ones. (SL 80-81).

After hearing this sermon, Rajadhirat agreed to return to the south as soon as the troops he had sent north returned. Some of Rajadhirat's soldiers returned from an attack against the settlement around Shwekyetyet Pagoda with thirty to forty war captives and the heads of others. Those killed and captured had been "slaves" dedicated to Shwekyetyet Pagoda. The monk instructed Rajadhirat that he was being ungrateful to his benefactor. When Rajadhirat asked the monk to elaborate, the monk explained that he meant that Rajadhirat owed his present position as king to meritorious offerings made to the Buddha and that now by killing these "slaves" that had been dedicated to religious institutions, he had exhibited ungratefulness towards his benefactor, the Buddha. The slaves who were taken captive were allowed to leave and Rajadhirat returned to the south. Although no general pronouncements on killing or the taking of war captives were made, the slaves who

were dedicated to supporting Buddhist religious institutions were definitely declared off-limits (SL 81-84; UKI: 473-485).

Rajadhirat's expedition to Prome (c. 1401/02)

When he returned to Pegu, Rajadhirat learned that his daughter had been abducted during the march to Ava and he vowed to sack Prome and Sale, subject to Ava, in retaliation (SL 83-84). Rajadhirat marched first to Myanaung (Kudut) and took the town, followed by the smaller towns of Uyinput, Kyakhat, and Shwedaung, sacking these towns and taking captives. His assault against Tayokmaw failed, so he laid siege to the town and the ruler fled into the jungle. Maintaining the siege at Tayokmaw, Rajadhirat marched on to Prome, his generals advising him that if Prome were taken, then Tayokmaw would fall easily (SL 84; UKI: 487-492).

Prome was ruled by Letya Pyanchi, a son-in-law of Laukpya. Rajadhirat launched three assaults at great cost against Prome to no avail. He finally decided to lay siege to Prome from the land side. As the siege dragged on, the inhabitants within the walls of Prome faced famine. Ava sent forces from Kukhan, Talokmyo, Kinda, and Pinle to relieve the siege (SL 84). To avoid being attacked from two sides, Rajadhirat maintained the siege with his naval forces, while the seven remaining land regiments went to attack Ava's approaching forces.

Rajadhirat's scouts sighted Ava's advancing troops near the village of Theymathaw. They were led by a Tai contingent from Kale. The Mon army hid behind a range of hills. The Mon commander Byat Za tried to get the other leaders to wait for an opportune time to attack, but Lagunein refused to follow his orders and ventured out onto the plain with the intention of instilling fear in their opponents. Another commander, Upakaung, followed. Lagunein's charge scattered the Tai vanguard which managed to reform and charge back, throwing Lagunein's forces into disarray with sixty casualties. Byat Za, his elephant in musth, learning that the four regiments had been put to flight, emerged from hiding and attacked the pursuing Avan regiments, not in orderly formation themselves, and scattered them. Byat Za also set fire to a stockade that had been set up by the ruler of Tarokmyo, forcing those inside to flee. Lagunein regrouped his elephants in a nearby forest and managed to capture many of the soldiers and horses Byat Za had routed. Arriving back at the capital first, Lagunein presented the victory as his accomplishment and was awarded by Rajadhirat. Later, after Byat Za returned, Lagunein admitted that his troops had been put to flight at the beginning, but that he had later taken the opportunity to capture the enemy that had been scattered by the general Byat Za's counter-attack and was upbraided by Rajadhirat for lying (SL 85-86).

Byat Za informed Rajadhirat that the ongoing siege of Prome could only be won by waiting and forcing starva-

tion inside the walls of the town, but many from the Mon side would also die because of the bad environment [unclean air] the soldiers had to live in during the siege. Byat Za suggested,

Since the enemy reinforcements had been put to rout...only three regiments should be placed at Nawin and the main force, both riverine and land concentrated at Thale where the atmosphere [is] better (SL 86).

Ava relieves the siege; Rajadhirat orders the execution of deserters

The inhabitants of Prome eventually started suffering from starvation and were forced to live on rice bran and the pith of toddy palm. Realizing how urgent it now was to relieve the siege, Minhkaung quickly gathered together a large army and marched south to Prome. Rajadhirat learned of this while he was encamped upriver at Myede. He consulted his generals who were divided as to whether to continue the siege or retreat. Byat Za and Deinmaniyut advised retreat, arguing that their defenses, consisting of wooden stockades surrounded by a ditch, were no match for the fortifications of Prome which consisted of "brick walls and a wide and deep moat." Rajadhirat decided to continue the siege. As Minhkaung approached Prome, the four generals who had been defeated earlier rejoined his forces. Minhkaung made an assault on the Mon stockade at dawn on Tuesday, the 5th day of the waxing moon in the month of Dabodwe (4 January 1401).

At dawn, the Ava forces attacked the Mon stockade and overran it, killing seven to eight hundred of the defenders and capturing nearly as many. The river was filled with Mon soldiers fleeing from the Nawin Stockade. When Rajadhirat found out that they were fleeing like this, he ordered his remaining soldiers to pursue them and kill them. Another commander pleaded with Rajadhirat, arguing that attacking his own men like this would be like helping the enemy, so Rajadhirat had the order rescinded and ordered that the fleeing soldiers be rescued instead (SL 87).

Diplomatic letters and a truce (c. 1406)

Byat Za advised that the supplies that they had brought with them by means of porters would soon be exhausted and they would soon have to live off the land and find provisions in the Ava territory that they now occupied. Byat Za believed that they would eventually win the battle this way. Prome being unable to collect supplies and provisions would eventually starve, so Byat Za advised Rajadhirat not to negotiate with the king of Ava, Minhkaung. With three to four hundred boats and picked men led by nobles, they would see to it that the rice from the Myede-Thayet-Magwe-Malun re-

gion was collected and any amount remaining was burnt and destroyed. This scorched earth policy was carried out in every town and village in the area. When Minkhaung was unable to obtain supplies he sent a letter of submission and returned the war hostages he had taken (SL 87-88).

After a series of diplomatic letters were exchanged between Rajadhirat and Minhkaung they met at the Myathitin (Shwesandaw) Pagoda, exchanged gifts, discussed affairs, and demarcated the boundary between their two kingdoms. They designated Tapindaraung as the western border point, Thapaka in the east. Rajadhirat promised to remove his garrison in Talehsi where it was currently stationed (SL 88-90; UKI: 493-503).

4. Treachery, food supply problems, and a disastrous retreat for Ava (c. 1406-09)

Ava and then Pegu fight takes Arakan

Soon after reaching a truce with Rajadhirat, Minhkaung caught thirty spies from Pegu on horses at a checkpoint he set up in the jungle. They had been sent north even before the two kings had met to discuss the truce, an act of betrayal in the eyes of Minhkaung. In retaliation, Minhkaung sent an expedition to Arakan. Rajadhirat discovered from spies that Ava was marching south to Arakan so Rajadhirat marched quickly to Bassein to meet the challenge.

Ava quickly took the capital of Arakan and the son-in-law of the king of Ava, Gamani, was installed as ruler with the intention of extracting a portion of the lucrative maritime trade that passed through the town. The king of Arakan fled north to Bengal and his son Naramaikhlā fled south to Sandoway with one thousand soldiers and sought the protection of Rajadhirat in Bassein. Rajadhirat sent a force north to install Naramaikhlā on the throne of Arakan (E: 50, H: 3,000, S: 20,000). Rajadhirat gave special instructions to his troops not to plunder the area around Sandoway, an exception to a general rule of scorched earth tactics. Before Rajadhirat returned to Pegu from Bassein, he appointed his trusted minister Deinmaniyut to rule over this strategically important point.

Upon reaching Sandoway, Rajadhirat's forces had no trouble winning over the local population to the side of Naramaikhlā. Rajadhirat's forces marched on to the Arakan capital with Naramaikhlā and troop levies from the Sandoway area. Gamani fled but was captured with three thousand horses and elephants. When the capture of the Arakan capital and Gamani were reported to Rajadhirat he was so overjoyed that he built a pagoda on this site named Kyat Kanat [later Sanaw Daw]. Naramaikhlā was installed on the throne of Arakan, Gamani was executed, and the princess made a queen of Rajadhirat. Burmese artisans resident at the Arakan

capital, "skilled in painting, carving, sculpture, weaving, bronzework, and carpentry," were brought back to Pegu (SL 91-92; UKI:514-515).

Other reasons have been proposed for Ava's two invasions of Arakan circa 1406 and 1410. One theory is that a title had been granted by Naramaikhlā's father to a leader immigrating from Ava to Arakan with followers. When Naramaikhlā insisted that a woman from the clan be given to him in marriage to create a stronger bond between the court and this family, a conflict arose that led to intervention by Ava and drove Naramaikhlā from the throne. This theory is derived from an Arakanese chronicle source (Charney, 1999, 57; also see Leider, 1998, 88-93). *The Maniyadana Bon* also records that Arakanese raids occurred that might have been a precipitating cause also. In 1404 [766 BE]:

...since the Arakanese were raiding the villages of the Yaw, Hsaw, Laungshei, and Kyahkat districts," Minyekyawswa, then age 17, was sent against Arakan. He defeated the Arakanese leader Tawyagyi and sent his head back to his father in Ava. Minhkaung ordered for "his daughter Saw Pyichantha and her husband Nawrahta should take up residence in Arakan (Bagshawe, 1981, 56)

Theiddat challenges Minhkaung and flees to Rajadhirat after his defeat (c. 1406)

Theiddat had helped his brother Minhkaung with the throne of Ava and was not content with the position as ruler of Sagaing that his brother had given him and desired the throne of Ava for himself. One day he took some of the cavalry used to guard the northern approaches to the capital and marched south to Pagan:

In Pagan he took possession of the white canopy and drum of king Kyaungbyu, the father of Anawrahtaminsaw, and fled down to Prome. There he asked Myetnashei of Prome, the son of the prince of Myinsaing, whether he would give him support (Bagshawe, 1981, 104).

They promised their support if Theiddat could defeat his brother the king of Ava, so he marched back to Ava and camped at the Htaukshei dam sending a message to his brother demanding the throne of Ava. The two brothers met in a one-on-one elephant duel. Minhkaung defeated his brother but did not keep him in confinement for long. When Theiddat was released, he fled south and joined Rajadhirat (Bagshawe, 1981, 104-106).

Ava marches south and Lagunein estimates the strength of Ava's forces

When Rajadhirat took Arakan, the king of Ava was on a military expedition to Bhamo in the Tai region to the

north of Ava. He had just arrived back from this northern campaign when he received news of his daughter's and son-in-law's capture in Arakan. His response to this family tragedy was to set off immediately for the south via Yamethin with forces augmented by Tai troop levies, the war captives he had just taken from Kale and Mohnyin (E: 500, H: 6,000, S: 150,000). When Rajadhirat learned of Minhkaung's approach, he raised an army and marched north to meet him (E: 700, S: 80,000).

One often wonders how the ubiquitous and detailed troop counts that fill whole pages of the Burmese chronicle were actually taken down. Roman legions with a fixed, rigid, and invariable battle array are amenable to being counted, but how could the forces in the much less rigid battle formations of Southeast Asia be counted? "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" provides the reader, perhaps somewhat defensively, with a little reenactment of what the process might have been like:

Byat Za suggested that a force to reconnoiter the movements of the Burmese force be sent out and Lagunein was duly sent on this mission with 50 fighting elephants, six hundred troops and over one hundred pathfinders...Minhkaung had reached Taungoo [Toungoo]...Lagunein could hear the commotion raised by a large number of troops and ordered the pathfinders to take to the treetops. They came back with the report that there were many, many troops and that they should withdraw as they might soon be engulfed by the horde. Lagunein said they would not before he had taken a look himself...From its vantage point he could see wave upon wave of infantry, cavalry, and elephantry advancing towards them, a endless sea of troops (SL 93, note that a more subtle form of argument ad verecundiam consists of an appeal to the authority of "detail and specificity" in historical writing, Fischer, 1970, 285).

Lagunein ambushed some of the Shan troops in the vanguard and killed twenty to thirty of them and then fled quickly before the rush of advancing troops, planting stakes to retard the advance of the enemy troops. Lagunein reported to Rajadhirat that they counted Ava forces fifty to sixty thousand men strong. Later, in the presence of Rajadhirat and his ministers, Lagunein was interrogated:

Did you see just the van or the entire main body of troops,' he was asked. Lagunein replied that from his perch in the Langaik woods he could count two hundred pennants and estimated a strength of seventy-thousand, that he had mounted an ambush at the stream crossing but could not hold on for long and that only Shan troops were in the van (SL 93).

Given the strength of Ava's troops, Rajadhirat felt that a pitched battle in the open plains would be best, but

since they were weak in terms of elephants, a "pincer movement in the jungle" was deemed the best choice (SL 94).

Byat Za pointed out that mounting an offensive like this would result in a "surge ahead with great momentum" and the ensuing fight in the jungle would be similar to that of "wild buffaloes straining at each other with horns locked" and success would come only after a long hard fight. A better option would be to wait inside the town walls as Ava's forces tired themselves out trying to batter the walls of the town down. As they headed home, they had to be careful to keep a decent interval between elephants as many of them were in musth. There were also rumours that Ava's troops would reach Pegu before they did because they were taking a more direct route. Byat Za and Rajadhirat quieted these fears, pointing out that if this was the case they could attack them from behind and defeat them. Minhkaung, meanwhile built a stockade, anticipating meeting Rajadhirat in the jungle ahead. Shans from Mohnyin and Kale were placed out in front of the stockade to defend it (SL 94).

A monetary tax in lieu of troop levies for the town of Thakyin

Ages as young as sixteen are sometimes cited for warrior members of the ruling elite. Better known examples include King Tabinshwehti of Toungoo who became king in 1531 at age fifteen and was leading expeditions south against Pegu a few years later at age seventeen or eighteen. Rajadhirat is said to have ascended the king when he was seventeen (SL 153-154). Min-gyi-nyo (r. 1486-1531) committed regicide and usurped the Toungoo throne at the relatively late age of twenty-six. The next incident in "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" not only provides some insight into why younger warriors were perhaps preferred, but also shows how gifts or bribes could buy elites out of mandatory life-threatening military service.

Rajadhirat had appointed the older Zeip Bye to rule Thakyin, a town located along the path of Ava's advancing troops, troops led by the king of Ava himself which would make them even more formidable. Rajadhirat asked Zeip Bye to hold off the advancing troops while he went off for about ten days and mobilized more forces. Zeip Bye knew that Thakyin was only protected by a weak wooden stockade and by a narrow and shallow moat and flat terrain making it extremely vulnerable, so he asked Byat Za to persuade Rajadhirat to change his mind.

To request help, Byat Za proposed a gift of ten viss gold to the king. Zeip Bye countered that he only had enough for a gift of seven viss to the king and one viss to Byat Za. Byat Za accepted the offer. When he presented the gift of seven viss to Rajadhirat, Byat Za told the king that the gift was to recruit capable warriors, Zeip Bye being too old to offer effective help. Rajadhirat

in his wisdom surmised that gold had also been given to Byat Za and requested that this additional amount also be handed over to purchase warriors.

The whole incident of Zeip Bye's bribe is described in the "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" as Byat Za and Rajadhirat's trick, yet another instance of cunning in warfare. After effectively taxing Zeip Bye in this manner, Rajadhirat destroyed Thakyin stockade and had the rice stocks burnt to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy (SL 94-95).

The Mon tidal strategy and victory at Pankyaw (c. 1408/09)

Rajadhirat erected a long stockade along the river at Pankyaw and positioned five to six thousand troops around the perimeter of the stockade. The invading Ava troops set fire to every village they passed through and slaughtered all the cattle (SL 95). When they reached the Mon stockade, the Ava side erected a stockade facing the Mon stockade from the east, placing Tai troops from Kale and Mohnyin out in front to guard the stockade. According to "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon," the Tai troops accompanying the Ava forces had been told that that they were going to attack and take Pegu, implying that enrichment through plunder provided an incentive for Tai voluntary participation on Ava's side.

Voluntary participation of Tai troops in return for a reward, essentially a mercenary motivation, is implied here whereas in other places the more coercive participation of Tai troop levies taken as war captives is implied. Perhaps the two types of participation existed side-by-side. Later on, during king Bayinnaung's reign (r. 1551-1581), the balance of power shifted to the Burmese state and Tai rulers were forced to participate in Burmese expeditions by providing troop levies. In this section of "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon," there is evidence that Tai troop contingents were anxious to start fighting so that they could obtain what they came for, namely wealth from plunder.

The Mon side carved out ramps on the banks of the stream so that when the tide came in quickly, as it would soon, they could quickly escape the tidal onrush with their horses and elephants. The upland Tai contingents, of course, had no experience with tides, so they casually wandered around this potentially dangerous area without making any preparations (SL 95).

Keeping to the common theme of trickery and cunning in "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon," the Mon side goaded the Ava side on, yelling across the divide separating the two sides that if the Burmese from Ava were too afraid to come and fight then the Mons would go to them and fight. As the Mons charged into the stream, the Tais also charged into the stream. Drawing the Tais into the stream in this manner:

Rajadhirat had a rider sent downstream to report

when the tide came in. When it was reported that the incoming tidal bore had reached Daniye he ordered drums, bugles, gongs, and conches to be sounded to drown out the roar of the tidal bore. Thus the Shans had no inkling of impending trouble until the tidal bore was on them and as they tried to clamber out only those close to the banks could make their way out of the melee. Some were carried away by the tide and drowned. Those who could make the exit from the confines of the stream slashed at the tidal waters in frustration. When the waters receded the bodies of the Shan troops were revealed. There were more than two hundred corpses in the stream and Talaing [Mon] soldiers came out and hacked at the dead bodies (SL 96).

In the wake of this tidal massacre of the Tai vanguard, the Mons put on a show of Brahmin ritual to awe the Ava side into believing that they had supernatural control over the water. They also moved the stockade walls back about sixteen meters to provide enough room between the stockade and the stream to put on a marshal display of strength. Modern science could, no doubt, determine whether such an offensive use of ocean tides as weapons is possible.

Deinmaniyut, the ruler of Bassein, arrived with reinforcements. Rajadhirat asked Deinmaniyut to inform him of the size of his forces and estimated eighty thousand. Rajadhirat then sent out scribes to do an actual count and they verified that Deinmaniyut's spot estimate was equal to the actual amount (SL 96). Does this actually bolster the veracity of chronicle troop counts or is it merely a rhetorical move by the author (cf. Charney, 2003; Lieberman, 2003)?

Ava's defeat at Pankyaw: food supply problems and the travails of a hero (c. 1409)

At this point the narrative of "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" branches out in two directions. First, there is the story of the warrior Lagunein, how he fails in warfare and how he redeems himself. Lagunein's acts of bravery are portrayed as literature with dramatic-cinematic flourishes that cast doubt on their status as events that actually happened. Second, there is the more world-historical theme of a diminishing food supply, the difficulties in supporting troops that it posed, along with the impact the food supply had on warfare and strategic calculations. This narrative strand is probably of greater interest to historians.

In the first narrative strand of Lagunein's heroism, the dwindling food supply leads to negotiations and a planned truce (SL 96-99). Messages are exchanged and the Mon and Ava sides agree to meet and seal a peace agreement with a formal oath with supernatural efficacy. The Pegu side plans to attack the Ava side when it comes to take the oath. As the two sides advance to take

the oath, Lagunein's actions reveal the plan and the Ava side retreats. Rajadhirat sentences Lagunein to die for revealing the plan (SL 99).

In Lagunein's revelation of the truth to the enemy before the oath is taken, "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" once again addresses the law of war as it has done previously with Byat Za's pronouncements on limited warfare in Arakan (SL 72-74) and the monk Panya Thukyaw's sermon on just war to Rajadhirat in Ava (SL 79-84). In Arakan, Byat Za defended the sanctity of oaths, claiming that if they were violated then trust would be broken and there would effectively be no law or rules in war that both sides could depend on in the future.

As the two sides approached each other to take the oath, the prince of Ava asked Lagunein whether the oath they were about to take were genuine or not. Lagunein answered, "You fool of a Burman, do you have to ask me such a foolish question? I will kill you if I can and you would do the same favour for me. Can an oath taken between enemies in wartime be termed genuine by any chance?" Lagunein effectively countered Byat Za's hypothesis on the efficacy of oaths, by claiming that only fools expect them to have any permanent effect on hostilities. This judgement seems to not only summarize the strategic position of Rajadhirat, but also the general theme in "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" of cunning and treachery as legitimate devices in warfare (UKI: 522-525; SL 97-100).

To redeem himself, Lagunein engaged in two acts of bravery aimed at killing the king of Ava Minhkaung. To save himself from execution, Deinmaniyut first proposed that Lagunein ambush Minhkaung and his men. Minhkaung's brother Min Theiddat, now on Rajadhirat's side, accompanied Lagunein to help identify Minhkaung.

In the first heroic act of Lagunein's redemption, Minhkaung's brother Theiddat revealed the secret of the ambush to his brother Minhkaung and Rajadhirat has Theiddat executed immediately (SL 100-101; UKI: 526). Lagunein requested another chance to redeem himself and set off on a mission to enter Minhkaung's living quarters under the cover of night and assassinate him. After being detected by one of Minhkaung's concubines, Lagunein only had enough time to grab Minhkaung's sword and betel box and escape. Lagunein claimed that he did not kill Minhkaung because doing so would have shortened his life and he wanted to serve Rajadhirat for a long time. This rather cunning and ironic excuse, given that he was under a sentence of death if he did not succeed, was enough to redeem him (SL 100-102; UKI: 527).

In the second narrative strand, the king of Ava was faced with a strategic predicament. The inadequate food supply ruled out success in either a further attack or in withdrawal back to Ava. On their initial advance into Pegu territory, Ava's foraging parties had "depleted the countryside" of food stocks, so to gather further food supplies:

[Minhkaung sent] foraging parties totaling about three thousand strong as far as Paukngu, Malauk, Dawgon, Awtit and Taungnyo. Rajadhirat sent Samim Awanannaing after these foraging parties to ambush them on their return. As these parties came back bent under under baskets of rice in the husk they made easy prey and five to six hundred were killed, over two hundred were captured alive, as were male and female elephants and over twenty horses. This happened two or three times. Thus casualties mounted and when they had to forage further and further, what meager provisions these parties could collect were mostly consumed during their travels to and fro. To the West dense jungle barred their entry and to the east numerous lakes, swamps and morasses hindered their travels. Enemy ambushes made foraging costly. Therefore little rice was to be had and famine stalked the troops (SL 97).

After a failed truce and a few further minor engagements with the enemy, Minhkaung, with his soldiers nearing starvation, ordered a retreat back to Ava (UKI: 528-532; SL 102-105). Rajadhirat did not face the same food supply problem as Ava did, so his forces were in good condition and ready for battle. Rajadhirat pursued the retreating Ava troops and encountered a contingent of Ava troops concealed in the forest to guard their retreat (SL 102). Advancing cautiously to Maw Lyin, Rajadhirat prepared his forces for battle.

The two warriors Lagunein and Upakaung were sent out to engage the Ava forces in fighting. The battle progressed in a very gradual pattern of: engage-retreat-engage-retreat. The narrative reads, in typical fashion, as a series of engagements between individual hero warriors, but when the names of individual warriors are used, it is not too much of a leap in historical interpretation to assume that each warrior patron was accompanied by a group of warrior clients, so overall the engagement could be characterized as a skirmish, not duels between individual warriors, yet not reaching the scale of a full-scale pitched battle, at least according to Western distinctions between battle and skirmish.

In his assault, Lagunein killed ten Tai cavalry from Kale. As the Kale cavalry withdrew, the ruler of Kale advanced with elephants that pushed both Lagunein and Upakaung back to the forces of Byat Za who met the Ava advance and also killed ten of the Tai cavalry. Reinforcements joined Byat Za, another one hundred Tai cavalry fell, and the Tai vanguard was routed. The king of Ava entered the fray only momentarily, being advised to withdraw while he still could by the ruler of Myinsaing who remained to guard the rear. The hasty withdrawal of Ava's forces left the slower horses and elephants behind together with slower civilian members of the baggage train. Concubines and a queen of Ava, a Shan princess, were captured at Mawkyi Mawpa. The

main body of the Mon forces pitched camp in a cotton field while a small contingent under Upakaung and Lagunein pursued the retreating Ava forces up to the frontier taking captives along the way. The strategist Byat Za complained that if they had pursued the king of Ava right up to Ava itself, Ava could have been easily taken. Others argued that the king of Ava still had his best elephants and horses left in reserve and they would have encountered stiff resistance (SL 102-103).

At the end of the retreat a rather long story is inserted into the narrative of how one of the king of Ava's queens fell off her elephant howdah during the retreat and how she was rescued and taken care of by an elephant-keeper. She returned to Ava, but when the king one day overheard her pronouncing the elephant-keeper's name, he had him summarily executed. This incident has found its way into a Mon language proverb advising one to avoid helping a king on his downfall (SL 103-105). This whole section of "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon," the defeat of Ava at Pankyaw, ends with victory celebrations at Pegu including a wedding ceremony for Rajadhirat's son Binnya Dhammaraza (SL 105-106). Minhkaung, meanwhile, was preparing to renew his attack against the south.

5. The rise of Ava prince Minyekyawswa (c. 1409-12)

After the disastrous retreat of the previous year, in 1409 Minhkaung's son Minyekyawswa took over his father's role as leader of Ava's military expeditions against the south (Harvey, 94). With the advent of Mingyiswasawke's more aggressive waging of war, Ava would occupy the south for longer periods and force Pegu into a more defensive position.

Minkhaung renews his attack on Pegu (c. 1409)

In 1409, Minkhaung prepared for yet another expedition to the south combining troops from the Shan states Onpaung, Kale, and Mohnyin with Ava's forces. Rajadhirat quickly raised a stockade on the approach to Pegu at Kyat Paw Taw. There was a food shortage at Pegu, so he built another stockade at Arnan to store a food supply in. Since the stockade had been built hastily, it was not strong and Rajadhirat was advised to have the troops stay within the city walls during the night to guard against a night attack. That Rajadhirat disregarded this advice and slept in the exposed position is taken as a sign of Rajadhirat's bravery (SL 106; UKII: 2). Minkhaung was encamped with his troops nearby in a stockade at Byat Lan. In the morning, Rajadhirat chose a strategy of personally targeting Minhkaung: "When he is defeated the rest will no longer stand fast." The battle proceeded according to plan:

Rajadhirat charged his elephant straight at Minhkaung which the later tried to meet but could

not withstand so that he had to turn away using his goad. Only the hardy and hardened escaped which was about only two-thirds and the rest of the elephantry, cavalry, troops, and womenfolk accompanying them were captured (SL 108).

In 1406 [768 BE], Minhkaung's son Minyekyawswa set off from Ava with a fleet of war boats to support his father (SL 109). The fleet included seven large warboats, 150-156 feet in length, to be used by important members of the ruling elite. The rulers of Prome, Salin, Badon, and Pahkan also led armies. Minyekyawswa attacked Myaungmya and Deypathwe first. Deypathwe despite being stockaded with thirty nobles to defend it, fell quickly. Then Minyekyawswa led an assault in his warboat against the Myaungmya river defences and made a large breach in their defences, "30 to 40 feet wide," but was overwhelmed by enemy boats and stranded when the tide went out. Part of the boat remained above water and Mon soldiers were able to strip off the silver caps on the crocodile teeth on the front of the boat. Rajadhirat's commander Byat Za secured the river approach to the stockade, hid in the jungle with his own forces, and launched an ambush as the Ava forces passed by.

At the end of hostilities, there was an interlude in which culture exerted an influence over war. When Minyekyawswa learnt that Byat Za, the "elder brother to the king," held Myaungmya, he declared that he would not attack the town. When Byat Za heard this, he, in turn, responded by returning the silver caps from the crocodile image on the front of Minyekyawswa's boat that had been taken as victory booty, adding fine cloth and a golden bowl as gifts as well, and apologized that the attack had been launched against the boat without knowing that the Prince Minyekyawswa was its owner. Minyekyawswa replied that the town deserved to be sacked for defacing his warboat, but because it was Byat Za who now ruled over Myaungmya, he would march on to Bassein and attack it instead: "Talamipaik, wife of the general came to offer a sumptuous array of delicacies to the prince who took off his ring and presented it to her" (SL 109). This negotiated settlement, heavily embedded with a logic of reciprocity and gift-exchange seems similar to the elite-to-elite extensions of courtesies and strict codes of conduct that existed in European warfare before the first mass mobilizations of the Napoleonic wars. Andreski (1968) discusses this in his treatise on war and society.

Ava and Pegu fight over Arakan (c. 1410/11)

Minyekyawswa marched from Myaungmya to Bassein but failed to take the town. He then marched to Khepaung and failed to take this town also. He marched to Arakan and managed to overwhelm the defenses there. The king of Arakan, Naramaikhla, fled to the court of the king of Gaur in Bengal and both the capital of Ara-

kan and the town of Sandoway were garrisoned with Ava forces. Rajadhirat responded by sending an expedition to Sandoway. The garrison that Ava had put in place withdrew to join the Ava garrison at the capital of Arakan. The defenses of Sandoway were repaired (SL 110; Harvey, 139; Bagshawe, 1981, 62-63).

Minyekyawswa returned to Sandoway and launched three to four unsuccessful assaults against the newly built fortifications with great casualties. To avoid further casualties stockades were built around the perimeter of the town's fortifications to protect the attacking forces from Ava. Raiding parties were then sent out from the town at night to set fire to Ava's stockades. A severe food shortage forced the Mon commander who ruled over the town, Bya Paik, to resort to a stratagem. He sent two envoys out from the town to appear as if they they were carrying a message sent from Pegu to Sandoway by Rajadhirat telling them forces were being sent from Pegu to relieve the siege (SL 111).

Minyekyawswa fell for the ruse and withdrew. Rajadhirat was then able to send food supplies in twelve boats to Sandoway. After the Ava garrison was driven from Sandoway, the Ava garrison at the Arakanese capital supposedly withdrew voluntarily, certain that they would be targeted next (SL 112; UKII: 6-7).

Pegu's siege of Prome and a battle for food supply (c. 1411)

In 1411, as Minkhaung led troops north to meet an attack by Hsenwi, Rajadhirat took advantage and led forces north along the Irrawaddy towards Prome (SL 112; UKII: 8-9). Prome managed to hold off two or three assaults and Rajadhirat settled down to a siege. After a month had passed, Pegu reported that Martaban was under attack by the Tai ruler of Kamphengphet. The Burmese chronicle claims that only Ye was attacked. Rajadhirat rushed back to defend Pegu, but he left troops to continue the siege against Prome. He also blockaded the river north of Prome at a town called Thalesi to prevent food supplies from reaching the town from Ava via the river. A stockade was built there and the town was renamed with the auspicious name Baranasi after the name of the sacred town on the Ganges River in India. It was judged that land access by porters delivering supplies to Prome from Ava could not be prevented, but was probably not adequate to supply Prome with an adequate amount of food anyway. Arriving back at Pegu, Rajadhirat headed straight to Martaban to meet the Tai invasion (SL 112-113; UKII: 10).

Despite the Mon blockade of Prome, Minhkaung was still able to slip through, stockade himself at the town of Nawin, and deliver supplies to Prome. Perhaps the forces that Minhkaung brought with him down the river from Ava were simply too great for the Mon forces to leave their stockade at Thalesi. After his victory over the Tai forces of Hsenwi, Minyekyawswa traveled down

stream with a large fleet of warboats. Perhaps in the wake of Ava's recent victory over Tai forces, Ava had been able to gather together Tai troops to augment its campaigns against the south. Whether these forces were strictly troop levies under coercion, or rather mercenary forces who stood to benefit in some way from participation still has not been adequately answered.

Only four days after his arrival at Prome, Minyekyawswa was eager to attack and gain the advantage before Pegu reinforcements arrived. Minyekyawswa led his troops upstream to a narrow fordable part of the river and had them cross the river, and positioned them on the weak north side of the Mon stockade at Thalesi. Minhkaung positioned his forces on the other three sides of the stockade (UKII: 11; SL 113-114). Minyekyawswa then led an assault against the stockade from the north:

On the side of the defenders also discipline was maintained by the bared sword to keep the battlements well manned. Musket balls, bolts and arrows rained down on Burmese soldiery forcing their way across the moat and there were about one to two hundred casualties. The governor of Pahkan with a retinue of five hundred bearing shields, swords and three lances each escorting his war elephant crossed the moat and rammed the stockade walls making a breach of about seventy feet and bringing down the enemy manning the ramparts. As he charged in, he was met by Upakaung on his elephant and the result of this encounter was that Pahkan's elephant was felled and he had to flee, his elephant dying later. The charge was repulsed with the attackers sustaining two to three hundred killed in action (SL 113).

Minyekyawswa made several charges against the stockade but could not breach the defenses. The Mon defenders are said to have put up the fallen stockade posts in as much time as it takes to "cook a pot of rice." With their lack of success, the Ava forces withdrew to blockade the river and surround the stockade (SL 114). Four months into the siege, the Mons inside the stockade were wracked by starvation. Supply boats sent by Rajadhirat were captured by Ava at Tarokmaw (SL 115). Rajadhirat finally led a contingent of troops to break the siege at Prome and the general Byat Za died from illness along the way. A duel on warboats was held between Lagunein and the Ava side. Lagunein was outnumbered in the duel and was killed (SL 116-118; UKII: 11).

The description of the early part of the battle clearly indicates high intensity warfare. Enough data is given to calculate the percentage of casualties of total participants. Minyekyawswa is said to have attacked with six to seven hundred troops, so two to three hundred casualties would be a twenty-nine to fifty percent casualty rate, which is a fairly high percentage. Despite the high casualty rate, the total number of participants ranks this

engagement as a small skirmish rather than a large-scale battle. The high casualty rate does not support a general thesis of low intensity warfare for Southeast Asia (Reid) or Harvey's generalization about how warfare was fought during this period:

...it was desultory irregular fighting, consisting largely of ambushes and skirmishes...Occasionally some determined leader would bring about a battle in which there would be real fighting, and then men could be brave and destructive. But the casualties mentioned are seldom more than a decimal percent of the numbers engaged (Harvey, 82).

Immediately after Lagunein's death, Rajadhirat beat a hasty retreat back to Pegu, the last troops to withdraw burning the stockade before they left. Ava forces pursued the retreating Pegu forces and Minhkaung was able to attack Dala before fortifications were completed so the town is easily taken. Rajadhirat managed to extract his forces from Dala and move them to Panpadaw via the Kalinraw creek. Minhkaung garrisoned Dala, marched on to Dagon, took the town, and stockaded it. Minyekyawswa pitched camp at Kyaik Dasum near Syriam, attacked Syriam, took the town, and garrisoned it. Letya Pyanchi was sent to take Hmawbi but was hit by a poisoned arrow and taken back to Dagon where he died (SL 120). Minhkaung stayed in Dagon for the duration of the rainy season and as a result most of the land in the western delta region except for land adjacent to Myaungmya, Khepaung, and Bassein could not be cultivated so famine probably resulted (SL 120). With Ava gaining the upper hand, Rajadhirat allied himself with the Tai state of Hsenwi. Hsenwi was a logical choice because it was frequently at war with Burman Ava (SL 120).

Minyekyawswa occupies the south (c. 1415-16)

By 1415, the momentum of the conflict had shifted permanently in Ava's favor with the conflict rarely leaving the southern delta region. The delta was not an easy place to wage a war in for Minyekyawswa and despite some initial successes like the siege of Khepaung, decisive control over Lower Burma ultimately evaded him. Minyekyawswa often had to fall back on defensive positions, only venturing forth in sporadic raiding expeditions along the canals and small riverways of the delta region. A few representative events from this final period will be summarized here.

The Siege of Khepaung (c. 1415)

In 1415, Minyekyawswa led a flotilla of riverboats south from Ava. Land-based forces followed. Wanting to maintain the initiative Minyekyawswa made an assault on the walls of Khepaung even before the land-based

forces had arrived. After five days, there was a stalemate and the attackers retreated to the nearby confluence of the Ngawun River.

The land forces finally arrived and an assault on Khepaung was launched from both land and river. The elephants waited at the edge of the moat while infantry scaled the walls. "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" provides some rather explicit details on the methods of maintaining discipline during battle. On Ava's side, those who disobeyed orders during the assault on the town were to have their limbs chopped off. On the Pegu side, on the defensive within the walls of Khepaung, the commander Re Thinran entertained his army with a feast, handing out awards, and making "displays with swords and shield at every portal to the stirring sound of war drums." At dawn, three groups of warriors from Ava approached the walls from three different directions: "The moat was drained and scaling ladders placed against the walls. The defenders countered by throwing rocks, bricks, and sticks, heaving logs down the walls on those swarming up the ladders and thrusting at them with pointed staves." After two or three hours, with heavy casualties, the attack was called off.

The next day, as the Ava side headed once again for the confluence of the Ngawun River, the Mons taunting of the retreating Burman troops spurred Minyekyawswa and he immediately ordered another assault against the walls, this time ordering that anyone who did not dismount from their elephant or horse or who failed to scale the walls would be killed. Soldiers who hesitated were executed on the spot. Soldiers dug up "the stockade posts with adze and axe" as well as setting them on fire and a breach in the stockade walls was finally made. Avan troops poured through the breach and the town of Khepaung was taken (SL 128-129; UKII: 15).

Ava river patrol from Khepaung captures Paik Thinran (c. 1415)

Not long after Pegu failed in an attempt to retake Khepaung from Ava, a small group of Mon warboats were traveling upriver near Khepaung when they were detected by Ava boats on patrol. The Ava boats quickly doubled back to Khepaung to report their discovery, but the Pegu boats pursued them and attacked them from behind:

One of Ava's warboats in the shape of a water buffalo lagged behind. The Mon commander Paik Thinran managed to catch up with the boat and attack it. The crew fled the Ava boat, some reaching the shore, others drowning. Paik Thinran tied the Ava boat to the stern of his boat and headed back to camp. Learning of the attack, the other Ava boats rallied together under the leadership of Letwe Nandayawda and at-

tacked Paik Thinran who, fighting alone, was quickly overwhelmed. Wounded by a spear thrust, Paik Thinran was taken captive and brought back to Ava's camp (SL 129-130).

At Khepaung, Minyekyawswa's provisions were running low and his soldiers forced to live on "yams and tubers." He faced the choice of destroying his warboats and marching back north by land or confronting the Mon side in a naval battle. When Paik Thinran, one of Rajadhirat's most important generals, was taken captive and presented to him, he decided to stay, calculating that taking this important war captive would deal a mortal blow to Rajadhirat's resolve.

The Mons, believing that the Ava forces at Khepaung were too strong, decided to blockade Khepaung by driving stakes into the river to stop boats from passing south, forcing them to retreat to the north. Rajadhirat at Panhlaing sent elephants to strengthen the Mon forces at Panko and sent Upakaung to disrupt Avan supply lines along the river at Henzada (SL 130-131).

Minhkaung, the king of Ava, sent the prince Minyethihathu from Taungdwingyi south to Prome to ensure that supplies could get through to Khepaung. He also sent his son Thihathu south with a naval contingent to take Henzada and open up the supply line to Khepaung. Rajadhirat sent reinforcements to Upakaung in Henzada when he learned of this. The Mons defeated the Avan side in a naval battle and the Avan side left the water to flee by land:

As Minyethihathu [Ava] approached Hsapaka [near Prome], he was set on by...three Talaing [Mon] forces. The warboat of 102 feet length commanded by the governor of Mindon [Ava] was engaged by Upakaung's and Lauknare's warboats [Mon] and Upakaung shot and killed the governor of Mindon [Ava] with a bow. His head was taken as prize as his crew fell into disarray. Tuyinyawda and the governor of Pandaung [Ava] were captured alive. Seeing this, Minyethihathu [Ava] urged his oarmen forward but his warboat ran aground and sank so that he had to abandon it and flee on horseback. Other Burmese [Ava] troops following in his wake also turned and made for Prome. They were pursued, but escaped...Binnya Bathein [Bassein, Mon] had carried out a raid on the outskirts of Prome setting fire to houses outside the protection of the city walls and carrying away captives (SL 130).

The Battle of Pannin (c. 1415)

Around the time that Ava was occupying Khepaung, Ava's ally Toungoo sent forces south along the Sittaung River. These forces were intercepted at Paninn by Mon forces from Salat. In the battle between Salat and Toungoo, Salat had the upper hand, but at the end of the day

both sides retired to their camps located on sandbanks on opposite sides of the Sittaung River.

Toungoo made defensive preparations by driving a double line of stakes into the river in front of their position. The first front-most line was concealed below the water; the second line in back was visible above the water, probably to lure the attackers onto the first line and their destruction. When the Salat warboats made an assault against the Toungoo position at dawn the next morning, these stakes punctured and ruptured the hulls of the attacking boats, sinking them (SL 131-132).

Ava attacks Panko (c. 1415)

While Ava was planning to attack, the Mon commander at Panko Binnya Raza, ordered three warboats to position themselves out in front of the shorter hidden stakes used for defense. When they attacked, Ava's boats aimed for the gaps between the stakes. In the description of the two lines of boats coming together, one-on-one combat in the manner of a duel along with the individual names and personalities of warriors are a prominent feature of the narrative. It is not clear, to what degree this indicates the importance of one-on-one combat by members of the elite in warfare (in the manner of the Iliad, some of the issues that classicists have raised may be relevant here) or is just a rhetorical device used to heighten dramatic tension. Although there were soldiers on both river and land, all the fighting took place on the river because the fortifications impeded the fighting on land:

Minyekyawswa [Ava] signaled the governor of Salin [Ava] to attack and after the crew had made the gesture of paying obeisance to the prince surged out with the governor stationed at its helm. Salin hailed from his 156 feet long war boat challenging Smin Payan [Mon], Rajadhirat's son-in-law, to show himself. Smin Payan came out to answer the challenge and Salin's warboat, with the war drums in full cry, rammed Smin Payan's warboat. The clash of warboats also resulted in the breaking of some of the stakes driven into the riverbed. Smin Payan's marines grouped at the helm giving a chance for Salin's marines to board her. Thray Sithu's [Ava] warboat came rushing to Salin's aid, crashing through the barrier of stakes and ramming into Smin Payan's warboat at an angle. Smin Payan fought on undeterred and Rajadhirat's sons [Mon] ordered their warboats to go to his aid but no one made a move and just looked on. Three Talaing [Mon] warboats including Deinmaniyut's Dangaw Hamsa and Binnya Dala Baik were also on the scene but instead of going to the attack went into reverse. At this the warboats of the governors of Pandaung, Malun, and Myawaddy came forward in formation. Even then Smin Payan stood his ground

(SL 131-132).

Two Mon warboats were rammed in shallow water, rupturing their hulls, but due, apparently, to the shallow water, the men aboard the boats were able to continue fighting. Minyekyawswa, the leader on the Ava side, is said to have transferred from his elephant to a warboat during the battle.

During all the fighting on the river, the stockade prevented the Ava land forces from engaging with the Pegu forces. After their naval defeat, Mon commanders gathered together as many men and elephants from what remained of the stockade as they could and fled to the jungle. Ava forces pursued them. The well-known Mon elephant Bakamat in musth lost its riders, fell into a pond that it could not extricate itself from, and was finally taken captive by the Ava side (SL 132).

Raiding by river around Bassein (c. 1415-16)

Raids and scorched earth tactics were carried out by river as they were by land. After his victory over the Mons at Panko, Minyekyawswa sent scouts along Yapyaw Tamut stream to find an out of the way route which they could use to advance on Bassein without being detected, but this stream was found to be too shallow. Around 1416, Minyekyawswa, unable to take Bassein marched towards Myaungmya. Minyekyawswa was unsuccessful in his attack on Myaungmya and withdrew passing by Bassein once again, traveling to Ola upstream from Lamaik.

At this point in its narrative "Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon" provides some rich details about life in an environment of endemic and constant warfare. Raiding and scorched earth tactics could suddenly transform an area and make it uninhabitable just when it seemed peace and tranquility had finally returned:

People from Bassein poured out from within the confines of the city walls thinking that the besiegers had gone away for good. They visited the gardens and parks savouring them when Minyekyawswa then at Kyet Kanet, sent warboats and other craft accompanying them to take captives. He also had coconut and betel nut plantations razed. Wanting to use the Ngawun river route and finding it to be too shallow, he had earthen dams built." The dams however broke and he moved off to Yapyaw Tamut, Rajadhirat meanwhile moved from Panhlaing to Mitaloun landing, thence to Dala where he had defensive works repaired where necessary (SL 136).

Minyekyawswa traveled back to Ava to present the captured nobles to the king. After hearing of the exploits of various warriors, the king of Ava bestowed titles and awarded appanages to them. Minyekyawswa was given a wife.

The final years of the war and the death of Minyekyawswa, Minhkaung, and Rajadhirat (c. 1418-21)

By 1415/16, Minyekyawswa had taken all the towns in the western delta region. In the wake of this onslaught Rajadhirat retreated to Martaban, but a famine in Pegu brought him back to Pegu. In 1416, Minyekyawswa set off on a campaign through the delta against the wishes of his father. During this campaign he was mortally wounded and died in captivity.

Minyekyawswa's death in 1416 [778 BE] was the beginning of the end of the Pegu-Ava war that had dragged on for decades. Without a strong leader, Ava's side became disorganized and withdrew to the north. Minhkaung quickly renewed the campaign, marching to Bassein and Myaungmya. Pegu marched north to Toun-goo in 1417 and Ava marched south to Pegu in 1418, but the war machine had run out of steam. Minhkaung died followed by Rajadhirat in 1421. Their successors carried on the war for a few years but gradually a long period of peace descended over the south (SL 129-153; UKII: 15-45).

7. Conclusion

In summing up the significance of the textual history of warfare that we have available for the Rajadhirat era, it is worth comparing the historiographical situation with that of other times and places. The problems faced in characterizing Late Classic Mayan warfare, related in a recent volume devoted to the cross-cultural study of pre-modern warfare (Raaflaub and Rubinstein, 1999), bears many similarities to the problems faced in the Rajadhirat era. The era was characterized by:

...large-scale patterns of hegemonic warfare presided over by regionally dominant centers...These polities, supported by their lesser allies, dependents and proxies, purportedly contended with each other for several generations. Evidence for the prolonged wars of these titans comes almost entirely from textual evidence that is still widely debated among epigraphers. Unfortunately, the published material on these is almost entirely concerned with identifying the protagonists, polities, alliances, and cultural history of conflicts rather than motivations, functions and outcomes. Nor can we yet determine if the supra-city-state aggregations involved in such conflicts were strongly structured in hierarchical terms, or instead consisted of associations of convenience in which each political player sought political advantage (Webster, 1999, 350, *my italics*).

Like the Rajadhirat era, the historiography of Late Classic Mayan warfare shares the problem of being based on indeterminate textual evidence and having an exclusive

focus on superficial historical detail of mainly local importance (e.g. Aung-thwin, 2005) to the exclusion of deeper more universal cross-cultural issues such as the underlying causes that drive conflict. In the Rajadhirat case, “supra-city-state aggregations” were less hierarchical and unchanging than “associations of convenience in which each political player sought political advantage.”

Associations of ruling elites during the Rajadhirat era were strategic. Much has been made of the negative literary themes of cunning, treachery, and deceit in “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon.” If one strips away the moral-ethical judgement implicit in these terms, they are just the literary realization of strategy. The decisions made by elites were strategic and calculating because they were embedded in an environment saturated with contingency and chance. Warfare is an activity immersed in the Clausewitzian trinity of chance, politics, and violence. Strategy is the way of visualizing a way out of this labyrinth.

This strategic action has parallels in other historical times and places. For instance, during the Napoleonic era treachery and betrayal among ruling elite officers was fairly common. On the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, the royalist commander De Bourmont who had already betrayed Napoleon once, betrayed him once again, at once fleeing and divulging sensitive information that compromised Napoleon’s attack (Hamilton-Williams, 1993, 154-156, 164). This strategic action takes place in a rich matrix of culture, which also has parallels from the Napoleonic Era. Another German commanding officer-elite, Gneisanau, on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo could not issue an order because of a cultural constraint of deference to another officer-elite of superior status, Bulow (Hamilton-Williams, 1993, 150-151). Deference to superior status, even if it meant sacrificing decisive victory, is another common and perplexing theme in “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon.”

Local power was the most important strategic element that larger hegemonic states had to contend with during the Rajadhirat era. Localities remained largely autonomous from stronger hegemons like Pegu and Ava. Geographical separation favored local autonomy. Punitive action against localities was difficult because of transportation and communication delays that made the concentration of local resources such as man and animal power at the center for concerted action difficult if not impossible.

In the complicated war narratives of “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon,” historians sometimes forget that there were three, not two, possible loyalties for Lower Burma settlements such as Bassein, Myaungmya, Myanaung, Martaban, Khepaung, and Prome, loyalty to: 1. Pegu whose power and influence was on the rise, 2. Ava in Upper Burma, and usually neglected, 3. local loyalty to the settlement itself. During periods of crisis and disorder, local loyalties likely overrode loyalties to more re-

mote but larger polities such as Ava and Pegu. Smaller states in the delta region could quickly change their political loyalties from one large hegemon to the other. Before 1390, when Rajadhirat was working to consolidate his power over lower Burma, the settlements of Lower Burma like Laukpya in Myaungmya were fighting against Pegu for their own independent autonomy, not out of loyalty to Ava. These local political loyalties are often labeled “rebellion” but one must remember that this is from the perspective of the larger hegemons who wrote later histories. Harvey’s history and many that follow it echo this perspective, for instance: “Rajadhirat had to contend not only with the Burmese but also with treachery and rebellion at home” (Harvey, 113), which takes the power of the larger hegemons as prior and given.

Elite mobility across localities eroded away at the very notion of local autonomy during the Razadharit era. In the extreme case of endemic warfare we have, on the one hand, peasants tied to the land and a locality, relying on ruling elites for military protection. These ruling elites had a Weberian “monopoly of force” and were tied together by family ties that extended beyond the locality. In exchange for protection, elites extracted rents and surplus wealth through the exercise of military power. Goldsworthy (2000) describes perfectly the logic behind this elite “protection racket” in Punic War Spain:

Warfare, particularly raiding, was endemic throughout the Spanish Peninsula...the peoples of Spain habitually raided their neighbors...Tribes or towns perceived to be weak were mercilessly raided, every unsuccessful attack encouraging similar enterprises. A leader could only expect to command the loyalty of allied communities for as long as he was able to protect them from depredations. A reputation for military might, achieved primarily by aggressive campaigns against others combined with swift reprisals to avenge any attack, deterred raiding, but this was hard to maintain, and even a small defeat encouraged more raids (Goldsworthy, 2000, p. 247).

A good example of this elite politico-economic logic at work is Rajadhirat’s father Binnya U having Martaban taken away from him by a subordinate ruler and then in turn assuming power in nearby Wun and then Pegu. Surplus wealth was extracted by raiding, sometimes in the form of human captives or animals, other times in the form of accumulated religious wealth. Food, another form of wealth, was quickly exhausted as troops lived off the land during military campaigns. If the power of a ruling elite was not sufficient, flight was also an option, either to new protectors (Than Tun, 1997; Fernquest, 2005b) or to remote uninhabited areas. During more settled times, peasant (client) mobility between agriculturally productive areas increased, allowing those less bound by royal obligations (the *athi* freeman class as

opposed to the *a-hmu-dan* royal serviceman class) to migrate to land-rich frontier areas under the leadership of lower level elite leaders (patrons) (Lieberman, 2003, 142-143).

Food supply, warfare, and state building were intimately connected. Guillon objects that “not a single detail in the chronicles or rare inscriptions provides any clues to the economic basis of this [Rajadhirat’s] power” (Guillon, 1999, 165). It is a commonly accepted fact among political anthropologists that the food supply of an emergent agrarian state provides a food surplus that finances warfare and state formation (Diamond, 1999; Lewellen, 1992; Johnson and Earle, 2000). In the campaigns of Rajadhirat, the food supply emerges as the limiting factor in warfare that is eventually overcome with supply lines, which in turn become a strategic focus in warfare. Food supply and warfare plays a central role in “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon,” compared to the few references to external trade. Could this mirror the actual economic organization of society during this period? Long distance trade is not a universal given during all historical periods.

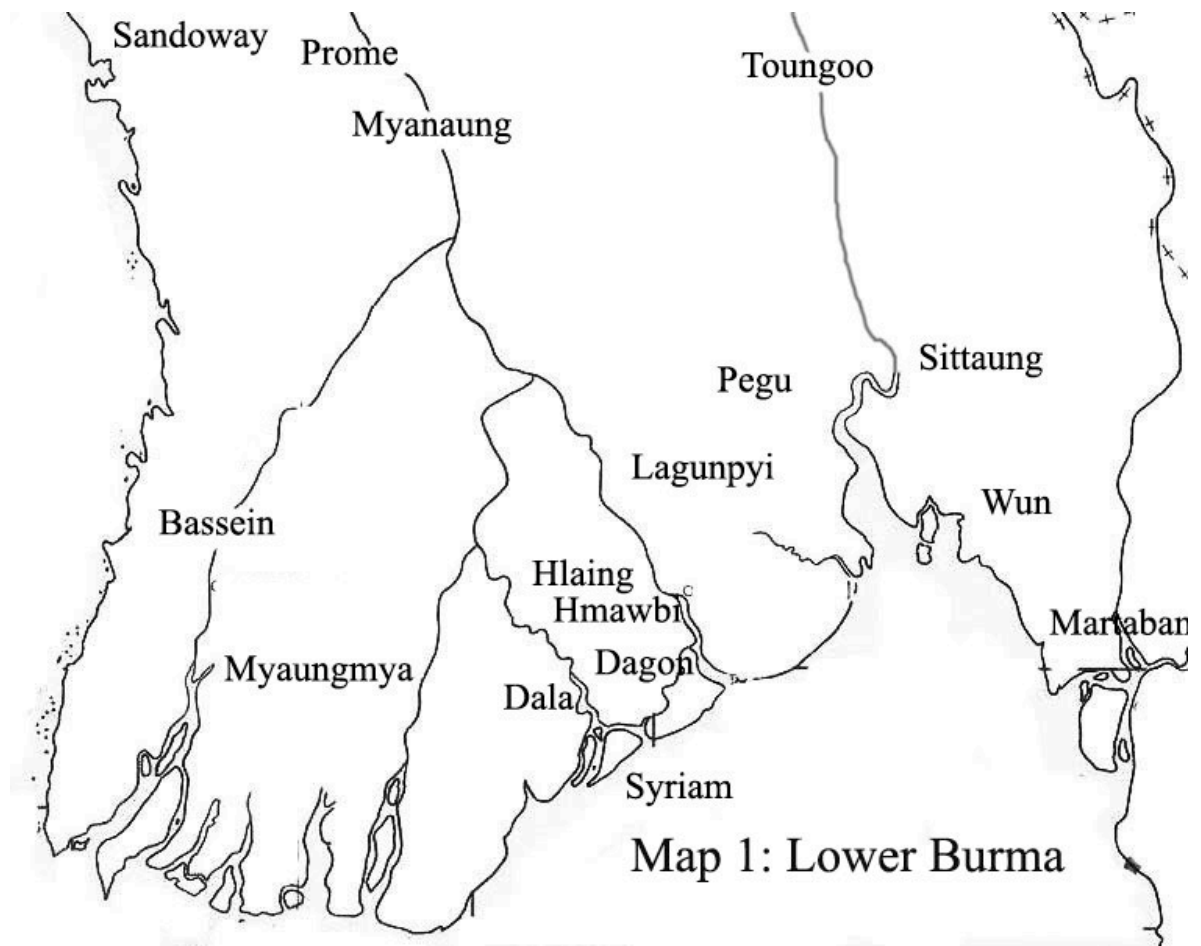
Focusing on the historical details of the Rajadhirat era of history also raises larger scale questions. Has war driven the Burmese dynastic cycle over long periods of time (Lieberman, 1984, 2003; Surakiat, 2005, 2006)? Did economic expansion and contraction follow military success or failure? Warfare was a source of zero-sum resource transfers between states, augmenting the resources of the victorious expanding state while decreasing that of the vanquished, but unlike modern economic growth it reduced the carrying capacity of the land controlled by states. Famine often reared its ugly head in the aftermath of warfare in “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon.”

Was the “macro” economy of pre-modern states driven by warfare in much the same manner as monetary policy and the international financial markets drive modern macro economies? Both skilled and unskilled manpower were resettled around the victor’s capital (Lieberman, 1964, 2003; Grabowsky, 1999). As Di Cosmo’s model of state formation makes clear, longer term hegemonic relations led to wealth accumulation progressively in the form of plunder from raids (trans-

ferred religious wealth), tribute, and ultimately taxes (Di Cosmo, 1999; Fernquest, 2005b). The historian of ancient Greece, M. I. Finley, points out that Marx first introduced the idea that “in early societies, war was the basic factor in economic growth and consequently in social structure.” Citing Marx’s *Grundrisse*:

The only barrier which the community can encounter in its relations to the natural conditions of production as its own -- to the land -- is some other community, which has already laid claim to them as an inorganic body. War is therefore one of the earliest tasks of every primitive community of this kind, both for the defense of property and for its acquisition... Where man himself is captured as an organic accessory of the land and together with it, he is captured as one of conditions of production, and this is the origin of slavery and serfdom [war captives and manpower], which soon debase and modify the original forms of all communities, and themselves become their foundations (Finley, 73-74; quoting from Marx, 1964, 89)

Finally, to zoom out and look at the larger picture for a moment, in historical interpretation and explanation long-run determinism has gradually gained favor over short-run contingent action. The writing of narrative histories of Southeast Asia is often considered old-fashioned and frowned upon, despite the recent revival of narrative in world historiography and the necessary use of narrative if the historian is to capture the force of contingent human action in history (Roberts, 2001). The idea of individuals driving history with individual actions and decisions has lost out to the idea that more deterministic environmental and socio-cultural forces are silently at work behind the scenes like a glacier moving people in deterministic directions over very long periods of time (Ferguson, 1997; Berlin, 1998a, 1998b; Braudel, 1966; Fischer, 1996; Reid, 1988, 1993). Rajadhirat provides us with a large corpus of counterexamples to this trend, showing us once again the importance of human agency in history.





Appendix: Comparative Table of “Rajadhirat Ayeidawpon” and U Kala

| | UK | BE | U Kala | Ayeidawpon |
|--|-------|-----|---------------|------------|
| 2. Rajadhirat's initial struggle to control Lower Burma (c. 1383-1390) | | | | |
| Rajadhirat flees to Dagon | 1383 | 745 | | 30 |
| Smin Maru's force defeated, flees to Pegu | 1383 | | | 56 |
| Pegu king Binnya U dies, Rajadhirat becomes king | 1383 | 745 | UKI:438 | 57-59 |
| Laukpya sends a letter asking them to intervene in the south | 1386 | 748 | UKI:439 | |
| Ava attacks Pankyaw | | | UK:440-441 | 61 |
| Ava and Pegu exchange diplomatic letters | | | UKI:444-447 | |
| Ava and Pegu fight | 1387 | 749 | UKI:448 | |
| Pegu attacks Bassein, Myaungmya | | | | |
| Martaban taken | 1388 | 750 | | 67 |
| Pegu defeats Lautpya at Myanaung | 1389 | 751 | UKI:454* | |
| Pegu pursues Bassein ruler to Arakan (Byazat on limited warfare) | 1403 | 765 | UKI:469-471?? | 72-74 |
| Rajadhirat celebrates victory over the south | | | UKI:454 | 73-75 |
| Pegu pushes north against Ava (1390's) | | | | |
| Pegu takes Kudut | 1390 | 752 | UKI:454 | 74-77 |
| Ava marches south, attacks Kudut | | | UKI:455-457 | 74-77 |
| Mingyiswasawke catches a white elephant in Tharawaddy | 1391 | 753 | UKI:458 | |
| R returns to Pegu (?) | 1395 | 757 | | 75 |
| Mong Yang attacks Ava | | | UKI:459-461 | |
| 3. Ava's succession crisis, Pegu's offensive, and a truce (1400-05) | | | | |
| Succession crisis at Ava after Mingyiswasawke dies, Minhkaung becomes king | 1400 | 762 | UKI:462-465 | 77-78 |
| Ava gives Kalei to Maung Nyo | 1401 | | | 57 |
| Minhkaung and younger brother Theiddat | | | UKI:466-468 | |
| Onpaung becomes tributary state | 1404 | 766 | UKI:472 | 54-55 |
| Arakanese raids | 1404 | 766 | | 56 |
| Pegu marches to Ava, sermon by monk Thukyo of Banya convinces Pegu to withdraw | 1404 | 766 | UKI:473-485 | 78-84 |
| Minhkaung awards Nyaungshwe sawbwa | 1405 | 767 | UKI:486 | |
| Ava Minyethihathu married to Rajadhirat's daughter | | | | 84 |
| Rajadhirat attacks Kudut and Tayokmaw | | | UKI:487-492 | 84-88 |
| Ava-Pegu diplomacy and truce | | | UKI:493-503 | 88-90 |
| Myo Hla leader awarded with Mohnyin for rice supply | 1406 | 768 | UKI:504 | |
| Diplomatic letters between Ava and Pegu | | | UKI:505-507 | |
| King of Ava's sister Wimala or Thubaba Dewi given to Rajadhirat | 1406 | 768 | UKI:508-509 | |
| Minyekyawswa given gift of horses elephants | 1407 | 769 | UKI:510 | |
| Minyaza advises Theiddat | | | UKI:511-514 | |
| 4. Treachery, food supply problems, and a disastrous retreat for Ava (c. 1406-09) | | | | |
| Minhkaung takes Arakan, Naramaikhla flees to Bengal | | | UKI:514-515 | 91-92 |
| Ava Minhkaung puts down Tai rebellion in Bhamo | | | | 92 |
| Pegu takes Arakan | | | | 92 |
| Minyaza advises Theiddat | | | UKI:517 | |
| Theiddat flees to Prome | 1406Y | | | |
| Minhkaung marches to Pegu | 1408 | 770 | UKI:516-521 | 92-96 |
| Lagunein estimates Ava troop strength | | | | 93 |
| Tax in lieu of troop levies for Zeip Bye in Thakycin | | | | 94-95 |
| Pegu estimates troop strength | | | UKI:516? | |
| Mon tax instead of troop levies at Thakin | | | | |
| Mon tidal strategy against Tai cavalry | | | | 95-96 |
| Negotiations for truce, about to take oath when Lagunein reveals the truth | | | UKI:522-525 | 97-100 |
| Shin Theiddat reveals Lagunein's ambush, executed | | | UKI:526 | |
| Lagunein sneaks into Minhkaung's tent | | | UKI:527 | 101-102 |
| Ava makes long, difficult retreat | | | UKI:528-532 | 102-105 |
| 5. The rise of Ava prince Minyekyawswa (1409-12) | | | | |
| Ava appointments and queen affairs (Bomei) | 1409 | 771 | UKII:1 | |
| Ava with Tais renews attack on Pegu | 1409 | 771 | UKII:2-4 | 106-108 |
| Queen Bomei falls from favor at Ava | | | UKII:4 | |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|------|------------------|----------|
| Minyekyawswa vows to eat Rajadhirat's flesh | 1409 | 771 | UKII:4 | 109 |
| Minyekyawswa fails to overcome resistance at Myaungmya, Bassein, Khepaung | | | UKII:5 | 109-111 |
| Arakan | | | | |
| Minyekyawswa takes Arakan, Naramaikhla flees to India | 1410Y | 772Y | UKII:5 | 112 |
| Pegu takes Arakan, Minyekyawswa's counterattack fails | 1411 | 773 | UKII:6 | 110-111 |
| Ruse forces Ava to withdraw from Arakan | 1410 | 772 | UKII:7 | 111-112 |
| End of Arakan | | | | |
| Minyekyawswa fights with Hsenwi and Ming | 1411 | 773 | UKII:8-9 | 112-113 |
| Pegu attacks Prome | | | UKII:10 | 112-113 |
| Kamphengphet attacks Martaban | | | UKII:10 | 112 |
| Pegu returns to Pegu, tries to block Ava's river supply line | | | UKII:10 | |
| Minhkaung attacks Prome, opens river supply line | | | UKII:11 | 113-114 |
| Supply boats sent by Rajadhirat captured by Ava at Tayokmaw | | | UKII:11 | 115 |
| Lagunein dies | | | UKII:11 footnote | 116-118 |
| Ava takes Dala, Dagon, and Syriam, fails to take Hmawbi | | | | 120 |
| Rajadhirat seeks alliance with Hsenwi | | | | 120 |
| Minye disobeys father Minhkaung, attacks Pegu, long sequence of skirmishes | | | | 120-126 |
| Ambush and defeat of Minyekyawswa at Paungnin | | | | 126 |
| Minyekyawswa appointed crown prince | | | UKII:12 | |
| Appointments 1413 | 1412 | 774 | UKII:13 | |
| Minhkaung expedition to Madon Mawke | 1412 | 774 | UKII:14 | 131 |
| 7. Ava Minyekyawswa offensive in South (1415-16) | | | | |
| Hsenwi attacks Ava | | | | 126 |
| Minyekyawswa marches to Talaing country | 1415 | 777 | UKII:15 | 127 |
| Mon Thamein Mawhkwun defeated at Pannin near Toungoo | | 777 | UKII:15 | 130-131 |
| Minye siege and taking of Khepaung | 1415 | 777 | UKII:15 | 127-129 |
| Pegu counter-attack, defeat at Panko | 1415 | 777 | | 129-132 |
| Minyekyawswa marches to Pegu | 1415 | 777 | UKII:15 | |
| Ava captures elephants Bakamat and Thameinbran | 1415 | 777 | UKII:16 | 132 |
| Ava moves camp to Bye Myay | | | | 133 |
| Minye attack on Myaungmya fails | | | | 135-136 |
| Minye attacks Dala | | | | 136 |
| Rajadhirat moves to Martaban, Pegu and Bassein no longer secure. | | | | 137 |
| All towns in western delta region taken by Ava | | | | 138 |
| Minye attacks Dala | | | | 138 |
| Mawdon Mawke seeks support from China | | | | 138 |
| Chinese attack, horse duel between Chinese hero Karmani and Mon Smin | | | UKII:17-19 | 138-140 |
| Paya who wins Chinese retreat | | | | |
| Famine in Pegu, Rajadhirat to Pegu from Martaban | | | | 140, 143 |
| Ava in the south (1418) | | | | |
| Emuntaya's strategem | 1416 | 778 | UKII:22-26 | 141-143 |
| Rajadhirat marches to Dala | 1416 | 778 | UKII:27 | 143-150 |
| Minyekyawswa drawn into battle, captured, injured, dies in captivity, Ava side is disorganized without leader, is defeated | | | UKII:27-34 | 143-150 |
| Great battle of Dala | 1416 | 778 | UKII:30 | |
| Minyekyawswa dies | | | UKII:33 | 148 |
| Minhkaung informed of Minyekyawswa's death | 1416 | 778 | UKII:34 | 149-150 |
| Rajadhirat sends a letter to Minyethihathu | | | UKII:35 | 148 |
| Rajadhirat sends a letter to Salin ruler | | | UKII:36 | 148-149 |
| Gratitude and the rulers of Myaungmya and Salin | | | UKII:37 | |
| Minhkaung sends a letter from Dala | | | UKII:38 | |
| Rajadhirat organizes towns and villages | | | UKII:39 | |
| King Minhkaung river expedition to Dala | | | UKII:40 | 150 |
| King Minhkaung marches to Bassein and Myaungmya | | | UKII:41 | 151-152 |
| How Ngamat loved Ashin | | | UKII:42 | |
| Pegu marches to Toungoo | 1417 | 779 | UKII:43 | |
| Ava marches to Pegu | 1418 | 780 | UKII:45 | |
| King of Ava dies | 1421 | 783 | UKII:45 | 152 |
| Rajadhirat dies | | | | 153 |
| New king of Ava | 1422 | 784 | UKII:47 | |

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