Additional Burmese Historical Sources 1752 - 76

This paper is a supplement to the author's two papers "Burmese Historical Sources 1752 - 1885" and "A Bibliographical Essay of Burmese Sources of the History of the Konbaung period 1752-1885". The author studied primary historical sources from unpublished Burmese materials: 1752 - 76 and presented her findings in three periods (1) 1752 - 60 -- the reign of King Alaungmintraygi (a) a palm leaf manuscript containing more than seventy orders and letters
(b) a miscellany of orders and petitions pertaining to the reigns of Alaungmintraygi and his eldest son Naungdawgyi (Dabayin Min). There is little original material for the period 1760 - 63; however sources from 1763 - 1776 are abundant, principally the "Yaza" account of the embassy from Sandapuri. These historical sources describe political history, administration, and Burma's foreign relations during the first half of the Konbaung monarchy.

1. Burma - history - early Konbaung Period, 1752 - 1837
2. Burma - history - King Alaungpaya, 1752 - 1760
3. Burma - history - King Naungdawgyi, (Dabayin Min) 1760 - 63
4. Burma - history - King Sinbyu shin, (Myedu Min) 1763 - 76

1. Bago (Pegu)
2. Martaban
3. Tavoy
4. Sandapuri
5. Thailand
6. Sittans
ADDITIONAL BURMESE HISTORICAL SOURCES 1752–76*

Yi Yi, Ph. D. (London), Senior Research Officer (Konbaung Period)

This paper is a supplement to the papers “Burmese Historical Sources 1752–1885” 1 and “A Bibliographical Essay of Burmese Sources of the History of the Konbaung Period 1752–1885”. The latter is an enlargement of the former with examples and quotations from the Burmese sources. In these papers after giving an extremely brief account of Burmese political history from 1044 to 1885 and the writing materials used, the Burmese sources were divided into four broad groups—inscriptions, chronicles, literature and official records—and studied. In this paper we shall be dealing mainly with primary unpublished Burmese material on the period 1752–76. For the sake of convenience we shall divide the period under survey into three short ones. They are

I. 1752–60 the reign of Alaungmintonaryi²

II. 1760–63 the reign of Dabayin Min popularly known as Naungdawgyi

III. 1763–76 the reign of Myedu Min popularly known as Hsinbyushin

We will now study the principal sources in each period as completely as possible. It is well to state at the outset that although there is a wealth of material for some periods there is but a few for others.

I

1752–60 The material for this section is derived from the following sources:

(i) The Correspondence of Alaungmintonaryi—a palmleaf manuscript containing more than seventy orders and letters.³

(ii) A miscellany of orders and petitions pertaining to the reigns of Alaunmgintonaryi and his eldest son.⁴

As Alaungmintonaryi was a warrior king who practically spent the whole of his reign fighting the bulk of his correspondence naturally comprised military matters pertaining to his various campaigns. We shall deal first of all with the correspondence concerning the war with Pegu (1752–57). Although we have eighteen orders and

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2. This is the correct title of which Alaungpaya is a corruption

3. Yadasathelinga Konbaungmyo Minitarayi Ameindaw မြင်ကွင်း မိမိအောင်စွာ ဆန္ဒ ဗုဒ္ဓသံရွတ် ဗျာတမှား ဗျာတမှား India Office Library Burmese MS 3503 Henceforth this will be referred to as YKMA

Alaungmintonaryi Ameindaw a palmleaf MS in the Shweby U Ba Tin collection now at

4. the Historical Research Department Henceforth this will be referred to as AA
letters on this subject only a few of them are worthy of note. The first of these is an open letter from the sons of Aylaungmintaragyît to the officers and servicemen of Pegu dated 9 April 1956 while they were besieging Syriam.\(^1\) In this letter they asked the people of Pegu whether they had not heard of the might and power of Aylaungmintaragyî their father to whose standard all the princes far and near had flocked. The people of Pegu would be subjects of whoever was destined to be the victor of the conflict be it Aylaungmintaragyî or the king of Pegu.\(^4\) Their father caring for the welfare of the people had waited more than a year before attacking Syriam in earnest which will be taken whether it surrenders of its own accord or not. If the Court of Pegu would care to undergo trial by combat let them come forth—king will be matched against king. prince against prince. officer against officer. soldier against soldier. The decision is left to the people of Pegu. Syriam is surrounded by plains which are suitable for the contest. It they are desirous of trial by combat let them come forth.\(^5\)

This letter shows that Aylaungmintaragyî’s sons were good military strategists. They had been victorious time and again in their oft-repeated encounters with the Pegu armies which were never led by the king in person but by princes of the blood and other commanders who seldom stood their ground. Thus Aylaungmintaragyî’s sons had nothing to lose by issuing a challenge to trial by combat because if it was accepted they were almost certain of success but if it was refused the court of Pegu would probably be guilty of cowardice in the eyes of the people. This would further lower the morale of the people which was not too high at the moment.

The next piece is Aylaungmintaragyî’s open letter to the people of Pegu which was written in the form of a chain letter from Sakra, the Lord of Tavatimsa to the people. Foreseeing that Death will stalk the land of Ramaña, Sakra having compassion for the people caused a prophecy to be sung by the children of Pegu the meaning of which was that since the King of Pegu had lost large tracts of his kingdom he should pacify the conqueror by giving his daughter in marriage. Thus may he retain his kingdom. By now the people of Pegu should have realized that the king from Upper Burma was a true bodhisatva because he has ever been victorious in the many encounters with the forces of Pegu. People who do not believe Sakra’s words shall suffer all sorts of calamities. If the people of Pegu will not submit to the king who is the upholder of the Religion many of them will perish. If they do not believe Sakra’s prophecy wait for the months of April and May. People who wish to avoid the disaster that threatens them must retire with a fort-night’s provisions to the mountains and jungles where they must practise the holy precepts.\(^6\) This too was an excellent piece of military strategy as the people most of whom were superstitious would have been panic-stricken by such a missive and may well have sought the woods leaving the towns and villages undermanned.

Then we have a letter from Aylaungmintaragyî to the King of Pegu dated 28 September 1756? i.e. a few day before his advance from Rangoon to the capital city of Pegu. The most important passage in this missive is the challenge issued to the king of Pegu. Aylaungmintaragyî said that he had sent some fifty boats which may

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1. They were the Crown Prince, the Prince of Myedu and Thado Minhla Kyaw (the Prince of Amyint)
2. 10 waxing day of the month of Tagu s. 1117
4. His regnal title was Byakmingdiyathanaedipati
5. YKMA kì verso-ki verso
6. YKMA kai verso-koau recio
7. 5 waxing day of the month of Thadingyut s. 1118, 1119
be matched against any number of the King of Pegu’s fleet be it a thousand or ten thousand. If his boats were defeated the King of Pegu should remain sovereign of his dominions while he, Aulaungmintaragyi, would retire to his own territory. However if the King of Pegu’s fleet was vanquished he shall give suitable gifts (such as his daughter in marriage) and retain his crown as a vassal.¹

The next letter of importance is from the King of Pegu to Aulaungmintaragyi dated 25 October 1756² in which he said that he desired peace between the two kingdoms. He reasoned on religious grounds that Aulaungmintaragyi should desist from warfare. He also requested that Aulaungmintaragyi should send suitable delegates to him who would be able to indicate their monarch’s wishes on the subject.³ It is quite evident that the King of Pegu wrote this letter because he was in difficulties as Aulaungmintaragyi with his victorious army was fast approaching the outskirts of Pegu. Aulaungmintaragyi’s reply to the above was dated the same day i.e. 25 October 1756. The essence of the letter was that if the King of Pegu spoke suitable words and tendered humble submission to the King of Kings he would be justly admonished and reinstated.⁴ Although this letter was couched in the politest of terms it must have been as gall and wormwood to the King of Pegu as it offered him only a vassal’s status. Thus he sent no reply. There was a cessation of correspondence for about fifty days during which time Aulaungmintaragyi set about a full scale seige and blockade of the royal city of Pegu.⁵

The first week of December 1756 saw Aulaungmintaragyi making preparations for an attack on the outer defences of Pegu the King of which made repeated attempts to dislodge the besiegers but failed ignominiously. Thus on 13 December 1756⁶ he wrote to Aulaungmintaragyi a pathetic letter the contents of which were as follows: As he had intended defending his realm against aggression he had made ample preparations for its defence but owing to the daily increase of Aulaungmintaragyi’s might and power all his plans of defence has failed. Therefore would Aulaungmintaragyi who had prayed for the boon of Buddhahood show clemency. He was ready to make an alliance with Aulaungmintaragyi according to the example given in the Bhūrīdaṭṭa Jātaka.⁷ He hoped that he will be permitted to rule Ramaṇādesa as a vassal under Aulaungmintaragyi.⁸ The latter, one imagines must have been extremely pleased on the receipt of the above missive as it would bring his war with Pegu to a close. A week later on 19 December 1756⁹ he sent a reply in which he said that if the King of Pegu is really in earnest about his allusion to the Bhūrīdaṭṭa Jātaka it is well. If a person is often false it is hard to believe him. The word of righteous kings is like the thunderbolt—one is sufficient. He also said that he sent two baskets of thazin (orchid).¹⁰ The King of Pegu must have been relieved when he received the

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¹ YKMA khi recto-khī verso
² YKMA khi verso-khī verso
³ YKMA khi verso-khī verso
⁴ YKMA khi verso-khī verso
⁵ G.E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, 233
⁶ No. 543. *DPPN* II, 388. The allusion is to an episode in the Jataka where Brahmaṇadatta, King of Benares had to give his daughter Samuddāja to Dhataraṭṭha to avert the total destruction of his city.
⁷ YKMA khi recto-khī verso
⁸ YKMA khi verso-khī verso
⁹ 13 waning day of the month of Nadaw s. 1118
¹⁰ YKMA khi verso-khī verso
above letter because it would terminate the hostilities in which he had come off second best. He offered a basket of orchids to the Shwemawdaw Pagoda while he gave the other to his daughter whom he intended bestowing in marriage to Alaungmin taragyi. This letter is the last in the correspondence concerning the war with Pegu.

The next campaign of importance is that against Manipur in the cool season of 1758—59. Although there is neither correspondence nor edicts concerning this campaign we have the text of an inscription dated 19 January 1759 which Alaungmin taragyi caused to be set up in front of the Manipuri royal palace. The important facts in this inscription are the date of the annexation of Manipur i.e. 12 January 1759; the tribute exacted—an annual payment of ten viss of gold, a hundred horses, five hundred bows, five thousand poison—tipped arrows, one thousand viss of lac, and a princess of the royal family every three years; and the service demanded—in case of warfare when Alaungmin taragyi himself took to the field Manipur must send a thousand horsemen and a thousand archers which shall be led by the king of Manipur and his ministers in person.4

The next important campaign is Alaungmin taragyi's expedition against Tavoy and his invasion of Thailand at the beginning of 1760 for which we have twenty-six orders and letters. The principal if not the sole cause for Alaungmin taragyi's march on Tavoy was the rebellion of the Governor of that province. Before the armies left Rangoon on their way to Tavoy Alaungmin taragyi made arrangements for ample supplies and transport enroute. Thus on 9 December 1759 he instructed the port authorities of Martaban as follows: Provisions from the surrounding districts must be collected and brought to Martaban where they shall be stored in granaries erected within the stockade. The needs of the army must be supplied from the paddy of Talaban's estates, the remainder of which must also be stored up. Moreover all available boats in the Martaban area must be collected and repairs effected if necessary. We have no further instructions concerning the expedition to Tavoy. However we have a letter of commendation from Alaungmin taragyi to his armed forces led by the Lord Chief Treasurer Minhla Yaza on their capture of Tavoy, dated 4 January 1760 which was probably written from Martaban.

We now come to the causes which led to Alaungmin taragyi's invasion of Thailand. According to the KBZ there were three incidents—the depredations of Thai subjects on the borders of Tavoy; Thai seizure of the sampan sent to Tavoy; and the detention by Thai port authorities of three ships bound for the port of Rangoon which

2. 6 waning day of the month of Pyatho s. 1120
3. 14 waxing day of the month of Pyatho s. 1120
4. YKMA kho verso khoao recto
5. G.E. Harvey, History of Burma, 241-2
6. 5 waxing day of the month of Nadaw s. 1121
7. Talaban had been implicated in the rebellion of Banya Dala (the former Daw-zwe-yu-zet—
manager in the service of the King of Pegu) Governor of Martaban who was executed for treason. Konbaungzet Maha Yazawindawgyi 1, 312. (Konbaungzet is the official chronicle of the Alaungmin taragyi dynasty which shall be henceforth referred to as KBZ.) It seems that the sangha pleaded with Alaungmin taragyi on behalf of the rebels without success. YKMA khoa recto
8. YKMA khoa verso khoa recto
9. A fairly comprehensive account of the campaign is given in KBZ 1, 312-13
10. 2 waning day of the month of Pyatho s. 1121
strained friendly relations between Burma and Thailand. A different version is stated in the letter from Alaungminitaragyi’s commanders to the Thai officials at Tenasserim early in January 1760. It said: in 1758-59 while Alaungminitaragyi was away on the Manipuri expedition some Mon subjects who could no longer bear the misrule and extortions of the Rangoon authorities rose in revolt. During the troubles that ensued the foreign seamen who manned the royal vessel seized it and fled to Mergui taking with them the valuable cargo on board. When the Rangoon authorities sought the return of the royal vessel from the Tavoyans and the Mergui authorities they procastinated saying that they must report the matter to their sovereign as though the ship belonged to His Majesty of Thailand. It is felt that the Thai king as befits a sovereign would not act unjustly viz. take that which is not his. If there is intent of returning the ship and men, return them under sufficient armed escort to Tavoy immediately. The Lord of Tavoy having revolted has been executed as befits a rebel. The insurgents of Tavoy who have sought asylum in Tenasserim should forthwith be returned in accordance with the usage of nations. If there is no intention of doing so on the excuse that they are refugees then send word plainly to that effect. Whether the Tenasserim authorities replied to the above is not known. At any rate Alaungminitaragyi was dissatisfied and prepared for an expedition to Tenasserim. Thus we have the following instructions.

The first of these was to the expeditionary force at Tavoy under Minhla Yaza, dated 5 January 1760. The commanders in Tavoy were notified of the appointment of Minhla Yaza as commander-in-chief of both the infantry and naval forces there. Thus all commanders must obey his orders. As Mergui and Tenasserim are in foreign territory they must not set out on the expedition on their own but must await his arrival. In the meanwhile they must endeavour to lay in as much provisions as possible. On 7 January 1760 instructions were given to Mingyi Nawrahta which said that he and his troops were allotted the duty of building Alaungminitaragyi’s daily accommodations along the route to Tavoy. On the same day orders were given to Udein Nandathu, Bala Yehtut and Dewa Thura with regards to the line of communications. They were to repair the Martaban-Tavoy road—clear the undergrowth on either side of the track which was also to be widened to accommodate the travel of cavalry and elephantry. Besides this they were also to build strong causeways across marshes and streams which would withstand the strain of troop movements. About the same time Minhla Yaza was instructed to send one thousand baskets of rice by boat to Wageru waters as Alaungminitaragyi was doubtful of securing sufficient provisions for the troops en route from Martaban to Tavoy.

On 19 January 1760 we find Alaungminitaragyi’s generals making another attempt at a peaceful settlement with the Thai authorities in Tenasserim. They signified that they came to Tavoy with the sole purpose of putting down the Lord of Tavoy’s insurrection. The rebels fearing Alaungminitaragyi’s justice have fled across the border. Thus they were given chase with the intention of chastisement. While engaged

1. *KBZ* I. 311. For the English and Thai accounts see G.E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, 241; “Our Wars with the Burmese” *JBR* XL, ii, 299
2. *YKMA* gastrointestinal recto
3. *YKMA* gastrointestinal recto
4. 3 waning day of the month of Pyatho s. 1121
5. *YKMA* gastrointestinal recto
6. 5 waning day of the month of Pyatho. s. 1121
7. *YKMA* gastrointestinal recto
8. *Ibid.*, gastrointestinal recto
9. *YKMA* gastrointestinal recto
10. 2 waxing day of the month of Tabodwe s. 1121
in pursuit of the rebels the villagers of Hsindo in Tenasserim district without any enquiry whatsoever set upon the Burmese forces. In that skirmish some captives were taken who are forthwith returned with this letter. Send back under armed escort the son of the Lord of Tavoy and all rebels who had sought asylum there. Then only there may be peace between the two states.\textsuperscript{1}

Then we have three letters which shall be dealt with briefly. The first is a letter of commendation written at the end of January 1760 to Minhla Yaza and his troops for their capture of Mergui district which they were cautioned not to lay waste as it would provide provisions for the army.\textsuperscript{2} The second is a letter to Wunyi Nanda Yawda dated 20 February 1760,\textsuperscript{3} reminding him of the duties of a commander-in-chief to his troops.\textsuperscript{4} The third is a letter from Alaunminteragyi to King Somdet Phra Chow Akatay which stated in detail the causes of his invasion viz. the seizure of the royal vessel and the harbouring of political refugees.\textsuperscript{5}

We now come across a number of instructions concerning the disposition of troops and plan of action. The advance into Thailand was to be led by Minkhaung Nawrahta\textsuperscript{6} whose troops were to form the spearhead of the expeditionary force. Then we have instructions to Sithu Nawrahta etc. regarding troops that should be sent to the forefront. At the same time instructions were sent to Shwedaung Letyapaw stating that if Selang seemed to be strongly fortified they were to report back to him.\textsuperscript{7} It seems that Alaunminteragyi's commanders desirous of winning honours vied with one another in getting to the forefront. Most of them even went so far as leaving captured Selang before receiving any instructions to do so. Thus Alaunminteragyi wrote to Mingyi Nawrahta and his subordinates that as he himself was not far behind they should await his orders. Only if he said that all of them must advance from Selang should they have done so. Mentioning the various commanders by name, he further said that they, in their eagerness to outdo one another had not thought of consulting him but acted as each individually saw fit to the detriment of the general cause. On receipt of these instructions they were to assemble at the nearest point and await further instructions.\textsuperscript{8}

Next we have instructions to all commanders of the Thai expeditionary force regarding the arrangement of troops. They were further instructed to attack and capture Kwai if it was garrisoned after which they were to await him there. Moreover two thousand infantry and three hundred horse under Teingya Mingyi and Minhla Nawrahta were detailed to make forays into the neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{9} Instructions were also dispatched to Shwedaung Letyapaw to reconnoitre the countryside including the town of Bratbi\textsuperscript{10} and seize all available provisions. If Bratbi was strongly fortified they were to report and await Alaunminteragyi's arrival with the artillery.\textsuperscript{11} Bratbi must have been an important military position to have caused such anxiety. Five

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{YKMA} gi recto-gi verso
\item \textit{YKMA} gi verso-gu recto
\item 5 waxing day of the month of Tabaung s. 1121
\item \textit{YKMA} gu recto-gu verso
\item \textit{YKMA} gu verso-gu verso
\item Aalunminteragyi's famous general who became a rebel after his death
\item \textit{YKMA} ge verso-gai verso
\item \textit{YKMA} go recto. dated 8 March 1760 (7 waning day of the month of Tabaung s. 1121)
\item \textit{YKMA} go recto-goau recto. 8 March 1760 Minhla Nawrahta received general instructions on the same day. \textit{YKMA} gai verso
\item I have been unable to ascertain the Thai equivalent of this place.
\item \textit{YKMA} gai verso-go recto. 8 March 1760
\end{itemize}
days later on 13 March 1760 he wrote to Minhla Yaza reprimanding the latter for not informing him daily on the next day’s march with regard to provisions of both men and animals. Moreover they had failed to report on enemy positions and whether Bratbi was strongly defended or not. The last letter that we shall mention in connection with the Thai Campaign is Alaungmintaragyi’s letter to the townsfolk of Bratbi. He said that the paddy stored in the granaries of Bratbi was intended for the consumption of the army and people only after the capture of Ayuthia. If they, in spite of this prohibition use it in the meantime, the townsfolk as well as the people of the surrounding countryside shall suffer grievously. In case of scarcity however, if the elders in concert petition him they may use it after they had received his permission. 2

Although there is much more to be said on military matters it is time we concluded our study as we have dealt at length with instructions and correspondence pertaining to Alaungmintaragyi’s three important wars—the campaigns against Pegu, Manipur and Thailand.

We will now turn our attention to orders and instructions regarding administration of which we have thirty one items on a variety of subjects. We will deal first of all with administrative matters pertaining to Burma proper in which we will give priority to orders of a general nature. Foremost among these is the emancipation of war captives from slavery issued while Alaungmintaragyi was investing the city of Pegu, dated 2 April 1757. A rough rendering of the proclamation is given. Owing to the troubled state of the country many people have been carried away as captives causing children to be separated from their mothers. These people have been sold and resold as slaves in the kingdom of Pegu. There are also bondsmen as well as hereditary slaves. If any of these slaves in the rebel camp abandon their masters and enter my service they may be free of their servitude. War captives who have been sold into slavery and children born to them in captivity may not be regarded as slaves. People who have bought these captives with the intention of using their services cannot make a case for themselves saying that they entered my service before or after or at the same time as their slaves. These so-called slaves shall obtain their freedom. As for the people who came to reside in Pegu and became slaves only during the troubles because of fines or debts, if they enter my service at the same time as their masters they must first settle their debts before they may become freemen. If, however, they enter my service prior to their master’s doing so they become free. This proclamation must undoubtedly have swelled Alaungmintaragyi’s camp at the expense of the enemy.

We have certain instruction’s regarding the dispensation of justice. In connection with the case—Yauksauk heir designate versus Hla Chit, Alaungmintaragyi said that officials who tried cases in the Hluttaw did not consult the dhammhat but used their own discretion which was incorrect. In future they were to take time consulting the various dhammhat and rulings, then deliberate on their findings and pass judgement. Then there is an order relative to the number of cases and their costs. Bayathaena the Keeper of the Seals was instructed to submit on the second day of each lunar month the number of cases that had been tried in the numerous courts, together with the costs incurred by the litigants in the payment of court, lawyers, clerical and judicial fees. There is also an order relevant to cases of debt. The officials who tried cases were admonished to be just to the litigants. Where the debtors were common-

1. 12 waning day of the month of Tabuang s. 1121
2. YKMA gam recto-gam verso. This letter also contained instructions regarding the maintenance of strict discipline among the troops and procurement of supplies. Other such instructions may be seen in YKMA goau recto-gam recto etc.
3. YKMA gha recto dated the end of March 1760
4. 14 waxing day of the month of Tagu s. 1118
5. AA khaou recto-khau verso
6. AA kha: recto-kha: verso dated 29 November 1757 (4 waning day of Nadaw s. 1119)
folk while the creditors were officials or rich men except in criminal cases the debtors must not be arrested, imprisoned, tied, shackle or put in the stocks. This order was to be issued throughout the realm. From these orders we see that Alaungminitaragyi had the welfare of his subjects at heart and tried to shield them from the highhandedness and injustice of his officials. In fact he would not even allow his kinsmen to illtreat them as the following order will show. He said relative to a particular case concerning his younger brother's children that if in future he hears that his nieces, nephews, grandchildren, cousins and kinsmen, taking on themselves the status of princes illtreat the people, Nemyo Thiri Zeya Nawrahta, the Mayors Zeya Yandathu, Letya Sithu, etc. will not be given an opportunity to explain themselves. Even if the culprits are in reality princes of the blood, if after committing misdeeds they say they are princes, cut open their mouths. Ministers must hate that which he (Alaungminitaragyi) hates, love that which he loves and bearing in mind the gratitude owing to him punish and chastise accordingly.

Although we have a few orders relating to the assessment and collection of tolls and taxes we shall only mention one here—that dealing with the toll stations of Tamaw-za and Sebenago on the Upper Irrawaddy. It stated that although it was customary to collect one tenth of the value of the cargo as dues this would cause hardship to the traders. Thus instead of 10 percent, in future the vendors shall only pay 6 \( \frac{2}{3} \) percent while the purchasers shall pay only 7 \( \frac{1}{2} \) percent. With regard to traders from China, the toll men must give them passes without the customary exaction of a quarter of silver, a pyi of rice and cloth. When the Chinese traders arrive at the royal capital they must report to the Toll Master General whose clerks shall collect the necessary dues, compile the statistics in detail as well as in summary and submit.

We will now deal with a general order concerning local officials and the people under their jurisdiction which is most important because it gives us a picture of the social life of the day. It says: local officials must exhort the various groups of servicemen and commonfolk under their jurisdiction to unity that they may carry out whatever service is required of them, be it the carting of bricks, imber or stone, other miscellaneous jobs, the building of temples and monasteries, social work such as marriages, funerals, etc. together in unison. If the servicemen within their jurisdiction such as the royal boatmen, musketeers, titled gentlemen, courtiers, etc. say that they are not free to carry out the above mentioned local services because of prior assignments given to them from the palace let them be exempted. Families of servicemen who are on active duty must participate in the social work as well as brick and earth carrying activities of the locality. In case of the levying of cash payments, the relaxation of quotas with regard to service families is left to the discretion of the local officials. If the servicemen on active duty have left neither children nor slaves behind them in the villages let the wives be exempted from service.

Local officials must always be on the qui vive to prevent theft and outbreak of fire. Every house according to its size must have five to ten bamboo stakes in readiness as well as full pots of water on the roof. The cooking of food must be done in pits three cubits long at the allotted hours only viz. in the morning at 6 a.m.

1. *AA* kha: recto dated 16 May 1758 (10 waxing day of the month of Waro s. 1120)
2. Thado Theingathu
3. *AA* ga verso-ga recto dated 20 November 1759 (10 waxing day of the month of Nadaw s. 1120)
4. *AA* ga recto dated 29 December 1757 (5 waxing day of the month Pyatho s. 1119)
for about two hours presumably. In the afternoon when the Myowun’s (Mayor) gong sounded after 3 p.m. the evening meal may be cooked. Cooking fires must be gut out after 6 p.m. There must be no fire in the cooking pits except at these stated hours and the fire guards must inspect the pits by inserting chicken feathers in them. If during the fire prohibited hours the fire guards test feathers get burnt in the pit the householder must be taken before the Myowun. People must not smoke on the roads. If they are seen doing so confiscate their smokes. Fire guards must patrol their beat five times a day.

People must not travel about after 9 p.m. Only if they have urgent business may they do so in which case they must carry lanterns. The ward elders must ever patrol their areas. When thieves break into houses and storehouses and the alarm is raised everyone within hearing distance must join in the apprehension of the culprits. Whoever within hearing distance fails to cooperate in the chase must be given five lashes. If he cannot take a beating fine him half a viss of copper.

When the local authorities call forth the people under them to carry out the services imposed on them such as brick, earth or timber carrying, miscellaneous services, the building of temples or monasteries, social welfare etc. those who absent themselves from such activities must be given five lashes. If they cannot take the punishment they must be fined five viss of copper. Those who cannot participate in the local activities must ask leave of the authorities and send their servants or slaves in their stead. Only if he has no one to represent him may he be exempted. If any serviceman called for the above duties failed to present himself in his arrogance of position let the authorities and elders in concerted action chastise him. If any resident in the area fail to participate in social work, even if he is one’s own kith and kin ostracize him. Let him not participate in future social activities. The local authorities as well as those under them must partake of betel and pickled tea together in token of acceptance of this order.1

We will now turn our attention to some general instructions and letters from Alaungminteragyi while he was away on the Tavoy and Thai campaigns to his eldest son the Crown Prince whom he had left as Regent and to the Chief Queen. These instructions are important because they give us in addition to information on administration some ideas of Alaungminteragyi as father and spouse. The first example is an undated one which said that Alaungminteragyi had left the Crown Prince2 as Regent because as a son he was trusted but that the courtiers the Crown Prince kept near him were foolish persons. Letters and summons to outlying areas should not be written by various persons but only by one person who was well versed in such procedure.3

Our next example is a letter of instructions to the Crown Prince dated the end of December 1759. It said that creditors of servicemen or their families must not ask for a return of their loan be it for so great a sum as a thousand. Let this order be promulgated by the sound of gong. If people who are dissatisfied wish to file suit against servicemen or their families let them await the King's return. Needy people who had borrowed money because of straitened circumstances must not be asked for the return of their loan until ten months or more had elapsed. Local officials must be warned stringently to prohibit the use and practice of intoxicants, spirit worship and witchcraft throughout the realm.4

1. AA khoau verso—kham verso dated 7 February 1758 (1 waxing day of the month of Tabaung s. 1119)
2. The Crown Prince’s title was Thirthudhammayaza
3. YKMA khoau verso
4. YKMA kha: verso—ga recto
Then we have Alaungm barredg's letter to his Chief Queen dated 4 January 1760, where he exhorted her with various allusions to the scriptures, old saws, etc., not to worry about him and his army. Then he requested her to send for her eldest son the Crown Prince and admonish him to rule his subjects justly and without favouritism. As he was still young he must be reminded time and again not to believe his favours and talebearers and be biased. He must also be warned to be always on guard against theft and fire. The digging of the moat is a big undertaking for the people. Thus they must not be given another task until they had completed it. When the digging of the moat is done then only must the people be assigned timber work on the moat. When the time comes, work on the tank requiring at the utmost a day's labour must be undertaken. The damming of the Mu must be done only at the appropriate season i.e. dry season, thus for the moment concentrate on the digging of the moat. Send for the Crown Prince and admonish him strictly on the above matters.

We will now cite another letter from Alaungm barady to the Chief Queen and Crown Prince dated 6 March 1760, which shows us that he was anxious about the administration of the country he left behind. He said that they were to be extremely careful of theft and fire in the royal capital. The people must be made to cooperate in the building of the city walls, gates and moat. The Crown Prince himself must be in constant contact with the local officials and administer them. He has been left as Regent for the sole purpose of gaining practice in government. Thus he must not be slothful but be always zealous and discerning in administration. Alaungm barady said that he wished only to hear that his family and subjects are living in prosperity and peace and that they need not worry about him. He had left Tenasserim for Ayuthia on 27 February 1760 and as he ever honoured the Three Gems they must not fear for his success. When the people come to render service let them work on the Wettow dam. When the digging of the moat is completed let three quarters of the labourers return to their villages while the remainder must work on the city walls and gates. Every week on Alaungm barady's birthday i.e. Friday a number of sangha corresponding with his age must be offered food. The guardian spirits of the realm must be propitiated that Alaungm barady may be of good health and gain a speedy victory. The queens, concubines, and women of the harem were to observe the sabbath four times a month in his stead and pray for his welfare. Much more could be said on administration but we shall not do so. We have seven letters on ecclesiastical matters but as they are rather unimportant we shall not include them in this paper.

We will now deal with Alaungm barady's correspondence with the English and French East India Companies. The first letter in our collection is from Alaungm barady to the Chief of Negrais dated about the middle of April 1755. The gist of the letter is that Alaungm barady became king after the fall of Ava and had been ever victorious over his enemies. He had also taken Prome after defeating the Pegu forces in which encounter he captured more than six hundred boats, cannon, guns, etc. From days of yore there had been commerce between Ava and foreign parts which he wished to see resumed. As a token of his good will he sends a pair of

1. 2 waning day of the month of Pyatho s. 1121
2. YKMA ga verso—gá recto
3. 5 waning day of the month of Tabauang s. 1121
4. 12 waning day of the month of Tabauang s. 1121
5. YKMA ge recto—ge verso
6. According to Baker this letter was written in March 1755, A. Dairymple, Oriental Repertory I, 137
ruby hinthá.¹ This is probably "A Letter to Mr. Brooke, desiring his Friendship, &c. and promising in return that nothing should be wanting in which he could oblige him," mentioned by Baker in his observations.² Then we have four letters from Alaungminteragyi dated 8 May 1756³ to the King of England, the English East India Company, the Governor of Madras and the Chief of Negrais respectively. A rough translation of the letter to the King of England which is practically identical with that to the Directors of the English East India Company is still preserved in the India office Library, London.⁴ This translation however has omitted the most important portion of the original letter, which said that the King of England as well as the East India Company's ships or goods were exempt from paying customs although they would have to give the traditional presents and munitions. Private traders however would have to pay custom duties and port charges as laid down by the Governor of Bassein and his staff.⁵ The letter to the Governor of Madras sent through John Dyer, etc. contains the same information.⁶ The letter to the Chief of Negrais John Howes contained in addition to the information in the above letters the fact that Alaungminteragyi required from the Company cannon, muskets, gunpowder, and shot, and that he had granted the Company a piece of ground twenty-five tas² square.⁸

Alaungminteragyi wrote another letter to the Chief of Negrais some time after July 1756. After enumerating his various successes in Lower Burma he reminded the Chief of Negrais of the friendship between them. Then he said that the King of Pegu not daring to face him on the battlefield remained entrenched behind the walls of Pegu city which he, Alaungminteragyi proposed to assault. Having heard that there were many cannon in Negrais he wanted twelve guns of various calibres ranging from five to eighteen pounders to breach the walls of Pegu. The King of Pegu has received aid from the French East India Company whose agent the Sieur de Bruno has supplied them with sixty cannon, three hundred muskets, gunpowder, shot, sulphur etc. thus strengthening the Pegu arms. The Chief of Negrais, being Alaungminteragyi's friend ought to supply him with twice the amount provided by the French to his enemy. He further stated that his emissaries carried cash for the purchase of munitions. The letter also mentions that the French Company's agent Bruno with his ship had been expelled from Syriam⁹ and that Whitehill's ship which was bound for Negrais had put in at Rangoon on 23 June 1756¹⁰ because of contrary winds. They had been hospitably accommodated.¹¹ We have no further letters from Alaungminteragyi to the English East India Company in our collection.

¹. YKMA ka verso–ki recto
². A. Dalrymple, Oriental Repertory, 137; see also D. G. E. Hall: "The Tragedy of Negrais"
³. JBRs XXI, iii, 85.
⁴. 10 waxing day of the month of Kason s. 1118
⁵. JBRs XXII, iii, 100–101
⁶. YKMA kaṁ recto–ka: recto
⁷. One ta is equivalent to seven cubits
⁸. YKMA ka: recto–verso
⁹. This statement makes sense only if the letter was written before the capture of Syriam after which Bruno was roasted alive. JBRs XXII, iii, 98
¹⁰. 11 waxing day of the month of Nayon s. 1118
¹¹. According to Professor Hall, Whitehill whose health had broken down in Negrais left on the Cuddalore and arrived at Madras early in February 1756. JBRs XXII, iii, 99. Does this reference to Whitehill means that he returned to Negrais later? YKMA kha recto–khā recto.
Alauqmintaragyi’s correspondence with the French East India Company in our sources is limited to one letter only—to Pondicherry dated 20 December 1759. It said that various East India Companies had always traded at the ports of Syria and Rangoon until the people of Pegu rebelled against their lawful king, vanquished him and became independent. By the divine will Alauqmintaragyi was able to defeat them. Bruno the French agent accepting bribes and presents from the King of Pegu fought against Alauqmintaragyi and perished according to his deserts. Alauqmintaragyi farther stated that he knew very well that the Governor of Pondicherry had not instructed Bruno to side with Pegu and therefore did not harbour any ill will against the Company because of Bruno’s ill-advised actions. If the French Company wishes a resumption of trade with his country he was willing to accommodate them. He said that it was unreasonable that his interests as well as those of the French Company should suffer because of Bruno’s folly, therefore the French traders must come and trade.

In addition to the above material on Alauqmintaragyi’s reign pertaining to his wars, administration and foreign relations we have an unpublished narrative of his campaigns by Letwe Nawrahta, and accounts of the building of Yadanatheinga his capital, and his funeral rites but we shall not deal with them here as the study of each account would require a paper in itself.

II

1760-63 The two main sources for this period are AA and a collection of letters, orders, etc. of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is little original material on these three years. Dabayin Min, Alauqmintaragyi’s eldest son succeeded his father on 7 June 1760. His reign was occupied largely in suppressing rebellions. The most important of these is Minkhaung Nawrahta’s revolt. We have two letters in connection with this rebellion. The first of these if from Minkhaung Nawrahta himself while he was strenuously besieged at Ava to the commanders of the Payahla stockade—one of the chain of blockhouses encircling Ava. This letter is dated 12 September 1760. In it Minkhaung Nawrahta says that he, the ruler of Ava, because of acts of merit in past existences has been rewarded with the kingly estate. Those who beleaguer him are like unto Mara’s forces disturbing the Buddha or the Asuras attacking Tavatimsa. Knowing that they are unaware of the danger that threatens them in their actions against him he warns them of it as is the way of a brave man. Have they not heard the prophecy which promises him the whole kingdom and destruction to his foes? Compassion prompts him to send the besiegers this warning of the dire calamity that shall surely befall them if they persist.

The Commanders of the Payahla stockade in their reply to Minkhaung Nawrahta dated 14 September 1760 said that he was like the little fish who not having

1. 2 waxing day of the month of Pyatho s. 1121
2. YKMA kha: recto—kha: verso
3. This is one of the three main sources used by the compilers of the Hmannan Yazaw in for their compilation of Alauqmintaragyi’s reign.
4. Yazathan mya a holograph copy in the library of the Archaeological Survey Department.
5. Henceforth this work will be referred to as Yaza
6. Accounts of this rebellion may be seen in KBZ I, 339–42; G. E. Harvey, History of Burma, 244—7; A. Dalrymple. Oriental Repertory I, 372, 373, 381–2, 387
7. 3 waxing day of the month of Thadingyut s. 1122
8. Yaza 1—2
9. 5 waxing day of the month of Thadingyut s. 1122
seen the ocean thinks his home—a buffaloe hoofprint—a large expanse of water. From the beginning of time there had always been ingrates who had rebelled against their king. The fate that overtook them may be seen in the histories. The king who is most merciful is willing to pardon Minkhaung Nawrahta if he will lay down his arms. He had twisted the prophecy to his own ends.1 People who believe in his destiny are bound to suffer. Although he is now in possession of Ava he cannot hope to withstand the might of the king. If Minkhaung Nawrahta persists in his treason he will surely perish.2

Dabayin Min’s short reign as we have said before was beset by rebellions which brought unrest in its train. Conspiracies flourished and there was much dissatisfaction. The king therefore needed competent intelligence staff to report on the state of affairs of the country. It was the duty of the nakhan of each district to give intelligence reports to the king. Dabayin Min’s instructions to his chief nakhan Dhamma Minye said that of the district nakhans appointed on 16 May 17583 only some were adept in criminal investigation. It was necessary that those who were already skillful in intelligence should become more so while those who were still unskilled should become proficient in their work. To this end Dhamma Minye who was also appointed chief of all the nakhans of the realm must prepare a manual for the guidance of all nakhans and send them copies of it.4

We have an account of Dabayin Min’s coronation and another of his ceremonial cleansing but as these are lengthy narratives5 we shall omit them here. I shall however include sketches of some of the figurines enshrined in the Shwebawgyun Pagoda, Shwebo, which was built by Dabayin Min, as they are invaluable for a study of the social life of the period. These statuettes were unearthed in December 1902.6 Although photographs of some of them appeared in the Archaeological Survey Report 1903–04 the reproduction was extremely poor. These figures some of which are now kept in showcases at the Shwetaza Pagoda and Myodaung Zedi, Shwebo are priceless because they are contemporary representations of court dignitaries, soldiers, ships, barges, elephants, horses, cannon etc. of the day and are therefore extremely useful for a study of the society and culture of the period.

III

1763-76 We have quite a lot of material for this period which corresponds to Myedu Min’s reign. He had succeeded his elder brother Dabayin Min on 30 November 1763.7 The principal sources at hand for this period are Yaza and an account of the embassy from Sandapuri.8 The bulk of our material is on administration and foreign relations. In spite of the fact that Myedu Min was a great warrior and waged successful war against Thailand, China and Manipur no instructions with regard to the campaigns has been discovered to date.

1. Here they quoted the whole prophecy and explained its meaning
2. Yaza 3–5
3. 10 waxing day of the month of Nayon s. 1120
4. AA kho recto dated 2 June 1762 (11 waxing day of the month of Nayon s. 1122)
5. A palmleaf manuscript in the National Library, Rangoon
6. A detailed account of the findings may be seen in the Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1903–4, pp. 145–57
7. Wednesday 11 waning day of the month of Nadaw s. 1125
8. Sandapuri Thami Kanya Set Sudan a palmleaf manuscript in the National Library, Rangoon.

Henceforth this work will be referred to as STKS
We shall deal first of all with orders regarding administration. We shall begin with the general decree passed on 9 February 1761 which in the main concerned servicemen. It said that all branches of the services such as cavalry, musketeers, guardsmen, royal bodyguards, shield bearers, etc. must be separate from commoners and property belonging to the Religion. Successive kings, in obedience to tradition, have kept apart the temporal from the ecclesiastical by issuing edict after edict. However, heads of service, their clerks and the local authorities have ignored the existing mandates concerning the division between service, common and religious lands, disputing as to which should be taxed or exempted or whether the burden of taxation should be shared and so on. The king himself bearing in mind the edicts of previous kings has decreed, on 7 August 1764, 22 August 1764 and 15 December 1765 respectively that previous edicts were still in force because they had been issued for the welfare of the people. Now the king has been collecting a census of his subjects according to their vocations that it may serve as an example to his successors. This census however has not yet been recorded on palm leaves for the royal rolls. Local authorities therefore may not say that servicemen within their jurisdiction has already been included in the list of tax payers but must institute enquiries regarding them and have then enrolled in their respective services. People who have served under the three kings Taininganwe, Mahadhammayazadhipati and Alaungminaragi, as well as those who have served under Alaungminaragi and Dabayun Min have already been registered. Let them remain so. If serviceman other than those who have been given estates there reside in a certain locality, they come under the jurisdiction of the local thugyi. All thugyis must administer outsiders to whom land grants had been given within their jurisdiction.

Sons of servicemen who belong to groups founded by previous kings must be enrolled in their fathers' companies. Their relatives too must belong to their respective groups. A list of the relatives of archers must be made and submitted that they may be incorporated in the company of bowmen. Members of the Phwabetaw Shieldbearers are few in number. Enquire of those who had served from Alaungminaragi's reign to this of its membership and submit their list. They shall be formed into the Phwabetkyaw Shieldbearers. The Southern Cavalry was founded by king Kyawzaw. Possessor of Five White Elephants was the Pinya dynasty who had also endowed them with land grants for their upkeep. The Northern Cavalry was founded by Athin-khaya Sawyun of the Sagaing dynasty who had also bestowed estates on them for their maintainance. Cavalrymen who have been created lords of their tracts or villages must still render cavalry service. When a cavalry tract is untenanted because the hereditary line is extinct, kinsmen of the late incumbent must be incorporated into the unit that no cavalry land might be by vacant of service. Unattended cavalry tracts must be reported.

The ahti as well as outsiders living in a given locality must still belong to their original groups. It was the duty of the ahti class to supply leather, cotton, etc. Besides the above when the government levies a monetary contribution on the locality everyone - servicemen as well as others - must share the burden which must be apportioned out justly by the local authorities that each one’s share is in accordance with his means. When someone has been given the lordship of a tract or a village it is his privilege to demand - for the charges of taking possession of his estate, house-building and fence repairs - from an ahti 300 (ticals?) of copper, from an outsider

1. 11 waning day of the month of Tabodwe s. 1128
2. The chief of these Tamansit as well as the sixty households under him whose domicile were in Pagan and Nyaungu were given quarters outside the Thai gate in Ava. *Pye* p. 96 (2 September 1772)
150 of copper, from a cavalry or militiaman 75 of copper, from a bodyguard, shield bearer or royal predial slave 37 1/2 of copper respectively. This is in accordance with the royal decree which must be observed faithfully.¹

The next piece on administration is Myedu Min's orders reprimanding the Wunyis and Wundauks for their irregularities concerning the revenues. Instead of submitting complete tax returns and storing the revenues in their respective storehouses the wunyis had stored these in their own homes appropriating it for their own use after effecting an understanding with their subordinates. It was only on the king's investigation into the matter that incomplete returns were given. The burden of taxation has not been apportioned out equally among the people—those under the patronage of officials escaping their share. For instance there had been cases where whole villages which had paid taxes formerly were exempted because of an understanding between the local and central authorities whereby they were registered as cavalry villages which were exempt from taxation. The people rendered but little service to the king because they had to work for the high officials and the chiefs of services who regarded the people as their own property. When the king tried to investigate the matter he could not get at the truth because his officials shielded one another. Thus he had intended to punish all as he could not know who was innocent and who was guilty. But owing to the royal mother's intercession they have been pardoned this time. In future they must refrain from such deeds. The wundauks too were censured for the same faults.²

We also have royal decrees pertaining to judicial administration. The first of these was instructions to local authorities concerning cases within their jurisdiction. When there were cases of murder or grievous assault within their territory the lords of towns, villages, service tracts, etc. may try them or bring the suits before the governor of the district. When the slaying occurred during the tumult of a festival the local authority must exact from the culprit or culprits compensation in accordance to the dhama that i.e. civil code. If the parties are dissatisfied with his judgement the case must be brought before the governor who shall try it according to the criminal code. The banding of blood brotherhoods is treason. Such cases may not be tried by local authorities but must be brought before the governor.

In some cases it is necessary for the local authorities to visit the scene of the crime. In such cases the fees demanded by them far exceeded the costs. A table of permissible travel allowances is now laid down. They are, for one to four miles travel one viss of copper, for six to ten miles two viss of copper, for a day return trip three viss, for a night's journey four viss, for a two days trip six viss. If the journey is over difficult terrain, irrespective of the distance he may receive from five to six viss of copper irrespective of the distance, be it a six mile journey or a night's trip, if he has to spend some days taking down depositions he may receive from seven to twenty-five viss of copper according to the number of days he has to spend there.

When the summons server subpoenas the litigants he must be instructed to bring them back with him. If because of their nonappearance he has to resummon them he may not receive travelling allowance again. But if they had moved elsewhere he may receive travelling allowance. If the interested parties failed to appear at court on the appointed day and they had to be resummoned the messenger may not again receive allowance. But if they had to be recalled because they had moved elsewhere the summons server must be paid. When witnesses in a case fail to appear on the appointed day and have to be resummoned the cost of the second summons must be shared by both parties equally. If the witnesses abscond they must be brought

¹ Yaza 56–7
² Yaza 100–101 (28 June 1770) This order unfortunately is incomplete.
forcibly and punished. In cases where some litigants were of the same household a single summons shall suffice for them. The instruction is concluded by a warning that if the local authorities fail to abide by the rules laid down above they shall be sorely punished.

Then we have edicts concerning lawyers, advocates and judges. When lawyers or advocates address the judge at court they must speak civilly and with hands raised in the respectful attitude. They must not be rude nor may they adress the court in a standing posture. For such contempt of court they shall receive five lashes at the four gates. Senior officials had ever been forbidden from acting as lawyers or advocates. They are still debarred from doing so by this edict. Our next item is an order which appointed Baya Kyawhtin a judge on 22 July 1767. It contained among other things guiding principles for judges. In civil cases the Manu dhammathat must be his guide. If that proved irrelevant the Manawthara, and the Manathara Shwemyin must be consulted. If they too proved inadequate Kaingza Manu's dhammathat must be referred to. When people because of their greed file suits which they should not, dismiss the case after admonishing them. Judges must not be influenced by personal gain. There are also other edicts on administration but they deal with specific groups only.

We shall now turn our attention to foreign affairs. Although there are a few items on relations with Arakan which was then a separate kingdom, China, and Champa the bulk of our material is on relations with Linzin and Sandapuri i.e. Vienchang. The first of these is from the ministers of Linzin to Myedu Min's wangyis which said that they wished to have friendly relations with Burma and that two elephants had been sent as present. The next is from the relatives of the king of Linzin to the Burmese generals at Chiengmai which said that they had sent a letter and a present of two elephants for the king of Burma which they desired the generals to forward with despatch. Then there is an epistle from the king of Linzin which contained the same information as the above. We also have a letter from the sayadaws of Linzin to the sayadaws of Burma which expressed a desire for peace and the welfare of the Religion to which the Burmese sayadaws replied noncommittally. Then there is a letter from the Burmese commanders to the commanders at Mainglon Khabin which said that unless they submit according to ancient custom and send precious gifts they shall have to conquer Linzin.

Relations with Sandapuri is confined to its submission to Myedu Min and the sending of an embassy with valuable gifts including a royal princess. The first of these is from Nemyo Thenapati, Commander in Chief of the armies against Thailand to the ministers of Sandapuri. It said that in 1765 while he had been reducing Linzin he had enquired of them whether they would submit as of old or whether they wished to wage war on which they had intimatted that they were willing to abide by ancient customs and sent a gift of four elephants. Thailand which refused to

1. Yaza 88-9 dated 17 January 1770
2. Yaza 96 dated 23 June 1770
3. Yaza 97
4. We shall omit relations with China which is limited to the Chinese invasions as it is not unknown. See G. E. Harvey, History of Burma, 253-9 G. H. Luce: "Chinese Invasions of Burma in the eighteenth century" JBRs XV, ii, 115-28
5. Yaza 6 (no date)
6. Yaza 7 (3 January 1764)
7. His title as given in the letter was Mahasetkbattibhumadhipatiyaza
8. Yaza 11
9. Yaza 11-12, 17-18
10. Yaza 15-16 (25 September 1764)
submit has now been conquered, while Sandapuri which had expressed friendship has been spared. Having heard again from the courtiers who had come from Linzin that Sandapuri was desirous of becoming a tributary state Punya Kyawhtin etc. has been sent as ambassadors to Sandapuri.¹

The second letter is from the king of Sandapuri which said that he had received the first embassy sent in 1767 as well as the second which arrived on 4 November 1768. They were most respectfully received and the royal letter from Myedu Min was read with high ceremony on 12 November. In accordance with ancient custom the king of Sandapuri desired to present his niece as a gift together with valuable horses and elephants. These offerings were arrayed without the walls of Sandapuri in a splendid encampment since 22 December 1768 for sending to Burma. However the journey cannot now be undertaken because the rebel Gwes and Laos infested the road. Thus only a present of a viss of gold has been sent by the ambassadors with this letter. Would Myedu Min therefore send a suitable escort for the protection of the gifts destined for him.²

Then we have a letter from Myedu Min's ministers to their counterparts in Sandapuri which after reiterating the relationship between Burma and Sandapuri said that if there was rebellion in the latter country the former would aid in putting it down and that the gifts for Myedu Min including the Princess of Sandapuri must be sent under escort suitable to her dignity. A list of presents for the king of Sandapuri was also enumerated.³ Some time later Myedu Min himself wrote to the king of Sandapuri. Among other things he mentioned the honours he had bestowed on the Sandapuri princess and said that the King of Sandapuri must bring the rebels in his kingdom under control, that he confirmed the king in his sovereignty, that Sandapuri's tribute to him was to be fifteen elephants annually, gold and silver flowers, a gold cup and gold cloth every three years.⁴ We also have information on the honours bestowed on the ambassadors of Sandapuri, their depositions at the Hluttaw concerning the internal affairs of their country etc. but we shall not deal with them here. In 1764 or earlier it seems that Sandapuri had seized some territory from Champa. The latter sent gifts to Myedu Min including two princesses. As a result of this mission the ruler of Champa was confirmed in his dominion while the ruler of Sandapuri was ordered to return the lands that he had seized.⁵

In the preceding pages we have surveyed to the best of our ability the original sources pertaining to the period 1752-76. We dealt with Alaungmirtaragyi's correspondence relating to his wars against Pegu, Manipur and Thailand, his instructions regarding administration and his correspondence with the English and French East India Companies. Then we dealt with the correspondence concerning Minkhaung Nawrahta's rebellion during Dabayin Min's reign and the figurines enshrined in the Shwebawgyun pagoda. With regard to Myedu Min's reign we enumerated his decrees and orders on administration and his relations with the principalities of Linzin, Sandapuri and Champa. This however, by no means exhausts our primary material on the period. We have for the sake of convenience omitted ecclesiastical matters, accounts of the construction of royal cities, royal ceremonies such as coronation, funerals, etc. and material relating to social and local history such as sittans,⁶ various types of inscriptions, wall paintings, etc.

1. STKS ghañ verso—ña recto
2. Yaza 19–20
3. Yaza 21–3 (13 March 1769)
4. Yaza 64–6 (18 October 1769)
5. Yaza 38–9
6. Revenue depositions submitted by local authorities such as thugys, etc.
I would like to conclude by saying that contrary to the belief of some eminent scholars we have a wealth of material on modern Burmese history which is largely unknown and untapped. These sources should be used in the re-evaluation of modern Burmese history as they shed much light on certain aspects of Burmese history which has hitherto been ignored and neglected.