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History of Lashio Township Portrayed by Chronicles (1763-1958)¹

Aung Zaw Myint²

Abstract

In the early Konbaung Period Lashio was a small village included in Hsenwi region. According to Konbaung chronicles, during the reign of King Sinbyu Shin, Lashio was a transit camp where military encampments were made. When Myanmar fell under the British Lashio was promulgated as specific municipal area and was notified as a Town. In other words, in the period of ancient Myanmar Kings, Lashio was little known small village. However during the British colonial period Lashio stood as a notified town where a government headmaster was established. During the World War II Lashio became a town of vital importance, major key to line of communication by land route as well as by air. So also, on the basis of Sino-Myanmar Road, It may be regarded that Lashio developed in trading.

Key word: Konbaung, Lashio

Lashio, the Capital of the Northern Shan State is located between latitude 22 degree 36 minute 53 second North and 23 degree 4 minute 27 second, between longitude 97 degree 31 minute 10 second East and 98 degree 33 minute 48 second, and stretches an area of 1633.41 square miles. It stretches 61 miles from east to west, 34 miles from south to north, and altitude on the average is 2806 feet above sea level.³ At the emergence of 1947 constitution the Southern Shan State, the Northern Shan State and Eastern Shan State were united into the Shan State and stood as one of the States of the Union of Myanmar. Lashio region is included in the Northern Shan State. The townships included in Lashio District are namely Kunlong, Tang Yang, Mong Yai, Lashio and Hseni. On 31st July 1972 the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs promulgated a circular that Lashio was notified as a Town. At the present day Lashio Township is composed of 12 wards, 75 village tracts and 490 villages.⁴ Lashio Town stretches 61 miles from east to west, 34 miles from south to north.⁵ According to the table of wards, village tracts, villages and population in Lashio in June 2017, it is said that there are 285763 nationals and 1888 foreigners in Lashio. The nationals dwelling in Lashio are namely Kachin, Kaya, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, Shan, Inn Tha, Pa-o, Danu, Taung Yoe, Kokant, Lishaw, Palaung, Ahkhar, Lahu, Lisu, Kayan, Waloila, Myaung Zee and Mong Wun. Foreigners dwelling in Lashio are namely Chinese, Indians, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepalese. In Lashio region (rural and urban), permanent dwellers of nationals ranging from large number to small number may be found as: (1) Shan nationals (90,316), (2) Kokant nationals (70,626), (3) Bamar nationals (47,324), (4) Palaung nationals (22,932), (5) Kachin nationals (17,619), (6) Mong Wun nationals (10,195). Observing these figures, it may be learnt that the majority of permanent dwellers of nationals in Lashio region are Shan nationals; Kokant nationals stand second, and Bamar nationals stand third. On observing the statistics in 2017 June, it is found that the religion worshipped there are namely Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and animism. Among those religions, believers in Buddhism are (257,516), believers in Christianity are (25,695), believers in Islam are (2,932), believers in Hinduism are

¹ Read at a Research Paper Reading Seminar in Commemoration of the 22th Anniversary of Monywa University held on 9 October 2018.

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³ Kanbawza Taing Magazine (Kanbawza Taing Thadin Journal 100 Volumes Memorial) Yangon, Ayeyawun Press. 2017.p.29 (Henceforth: Kanbawza, 2017)

⁴ List of Districts, Township, Wards, Village Tracts in Divisions, Regions, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of Myanmar, Shan State, Republic of Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Home Affairs, On 3 March 2015 (Henceforth : Shan State ,2015)

⁵ Kanbawza, 2017, 29

(894) and believers in animism are (641). On the basis of these figure it is found that the majority of believers are Buddhism, next to Buddhism are Christianity, and next to Christianity are Islam.⁶ The wards in Lashio are namely (1) ThiriMaha Ward (2) Aung Mitta Ward (3)ShweBontha Ward (4) AharYoneDaw Ward (5) AungMingalar Ward (6) Shwe Li Ward (7) Than Lwin Ward (8) AungThida Ward (9) Myanmar KharYoe Ward (10) MyoWam Ward (11) Namp Par Chi Ward (12) LashioGyi Ward. It is learnt that instead of addressing their wards by name, the local dwellers usually express in numeral as Ward No.1, Ward No.2 etc. Lashio Township is composed of (75) village tracts and (490) villages.⁷ On observing the above presentations, it is to be regarded that one may portray, to a certain extent, the general conditions of Lashio at the present day.

Legendary Name of Lashio

In ancient time there was a capital by the name of WeinKyauk near Mine Tin Village.⁸ The word Wein means Town and Kyauk means be in a far-off corner. WeinKyauk therefore means a town in a far-off corner. A King reigning WeinKyauk moved that capital of poor communication to a site between NaungShaung and Naung Lon and founded a new capital there. It is said that at the present day it is located to the west of Naung Mo village.⁹ Afore said King had three royal daughters. The King ordered the ministers to build a specific pool for private bathing of his daughters. The ministers built a bathing pool near a geyser (i.e. natural hot stream). While the royal daughters were happily bathing in that pool, a gigantic dragon appeared, captured the daughter next after the eldest, and took her in to the pond. The two remaining daughters narrated the event to their father, the royal father assigned the ministers and royal servants to go and search for the lost daughter. The ministers and royal servants made a thorough search. However they only found an abysmal pit filled with turbid water. Instead of the royal daughter with a view to keeping away from jeopardy in future, the King ordered to make a strong blockade with iron -net over the abysmal pit. For the eldest daughter and the youngest daughter, the King ordered again to build a bathing pool to the southern side of Haw Nan Taw (i.e. Royal residence of Shan tribal chief). The royal servants accomplished the work in harmony with the royal order. One day, after having enjoyed bathing in the pool, while the two royal daughters were about to return to Haw Nan Taw, a gigantic crow came out from a large ravine, snatched the two daughters with its strong talons and flew downstream the Nam Yaung stream. Reaching the mountain by the name of Loi Mu Eik, the crow flew in a bend and entered was named WaungKaSai that means Crow Valley, nowadays known as MaungKaSai¹⁰. The stream near which carrying to the two princesses was also named "NaungShauk". Later the name varied as Nam Sho. Lashio nowadays is located at the downstream side of Nam Sho stream and it was named HlaingSho (downstream side of Nam Sho stream). The name gradually came to a variation Laing Sho, LarSho and now known as Lashio.¹¹ That Nam Sho stream is a rivulet that flows into Nam Yaung stream. It is described that, on the basis of that stream, the region was named Lai Sho village, and later the pronunciation varied as Lashio.¹² In addition some also say that Lashio is of Shan language. That means Shan language, so gradually varied as Lashio.¹³ Two Princesses reached the

⁶Table of Wards, Village Tracts, and population in Lashio Township, 2017 June, Lashio Township Administration Office (Henceforth:2017 Table)

⁷Kanbawza, 2017, 29

⁸It is supposed that the Village was included in Nam Paung Village Tract

⁹ It is supposed that the village was included in WeinHtan Village Tract

¹⁰It is supposed that the village was included in Tar PonWillage Tract (Nowadays it is known as Maw KaSai Village)

¹¹"*LashioMyoAkyauThikaungSayar*" (Enchanting knowledge of Lahio Town) Venerable Sukhameinda (Translation of Shan Language into Myanmar Version) , (Sao Su Khan – Tang Yang) TakkasilaDhammaciriya, Lashio Township, PariyattiSaddhamma Pala SarPwe Taw, Silver Jubilee Journal, 2010,P. 28-35 (Henceforth: Lashio, 2010)

¹²Kanbawza, 2017, 29

¹³Maung Thaw , "Nammayaw to LoiYoe" , Shumawa Illustrated Magazine, 1973, June, No. 313, P.36-40 (Henceforth: Maung Thaw, 1973)

mountain range to the southeast of Lashio Town, flew southward, and was hovering round and round the hill where the present LoiYoe market (Lashio Market) exists. Thinking that it was a hawk, the people shouted out "Great hawk, great hawk". The hawk in Shan language is called as "Yoolon". Shan language "LoiYo " is pronounced as "LoiYoe" by Myanmar people.¹⁴ As we know, Lashio is divided into two parts LashioGyi and Lashio Lay and plain land side (to the north) is called LashioGyi. It seems that LashioGyi is called so, as it was a main village in the former time.¹⁵ It is said that LashioGyi is called Lashio Lon by native dwellers.¹⁶ It is also learnt that the native dwellers only call "LoiYoe" instead of calling "Lashio Lay". In fact the town known as LashioGyi nowadays is true Lashio. It is included in North Hsenwiregion subordinate to Hsenwi*Sawbwa*. South Hsenwi region is mostly known as MongYai.¹⁷ Afore said Laisho and LoiYoe, both villages, were included in the domain of north Hsenwi*Sawbwa*.¹⁸

Lashio portrayed by Konbaung Chronicles

With respect to Lashio, the prominent professor of History (Rtd.) Dr Toe Hla says it is said that the name of Lashio was first found in the early Konbaung Period. The said Lashio is the large village at the road-exit from Hsenwi nowadays known as LashioGyi, and not the LashioTown. However Lashio Town came into existence on the basis of the said large village. And for this reason LashioGyi and Lashio Town are on line in history and are in separable.¹⁹

Unlike Hsenwi, Hsipaw, MongMit etc., Lashio was not a town governed by Sawbwa. However, in ancient time Lashio might be an area of key-centre for communication. In Sawbwa administration, the surrounding areas of Lashio, Mong Yaw and Naung Mon were governed by town-governors. Nam Paung and Se Ahe were governed by Pu Hein.²⁰ Hopeik, LashioGyi and LoiYoe (Lashio Lay) were governed by Htamon.²¹

In Konboun Period under the reign of King Sinbyushin (1763-1776) the Chinese made four attempts of offensive attacks on Myanmar Empire by means of long range penetration. Among those attacks in the third attempt of Sino aggression, in order to attack the front of the Chinese troops, the great army led by Min GyiMahaSithu left the capital of Innwa. The great army led by Min GyiMahaThihaThura marched upstream river MyitNge via ShweSar Yan area and arranged to make a cut-out of communication between Chinese troops and Hsenwi. The strategy was that after cutting the line of provisions from Hsenwi, Myanmar troops might attack the rear of the Chinese troops by surprise. At Gok-Hteik area the troops of MahaSithu and troops of Ywi met, engaged attack and Myanmar troops were badly defeated. Troops retreating away from the battle were able to survive by hiding in masses of reeds and thatch growing wild on the silted area. These survivors reached the royal capital and reported the event. King Sinbyu Shin, with invincible spirit, reorganized the troops. King Sinbyu Shin arranged that the great Chinese army of Ywi might not approach near Innwa Capital. MahaThihaThura and TeinKyar Min Khaung's troops had been a plan to cut off the line of communication of Chinese troops and cut off line of supplying provisions. As the great army of Ywi proceeded marching forward on and on, the problem was emergency need for supply of provision. However the Chinese troops for supply of provision from Hsenwi were incapable of resisting the suppression of Myanmar troops. Those troops inevitably retreated to Hsipaw, and

¹⁴(a)Lashio,2010, 28-35

(b) KanbawzaKhinHlaing, MyuKho Wei Te Sin TaungChyei Hmar , Lashio College Magazine 1984-85, Yangon, TaukTauk Win Press, 1986, September, p.114 (Henceforth: Lashio Magazine,1986)

¹⁵ Lashio,2010, 28-35

¹⁶Lashio Magazine, 1986, 113

¹⁷Maung Thaw, 1973,36-40

¹⁸Lashio Township records, Northern Shan State , Burmese Way Socialism Party, Lashio Township Party Unit, Lashio, No date, p.7(Henceforth: Lashio records)

¹⁹Toe Hla, " *HnitHnayakyawkaLashioMyoHnintHmit Shit PyaekaLashio*" (Lashio Two Hundred Years Ago and Lashio Eighty Years", Lashio Regional College, Annual Magazine, 1980-81, p. 83 (Henceforth: Regional College Magazine, 1980-81)

²⁰Pu Hein=One who is in charge of a village headman or A village headman of higher level

²¹Pu Hein= One who is in charge of a village headman or A village headman of higher level

then to Lashio and then to Hsenwi When two Myanmar forces combine and attacked Hsenwi, the Chinese commander TarsinGha, being struck with terror and worries, committed suicide.²² Such events soundly proved that Lashio had been an area where military encampments were made in Konbaung Period during the reign of Sinbyu Shin.

In 1808 the arrangement sending the royal armies to march to Zin Me and arrangement of Badon Min in person to march up to Hsipaw shall be presented troops to march in three columns namely Mong Ne column, Hsenwi column, and Ywin-Salin Column. The work of supervising the soldiers marching in those columns was not an easy burden. Town headmen and Village headmen also were summoned to participate in marching columns. The royal order says as follows:

Town headmen and Village headmen also, with the number of followers proportionate to his status and office, shall follow His Majesty. At town and villages the brethren shall be assigned as watch and guard.²³

As Badon Min in person had to march up to Hsipaw, a royal order was issued for smoothness of route and communication as follows:

His Majesty in person shall march up to Hsipaw.YwarHai governor BanyaThei shall be consulted as to proper route for marching. Preparations to be made and the place where the preparation to be made shall be thoroughly noted. Notes written shall be submitted to His Majesty.²⁴

On observing the fore said royal orders, it is regarded that Badon Min in person might reach Hsipaw where was located near Lashio, and in addition, from Hsipaw, His Majesty would make commends and instruction to each marching columns.

Mansu Pagoda in Lashio



Photo by DrAungZawMyint

The Pagoda built and revedned during the Konbaung Period is Man Su Pagoda that is standing as a prominent pagoda in Lashio. In Konbaung Period under the reign of Badon Min (1782-1819) that pagoda was built in 1785 by Maha Raja Sao SeiWynePhu , the lord of Haw Nan and

²² Dr.KyawThet, "*PyiHtaung Su Myanmar NaingNganThamaing*"(History of Union of Myanmar), Yangon, Yatanabon Book House, 2015, pp.254-256 (Henceforth: KyawThet, 2015)

²³ Dr. Yi Yi, "*Myan-mar Tha-maing A-htauik- A-hta-myaPa-nar-ma Le-lar-chet*" (Evidence of Myanmar History: A Preliminary Survey), *Myanmar Historical Research Periodical (1)*, Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1977,p-66 (Henceforth: Yi Yi, 1977)

²⁴ Yi Yi,1977 ,68

the chief Minister Khun Kham Hlaing in collaboration with the people.²⁵ That Pagoda is located on the LoiHnam Hill. LoiHnam is a Shan language. Loi means hill, and Hnam means breast. LoiHnam means Breast Hill.²⁶ It is said that during the reign of Badon Min, U Paw Oo, the wise minister who was banished to Hsenwi renovated that Man Su Pagoda second time in 1812.²⁷

Prior to the first Anglo Myanmar War, while war clouds were gathering, it is learnt that Myanmar government highlighted security measures. In 1820 outpost stations of guards for messengers on horseback, messengers by boat were established from the royal capital up to Bhamo, to the east up to Hsenwi –Kyaing Yon Gyi, to the south up to Mottama, to the west up to DanyaWadi, to the north up to Assam Manipura. From Hsipaw to Hsenwi, outpost stations of guards were established along land route for messengers on horseback. It is learnt that Lashio village was included in those outpost stations of guard for messengers on horseback.

The table of outpost station series of guards for messengers on horseback by land route from Hsipaw to Hsenwi²⁸

From Hsipaw to Hsenwi	Number of outpost	Distance in <i>taing</i>	Number of Horse	Number of Person	Included in Town
Hsipaw to Sison Village	1	7	2	2	Hsipaw
From there to NaungTawt Village	1	7	2	2	Hsenwi
From there to Lashio Village	1	5	2	2	Hsenwi
From there to Mong li Village	1	8	2	2	Hsenwi
From there to Hsenwi	1	4	2	2	Hsenwi
Total	5	31	10	10	Three <i>Thaung</i>²⁹ one <i>taing</i>³⁰

On observing the fore said table it may be learnt that Lashio was one of the major regions, important key to defence.³¹

During the reign of King Mindon, HsenwiSawbwaNawPha was incapable of controlling his region and the region was sacked by Hein San Hair. His Majesty, being annoyed at the event, summoned NawPha to the royal capital, and sentenced him to imprisonment. In 1877 under the command of the King, Mong Lon and NyaungShweSawbwas unanimously attacked San Hair and gained victory, and then NawPha was reappointed as HsenwiSawbwa. After the death of San Hair, his son-in-law San Ton Hoan attacked Hsenwi again. Being incapable of resisting, NawPha retreated away and stayed as a refugee among Kachin nationals in Mansi region. For that event NawPha'sNawMaung and the daughter, the former HsenwiQueen (Queen of Mindon) were put into prison in royal capital.³² There arose political unrest and instability in Hsenwi. As to those conditions HsipawSawbwa submitted a report as follows:

²⁵ U KyawNyein, "LashioMansuCeti Taw Thamaing"(LashioMansu Pagoda History), 2015, sdgukn@gmail.com, Dhama Dana Sarsaung, p.10 (Henceforth: Kyaw Nyein,2015)

²⁶Kyaw Nyein,2015,12

²⁷Kyaw Nyein,2015,15

²⁸ Regional College Magazine,1980-81, 84

²⁹Three *Thaung* = 60 miles (*onethaung* = 10000 *tars*= 20 miles)

³⁰One*Taing* = (1000) *Tars* = 2 miles

³¹ Regional College Magazine,1980-81, 85

³²Ma Kyan, "Shan Pyi Ne Ache Ane (1885-87)" (Conditions of the Shan State (1885-87)), Myanmar Research Society Journal Volume 51, 1968, December, Part II, pp. 195-196 (Henceforth: Kyan,1968)

Your subordinate, HsipawSawbwaKambawzaMahaWinthaSiriSudhamma Raja raising my hands to the forehead as paying homage, report this message. HsenwiMyoSitke Min Hla Min HtinSithu retreated from Hsenwi and arrived at Hsipaw on 15th the waxing of Tagu. When asked, *Sitke* said that while he made encampment at Lashio Village HsenwiSawbwa gathered the youths of Chinese, Kachin, Palaung, Shan came to Lashio village and made an attack; due to absence of command to resist and due to weak conditions of men and ammunition he retreated to Hsipaw.³³

In 1881 the prominent Moe Ne *Sit-ke* summoned up the *Sawbwas* in Shan regions and held an assembly at Lashio Town. Khun San Tong Hone was invited to that meeting on the ground that Moe Ne *Sit-ke* heard the reputation of Khun San Tong Hone and had a desire to join friendship and to have a mutual discussion for peace and order of Hsenwi region. Khun San Tong Hone, accompanied by his eighty comrade soldiers to Lashio. Khun San Tong Hone left his seventy four soldiers outside the town on alert position and attended the assembly taking his six choice soldiers.³⁴ The assembly decided and approved that the area of Lashio Nam Yaung stream up to the border of MongMaw(Mine Maw)would be subordinate to Khun San Tong Hone; and that the area from the south of Nam Yaung stream up to downstream area would be subordinate to Sei San Pha.³⁵

Hsenwiforty nineMong (Mine) also were divided into five parts namely Eastern Part, Western Part, Northern Part, and Central Part and were put under the administration of Myanmar *Wun*, *Sit-ke*, *Win-taw Hmu* and their captains. Therefore said Chiefs were incapable of putting the areas under control. Hsenwi North Part had fallen under the Kachin nationals. HsenwiSouth Part including MongNaung, Kye Thee, Mansan, Mong Shoo, and Mansan were taken apart from Hsenwi and put under servile Town governors and Heins who were under the influence of King Thibaw. In 1883 the authority governing the Hsenwi Central Part also was incapable of resisting the power of Khun San Tong Hone and had to move the headquarters to Mong Ye. The body of Myanmar staff officers for Hsenwi also had to make deployment only at Lashio. As a matter of fact Myanmar troops was incapable of controlling their jurisdiction except Lashio. They were incapable of resisting the aggressive attacks of Khun San Tong Hone.³⁶

Lashio during the British Colonial Period

With respect to conditions of Hsenwi there appeared no particular changes obviously seen in 1886. Arising and political unrest went on as before. After the fall of Mandalay Royal Capital, Myanmar troops summoned at Hsenwi disbanded and left the area. And then Hsenwi region entirely fell under Khun San Tong Hone. At that time NawMaung, the son of the former HsenwiSawbwa, once being imprisoned in the royal capital was set free from prison. Gathering followers, he came back to Hsenwi. On the way he came across with the prince of MyinSai and joined in alliance. In order to reoccupy Hsenwi region NawMaung, the prince of MyinSai, the former HsenwiSawbwaNawPha (Sao NawMong),³⁷his son NawMaung and Hein Maung Se joined together and attacked Hsenwi region. HsipawSawbwaKhunSai and Khun San Tong Hone together resisted the attack.³⁸The former HsenwiSawbwa and Prince of MyinSai jointly led the army, marched up, and attacked Lashio. They occupied Lashio and put the town on fire, and then proceeded attacking up to Hsenwi area.³⁹ In March there broke out a serious attack at

³³Regional College Magazine,1980-81, 85

³⁴Sai Win Khaing (Representative to PyithuHluttaw), "*HsenwiHsaingYarThamaingAkyin*"(Brief Account as to Hsenwi), Hsenwi Maharaja SawbwaGyiKhun San Tonghone Coronation Ceremony Centenary Memorial (1914-2014), Centenary Celebration Committee,2014, p.87 (Henceforth: Sai Win Khaing,2014)

³⁵Sai Win Khaing,2014, 89

³⁶Kyan, 1968,195-196

³⁷It is expressed as Sao NawMaing in the book," The summary of Hsenwi History" by Sai Win Khaing

³⁸Kyan,1968,203

³⁹Sai Win Khaing,2014, 94

Mong Li in Hsenwi region, and at last troops led by Sao Naw Mai had to retreat in disorder up to Lashio. Khun San Tong Hone in person attacked in pursuit and a lot of arms and ammunition, provision of Sao NawMong were seized. Although a number of enemies by the side of Sao NawMong were caught captive, they were pardoned. However shortly after that event, while coming out from Lashio, the troops of Khun San Tong Hone were ambushed at Man Se village by the troops of Sao NawMong. Hsipaw*Sawbwa* Sao KhunSaing sent over one thousand soldiers with a view to reinforcing the troops of Khun San Tong Hone.⁴⁰

One the basis of the fact that Hsipaw*Sawbwa* Sao KhunSaing had provided reinforcement to Khun San Tong Hone during the war time, the former claimed that the areas such as MantSant, MongSek and Hoya regions which were occupied by Khun San Tong Hone should be put into the domain of Hsipaw*Sawbwa*. In spite of that claim, Khun San Tong Hone replied that only Mong Ton regions would be subject to the domain of Hsipaw*Sawbwa* and the remaining regions would not be all owed so. Since that time Hsipaw*Sawbwa* and Khun San Tong Hone were not on friendly terms.⁴¹

After the British occupation of Myanmar, on 4th May 1886 the British promulgated that all the Shan regions were annexed to the British India. In 1887 the Shan regions were divided and governed as follows:

- (1) Northern Shan Region (under Divisional Commissioner, Ottara Division Shan Region)
- (2) Southern Shan Region (under Dekkhina Division Resident)
- (3) MyeiLatPaing (under Dekkhina Division Headquarters Resident and Politics Officer)⁴²

On 9 January 1886 the British official Major Daley made an assertion that if *Sawbwa* agreed to stay under subjugation of Queen Victoria's Empire, all the areas Southern Lashio regions, from Se In area to northern Mong Mao border would be annexed to the jurisdiction of Hsenwi and put under the administration of *Sawbwa*, and would let the *Sawbwa* govern them at his own will, and in addition the British would not deter, annoy or interfere in the administration of *Sawbwa*; and added that *Sawbwa* might freely impose taxation and might promulgate laws for administration of justice. For those reasons the British and *Sawbwa* mutually accepted the agreement.⁴³

In 1887 the British came to Shan regions and made a request that the *Sawbwa* should not make war against one another and reappointed Khun San Tong Hone as southern Hsenwi*Sawbwa*.⁴⁴ On 3 March 1888, Hsenwi region was divided into two parts, namely South Hsenwi and North Hsenwi. Sao NawMong was appointed as South Hsenwi*Sawbwa* and prominent Khun San Tong Hone was appointed as North Hsenwi*Sawbwa*. The area of South Hsenwi was 2,200 square miles and the area of North Hsenwi was 6,300 square miles. It is said that North Hsenwi governed by *Sawbwa* Khun San Tong Hone had to pay only 15,000 rupee as tribute annually.⁴⁵

In 1898 Lashio, standing as a village with 20 households and population of 90 Shan nationals was located at a small valley two miles away to the east of urban area. There lay a small market close to the village, and in the offing, there was a small monastery built of bamboo and a single large and outstanding pagoda.⁴⁶ That one is supposed to be Man Su pagoda. On 10 April 1899, the Pennsylvania Steel Company of America and Maryland Bridge

⁴⁰Sai Win Khaing, 2014, 95

⁴¹Sai Win Khaing, 2014, 98

⁴²"*Myanmar Swe Son Kyan*" (Myanmar Encyclopedia), Volume 11, Yangon, Sa PeBeikman Press, 1971, p.390 (Henceforth: Myanmar Encyclopedia, 1971)

⁴³Sai Win Khaing, 2014, 103-104

⁴⁴Lashio, 2010, 28-35

⁴⁵Sai Win Khaing, 2014, 104

⁴⁶Gazetter of Upper Burma and The Shan States in five Volumes, compiled from official papers by J. George Scott, Part II, Vol II, Yangon, Superintendent Government Printing, Myanmar, 1901, p.18

Construction Company started building the Goteik Viaduct that would carry a railway from south to north across the valley between Naungkio (NaungHkio) Hill Top and Pinpaw Hill Top on the line of Mandalay-Lashio railway.⁴⁷ The British occupied Myanmar and afterwards gradually stepped further into the Shan regions. In 1890 the British settled between Lai Sho and LoiYoe villages by establishing regiment and administration office. Sir Fredric Fryer becoming Vice Governor, on 8 October 1901 came from Hsipaw to Lashio which was headquarters of Deputy Commissioner's office; moreover Governor General of India Lord Kerzan also had been to Lashio.⁴⁸ On observing the fact that Vice Governor and Governor General of India had paid a visit to Lashio, it is apparent that the British government particularly took keen interest in Lashio.

On 1 March 1903 as the railway route from Hsipaw to Lashio had been accomplished, the area between two villages became thickly populated and it obviously became a town of Key importance for the British. In 1904 by issuing the Gazette No.7, Lashio was separated from the jurisdiction of HsenwiSawbwa and was directly governed by the British Deputy Commissioner.⁴⁹ In 1904 Lashio, TaungGyi and Kalaw were promulgated as specified areas.⁵⁰ In addition, by issuing Gazette No.8 Lashio village was promulgated as "Notified Area" and recognized as a Town.⁵¹

During the British colonial period routes by railway were established sections by sections. The section PyinOoLwin–Naungkio (NaungHkio) on 20 May 1900, the section Naungkio(NaungHkio) - Hsipaw in 1901, the section Hsipaw –Lashio on 1 March 1903 were inaugurated respectively.⁵² The prominent Goteik Viaduct was located at the milestone No. 463/09 on Mandalay-Lashio railway route seven miles past Naungkio(NawngHkio) railway station and the construction was accomplished in 1903. The great bridge, unlike other bridges, was constructed not across rivers and streams, but across two greatly steep ravines of over 300 feet height.⁵³

However, during the Second World War under the Japanese regime, the allied forces made an air raid by bombing over the viaduct. Due to the air raid the iron beam No.(2) and No.(5) were damaged. During the time AFPFL (Anti Fascist People's Freedom League) Government, the Viaduct was completely reconstructed and inaugurated again for crossing of trains.⁵⁴ The alignment of road from Lashio to Kunlong existing on Sanlwin River side near Chinese border had already found. However, it is learnt that railroad from Lashio to Kunlong failed to be established. During the time of ancient Myanmar Kings the little Kunlong village was an outpost station for collection of tax.⁵⁵

In 1905 the prominent *Sawbwa* Khun San Tong Hone built a pagoda, placed a tiered and ornamental finial on it and revered.⁵⁶ The prominent *Sawbwa* Khun San Tong Hone passed away on 4 April 1916. At that time Maha Raja *Sawbwa* Sao Kham Hompha, the heir to the Chief of Hsenwi region, was twelve years of age and learning education. For this reason, his uncle the minister Sao Hein Pheik (a) Khun San Htun (brother –in –law of Khun San Tong Hone) had to perform as the *Sawbwa* Regent.⁵⁷

⁴⁷" *Myanmar YetsinThamaing*," Volume I (Myanmar Chronological History, Volume I, From Pre-history period up to 1945), Directorate of Historical Research and National Library, Nay Pyi Taw, 2016, p.269 (Henceforth: Chronological History, 2016)

⁴⁸ U OhnPe, "*PinlongSittan*" (Pinlong Inquest) Yangon, Sar Oak Zei Book House, 2013, pp.108-109 (Henceforth: Ohn Pe,2013)

⁴⁹Lashio records, no date,7

⁵⁰Ohn Pe,2013,122

⁵¹Sai Win Khaing,2014,117

⁵²"*HniitayarPyeMiyahtha*"(Hundred Year Railway), Yangon, Sandar Multi-Colour Press, 1977, p.193(Henceforth: Hundred Year Railway, 1977)

⁵³Hundred Year Railway, 1977,143

⁵⁴Hundred Year Railway, 1977,144-145

⁵⁵Ohn Pe,2013, 109

⁵⁶Sai Win Khaing,2014,117

⁵⁷Sai Win Khaing,2014,123-125

The towns such as Lashio the British headquarters for northern region, TaungGyi the British headquarters for southern region, Kalaw and Loilin the summer resorts in southern region are located in the regions of Shan feudal lords. However on the ground that the British officials ranging from petty officials to great ones resided in the aforesaid towns Shan *Sawbwas* and town governors had no right to rule those areas. Those towns were, like towns and cities in the main land (known as Burma proper) governed by town committees for development of the areas. In the municipal jurisdiction of those towns the relevant officials governed in conformity with criminal procedure and civil laws of the main lands on the remaining areas of Shan feudal lords, the *Sawbwas* and the town governors governed in harmony with criminal procedure of the main land Shan traditional laws respectively. On 1 October 1922 the Governor General promulgated that the Shan regions should be designated as the federated Shan regions. The federated Shan region was divided as Northern, Southern and MyaeLatt and according to the area, *Sawbwa*, Town Governor, etc, were allowed to govern respectively in their jurisdiction. The areas governed by Northern *Sawbwa* were as follows:

- (1) TaungPai Region
- (2) Northern Hsenwi Region
- (3) Southern Hsenwi Region
- (4) MongMit Region and
- (5) MongLun .⁵⁸

On 16 March 1925, Sao Khan Hong Pha, the son of SawbwaKhun San Tong Hone at the age of 22 took the charge of Hsenwi*Sawbwa*.⁵⁹ When Myanmar was turned into Diarchy Administration, the British maintained the Shan regions as undeveloped areas and did not put into Myanmar mainland (once known as Burma proper). However, up to the time of (91) departments' administration in Myanmar mainland, Myanmar mainland had to support financial aid the federated Shan regions.⁶⁰

Taking advantage of the domestic complication and unrest of China, the Japanese made an aggression in 1931. After the occupation of the whole coastal regions of China, the Japanese formed a puppet government in Nanjing. The Allied worried that Chiang Kai-shek government would be overthrown. Hence the American and British government agreed to give aid with all out effort for that purpose. They made up their mind to do consignment of goods and provisions, etc., by land route via Myanmar. Accordingly they urgently arranged to build a high way from Lashio to Kyu-hkok, the Chinese border, the road was available for small vehicles to travel, except the rainy season. It is said that, at that time, out of 132 miles from Lashio to Namhkan, there was all weather road only from Lashio up to Kutkai. In the roads and bridges directory, public works department of Myanmar, this road is expressed as Road No.21. In 1938 that road was repaired and renovated to a strong condition. And on the basis of that road Lashio Town rapidly got developed.⁶¹ On 10 January 1939 the high way known as Lido Road Connecting KumingTown of China and Lashio Town of Myanmar (726) miles long was officially opened.⁶² By means of this Sino-Myanmar road accomplished in January 1939, the volume of goods consigned to China up to 1940 June was on the average over (10,000) tons per months. That quantity was equal to 30% of the volume of all the other consignments.⁶³ By using that Sino-Myanmar road, the British and Americans consigned aids of arms and ammunition to China. It is supposed that the Japanese were of the opinion that the Sino-Japanese War which started in 1937 might turn to a certain change provided that arms

⁵⁸Myanmar Encyclopedia, 1971,390

⁵⁹Sai Win Khaing,2014,126

⁶⁰Myanmar Encyclopedia, 1971,391

⁶¹Ohn Pe,2013,196-198

⁶²Chronological History, 2016, 340

⁶³ Mr. Ono Toyu, " *Japan Sit Oak Choat Ye Khit Myanmar NaingNgan*"(Japanese Military Administration Period, Myanmar), Yangon, Bagan Book House, 1975, p.59 (Henceforth: Ono Toyu, 1975)

and ammunition aids consigned by the allied forces could be deterred. To stop using the Sino-Myanmar road, the Japanese not only approached the Myanmar but also claimed the right of deterrent to the British. At first the British, complying with the Japanese claim, closed the Sino-Myanmar road exactly for three months from 18 July 1940 to 17 October 1940.⁶⁴ Observing this point you may appreciate the important role of Lashio road, the Sino-Myanmar road. England and Japan, having a mutual consent, reopened the Sino-Myanmar road on 18 October 1940.⁶⁵

After the British occupation Lashio attained an important role in the Northern Shan Region. The reason was that when Shan Region was specified as area of specific administration, *Sawbwas* were partly capable of surviving as feudal lords. The other ground was that the British did not establish their central administration headquarters where the *Sawbwas* resided, but they established specific towns. Thus Taunggyi Township in Southern Shan Region rapidly came to an important role. The reason why the British government specifically resided in such a way was that, having a firm foot hold in a key post, they might be capable of controlling and supervising the *Sawbwas*.⁶⁶

Lashio under the Japanese Regime

The brief account of the Japanese military planning for occupying Myanmar is as follows:

- (1) With a view to not letting the enemy troops retreat, possible routes of retreat shall be blocked and cut off by strong troops.
- (2) The Japanese troops shall march from Taungoo route and along Ayeyawaddy River side to Mandalay, shall attack by pressing with two columns left and right and wipe out all the enemies at the riverside to the west of Mandalay.
- (3) And then the remaining enemy troops to the west of Lashio, Bhamo and Katha shall be driven up to river Salween upstream and utterly defeated.

The prime minister of China Chiang Kai-shek and his spouse paid a visit to the British war office at May Myo (Pyin Oo Lwin) on 6 April to give aids and met with General Stewell of war office. At that time the Japanese Division No.(56) marched on foot to the north via Shan plateau. Field Marshal of Division No.15, watching on the situation of the war, was of the opinion that they could be capable of making the final assault at the Mittila- Taunggyi front. For that purpose the Field Marshal sent the 56 Division to Lashio and commanded to block the routes by which the enemy troops might retreat. The Division No.56 reached Loikaw on 20 April. As the Division No.56 was an Armoured Division, the marching distance on the average was 110 kilometers per day, and on 29 April the Armoured Division occupied Lashio which played an important role for Sino-Myanmar Road.⁶⁷ With the effort of Dee dok U Ba Cho, along with the aid of an important figure in political field, *Thakin Soe*, *Thakin Ba Hein*, *Thakin Nu* and *Thakin Kyaw Sein* were drawn out from the Mandalay prison with a view to sending them by flight through Lashio Airport to Chongqing in China in order to attack the Japanese. Lashio, however, was occupied by the Japanese and they were incapable of proceeding farther and had to come back from the foot of Pyin Oo Lwin Hill, and they were put back into the prison.⁶⁸ In this way it is apparent that during the World War II Lashio played an important strategic role for communication to China not only by land route but also by air.

⁶⁴U Mya Han, "*U Mya Han Ei Letywe Sin Sartan Myae*" (Choice Papers of U Mya Han), Yangon, Monywa Press, 2016, pp.1-3 (Henceforth: Mya Han, 2016)

⁶⁵Chronological History, 2016, 353

⁶⁶Regional College Magazine, 1980-81, 85

⁶⁷Ono Toyu, 1975, 11-13

⁶⁸(a) U Nu, "*Nga Hnit Yarthi Bhamar Pyi* (1941-1945)" (Myanmar within five years (1941-1945), Yangon, Yatanabon Sar Pe, 2010, pp.37-50 (Henceforth: Nu, 2010)

(b) Khit Yanant, Volume I (Odour of Period, Volume I, No .32, Yangon, Pan Kyar Phyu Press, 26 December 2016, p.71 (Henceforth: Khit Yanant, 2016)

On 4 June 1942 the Field Marshal of Division No.15 promulgated that the Shan Regions would be put under the subjugation of the Field Marshal, Division No.15. In the promulgation it was expressed that, as to the status and authority of *Sawbwas* would remain as before; natives and residents of the Shan Regions should take the oath of allegiance to the *Sawbwas*; the *Sawbwas* in their part, complying with the orders and directives of the Field Marshal, would immediately restore peace, law and order, and supervise the natives and residents of the regions not to stop doing their professions in respective areas.⁶⁹

On 2 December 1942 Shan Regions administration office issued mandate No. 13. By that Mandate with effect from 8 December in four towns namely Taunggyi, Lashio, Kalaw, Loilen Municipal offices were opened. Municipal offices succeed to the functions of the Peace Maintenance Committee.⁷⁰ On 15 December 1942 Lt General Shojiro Iida, the commander in chief of the Japanese Forces in Myanmar reappointed 34 Shan *Sawbwas*. However, unlike the British Colonial Period, it is learnt that there was no distinction as *Sawbwa*, Town Governor and NgweKhunHmu.⁷¹ On 1 May 1942 the Fascist Japanese occupied Hsenwi and deposed Sao Kham Hong Pha from the status of *Sawbwa* and appointed his younger brother Sao YeikPha as *Sawbwa*. Later the Japanese perceived the true nature and disposition of Sao Kham Hong Pha and reappointed him as *Sawbwa*.⁷²

In October 1942 out of the spoil plundered by the Japanese in Lashio, some were found out to be looms 1600 in number. And then it was ordered that those looms should be consigned to Yangon and committed to Fujigasu Boseki Company for maintenance.⁷³ On observing that event, it is supposed that there developed weaving industry in Lashio in the British colonial period.

In upcountry regions, prior to World War II, the regions were self-sufficient in rice grown in their own locality. However, in the post war period, rice gradually became insufficient with local production. Due to poor line of communication there had been some areas which were totally devoid of rice supply. In August 1942 rice was urgently needed to be consigned to Hsenwi, Lashio and Bawtwin. The rice corporation was assigned for the consignment. In May 1943 Lashio and surrounding areas were lacking rice. However due to paucity of trailers- to -train, the route line work could not be easily done and the people concerned were faced with troubles. In July Railway Transport Supervision Committee was formed and railway transport programme was arranged to be in good order. In such a way the problem of food and provision for the Upper Myanmar and Shan Regions was capable of solving by a narrow margin.⁷⁴

On 7 March 1945 Lashio, with the aid of the Allied troops, was reoccupied from the Japanese. The occupation was made by the Chinese troops.⁷⁵ It was a considerable annoyance that the Chinese troops obstinately hesitated to move from Lashio. On 13 March 1945 the Allied troops occupied Mogok, and on 16 March Hsipaw. On 20 1945 When the Allied troops occupied Moe Mate a large number of Kachin nationals in the surrounding hill tracts joined the Allied troops.⁷⁶ On 14 August 1945 the Japanese surrendered without condition and the World War II came to an end. However the struggle of Myanmar for independence was going on. General Wavel, the Chief of Staff India War Office organized Military Administration Body as a pioneer. The pioneer who came to found the Shan States Military Administration was Brigadier J.F. Bowerman. In fact, military administration was in name only. There was no change in fundamental administration, and it went on as before. Even the feudal chiefs whom

⁶⁹Ohn Pe,2013, 210

⁷⁰Ono Toyu, 1975, 309

⁷¹Ohn Pe,2013, 211

⁷²Sai Win Khaing,2014,137-138

⁷³Ono Toyu, 1975, 171

⁷⁴Ono Toyu, 1975, 137

⁷⁵Chronological History, 2016, 436

⁷⁶Ohn Pe,2013, 239

were made no discrimination as *Sawbwa*, Town Governor, *NgweKhunHmu*, turned to an original status as before. Some people who left *Sawbwas* for other professions as there was no earnings for them came back and gathered at HawOo (i.e. Residential Office of *Sawbwa*).⁷⁷ When 1947 Constitution emerged the Southern Shan Region and the Eastern Shan Region were incorporated into one and became one of the States of Myanmar.

Lashio after the Period of Independence

On 21 November 1948 Sao Hong Pha rendered his service as the Commissioner of the Northern Shan State at Lashio.⁷⁸ On 31 March 1949 a great number of insurgents namely YebawPhyu (White –band PVO- People's Volunteer Organization) and Communist Tat Ni (Red Troops) sacked the Lashio Bank, deprived of about 15 lakhs in cash and took some government servants such as Yebaw (PVO) and military police as prisoners. Troops led by Hsenwi*Sawbwa* Sao Hong Pha approached Lashio to resist the insurgents, launched an offensive campaign, and won success. After that, the KNDO (Karen National Defence Organization led by NawSai sacked the rural areas and captured the cattle robbed the Lashio Bank of six lakhs in cash. Sao Hong Pha in person led the troops and launched an offensive campaign to the insurgents.⁷⁹ On 24 December 1949 memorial triumph ceremony of independence the President of Union bestowed Sao Hong Pha upon the title of ThadoMahaSithu.⁸⁰ On 25 December 1958 under the supervision of venerable Aloka*Sayadaw*, Hsenwi Sectional Head and 59 *Sanghas*, the prominent *Sawbwa* and his consort Maha Devi raised the pier ornamental finial to the pagoda of *Sasana* 2500 celebrating a magnificent ceremony. On 12 November 1958, in organizing Shan Regions Government, Sao Hong Pha rendered his service as the Chairman of the Shan Regions.⁸¹

In a nutshell, in the early Konbaung Period, Lashio was included as a small village in Hsenwi jurisdiction. According to chronicles, during the period of King Sinbyu Shin, Lashio was a transit of military encampment. During the British colonial period Lashio, Taunggyi and Kalaw were promulgated as specific areas and Lashio village was notified as a Town. On observing the initial administration system of the British after the occupation of Myanmar, it is found that they did not reuse the towns which were used as towns by ancient Myanmar Kings as their towns. It is learnt that the British established their headquarters in their offing of old towns and functioned the machinery of administration. However even nowadays it is found that those towns still exist as developed towns. Similarly, during the time of ancient Myanmar Kings in Konbaung period Lashio existed as a small and little known village. In the colonial period Lashio turned into a status of town where a British headquarters existed, and even nowadays it is still developing. It is a sound fact that event during the time of World War II Lashio existed as an important town for line of communication not only by land route but also by air. However as to terrain of Lashio there is no plain land as in Hsipaw. The people generally earn their living not chiefly based on agriculture. It is found that the people there earn their living chiefly on trading. It is learnt that the aforesaid business of trading relies on the Sino-Myanmar road.

⁷⁷Ohn Pe,2013, 244-246

⁷⁸Sai Win Khaing,2014, 158

⁷⁹Sai Win Khaing, 2014, pp.156-157, (Note It is expressed as AD.1948 ME 1310-3rd Waxing of Tagu in the reference book. If the mentioned Myanmar Era is turned into AD, the actual year shall be 1949)

⁸⁰Sai Win Khaing,2014, 157

⁸¹Sai Win Khaing,2014, 161

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