

OPIUM IN MYANMAR (1885-1948)

PhD DISSERTATION

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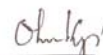
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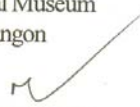
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ABSTRACT

The word “opium” derived from Latin, meaning “the one and single remedy of God”. In Pali, it is derived from *Ahi-phena*; in Sanskrit, *Aphena*. It was called *Aphein* in Hindi, and from that word derived the Mon word and the Myanmar word “Bein”. The Opium War of China stood as evidence that while opium would serve as a useful remedy; the abuse of opium could result in the ruin of the country. In Myanmar, the Dutch traders trafficked opium in the 16th century. But the Myanmar kings gave punishment to the opium-eaters or opium users, even death sentence. Thus, danger of the opium was presented in the reign of Myanmar kings. But after Myanmar had been annexed by the British government, licenses were issued for opening opium shops, and the Myanmar people, then were confronted with the dangers of the opium. This point has been presented in this dissertation. Next, it is discussed that the use of opium for healing or for remedy in the tradition of Myanmar indigenous medicine was transformed into the abuse of the opium which resulted from the bad heritage of colonialism. In other words, it is highlighted that it was the British colonialists who first brought the problem of drug abuse which followed the abuse of opium, in Myanmar. Although the British government earned a lot of income or revenue collected on opium license and the opium shops, some Myanmar became the victims of opium as opium eaters or smokers. This dissertation has presented, together with statistics of primary sources, the fact that one-tenth of all criminal cases that took place in Myanmar during the colonial period were related to the abuse of the opium. In the Review it is discussed that the problem of the opium which took root in the sixteenth century has still been the cause for the national threat today. There has as yet been lacking a dissertation which presents an account on opium as a narcotic drug based on reliable, collected contemporary primary sources, and this has been a gap in Myanmar history which this dissertation aims to fill.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	iii
List of Table	v
List of Photographs	vii
List of Maps	ix
List of Appendices	x
List of Abbreviations	xi
Glossary	xiii
Introduction	xix
Chapters	
1. Background History	1
2. Opium Laws	23
3. Opium Cultivation and Production	60
4. Opium Distribution and its Consequences	84
Conclusion	131
Appendices	150
Bibliography	156

List of Tables

	Page
1. The largest opium excise collected districts	18
2. The least opium excise levied district from 1905-06 to 1911-12	19
3. The largest amounts of opium excise collected districts from 1912-13 to 1930-31	20
4. Least amount of opium excise collected district from 1912-13 to 1930-31	21
5. Opium Cases	27
6. Report on Opium-Related case	34
7. Special tax on opium trafficking	37
8. Opium Crime and punishment in lower Myanmar and Upper Myanmar	42
9. The amount of opium weight arrested all over the country	45
10. Control of case breaching the opium Act	49
11. Opium cases in Myanmar	52
12. The Excise Collection	78
13. The amount of opium sold in Rakhine Division	89
14. Sale, loss and Profit of Opium in respective districts	92
15. Net Revenue on opium in Respective Districts	93
16. Rental Fees in Respective Districts	94
17. Opium Sale in Lower Myanmar	96
18. Opium issued, Opium shop Rental Fees and Sale in 1886-69	99
19. Comparison of license Fees for selling the opium	104

	vi
20. The Revenue of 1883-84 and 1884-85	105
21. Fees for the Warehouses	110
22. Fees on the issuing of the license Fees of opium in Upper Myanmar	110
23. Revenue collected on Opium in Upper Myanmar	112
24. Issuing the license of Opium	113
25. Opium shops and license Fees	114
26. Opium sale of Rakhine District	115
27. Opium Sale of the Bago District	115
28. Revenue collected on opium in Lower Myanmar	117
29. Amount of opium annually imported from India into Myanmar	118
30. Opium Consumers of the jail population for Lower Burma	123
31. Number of Opium Shops and Revenue in the Shan States	124
32. Estimate Revenue from 1940 to 1944	126

List of Photographs

	Page
1. Cultivating and Producing Opium Crop in India Since 11 th Century	135
2. Self-consumption of Opium by Rich Arabs and Trading it throughout the World	135
3. An Arab Smoking Opium and a Woman in the Same Way	136
4. An Arab Teaching How to Use Opium and Sellint it in Myanmar Po-win-taung Mural Painting (17 th Century)	137
5. A Native being Taught How to Smoke Opium by a Foreigner Po-win-taung Mural Painting (17 th Century)	137
6. Foreigners Using Opium in Myanmar Po-win-taung Mural Painting (17 th Century)	138
7. Opium Pipes	138
8. Opium Pipes	139
9. Tattooing a Burmese Boy, Permission to Use Opium while being tattooed and to have Opium in hand (Tattooer)	140
10. Opium Seeds	140
11. Raw Opium and its Extract	141
12. Various Opium Crops	142

	viii
13. Production of resin from poppy pod	143
14. A Licenced Opium Dem	144
15. Woman Opium Consumer	144

List of Maps

	Page
1. Opium Shops in Rakhine Division	146
2. Opium Shops in Taninthayi Division	147
3. Opium Shops in Lower Myanmar	148
4. Opium Shops in Upper Myanmar	149

List of Appendices

	Page
1. License Fees of Opium in Upper Myanmar	150
2. Revenue Collected on Opium in Myanmar	152
3. Increase and Reduce of Opium Shop in Myanmar	154
4. Increase and Reduce of Opium Shop of District in Myanmar	155

List of Abbreviations

Anti-Narcotic Drug Campaign, 1972	<i>Anti-narcotic drug and Intoxicant Abuse versus the United Nations</i> , the United Nations Headquarters, New York, Department of information, 1972
Aung Than Htun, 1980	<i>Anti-narcotics Campaign</i> , Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1980
BLS, 1925	<i>Pyidungsu Myanmar Naingantaw Bein-Let-Swe-U Pade</i> (The Myanmar Opium Manual) Yangon Union of Myanmar, 1925
Bo Hlaing, 1961	<i>U-du-baw-zana Thingaha Kyan</i> , Yangon, Hanthawaddy, 1961
BOEM, 1911	The Opium Act, The Bihar and Orissa Excise Manual, Government Printing, 1911
BOM, 1927	The Burma Opium Manual 1925 Rangoon, Government Printing, 1927
Brief History, 1907	<i>Brief Histories of the States in the Southern Shan States. For the year 1906</i> , Rangoon, Government, Printing, 1907
Chin Hills, 1923	Report on the Administration of Chin Hills, Rangoon, Printing, 1923
Crosthwaite, 1968	<i>The Pacification of Burma</i> , Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1968
Daly, 1890	Record on the Northern Shan States, Rangoon

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- PAB, 1886 Proceeding of the Administration of Burma on the Department of Finance and Commerce, Upper Burma, 1886

- PGB, 1900 Proceeding of the Government of Burma, 1900,
Rangoon Government Press, 1900
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Baptist Mission Press, 1939
- Po Latt, 1963 *Myanmar Saga Ahpwint Kyan* (Explanatory
Text to Myanmar Language), Vol. II, Yangon,
Pyinnya Nanda Press, 1963
- PRCO, 1886 Paper Relating to the Consumption of Opium in
Lower and Upper Burma, 1886, Rangoon,
Office of the Superintendent, Government
Printing, Burma, 1886
- RAB, 1867-1911 Report on the Administration of British Burma,
Rangoon, Government Printing, 1867-1911
- RACJB, 1908 Report on the Administration of Criminal Justice
in Burma, Rangoon Government Printing, 1908
- RAEB, 1946 Report on the Administration of the Excise
Department in Burma, 30th September, 1946,
Rangoon, Superintend, Government Printing and
Stationary, Burma,
- RANSS, 1923 Report on the Administration of the Northern
Shan States, Rangoon Government Printing,
1923
- RASSS, 1901 Report on the Administration of the Southern
Shan State, Rangoon, Government Printing,
1901
- RED, 1885 Report on the Excise Department Rangoon,
Government Printing, 1885

- REDBB, 1880-85 Report on the Excise Department in British Burma, Rangoon, Government Press, 1880-85
- REDLB, 1889 Report on the Excise Department in Lower Burma, Government Printing, Burma, 1889
- RFSS, 1924 Report on the Federated Shan State, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1924
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- RPAB, 1882 Report on the Police Administration of British Burma, Rangoon Government Press, 1882
- RRTP, 1899 Report on the Rangoon Town Police Rangoon Government Printing, 1899
- RRVAB, 1903 Resolution on the Reports of Village Administration, Rangoon Government Printing, 1903
- RSFMD, 1903 Report on the Shan Frontier of the Mandalay Division, Rangoon Government Printing, 1903

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Glossary

B.L.S	<i>Bein-let-Swe</i> (Opium Manual)
Druoga	Office of Customs, Excise and Other Departments
Jammader	Second Rank Native Police Officer
Kye Thi-Bansah	Kye-Thi Man-san
Nin Gyan District	Pyinmana District
Sawbwa Council	Council of Federated Shan Chiefs
Tindal	Native Petty Officer

INTRODUCTION

During the writer's first appointment in Myitkyina University, she learnt that a considerable number of young people were drug addicts. She also noticed the Hospital for Drug Addicts in Myitkyina. As a rehabilitation centre, a vehicle service centre was also set up in the city. The sight of young people in the compound of the hospital who had been receiving medical treatment there, or the young people who had recovered from the addiction of drugs and had been employed in the car service always drew her attention. It was from that time that she had been 'addicted' (or interested) to the subject of opium, which is the source of narcotic drugs. She also had the desire to do research on the historical aspect of this narcotic drug, if fortune should favour her. This wish had been fulfilled when she was given an opportunity to write a Ph.D dissertation on the topic concerning the history of opium in Mandalay University.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter One discusses the route of opium leading to Myanmar: opium was first grown in Mesopotamia, and it was grown in India in the eleventh century. Opium first arrived in Myanmar in the fifteenth century. The original meaning of the word "opium" was "the one and single remedy given by God". The term "Bein" in Myanmar derived from "Ahi-phena", which changed into *Aphe-na*, *Aphein* and *Bein*. Many medical treatises in Myanmar contain the term "Bein" in the prescriptions. So it could serve as an effective remedy for the user with a good purpose. It was from Arab that opium reached Myanmar. But according to the saying, "The use of opium, liquor and

intoxicants would lead to one's ruin of life," Myanmar kings did not support the abuse of opium. There existed very few drug abuses of the abuse of drug till the nineteenth century. During the Nyaung Yan Period in the seventeenth century, Prince Min Ye Aung Din, son of King Anauk-phet Lun, made excessive abuse of opium, died and was transformed into the spirit of lower plane, or *Nat*. There are also some evidence which show that the notorious queen Nan-Ma-Taw Me Nu made some abuse of opium. In Chapter One, as Myanmar Kings had tried to stop the abuse of opium by giving death sentence, the threat of opium was avoided.

To prevent the unbalanced trading of China, the British grew opium in India, and sold it to China. Thus, Myanmar had to stand between India, which grew opium, and China, which made abuse of opium. The cultivation of opium in India had spread even to Asam, which lies close to Myanmar. Then, via Asam, the cultivation of opium had spread to the border-land areas. After the First Anglo-Myanmar war in 1824, and the Second Anglo-Myanmar war in 1852, Lower Myanmar felt under the British. Then, the British opened opium shops, and officially allowed the use of opium, as mentioned in Chapter One.

Chapter Two presents an account of Opium Laws on the opium trading. Even in the reign of Myanmar Kings, the abuse of opium was strictly prohibited by the royal orders. King Badon issued the royal order that the opium-eater or opium-smoker be sentenced to death. It can be assumed that Myanmar was the first country in World History which issued law against the abuse of opium that death sentence was to be given to the use and sale of opium in any form. Chapter Two also mentions that the abuse of opium was strictly prohibited also in the reign of King Mindon. But under the British colony, opium shops were opened, and some Myanmar people had become opium-eaters or smokers, and were imprisoned. The peasants who abused opium grew less crops, and there was a decline in yield. Opium also damages one's damage, and so opium laws are

mentioned in Chapter Two. There is a thin margin between the usefulness of opium and the threat of opium to be considered in drawing the opium laws. It cannot be totally wiped out. The labourers taken from India could toil very hard and never get tired after chewing opium. Chapter Two also mentions that some nationals like Kachin, Shan, Wa and La-hu used opium as the remedy. As the British government got a lot of revenue on opium trading, they began to consider the official allowance of the issuing of the opium license and opium production, distribution and sale. So the British government had the opium addicts registered, and allowed to buy opium at the officially permitted opium shops. Chapter Two also states such laws as “Not to allow the youths below the age of twenty five to buy opium”.

Chapter Three contains an account of opium cultivation. In Myanmar, as opium was not allowed on the ground that its abuse is against the Myanmar culture and traditions, opium was grown in the China borders. But, as stated in the 1890s, when the British had invaded Myanmar, the opium cultivation had increased immensely. In 1910 discusses that the opium cultivation had increased double and triple. The cause for opium cultivation in Myanmar was that in 1911, as the Sun Yet-Sen Government had come to rule in China, many Chinese in Yunan had entered the Shan States, and extended opium cultivation. Moreover, in 1918, as ships could not travel normally because of the First World War, there was a break in trading, and the demand in the opium market could not be met, and so extended opium cultivation had to be done in Myanmar. During the years from 1890 to 1917, the prices of opium had soared up, thus arousing the incentive to grow opium in extended number. As the British government knew that opium could cause the spoiling of the morality of the people, as well as the decline in productivity, it assumed that opium cultivation should be banned, but they were strongly ‘captivated’ to the revenue gained from opium shops, and opium dens. So

Chapter Three points out that there still existed the opium cultivation in the Colonial period.

Chapter Four presents the opium distribution and the consequences. First, it gives an account that the Myanmar kings effectively stopped the abuse of opium by issuing royal orders. Then it points out the predicament in which Myanmar had stood, between India, which cultivated and produced opium, and China which made abuse of opium. When the British had occupied Myanmar, opium dens and opium shops were officially opened through the issuing of licenses. As a lot of revenues were obtained on opium trading, there came into existence sixty eight licensed opium shops in 1880-81 in the British Myanmar. After the British had occupied the whole country, opium licenses were issued all over the country. As a result, there appeared a considerable number of opium eaters and smokers, and it also resulted in quite a number of problems related to the opium abuses. The twelve percent and above of all the cases that happened in Myanmar throughout the rule of the British were opium-related. In other words, Chapter Four highlights that the one-tenth of the social problems of Myanmar were opium-related social problems.

The researcher made five visits to Yangon to collect data for preparing this dissertation. She visited the libraries and the National Archives of Yangon, and collected books and papers. Copies were made on over 500 primary sources of files of the British colonial period. As much research data had been collected within the allowed period of time.

The threat of the narcotic drugs is still overshadowing the world today. The abuse of the opium and other narcotic drugs goes against the Myanmar Law, as well as the Myanmar Culture and Traditions. The opium problems that the foreigners had initiated to Myanmar can doubtlessly spoil the morality, social and economical aspects of the country and the nation. With the aim of highlighting the

threat of the opium and educating about avoiding it, this dissertation has been prepared. As far as the research has been done, there has not yet been a Ph.D dissertation which focuses on the history of opium with particular reference to the background setting of Myanmar. It is assumed that this dissertation aims at making a new contribution. The factors of the economy and the social factors in Myanmar history are also considered, which would make the Myanmar history more complete. However, there still can be some more additions to be made.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND HISTORY

Opium is a kind of plant from the fruit of which opium can be extracted and prepared. It is from opium that narcotic drugs can be made.¹ Opium, in Myanmar “Bein” is not a Myanmar word. It came from Asia Minor and arrived Myanmar via India by sea route. It is known as *Infuan* in Asia Minor and in Pali,² *aphena*; in Sanskrit *ahipheña*, and in Hindi *aphein*, from which it changed into the Mon-Myanmar word of “Bein” (opium).³ The Botanical name of poppy plant is “*papaver somniferum*”. The word “*papaver*” in Latin means the plant that induces sleepiness or drowsiness.⁴ Opium is obtained by boiling the resin collected from poppy fruit. In AD 1600, the English Thomas Sydenham called the opium as the drug that God gave⁵ to human beings. Monks in Srilanka call the opium” *ahipheña*⁶ which is a Magada word.⁷

¹ *The Myanmar Abhidhan* (the Myanmar Dictionary); Yangon, Myanmar Commission, 1991, p-200 (Henceforth: Myanmar Abhidhan, 1991)

² U Bo Hlaing, Yawmangyi; *U-du-baw-zana Thingaha kyan*, Yangon, Hanthawaddy, 1961, pp-138-9 (Henceforth: Bo Hlaing, 1961)

³ U Po Latt; *Myanmar saga ahpwint kyan* (Explanatory text to Myanmar language), Vol.II, Yangon, Pyinnya Nanda Press, 1963, pp.172-174 (Henceforth: Po Latt, 1963)

⁴ *Myanmar Swezonkyan* (Encyclopaedia Birmanica); Vol VII, Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1963, p. 382 (Henceforth: Myanmar Swezonkyan, 1963)

⁵ (a) Kyaw Than Tun (Sethmau-sewa); *Mu-yit-se hnint Taing-yin-se*, Narcotics and Indigenous Medicine), Sarpay Beikman, Yangon, 1987, p.24 (Henceforth: Kyaw Than Tun, 1987)

(b) Join Cpaw, Opium, your donation will help protect and maintain Canada Wilderness, <http://www.Knowlex.org/lang/en/lexikon/opium.htm/7/26/2004>

⁶ Maha Zeya Theonkhaya, *Waw-ha-ra Li-niththa Dipani*, (Vocabulary Dictionary), Yangon, Hanthawady, 1963, p.147 (Henceforth: Thinkhaya, 1965)

⁷ Myanmar Abhidhan, 1991

The opium is found very useful, if it is used wisely. U Po Hlaing in his U-du-baw-za-na text described about the property of opium as follows:

“The oil, got by grinding poppy seeds, has a rich taste, gives strength and power, and seldom to digest. It makes semen grow and can control the ailment caused by flatus. But some medical text-explained that the poppy-seed-oil is rich in taste, piquant, and can cause dizziness and intoxication. It is hot and can control the gas in the body. It is indigestible and can cause constipation. It can intoxicate and destroy the expectorate and bile.”⁸

The Gandalarit (Chinese) medical text, translated from the text of China in Mindon's reign, stated thus:

“Should the equal proportions of opium, the dung of obicken and the residue of smoking pipe be ground, and made it into balls of the seeds of *Abrus precatorius* (Ywe-galay) in size. Then the balls should be dehydrated in the shade. If these dehydrated balls soaked in sesame oil, and be applied placed in the anus, all kinds of pils can be cured.”⁹

Solution made of opium can cure insomnia, lack of appetite, angina, flatus ailment, rheumatism, pile, menstrual haemorrhage, post-natal diarrhoea and phthisis.¹⁰ Eye cure made of boa gall, gall of crocodile, officinal fruit, *Coptis teeta*, undehydrated sesame and opium, can cure not only eye-sore and teardropping, but

⁸ Bo Hlaing, 1961, 189

⁹ *Abidhamma Taungtha* Explanatory, Vol.II & Gandalarit Medical Text, in Two Volumes, Mandalay Pitaka Distribution, 1968, pp.120-1 (Henceforth: *Abidhamma Taungtha*, 1968)

¹⁰ *Be-thit-za Swezon Abeikdan* (Dictionary of Versatile Medicine), Yangon, Pyithu Alin taik, 1956, p.167 (Henceforth: *Be-thit-za Swezon*, 1956)

also tooth-ache and carbuncle.¹¹ Myanmar Indigenous medicine No.(22) made of mangosteen peel, pomegranate peel, cover of tamarind seed, dried emblic myrobalan, officinal fruit, marijuana, roasted salt and opium, can cure not only diarrhoea due to irritating food, and dysentery, but also tooth infirmity, tooth ache, phorrhoea, plus such ailments on tear-dropping and trachoma.¹²

Opium is not only used in Oriental medicine, but also in the modern scientifically prepared medicine of the world. In Europe, it was used in the treatment of psychosis, in the Renaissance. For the first time, it became known as a cure for the treatment of mental disorder. In the eighteenth century, physicians used opium in the treatment of mental illness in American colonies. Beginning from the late eighteenth century, it was recommended openly to use opium in treatment of gall stone, cancer, dysentery, and pain. Opium was primarily used in cure of diarrhoea, vomiting, and menstrual disorder and was also used for easy delivery.¹³ But soon, the medicinal opium, which had been abused, became dangerous to human beings.

Being the protector and supporter of Buddha's Teachings, the pious Buddhist Myanmar kings strictly enforced the ban on the use of opium, ganja, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous rice and alcohol.

Since about 5000 BC, the Sumerians had known about the opium. Babylonians knew about the medicinal value of opium and that knowledge had been bequeathed to Egyptians. According to ancient Egyptian records, Egyptian had known about the use of opium as an opiate or sleeping medicine well before

¹¹ *Indigenous Medicine Practioners' Training*, 1/98, Mandalay, Indigenous Medicine Department Press, 1998, pp.103-104 (Henceforth: *Indigenous Medicine, 1998*)

¹² *Indigenous Medicine, 1998*, 52-53

¹³ Thaik Htun; *Mu Yit Say Pyinnga pay Dika* (Education of Narcotics), Yangon, Pyinnya Beikman Press, 1980, pp.77-9 (Henceforth: Thaik Htun, 1980)

2000 BC.¹⁴ The great Greek poet Homer metaphorically said the opium in his Odyssey as an anxiety-driving remedy. In the first century A.D. Dioscoride Dipetaxius had said how to collect and prepare the opium.

In the ninth century AD, the Arab physicians came to know well about the medicinal use of opium and their traders caused to spread the use of opium in the Eastern countries.¹⁵ The spread of opium at that time, could not be to destroy a race or a country, not as additive but medicinal drug. In 47 AD, a Roman pharmacologist, pharmacist, reported about the medicinal use of opium and how to make them. In 1500 AD, a Swiss Paracelsus wrote in praise of Laudanum, a medicine made with some ingredient of opium, In India, poppy had been grown since the eleventh century. The use of opium became widespread in the sixteenth century, and went on spreading through the ages of Mughal Kings.¹⁶

The habit of opium smoking and the practise of poppy cultivation began only after the arrival of foreigners in Myanmar. According to the travelogue of John Pinkerton, the sale of opium started in port towns of Passim and Syriam by Arab traders who took it from India. It was said that Arab traders brought the velvet along with the opium.¹⁷ Besides, according to the record of Caesar Fredrick, he himself took the opium from the Indian port towns of Cambay, Chaw and resold it in Bago, Myanmar, where he could sell it with huge profit, by which he could bring almost up to the sixty packages of opium into Myanmar.¹⁸

¹⁴ Kyaw Than Htun, 1987, 24

¹⁵ The Encyclopedia Americana, Vol.XX, Landon, Williard Benton, 1974, 764

¹⁶ (a) Kyaw Than Htun, 1987, 24

(b) See Photo (1)

¹⁷ Aung Than Htun, U; *Anti-narcotics Campaign*, Sarpay Beikman Press, Yangon, 1980, p.103 (Henceforth: Aung Than Htun, 1980)

¹⁸ (a) Ludu U Hla; *Bein-pyu-tha-ma Ahmargaba* (Heroinite and a world of wrong), Vol II, Kyibwaye Press, Mandalay, 1974, p.9,10 (Henceforth: U Hla, 1974)

(b) See Photo (2,3)

The record of Dutch East India Co. showed that once it had sold the opium of 200Lb at Malacca, and these opium were brought to Siam and Bago where they resold them with huge profit.¹⁹ In this way, the opium arrived to Myanmar by means of maritime trade along with Arab and foreigners. In about the middle of 16th century, Dutch and British entered the opium trade.²⁰ Therefore, along with the arrival of Dutch into Myanmar, there might have opium trade in the lower part of Myanmar.

It seems that, after the advent of alcohol, beer, opium and marijuana carried by Arabs and foreign traders, the homily, that said” the one who took opium, ganja, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous rice and alcohol, should be known of his fortune will be destroyed”, came to appear in the Myanmar milieu. It is thought that opium arrived Myanmar in about-1581, through India, and set about opium taking in Myanmar society, but the opium use might be not much big.

The opium addiction could be found not only in the common people only, but in the royalty also. According to the legend of Thirty seven lords, Prince Minye Aung Din, son of Anaukphetlun and Aung Min Phyu, son of Ava King, instantaneously became the Lords or Nats after their demise due to over doses of opium. They became members of Myanmar traditional Nats of the Thirty seven lords.²¹

Minye Aung Din was one among the thirty seven lords, compiled and written by the Minister Padethayaza. He was son of King Anaukphetlun and son-

¹⁹ Thaik Htun, 1980, 97-98

²⁰ D.G.E Hall, *Europe and Burma*, London, Oxford University Press, 1945, 161(Henceforth: Hall, 1945)

²¹ (a) Mg Htin Aung; *The Thirty Seven Lords*, J.B.R.S, Vol.XXXIX, Pt, 1956, 95 (Henceforth: Htin Aung, 1956)

(b) U Htwe Han and U Ba Nyunt (trs); *History of Myanmar Traditional Nat Culture*, Sarpay Meitswe Sarpay, Yangon, 1981, p.92 (Henceforth: Htwe Han and Ba Nyunt, 1981)

in-law of king Thalun. It seems that Padethayaza, seizing the opportunity to admonish the youths, not to become the narcotic addicts, had composed of a Nat song on Aung Din, who in the song, preached the youth not to emulate him in taking narcotics of opium, marijuana and so on. The Natsong on Aung Din, Nat-Song goes as follow:

“Do you show your devotion
to Min Ye Aung Din, with an iron helmet,
A great harpist, brothers and sisters?
He is known as Min Khaung Gyi,
The king of Gods over all lands,
The king of Ava (Inwa).
He is skilled in riding the elephant
And the horse-riding, unrivalled,
In the eighteen skills of a great man.
He expired because he had abused opium.
Dear brothers, my brothers,
Never, never follow his wrong path”.

In monarchical days, the king and the people alike kept the five Garudhamma, which was pronounced on every 1st waxing day to remind all the denizen of the country, by issuing the royal order of Garudhamma,²² which was meant that everyone in the realm should obey and observe the five precepts or the eight precepts and the Three Gems, indirectly exhorting to abstain from taking or eating of opium, marijuana, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutenous rice and alcohol.

Alaungmintaya in his reign (1752-60) passed a royal order concerning the use of toddy, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous

²² U Maung Maung Tin; *Shwenanthone Wawhara Abhidan* (A Dictionary of Palace usages), Yangon, Buddha Sasana Council Press, 1975, pp.61,65, 71 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 1975)

rice and alcohol, in that the monarch dictated that everyone shall obtain from taking intoxicants, otherwise, would be punished severely.²³ The order in 1 January 1760 read as follow:

Prohibit strictly the consumption of any intoxicant drinks. Stop all practices of animism. Proclaim the order by displaying the execution blade and solemnly announcing the fact that the punishment for disobedience would be an execution with that blade.²⁴

As there was no mention of opium in the royal order, it might be safe to assume that at that time in the part of Upper Myanmar, there was no tradition of smoking or eating opium. This assumption was further attested by the teat of Kavilakkhana orthography, in which we could not find the mentioning of the word-opium. It is should be there in Myanmar, opium could be found only in the coastal regions of Rakhine and Taninthayi.²⁵

The unmistakable existence of opium was found in Myanmar beginning from the reign of King Badon, who, just after the accession to the throne, issued the following royal order on 20 February 1782, that run:

²³ B.R Pearn; *A History of Rangoon*, Rangoon, American Baptist Mission Press, 1939, 61 (Henceforth: Pearn, 1939)

²⁴ (a) Daw Khin Khin Sein (ed); *Alaungphaya Ei Ameintaw Myar* (The Royal Orders of Alaungmintaya), Yangon, Myanmar Historical Commission, 1964, 137 (Henceforth: Khin Khin Sein, 1964)

(b) Dr. Than Tun; *The Royal Orders of Burma. AD. 1751-1781*; Vol. III, AD, 1751-1781, The Centre for South East Asia Studies, Kyoto University Press, 1985, p.63 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1985)

²⁵ Toe Hla; “Luhmu-Toe-tet-ye Phyt-sin-go Phyet-si-ne-thaw Bein” (The opium that destroys the social progress), *Tekkatho Pyinnnya Padetha*, Vol XIII, Part 3, 1979, 88-89 (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 1979)

There shall be no making, selling and consumption of any kind of intoxicant drink or inhaling a stimulant drug in the entire Kingdom. There shall be no big game hunting in the entire Kingdom. There shall be no gambling of any kind in the entire kingdom.²⁶

By examination the order, it can understand that only after the thirty years of Alaungmitaya's accession to the throne, the opium spreaded down to the grassroots level among the people reign, as this king was particularly fond of collecting medical texts and cultivation of herbal plants. The text-Wawhara Linaththa Dipani might be stood as evidence, where the teat described as follow:

In the reign of the founder king of Amarapura, the king asked what were these? by showing plants of poppy and marijuana to the monk Varana bandhe and so on who came from Ceylon. As the Monk replied that poppy plant was called ahiphena and that of marijuana as banga, both were of Mogada language.²⁷

In the first place, opium was used as medicine, which should be known by the royal order of King Badon issued on 10 May 1810 that dictated that every soldiers shall texts with them the opium of one pè each, to prevent from the diseases.²⁸ Therefore, it can understand that some became addicted to opium through the use of it as medicine. When foreigners arrived in Myanmar, the habit of taking intoxicants of opium, ganja, and alcohol became widespread. Concerning with the spread of opium, king Badon issued on 16 December 1817a royal edict, that stated as follows:

²⁶ Dr. Than Tun; *The Royal Order of Burma*, AD. 1782-1787, Vol.IV, The Centre for South East Asia Studies, Kyoto University Press, 1986, p.220 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1986)

²⁷ Thinkhaya, 1963, 160

²⁸ Dr. Than Tun; “Myanmar Nainggan haint say pyinnya” (Burma and Medical Science), *Tekkatho Pyinnya Padetha*, Vol.VI, part 3, 1970, 322 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 1970)

Any form of Opium consumption (Whether smoking it or eating it) has never been habitually done by people living in Burma; the order to arrest anyone who has been found indulging in this practice is confined only to Burmese nationals; foreigners are exempted from this order, Myo Wun-Town officer, shall get all opium addicts among the Burmese arrested, opium confiscated shall be sent to palace stores; and the other applies to opium found in the hands of Chinese²⁹

By the order, it comes to know that the royal orders against opium “eating” was only for the natives. Foreigners had the right to buy, sell and consume it. It also knew that opium cases fall within the purview of Treasury Minister. So Many royal edicts issued notwithstanding, the opium trade did not subside, instead, became spread not only in the royal capital Amarapura but also especially in the coastal sea ports.

After two days of the issuance of first order concerning with the opium, King Badon again passed the following royal edict, on 18 December 1817, that stated as:

Ship calling at the ports of Dhannawati, Hanthawaddy, Meghawati and Rammawati would bring opium and other allied drugs; it is forbidden to buy and use these drugs; any Burman who Consume opium, etc, shall be arrested, notify this to all Town officers and Regimental Officers concerned: Myo Won-Town officer of Hkan But shall check the opium traffic in Hkan But brought there by Kathe Cassays.³⁰

²⁹ (a) Dr. Than Tun; *The Royal Order of Burma*, AD. 1811-1819, Vol. VII, The Centre for South East Asia Studies, Kyoto University Press, 1988, p.156 (Henceforth: Than Tun, *1988a*)

(b) Thaik Htun, *1980*, 99

³⁰ (a) Than Tun, *1988a*, 156

(b) Thaik Htun, *1980*, 99-100

By the order, it was evident that the king had taken strong action against the opium, arresting everyone who ate, and smoked, and sellers and buyers of opium, and thrown them into jail. Apparently, so many prisoners of opium seemed filled the parson, because the king issued on 30 December 1817, another royal order just after two weeks of the second one, which read thus:

In consideration of long term effects, the consumption of opium has been forbidden, opium addicts now under arrest shall go free if they promise not to fall back on that bad habit; execute anyone who are found later either selling or consumption opium.³¹

If we study king Badon's royal orders, it can be learned that opium had already been spread in the royal capital. The spread of opium was found pervasive enough not only among the people, but it even encroached the royal palace also. According to the report of The British Residency in Burma, even Queen MaiNu of King Bagyidaw (Sagaing Min) was found complicated with opium, which said “She uses opium freely”(sic)³². Well before the British annexation of lower Myanmar, Myanmar kings had totally prohibited the opium trade and poppy cultivation by taking strong action against the breaching of the order. During the second Anglo-Myanmar war, on 18 March 1852, King Bagan issued the following order,

Gambling, drugs and intoxicant drink are not allowed. When the men are safely encamped after aday's mared, all leaders. From ten head to Commander shall go with Pah Hha Chot-Sword.³³

³¹ (a) Than Tun, *1988a*, 157

(b) Thaik Htun, *1980*, 100

³² W.S. Desai, *The British Residency in Burma*, 73

³³ Dr. Than Tun, *The Royal Order of Burma*, AD. 1819-1853, Vol. VIII, The Centre for South East Asia Studies, Kyoto University Press, 1988, p.300 (Henceforth: Than Tun, *1988b*)

In Mindon's reign, the British were employing a range of stratagems, in order to be able to get excuse for the annexation of the remaining half of the kingdom. The British apparently used opium as a means of weapon to destroy the physical and mental strength of the people of Myanmar. King Mindon tried at his best to prevent his people from dire danger of opium, by issuing a law which meant to punish the one who took intoxicants. The law³⁴ stated that.

No one shall take intoxicants or alcohol in the capital. The royal city governor, provincial city governor, town officer and regimental officer shall be responsible to take due action against the infringement of the order by anyone. Anyone, who takes bribes and corruption in execution of their duty, i.e, lessening the punishment and turning blind eye to the culprit, shall be liable to punish like that of the culprit and the Hluttaw shall do this.

The farsighted king also issued the three penal code for the breacher of the intoxicant law which were

- (a) No one, official or non-official in the capital shall take the intoxicants of opium, ganja, intoxicating brew, intoxication preparation of fermented glutinous rice and alcohol. Any one who take the intoxicant shall be punished by 50 lashes. For second time, such person shall be punished by 75 lashes and those of third time 100 lashes. Four time and above must be punished 100 lashes and put into the locks for one month.
- (b) No one, official or non-official in the capital shall trade the intoxicants of opium, ganja, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous rice and alcohol. First time infringement shall be punished by 100 lashes, those of second time shall be put into the locks for one month, and a person who abused the above-mentioned intoxicants for the third time shall be

³⁴ Thaik Htun, 1980, 101-102

thrown into the prison for one month, and that of four time and above must be given 100 lashes, plus one month imprisonment.

- (c) No one who has yet come of age, i.e, children, in the capital shall take the intoxicants of opium, ganja, intoxicating brew, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous rice and alcohol. The one who breached the law shall be punished along with their parent or guardian by 25 lashes. Two time breaching shall be punished by 50 lashes each and for third time 75lashces each for the fourth time, 100 lashes must be given.³⁵

While Myanmar kings took strong action against the consumption of opium in their realm, the Upper Myanmar,³⁶ the number of opium “eaters” and “smokers” dreadfully rose in the lower British Burma. In Thibaw's reign, gambling tremendously rose, in which not only the people but also the crown servicemen sank into the quagmire of gambling.

By the brief instructions given to Royal water and betel bearer Nawrahta Kyaw Khaung and Tax collector of thirty toll stations the East connecting hall, Royal water and betal bearer Nemyo Thiri Kyaw Htin, they were made known and obliged not to take intoxicants of opium, marijuama, intoxicating breus, intoxicating preparation of fermented glutenous rice, alcohol and even toddy, and not to do gambling of pachisi, dicing, playing of red and white nested tube and so on.³⁷ With the brief instruction, they were found given Hluttaw's reminder which warned not it they breached these instruction, they would be punished accordingly. By these penal code, we come to know that King Mindon had tried to make the

³⁵ Thaik Htun, 1980, 102-103

³⁶ U Tin; *Myammarmin Okchokpon Sardan* (Treatises on Myanmar Traditional Administrative System), Vol IV, Yangon, Cultural Department Press, 1974, pp. 189, 256 (Henceforth: Tin, 1974)

³⁷ Taw Sein Kho, *Hluttaw Hmat-tan* (Hluttaw Records), Yangon, Government Printing, 1960, pp. 222-223 (Henceforth: Taw Sein Kho, 1960)

morality of the people strong and physically and mentally vigorous, by promulgating the intoxicant law which was strongly and sternly enforced.

By the term of Yandabo treaty, signed after the Anglo-Myanmar war of 1824-26, Myanmar had to lose Rakhine and Taninthayi to the British. Before this, the British gradually occupied India, beginning by the Plasay war in 1757 and after 100 years in 1857, the whole of India came under the rule of British. In Bengal, British exploited the local people ruthlessly and avariciously by doing opium trade, collecting opium tax and making the consumption of opium spread among the people. Thus opium consumption was much widespread in the regions of Bengal.³⁸ The habit of opium consumption thus spilled over into the Rakhine territory. Therefore, it was not a difficult task for the British to find out the new opium market in Myanmar.

The people of Myanmar were not accustomed to the habit of opium before. Only after the arrival of foreigners, they came to know opium and used it. Though the British governed Myanmar for almost a century, they did not make the country free of opium. Only a tiny fraction of it became free of opium, such as Ramree district.³⁹ The report of the Baptist Convention in 1886, described that the Myanmar people were remarkable race who notably abstained from taking intoxicants of alcohol and opium.⁴⁰ After the annexation of lower Myanmar, British agents of opium, especially Bengalis and Chinese carried out opium trade systematically in order to be able to get a large share of opium market in

³⁸ Paper Relating to the Consumption of Opium in Lower and Upper Burma, 1886, Rangoon, Office of the Superintendent, Government Printing, Burma, 1909, 13 (Henceforth: PRCO, 1909)

³⁹ Report on the Progress of Arakan under British Rule from 1826, to 1869, Rangoon, The Government Press, 1874, p.35 (Henceforth: RPA, 1874)

⁴⁰ PRCO, 1909, 59

Myanmar. One of their enticement activity was opening a small opium shop which distributed opium to the youths free of charge.⁴¹

It is interesting to know, how the British had done systematically to make the opium spread among the youths in Myanmar, about which the Deputy Commissioner of Pyay district in this report of Excise Department, described as follow:

To control opium consumers, it is to sell the opium untreated, and for the beginners of opium and the ones who do not know the taste of it totally, it is to sell or give them what is called *kunpon*. *Kunpon* is a kind of opium prepared. With chopped opium coated betel or banana leaves. One can chew these *Kunpon*. Sometimes, it is made into small packages which can sell by one or two packages each time. It can be given to frequent users, if possible, free of charge, especially youths of 12 or 14 years of age. As they are too young to consume the real opium, it is meant for them not to get fed up with it after the once and only consumption of opium. In this way, it can tempt someone by making realized the taste of opium gradually and make used more opium increasingly. This can lead someone to the track of opium addiction bit by bit.⁴²

Concerning the spread of the habit of opium consumption in Lower Burma, Sir C.U Aitchison's memorandum describes as follow:

The present papers show the tragic characteristics of how the opium consumers gradually depressed and mentally destroyed in Burma. All officials and nationalities in every district and division, reported about the tragic ends of opium addicts, mentioned above. To make easy in

⁴¹ PRCO, 1909, 38-39

⁴² Report on the Excise Department in British Burma for the Year 1879-80, Rangoon, Government Press, 1880, 5 (Henceforth, REDBB, 1880)

analysis of the evidences got, the appendix is attached by taking notes from other reports. The tables in the appendix describe about the destruction of the nerve system of opium consumers after the decay of physical and mental strength. Their body become shrink and small, easy to get diseases. They became slow and indolent, accumulating a range of bad habits in the life, and lessen self esteem. Opium consumption is the most effective cause to become someone dejected, less appetite and makes it commit crime. It is a mean to make the prison full of men who do not want to work, and an opening to the road to be spoiled. It can cause to break out the cholera. It is one of hindrance in getting more form revenue by making decrease the number of cultivators. It also hinders the natural population growth and increase and a reason to make the generations to come interior and weak. There is no reason to doubt that the rate of opium consumption increases dreadfully, under our administration. Various officials and the entire people support this statement unanimously.⁴³

When the opium consumption became spread far and wide, British tried to check it. In the month of April, 1881, out of 68 licensed opium shops they closed down forty, and increased the opium price to about 30 per cent. In 1882, they also closed down another ten opium shop, leaving only 18 licensed opium shops. Arakan division commissioner reported that opium consumption became low, owing to the closed down of licensed opium shops. The report described that

The habit of opium consumption, eating and “smoking” disappeared in Sandorway and decreased in Kyaukphyu. In Arakan division it is difficult to get opium and the price went up. As total number of cases of opium consumption significantly came down, though the population of Arakan division increased 16%, within a period of four years, the

⁴³ PRCO, 1909, 39

number of opium consumption was only one fifth of the total of previous number.⁴⁴

As the danger of opium became eminent, British had taken some measures to control and check opium consumption. But it was only a partial solution to the deep rooted problem. Nevertheless, British came to accept the notion of not to encourage opium consumption, which could be seen in the Directive No.61 (separate revenue), issued by the Lord Hantington on June 8, 1881.⁴⁵ After the annexation of Upper Myanmar the British opium policy concerning whether it should be permitted to sell opium or not, and to do opium trade through Yunnan, or not, became serious. Accordingly, British government asked the opinion of administrative officials, Myanmar dignitaries and Europeans. Some officials such as Thayawady district Deputy Commissioner A.H Hildebrand,⁴⁶ and Town Officers of Kyaikkhami and Thaton⁴⁷ proposed total ban on opium, but some such as Inspector Shwe Hmon and Hlaingbwè Town officer⁴⁸ suggested to open some opium shops.

Among those who made proposals were some missionary societies who put forth proposals with evidences. One such missionary society was Rangoon Missionary Conference, which proposed a total ban on opium, and as it was a fruitless attempt, the ban should be made as much as possible in Upper Myanmar on importing intoxicants of opium, and alcohol.⁴⁹ The Opium Trade Control Society proposed a total ban on opium trade and the proposal was signed by its chairman Joseph W. Pease, Secretary Stowturner, bursar R.N Fowler and committee members.

⁴⁴ REDBB, 1885, 12

⁴⁵ PRCO, 1909, 35

⁴⁶ PRCO, 1909, 3-4

⁴⁷ PRCO, 1909, 2,3

⁴⁸ PRCO, 1909, 3

⁴⁹ PRCO, 1909, 33-34

All proposals were based on 6 points. The reasons given by the proposals of total ban were (1) opium consumption was underivable evil for the Myanmar society as well as for individuals, and (2) all Myanmar gentlemen and dignitaries categorically did not want the import of opium. But the ones who had the notion that opium should import had given the following reasons: (1) the loss of revenue to the coffer of British government, (2) total ban could make the opium black market spread far and wide, (3) the opium addicts could die as they could not get it and (4) if the opium was totally banned Chinese and other foreigners could face difficulties as they were accustomed to the habit of opium consumption. It is found that, if we can see the problem of whether the opium should be imported or not, in two terms: if we consider the interest of the people of Myanmar, opium should not be imported and it takes the British interest only, opium should be imported.

Regarding this problem, E.S Symes, secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Burma, wrote a letter⁵⁰ of suggestion to the secretary of Government of India on 8 December 1886, that described the following:

all opium shops, except some in Beik district, and port towns Yangon, Sittwe, Mawlamyine and Pathein, should be closed down, with effect on 1 April 1887; except for the use of medicinal purpose, any one who either a Burman or Kayin or a Myanmar, in the areas outside of these towns, posses opium, should be punished accordingly; if a licensed opium seller sold his opium to a Myanmar outside his shop anywhere in the country, such seller should be punished; to defray the loss of five or six lakhs of revenue from opium salt tax should be increased from eight to twelve pè per *mound* of salt.

Measures to be carried out in Upper Myanmar, suggested by Symes were: not to issue licences for opium shops in Upper Myanmar, except five or six places where Chinese, Indians, Kachins and Shans frequented; to impose a ban legally on the selling of opium by the opium shop owners to any Myanmar; to grant permission to the licensed opium sellers to buy opium from Shan or Yunan; in

⁵⁰ PRCO, 1909, 73-81

places of towns and villages where the Myanmars did not live and foreigners occupied, selling or distilling of alcohol should be permitted, not to permit the opening of alcohol shop in the Myanmar proper; and at present there should not ban the production and consumption of toddy. In carrying out these measures, Symes suggested that law, rules and regulations should be enacted.

Such suggestions put forth albeit, British government never took strong action against the opium. Thus it was found that revenue from opium did not decrease.

The largest amount of excise from opium was collected from the districts of Yangon, Thayawady, Pathein, Myaungmya and Kyaikkhami, which were shown in the following table.⁵¹

Table-I
The largest opium excise collected districts from 1905-06 to 1911-12

Year \ District	Yangon Rs.	Thayawady Rs.	Pathein Rs.	Myaungmya Rs.	Kyaikkhami Rs.
1905-06	711150	460624	425726	363934	163901
1906-07	687894	403156	459474	348112	166342
1907-08	751495	352750	474203	335902	188989
1908-09	666200	251540	338276	294229	156603
1909-10	536425	215339	397427	287524	136130
1910-11	441600	219804	339137	236725	136130
1911-12	315100	219559	262832	187325	139766

Source: STREO, 1940, 6

The least amount of opium excise was levied in districts of Meiktila, Shwebo and Sagaing, which could be seen in the following table.⁵²

⁵¹ Statistical Tables, Relating to Excise and opium in the province of Burma, Rangoon, Superintendent, Government Printing and Stationary, Burma, April, 1940, pp-6-6(1) (Henceforth: STREO, 1940)

⁵² STREO, 1940, 6

Table-II

The least opium excise levied districts from 1905-06 to 1911-12

Year \ District	Yangon Rs.	Thayawady Rs.	Pathein Rs.
1905-06	-	46	5
1906-07	-	16	9
1907-08	-	10	7
1908-09	-	18	9
1909-10	49	48	7
1910-11	90	110	66
1911-12	20	66	9

Source: STRGO, 1940, 6

The opium problem was a serious social challenge not in Myanmar only, but also in the colonies of India, Malaya, Borneo, Ceylon, French Indo-Chinese and Siam, Japan and China.⁵³ Therefore, under the auspice of the League of Nations, the International Opium Convention was signed on 23 January 1912. In its convention, raw opium and relating factors were included in Chapter (1), and treated opium and related factors were described in Chapter (2) and chapter three mentioned medicinal and medical use of opium, morphine, cocaine and so on. The objective of the convention was to ban the opium worldwide.⁵⁴ British government also was a signatory in the convention.

Nevertheless, signing the convention aside, the British enjoyed extra privileges: if the British government accepted the terms and facts of the convention, these terms and facts were effective also in the British territories of

⁵³ La Mottee, Etten, N, *The Opium Monopoly*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1920,13 (Henceforth: La Mottee, 1929)

⁵⁴ La Mottee, 1929,107-202

India inclusive of Myanmar, Ceylon, Malay and Hong Kong, like in Britain and Ireland. The British government had the right to sign or condemn the convention on behalf of its colonies, and protectorates. Enjoying such power and privileges, British did not tackle the opium problem effectively in Myanmar.

The negligence in controlling and tackling of the opium problem on the part of British government could be seen in the amount of opium excise collected. The following table shows the largest amount of opium excise collected in five districts of Yangon, Thayawady, Patnein, Myaungmya and Kyaikkhami.

Table-III
The largest amounts of opium excise collected districts from
1912-13 to 1930-31

Year \ District	Yangon Rs.	Thayawady Rs.	Pathein Rs.	Myaungmya Rs.	Kyaikkhaml Rs.
1912-13	323848	261434	125514	219743	180637
1913-14	222843	257329	325066	187531	179830
1914-15	164899	253411	307600	185600	196287
1915-16	222260	247905	290595	192650	176155
1916-17	427320	286887	301958	234701	207855
1917-18	545673	86325	298708	306664	220011
1918-19	519056	77608	288827	2715111	211077
1919-20	447363	72500	280187	249855	200796
1920-21	398190	73300	211218	213658	229995
1921-22	454139	78487	255740	188288	234289
1922-23	493263	104736	334092	243679	274341
1923-24	380380	89857	303124	263012	286874
1924-25	277942	83104	301296	349778	273507
1925-26	255281	81090	269745	324316	265300
1926-27	273535	75987	368360	286518	260059
1927-28	273517	140114	437632	286998	227041
1928-29	297122	162129	431132	273320	224592
1929-30	246872	159898	416950	247303	204833
1930-31	209344	148742	360887	218305	189654

Source: STREO, 1940, 7

The following table shows least amount of opium excise collected in three districts of Meiktala, Shwebo and Sagaing.

Table-IV

Least amount of opium excise collected districts from 1912-13 to 1930-31

Year \ District	Meiktila Rs.	Shwebo Rs.	Sagaing Rs.
1912-13	15	10	5
1913-14	15	10	5
1914-15	20	5	10
1915-16	10	15	-
1916-17	25	10	5
1917-18	15	10	5
1918-19	10	10	5
1919-20	-	20	-
1920-21	10	20	5
1921-22	1010	10	5
1922-23	-	15	-
1923-24	10	5	-
1924-25	-	5	-
1925-26	-	5	-
1926-27	-	5	-
1927-28	5	10	-
1928-29	5	5	-
1929-30	5	20	-
1930-31	5	10	10

Source: STREO, 1940, 8

In précis, opium has been grown first in Mesopotemia and later in eleventh century it was cultivated in India and spread to Myanmar in sixteen century. Opium came to appear to the world of human to use as medicine. But evil consequences later prevailed, as it has the nature of addiction and misuse of it. In the period, in which India grew opium and exported it to China, as Myanmar lies on the trade route of India, Myanmar and China, Myanmar had also felt the repercussion of misuse of opium. Even the royalty could not escape by the temptation of the power of opium, in that they themselves committed to the misuse of opium, such as Minye Aung Din and Queen Mai Nu.

Nevertheless, Myanmar Indigenous medical texts describe the benefit of opium and the good use of it. To counter and check the misuse of opium, Myanmar kings had issued a series of edicts, in which King Badon had once issued to punish the ones who consumed opium more than once, by capital punishment. When the British annexed lower Myanmar, British at first banned the opium trade. Also Chief Commissioner Arther Phayre once suggested to the Viceroy of India that Myanmar people should not be given the chance to test and try the taste of opium, which they never had been tasted. But the British government became avaricious as it got a huge amount of excise and revenue from the opium cultivation and opium trade. Therefore, though the British knew well about the bad effects and evil consequences of opium, they had not done taken effective and sufficient measures to curb and control the opium.

CHAPTER TWO

OPIUM LAWS

Even in the reign of Myanmar Kings, royal's orders and laws against opium were issued. It was noted that the Dutch Indies Company first sold opium at the Hanthawaddy jetty in 1613.¹ The Myanmar King Badon (1782-1819) strongly prohibited against the dealing of drugs and narcotics such as opium, liquor and Hlaw-sa (intoxicating preparation of fermented glutinous rice). According to that royal order, there had existed no opium-eaters or opium-smokers before. It was the foreigners who had brought along with them the habit of opium-smokers before. It was the foreigners who had brought along with them the habit of opium-eating or opium-smoking. Not the foreigners and the Chinese who were opium-eaters or opium-smoker but Myanmar opium-eaters or opium-smokers must be arrested. The opium caught must be kept at the Royal Treasury.² In A.D 1819, at the harbour cities of Hanthawaddy, Dhannyawaddy, Rammawady and Dwarawaddy, the import of opium was strong by prohibited. A royal order was also issued by King Badon. In the 1819 royal order of King Badon, a seal was impressed on the body of the opium-eaters and dealers, and when freed from prison, would be sentenced to death if one should commit the crime again.³

In King Mindon's (1853-1878) reign, it was prohibited from abuse of drugs, liquor and all forms of intoxicants, as well as toddy palm liquor. King Mindon

¹ Thaik Tun, *1980*, 97-8

² (a) Than Tun, *1988a*, 485

(b) See Photo (4,5,6)

³ Than Tun, *1988a*, 488

issued a royal order that an opium eater or smoker should be 50 beatings of the cane if he used once; 75 beatings for the second time; and 100 beatings and one-month cell-confinement for the third time.⁴ Shwe Danu Asaungta-mye Nay Myo Thiri Kyaw Htin was given responsibility to give punishment to any one who broke the royal order.⁵

A drug-dealer or opium-dealer in the area of the Royal Kingdom was to be punished with 100 beatings of cane for the first time; and two-month cell-confinement for the second time; and one-month imprisonment for the third time; and 100 beatings of cane and one-month imprisonment for the fourth time and above. Should a child below adulthood commit the crime, the parents and patrons would be given twenty-five beatings of cane; 50 beatings for the second time; 75 beatings for the Third time; and 100 beatings for the fourth time and above.⁶

That royal order carried the implication that it made an effect only in the area of the royal palace and not on the outside area. Since there were orders prohibiting from the abuse of drugs and opium and intoxicants, at Malun Min Hla Royal Post and Thon-se Town Post,⁷ the effect of the royal order overwhelmed the whole administrative territory in King Mindon's reign. In King Thibaw's (1878-1885) reign, the law named "Yit-Myo Nga Pa U-pade" ("Law on Five Intoxicants") was prescribed, and the abuse of five kinds of intoxicants was totally prohibited. The governor and officials were given authority to take action against those who breached the royal order.⁸ But the Law was related to the cases of Myanmar national. No action was taken against those who ate or smoked opium in the area beyond the territory of the Royal Kingdom.

⁴ Thaik Htun, *1980*, 102

⁵ Taw Seing Kho, *1960*, 222-223

⁶ Thaik Htun, *1980*, 102-103

⁷ Taw Sein Kho, *1960*, 222-223

⁸ U Tin, *1974*, 189-258

Among the nationals, the Wa-national not only grew poppy, but also ate and smoke opium. Some Wa-nationals both ate and smoke opium. In the opium-producing areas, there were no strong addicts of opium. The Kachin, the Palaung, Li-shaw, La-hu and the other nationals in the neighbouring villages grew opium both for abusing opium themselves and for the villagers in the neighbouring villages. Their opium plantation covered only ten to a hundred square feet. When the Shans got sick, they usually ate opium, and when the Palaung suffered from malaria, they ate opium. They also fed opium to their horses. Some Kachins put some opium in the tobacco pipe, and smoked. The La-hus smoked opium for the sake of health. The Kachins used opium as drug.⁹

Trading Contract between Myanmar and French, signed on 15 January, 1885, a statement describes that thirty percent tax would be levied on opium. This indicated that the Myanmar King tried to put on control of the opium black marketing and opium abuse from China to Lower Myanmar through the Myanmar territory. In 1860, it was discovered that the opium smokers turned to opium-eaters in Lower Myanmar.

Therefore, according to the Bengal Act 20 in 1856, the abuse of opium was prohibited.¹⁰ In 1865, one year after modifying the regulations for the whole British Burma, the High Commissioner Sir Phayre¹¹ issued a law against drug

⁹ (a) J.G Scott and J.P. Hardiman; *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Pt 1, Vol.1, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1900, pp.424-425 (Henceforth: Scott and Hardiman, 1900)

(b) W.A.Hertz *Burma Gazetteer Myintkyina District*, Vol.A, Rangoon, Printing, 1960, pp.83-101-102 (Henceforth: Hertz, 1960)

(c) E.C.S.George, *Burma Gazetteer Ruby Mines District*, Vol.A, Rangoon, Printing, 1915, p.45 (Henceforth: George, 1915)

(d) See Phto (7,8)

¹⁰ *Burma Gazetteer Sandoway District*, Vol.A, Rangoon, Printing, 1962, p. 90 (Henceforth: Sandoway dist, 1962)

¹¹ Sir A.P. Phayre

abuse, and modified the law, if necessary, every year.¹² But the modified law did not make an effect. Ironically, the case of intoxicants had been ignored by the police because most of the policemen were opium addict¹³, and so did not follow the law strictly.

In February 1868, the British government drew a guideline for the Intoxicant and Drug Officer, which was prescribed in August.¹⁴ In the 1870s, the jamedar¹⁵ and the clerk were appointed to investigate whether the license holders of poppy plantation were doing unlawful acts.¹⁶

The British Government prescribed the 1871 Intoxicant and Drugs Act as Act No.11, which came into effect starting from 1 April, 1872. According to this Act, opium must be sold under the system of Taxation in ration of actual "prescribed use of opium." License tax was to be paid for dealing opium, depending on the amount of prescribed allowance of opium. Moreover, according to the Act, the opium shops had the system to follow, which was to pay the Monthly Tax. After the First System was prescribed, unnecessary parts were replaced with the Monthly Tax system, the second system.

According to the 1871 Myanmar Intoxicant Law, the system of allowing opium shops was abolished, and an opium shop was opened in the Township Headquarters Town in the districts of the British Burma. The opium dealers had to buy an auction annually for running the opium shop. Only the opium-eater who was addicted to the excess of opium was allowed to keep opium in hand. To be in charge of this case, one superintendent of Excise and two Excise Sergeants were appointed. Moreover, the village police officers were also given the responsibility

¹² Report on the Administration of British Burma, for the year 1905-06, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1867-68 3 (Henceforth: RAB,1867,68)

¹³ J.S.Furnival, *Burma Gazetteer Syrian District*, Vol.A, Rangoon, Printing, 1963, p. 138 (Henceforth: Furnival, 1963)

¹⁴ RAB, 1867-68,10

¹⁵ Jammadar (Second rank of native officer)

¹⁶ Sandoway District, 1962, 89

to be in charge of excise affairs.¹⁷ The opium trafficking was placed under tight control, and systematic measures were taken by the British government. So the number of opium trafficking had declined.

According to the Administrative Report, in 1871-72 it was found that those criminals who committed crimes in towns and cities were opium-eaters or opium-smokers.¹⁸ So this point should be considered carefully. To discern the relationship, the cases related to opium were extracted from the 1870 Criminal Cases, as follows:

Table-V
Opium Cases

Case	No. of Cases Reported	Under Interrogation	Accused or Quit	No. of Prisoners
Breach of the Opium Law	304	432	100	332

Source: RAB, 1871-72, xxxi

The British government formerly, prohibited the abuse of opium, but in 1872-73, the government calculated that it would prevent opium trafficking if the opium dealer could get the demand from the government, and would not buy from abroad.

The excise authorities attempted to make a half-year record of the opium-dealing. They studied whether opium trafficking took place from Upper Myanmar into the British Burma. There were cases of opium trafficking from Madras to Yangon. It was concluded in the excise report that the British authorities had

¹⁷(a) Sandoway District, 1962, 89-90

(b) R.B.Smart. *Burma Gazetteer Akyab District*, Vol.A, Rangoon Printing, 1957, p.201 (Henceforth: Smart, 1957)

(c) W.S.Morrison, *Burma Gazetteer Henzada District*, Vol.A, Rangoon Printing, 1963, p.164 (Henceforth: Morrison, 1963)

¹⁸ RAB, 1871-72, 31

difficulties to check the true situation of opium dealing and opium abuse.¹⁹The opium abuse had increase year from year in the British Burma.

Such Myanmar nationals as Kachin, La-hu, Shan and Wa used opium as medicinal drug. The opium-dealing in those regions brought a lot of tax to the British government. So the controversy took place over whether opium dealing should be officially allowed or banned.

Thus, the Indian viceroy put forward the controversial issue to the eighteen state governors. From the queries, the Myanmar High Commissioner declared the following three items on 7 February, 1873:

- (1) Opium eating has been prohibited in the Myanmar tradition
- (2) The opium-eaters in Lower Myanmar are labourers taken from India
- (3) The Myanmar people should not be allowed to have a taste of opium that they have never had.²⁰

However, the majority of the state governors recommended that opium should be allowed by issuing the license since there was a lot of tax gained from the licensed poppy plantations in India. So it was considered that opium should be allowed an official license for production and distribution and consumption. Finally, it was decided that opium should be allowed by issuing officials license for dealing.²¹

As the abuse of opium increased, as the 1878 Act No.1, the Opium Act was issued on 9 January 1878. The Opium Act issued for Lower Myanmar was the

¹⁹ (a) RAB, 1880-81, 21

(b)O, Shaughnessy's, A Predecessor to the Indian Hemp Drug Commission Report, http://www.ccrmg.org/journal/03_sum/preihdc-htm/7/23/2004

²⁰ Supplement to the Gazetteer of India, December 27, 1873

²¹ John F, Richards, *Opium and British Indian Empire*, The Royal Commission of 1895, Cambridge University Press, February, 2002 (Henceforth: Richards, 2002)

same Opium Act prescribed in Bihar State and Orissa State of India.²² It was translated into Myanmar and the Act was prescribed.²³

In the Council Meeting, the Viceroy included this Opium Act as the announcement in the Gazette of India, and a statement was also included that the Act should come into effect on particular days in various regions. On Page 526, Part 2, of the Gazette of India, issued on 17 August 1878, it was stated that opium Act should come into effect in Bengal with the Declaration No. 2392 of the Government of India on 15 August, 1878.²⁴

According to this Opium Act, the term "opium" covers all kinds of intoxicants obtained from the mixture and production of any parts of the poppy plant.²⁵

According to the Declaration issued on 12 November 1878 by the British Government, concerning the authority stated in Section 12 of the Opium Act, all excise officers and police force of Orissa State, District Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Inspector, Sub-Inspector and Head, Constable of Police were transferred such authority.²⁶

Those excise authorities had the right to access and arrest at a suspect house, in accordance with the Opium Act Section 14. Moreover, section 5

²² The Opium Act, *The Bihar and Orissa Excise Manual*, Government Printing, 1911, p.1 (Henceforth: BOEM, 1911)

²³ (a) *The Burma Opium Manual*, 1925, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1927, p.1 (Henceforth: BOM, 1927)

(b) *Pyidangsu Myanmar Nainggantaw Bein-Let-swe U-pade* (The Myanmar Opium Manual) 1925 Yangon, Union of Myanmar Government Publication and Stationery Department. 1961, p.1(Henceforth: BLS, 1961)

²⁴ BOM, 1925, 1

²⁵ BLS, 1961, 2

BOM, 1925, 1

²⁶ BOEM, 1991, 31

prescribed that regulations should restrict the poppy growing, preparing, keeping in hand, bringing, taking out and dealing for sale in order to restrict the poppy cultivation and dealing of opium.

Concerning the opium tax imported by inland route, section six stated that the Viceroy had the authority to levy tax on opium. Section seven was concerned with the storing of opium while Section eight prescribed the authority about the methods of keeping the opium. According to section 9, illegal opium cultivation would lead to the commitment of the criminal law. Therefore, such a person would be taken action against in accordance with section 9, while section 10 prescribed the person's commitment. Section 11 stated the usurpation of the good as the treasury.²⁷

Section 12 is the Section for giving sentenced to the criminal while Section 13 was concerned with the authority to give rewards for the goods captured. The other sections were concerned with arrest, issuing arrest warrant, and selling the opium seized, and including the case in the reports etc. There were altogether 25 sections in the whole Opium Act.

According to the Declaration No.390, Finance Department, the Government of India, dated 24 January 1879, the Opium Act was approved in the British Burma on 29 March, 1879.²⁸ In that year, the weight of seer of opium sold at opium shops was reduced from 0.625 to 0.0375 seer.²⁹

²⁷ BOM, 1925, 2-7

BLS, 1961, 3-10

²⁸ BLS, 1961, 1

BOM, 1925, 1

²⁹ (a) Morrison, 1963, 166

(b) Tola=180 gram

Seer=80 tola

1 seer=75.5 ticals

The government prepared opium at opium factories of Bengal, and then the opium was imported into Myanmar. Although it was to get tax for the government from the import of opium into Myanmar, there had been criticisms against that action, as being meant to spoil the Myanmar people and to deprive them of the working capacity.³⁰ As some high class Myanmar people were fond of gambling, drinking and opium-smoking, the Gazetteer of the Syriam (Thanlyin) District stated that it was hard to make a guess of to what extent those Myanmar people had been involved in that affair.³¹

Opium was allowed to be eaten when one did tattooing. In sub-section (xvi), the opium Act of 1878, it was stated about the tattooer:

16. "Tattooer" means a Burman who practices tattooing of the human body according to Burmese methods, and "Licensed tattooer" means a tattooer to whom a license has been granted by the Deputy Commissioner under Rule 59.³²

Since opium nullifies the pain and makes one intoxicant, it was used for tattooing in those days, Naturally, eating the opium for this purpose made one addicted to it. Now the custom of tattooing has already disappeared. Although the disappearance of that custom might be a loss to the national character, since it was associated with the opium which could have spoiled the whole nation, Dr. Toe Hla commented that there should be a sense of relief to us over the disappearance of that custom.

According to the Opiums shop Reduction Policy, in 1881, only one opium shop was allowed license for one district, and many opium shops were shut

³⁰ RAB, 1880-81, 21

³¹ Furnival, 1963, 70

³² (a) BLS, 1961, 32

(b) Toe Hla, 1979, 97

(c) See Photo (9)

down.³³ However, there was no decrease of crimes along with the reduction of opium shops, because it was stated in the report of the British Police Force, that in accordance with the 1878 Opium Act, there were 433 cases 402of which were submitted to the court.³⁴

Moreover, the district authorities reported the cases of opium trafficking. There were cases of opium trafficking in Patheingyi District, Kyaikkhami District, Thayawaddy District and Shwe Kyin District. The men who came to work as colliers in Sittwe (Sandoway) District from Sittakaung District, also trafficked opium. So special police forces were positioned in borderlands. As such cases increased, those special police were allowed to go beyond the borderland for the search of opium. But the ongoing opium trafficking locally could not be stopped. There were sellers of opium shop, and in charges of opium trafficking personally. Some opium shoppers loaned more money from the treasury, and sold to officially-allowed opium-eaters all over the state. Because there were no informers who would inform about such breaching of the territory, the government was not in the know about such cases.

As strict measures were taken against opium trafficking in Thayet Township, it was reported openly that there took place on such case as opium trafficking. But there were activities of opium trafficking from Yunnan via the Upper Myanmar, the Myanmar King's territory. So though permission was asked for the village head to have the authority to interrogate those who breach the Excise Law in order to reduce opium trafficking, the authority was not granted to them since there were other administrative tasks.³⁵

³³ (a) Morrison, 1963, 90

(b) Sandoway District, 1962, 90

³⁴ Report on the Police Administration of British Burma for the year 1882. Rangoon; Government Press, 1882, 14 (Henceforth: RPAB)

³⁵ RPAB, 1882, 14-5

Because of the opium shop reduction policy, there were no more opium shops in some districts and towns. For example, the opium shop in Myan Aung had been abolished since 1881-82. In that year, the government raised the price of opium from Rupees-twenty-eight to thirty-two per seer to the opium shop. But the abuse of opium and the opium trafficking did not decrease. Drug trafficking had already seeped in villages far from opium shops and in villages where there were no opium shops.³⁶

So in the 1883 Police Force Report, it was stated that the cases of the breaching of the Opium Act did not decrease more than in 1882-83. It was exactly stated that the abuse of opium did not decline. In Pathein, the license was cancelled twice for a lot of opium trafficking. From the aspect of the government opium sales, there were high sales in one opium shop, but when it was checked practically, there were only a few opium smokers, so it can be concluded that there were many activities of opium trafficking.³⁷

Since opium dealing existed, there were cases of opium. In 1884, there were 52 opium cases, and 66% were given sentence. Sixty five persons were arrested, and forty were found guilty.³⁸

Concerning the British dealing with the case of opium, the British Burma High Commissioner's Secretary gave the following instructions in writing a report on opium trafficking, with circular order No. 232-23 E, dated 8 May 1884.

"Concerning the Circular Order No.91-29 E, dated 29 October 1883 by this Office, according to Paragraph 2 of that Circular Order, the reports are to follow the following format. In serious cases, copies of sentence and findings are be submitted, enclosed in the report.

Table-VI
REPORT ON OPIUM-RELATED CASE

Defendant	Summary of finding of the opium
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³⁶ Morrison, 1963, 166

³⁷ RPAB, 1883, 14

³⁸ RPAB, 1884, 29

Crime accused.....	Remark
Date	
Name of Judge and Date for Session.....	Remark
Sentence	
Weight of opium caught	

Source: RAB, 1886, 3-4

This form was issued by the British India Government which had its headquarters at Simala on 4 April, 1834.³⁹

The Excise Commissioner who had his officer in India, had been dealing with the opium cases of the British Burma until 1884, and at about the close of 1884-85, a separate post of the Excise Commissioner was appointed for British Burma. In that year, Mr. Geplesten become the first excise commissioner of British Burma. He himself supervised the preparing of the report of the Excise Department for the year 1884-85.⁴⁰

While the amount of opium distribution to licensed opium shops was reduced, the excise tax within four years of 1884-85 from British Burma had remained stable. In Rakhine Division, there existed no more opium abuse in Than-Dwe (Sandoway) District, and not a case of opium was found in Kyauk-Phyu District. But there were a lot of opium trafficking from the neighbouring districts of Bengal, and the regional authorities had been making arrests over opium trafficking.⁴¹

A lot of opium was caught when it was taken from China via Upper Myanmar in 1884-85. The worst cases took place in small villages too far from opium shops and in Thayarwaddy and Shwe Kyin districts where there were no opium shops. Special measures were taken by the government to reduce opium

³⁹ Proceeding of the Administration of Burma on the Department of Finance and Commerce, Upper Burma, pt. IIB, 1886, p.3,4 (Henceforth: PAB, 1886)

⁴⁰(a)Report on the Excise Department for 1884-85, Rangoon Government Printing, 1885, p.1 (Henceforth: RED, 1885)

(b)Morrison, 1963, 166

⁴¹ RED, 1885, 1-2

trafficking. Aid was also sought for ordinary police and village police. Some officers recommended that the Opium Excise System be changed, that the Opium Law be strictly obeyed, and that keeping opium in hand and the abuse of opium be totally banned, and that, severe action be taken against those who violated the law. But the High Commissioner did not see any changes to be made over the control of opium cases, but aimed at reducing the cases gradually. It was stressed that the younger generation be prevented from the abuse of opium. A sudden ban of opium would invite more of opium trafficking as in Upper Myanmar and in China. If new opium shops be opened in British Burma, it would reduce opium trafficking. Though it would be more suitable for allowing the abuse of opium only at the licensed opium shop, because the administration of the country had not taken proper shape, the action did not come into effect very successfully, as stated in the report of the Excise Department.⁴²

There were 2240 persons taken action against for breaching the laws of Excise and Opium in 1884, and 3460 persons in 1885. Sixty nine percent were found guilty in 1884, and ten percent in 1885.

It was only the minions, not the key person, who had been taken action against in the cases according to the opium Act. So the Pyay (Prome) District Criminal Officer recommended the prescribing of the law that would take action against those who kept opium in hand outside the licensed opium shop. Since there were more cases breaching the Opium Act in Sittway District, the opium shop had to be shut down for two months.⁴³ Opium trafficking was carried on because opium fetched high prices. 0.0125 seer of opium was purchased at eight annas at Sittakaung and sold at one Rupee to one Rupee and five annas in Rakhine.⁴⁴

Except the fact that it could be assumed that opium dealing had been at a steady state after prescribing the changed regulations of law that would take action against those keeping opium in hand, there had been no considerable progress over the control of opium dealings.

⁴² RED, 1885, 2

⁴³ RPAB, 1885, 9

⁴⁴ RPAB, 1886, 35

There were 1964 cases for taking action against the opium abuse in 1885-86 according to the Excise Law. About half of them were concerned with the opium case, and 592 seer of opium weight was seized.⁴⁵ The British government had not started the action against the opium abuse in Upper Myanmar which had now become their colony. But no opium shop was allowed to open every where according to the opium abuse reduction policy. The opium dealing license was banned in Nin Gyan District⁴⁶, Upper Myanmar.⁴⁷ According to the 1878 Opium Act, the Fourth-Level Town Governor was given the authority of the Second-Class Criminal Judge to take action against any case related to the 1878 Opium Act.⁴⁸

More actions were taken against the opium abuse by the administration authorities. In May, 1887, concerning one case of opium in Pyay District, the licensed opium shopkeeper was taken action against.⁴⁹ On 23 May, the report format was issued, concerning the opium trafficking and opium cases suppression under the title of File No.2712, Finance and Trading Department, the Government of India (Special tax on opium trafficking):

Decree: in the report on opium cases suppression and opium trafficking, with the intention of relieving the work of regional officers, the following table is prescribed for the future reports:

⁴⁵ Report on the Administration of Lower Burma during 1885-86, and on the Administration of Upper Burma during 1886. Rangoon, Government Printing, p.119, BHC, No.50 (Henceforth, BHC mfm 50, 119)

⁴⁶ Pyinmana District

⁴⁷ PAB, Pt. 11B, 1886, 6

⁴⁸ *British Burma Gazetteer*, Rangoon Government Printing, 1886, p. 203 (Henceforth: BBG, 1886)

⁴⁹ PAB, Pt II B, 1887, 1

Table-VII
Special Tax on Opium Trafficking

District	Name of Defendant Place	Weight of opium Arrested	Province Or Foreign Country or Village (If known) From which Opium is taken	Place Where opium is taken to (on Guess)	Means by Train or car	Date and Sentence made by Criminal Judge; reward; any Remark made by regional authority
			(a)	(b)		
			Defendants Confession	Witness's Confession		

Source: PAB, pt.HB, 1887,p.v

2. Minor cases on taking action against opium trafficking must be reported every three month.
3. Should the weight of opium arrested exceed 40 lbs, should the opium trafficking be done systematically in the form of an organization such serious cases be included in the prescribed form and submitted to the government.⁵⁰

One telegram dated 1 June was sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Than-Dwe to fill up the prescribed form and submit another report.⁵¹ Despite the suppressions, opium trafficking still existed. In 1881, opium trafficking continued to exist in Rakhine Division.⁵²

The Opium Act of 1878, prescribed in Lower Myanmar, was approved and prescribed in Upper Myanmar, except the Shan State, according to the Finance and Trading Department's Notification No.75, dated 15 September, 1888, and the Government of India Finance and Trading Department Notification No.5052, dated on that day.⁵³

Then the license form for opium wholesale and retail forms were issued separately for Lower Myanmar and Upper Myanmar. Thus, opium was to be sold at particular district and at particular place for wholesale and retail dealing of opium. The whole sale dealing must not be lower than ten seer of opium, while the retail must not exceed 0.125 seer per ounce. At that time, the Myanmar people

⁵⁰ PAB, Pt. I.A, 1887, 4

⁵¹ RED, 1889, 7

⁵² (a) BLS, 1961, 1

(b) BOM, 1925, 1

The Opium Manual, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1945, 1 (Henceforth: *Opium Manual, 1945*)

⁵³ Godley.A. "*Return of the Amount of India Opium annually*. Concussed in Burma during the last thirty years, Indian Stationary Office, 1906, p.5.26-28, 55-57 (Henceforth: Godley, 1906)

were not allowed to sell opium.⁵⁴ But it cannot be assumed that the above-mentioned rules were strictly followed. The study of the Myanmar Police Force Report shows that the Opium Act was breached occasionally in districts and townships in the 1890s.

There were 122 opium cases in Sittwe, and obviously, there still existed the opium trafficking from Sittakaung. Trafficking came from Sittwe and Pyay via Than Dwe to Kyauk Phyu. Similarly, cases of trafficking occurred in Pathein. In 1889, there were 1174 opium cases, and 1197 cases in 1890. The 901 cases or 75% were found guilty. 1291 persons were arrested and 22 persons were suspended. Of them, 958 persons or 73% were found guilty.⁵⁵ In 1890-91, the village headmen were appointed as the Excise Officers to step up the suppression of the Excise cases in 1890-91.⁵⁶

Thus, the suppression of the excise became more effective, and 1930 cases were uncovered in 1891. In 1890, only 1197 cases were brought to justice. Of these cases, 1502 cases were taken action against and 2250 defendants were submitted to court.⁵⁷ This may indicate not only the more cases uncovered, but also the condition in which more cases had taken place. On the other hand, opium dealing had increased and more cases of opium may have been committed.

The most cases of opium trafficking took place in Sittway, Hanthawaddy, Tharyawaddy and Pathein Districts in 1891. There were 256 defendants against whom action had been taken for violating the Opium Act in Upper Myanmar. Of sixty six defendants of opium cases, thirty eight were found guilty. It can be assumed that more arrests were made without having clear line of criminal

⁵⁴ RPAB, 1890, 11

⁵⁵ (a) RAB, 1891, 13

(b) Morrison, *1963*, 167

⁵⁶ RPAB, 1891, 6-7

⁵⁷ RPAB, 1891, 7-13

evidences. The Police Force Report stated that more supervision be done on suppression of opium cases under the supervision of the district criminal officer.⁵⁸

At that time, opium trafficking from the Shan state and Yunan was not able to be controlled from trafficking into Mandalay. It would have been more of a success only after making observation and enquiries about the opium traffickers' habits and means and about the sources of opium trafficking.

Opium trafficking was mostly done through the Kachin mountain ranges, to the south of the Maykha River. So the British government began to consider the occupation of that region. In 1890, opium cases for violating the Opium Act were 1197 cases, and 1930 cases in 1819.⁵⁹ In 1819 the cases declined to 1894 cases. Forty six cases were suspended and 1851 cases were submitted to the court. The 1888 cases were settled, and 1915 cases were found guilty.⁶⁰

Based on the Opium Act, the 1891-92 modified regulations were prescribed. The main modifications were the prevention of poor quality opium dealing, and the prohibition of opium abuse in licensed opium shops.⁶¹ After that regulation had been prescribed, action was taken against those who breached the Section Nine (Ga), of the Opium Act: the Chinese Nga Thi Hla, arrested for keeping some opium residue in hand, was sentenced to a fine Rupees twenty-five or to serve one month with hard labour,⁶² and such cases occurred later.

Moreover, detailed instructions on the rules related to opium dealing were issued. By the end of 1892-93, the Administration of the Kachin Range were re-

⁵⁸ RAB, 1898, 16-30

⁵⁹ RPAB, 1892, 6

⁶⁰ Morrison, 1963, 166

⁶¹ Upper Burma Rulings, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1892-96, 133-4 (Henceforth: UBR, 1996)

⁶² Punjab Frontier Crimes Regulations

considered, and the disciplinary draft law were prepared, which was similar to the Punjab Frontier Crimes Regulation.⁶³

That draft regulation included the rules to pay eight annas of tax on the one-fourth of the cultivated land, or less than that area of poppy plantation, and to take action against opium trafficking in the convoy of bullock carts.⁶⁴ But knowing that the poor Chinese would be affected in the long run, the government modified some of the regulations prohibiting the abuse of opium residue.⁶⁵ All Myanmar opium addicts were given permission to register themselves.

Those items were confirmed with the Regulations related to opium, included in the Notifications, dated 23 November, 1893. Those regulations were (1) Anyone is allowed to purchase only 0.0375 seer of opium weight; (2) opium must not be used in Myanmar except for the purpose of using it as a medicinal drug; (3) only people above 25 years are allowed to abuse opium in Lower Myanmar.⁶⁶ Should a Myanmar be found with some opium in hand and should be found not to be an opium addict, he would be sentenced to be guilty.⁶⁷ Thus, starting from 1 January 1894, a registration record of the opium addicts of Myanmar had been kept.⁶⁸ The registration began on 1 February 1893, and was closed on 30 June, 1894.⁶⁹

⁶³ RAB, 1892-93, 5, 33

⁶⁴ Morrison, 1963, 167

RAB, 1893, 101

⁶⁵ (a) BLS, 1961, 37

(b) Opium Manual, 22

⁶⁶ Thik Htun, 1930, 119

⁶⁷ Morrison, 1963, 167-168

⁶⁸ RAB, 1894, 13

⁶⁹ (a) RAB, 1894, 24

(b) D.Nisbet; *Burma under the British rule and before*, London, the Sea Wood Printing Works, 1901, Vol.I, p.447 (Henceforth: Nisbet, 1901)

If the amount of opium production was restricted that not to exceed the local consumption needs.⁷⁰ In Upper Myanmar, a significant modification of the New Opium Regulation in accordance with the Opium Law was that some opium was allowed to be kept in hand on some conditions. In 1892-93 and in 1893-94, opium crime and punishment in Lower Myanmar and Upper Myanmar are mentioned as follow:⁷¹

Table-VIII
Opium Crime and Punishment in Lower Myanmar and Upper Myanmar

Year	Persons Arrested	Personal Accused	Personal Imprisoned	Fined (Rs)
Lower Myanmar				
1892	1794	1376	463	40769
1893-94	1773	1337	361	39018
Upper Myanmar				
1892-93	375	297	144	13242
1893-94	321	275	89	11271

Source: RAB, 1894, 76, 80-81

The number of breaching the opium law was 1602 case in 1894, and 1750 cases in 1895. In Lower Myanmar, the cases in Pyay, Bago and Myaung Mya District were the largest in number, while the case were the largest in number in Mandalay. In Yangon, the number of opium cases reduced by sixty seven cases. In 1895, Myikyina District was separated from Bamaw District, and the opium

⁷⁰ Lower Chindwin District, 190

⁷¹ RAB, 1894, 76,80-81

dealing in Bamaw declined. In Myitkyina, 1600 seer of opium weight arrested was the most.⁷²

The imprisoned opium dealers in the whole country were about 20,000 in 1896; over one-eighth of those were in the prisons of Lower Myanmar.⁷³

The government levied tax of Rupees thirty-three per seer on opium in 1896-97. The opium imported from Yunan and the Shan State was levied Rupees seventeen. This was an attempt to prevent opium trafficking.⁷⁴

Despite those preventive measures, in 1896-97, opium of 47413 seer was arrested in Myitkyina District; 15744 seer in Bamaw District; 16570 seer in Padamyatwin District. The increase of illegal opium arrest in Meiktila and Yamethin districts indicated the instances of opium trafficking from the Shan States. The seizure of 7575 seer of opium trafficking in one single area of Bago District also showed the Opium trafficking in large volumes from the borderland areas. This implies that the Police Force and the Excise Department had been taking effective measures against the opium abuse, while, on the other hand, illegal opium dealing had been seeping in all over the country.⁷⁵

According to the Opium Act, the money obtained from fine was Rs.41090 in 1895-96; Rs. 41746 in 1896-97, having an excess of Rs.656.⁷⁶ To prevent opium trafficking, the Excise Department was responsible for the control. In Than-Dwe, two incharges, and six clerks were replaced by the Excise Inspector, earning pay of Rs.150 per month, and two clerks, earning Rs.15per month; in Kyaikkami, one more Tindal,⁷⁷ earning Rs.15 per month; starting from 1 September 1896, in Myeik, one Excise Inspector, earning Rs.150 per month; and a beat to be used at

⁷² RPAB, 1895, 50

⁷³ Nisbet, 1901, Vol.I, 237

⁷⁴ Lower Chindwin District, 1897, 199

⁷⁵ RED, 1896, 4

⁷⁶ RED, 1897, 12

⁷⁷ Tindal=Native Petty Officer

the express of Rs.150 per month, in Meiktila, two Daroga⁷⁸, earning Rs.30 per month; and in Yamethin, two Darogas, earning Rs.40.

Of the prisoners of 19708 in 1895 serving sentences in cases of opium all over the country, 2509 prisoners were opium addicts. But the number in that year (1895) was a little lower than in 1894. In the Paung-Te Reformatory, of eighty eight juvenile delinquent youth under reformation, two were those who had breached the Opium Act.⁷⁹

Since there was a change of staff in the Excise Department, the expense of salary, which was Rs.65810, increased to Rs. 73134 in 1896-97. Rs. 2660 was spent more on travel allowance. With the increase of the staff, there was a decline in the cases that breached the Opium Act. There were 234 cases in 1895-96, and only 182 cases in 1896-97.⁸⁰

According to the Police Force Report, there were 1775 cases of breaching the Opium Act in 1897; and 1626 cases of action taken against.⁸¹ There seems to be some difference since the Excise Report shows the financial year and the Police Force Report shows the calendar year.

Although there were measures annually taken against the cases, the opium trafficking did not decline. There was an increase of 328815 seer of opium weight in 1898-99, i.e., 110000 seer more than 1897-98. The 251123 seer of opium were arrested in Upper Myanmar. One single seizure of opium in the largest amount was 29600 seer of opium, which only one Kachin headman of Bamaw District had arrested.⁸² Although the excise cases accused had declined in number, the opium

⁷⁸ Duroga = Officer of Customs, Excise and other departments

⁷⁹ RAB, 1897, 21-2

⁸⁰ RPAB, 1897, 34

⁸¹ RAB, 1899, 84

⁸² Report on the Rangoon Town Police for the year 1899, Rangoon Government Printing, 1900, p.217 (Henceforth: RRTP, 1900)

criminal cases had increased. According to the Opium Act, in the cases accused in Yangon were 99 cases in 1895; 77 cases in 1896; 166 cases in 1897; 112 cases in 1898; and 149 cases in 1899.⁸³

Table-IX
The amount of opium weight arrested all over the country

Year	Local use of opium (seer)			Illegal opium seized in (seer)		
	Lower Myanmar	Upper Myanmar	Total	Lower Myanmar	Upper Myanmar	Total
1894-95	19275	5704	24979	606	147	753
1895-96	19455	6580	25835	508	337	845
1896-97	20802	7311	28113	645	1208	1953
1897-98	21552	8516	30068	827	2157	2984

Source: RAB, 1899-1900, 77

The administration report stated that the cases of breaching the Excise and Opium Act and the number of arrests had declined in 1899-90 less than 1898-99. The report mentioned that there was an increase of opium abuse in Patheingyi, and an increased number of illegal opium seizure in Mandalay, and that, with the collaboration with the licensed opium dealers, opium traffickings had been strongly suppressed, but there still were some cases.⁸⁴ This conclusion seems to

⁸³ Proceeding of the Government of Burma, 1900, Rangoon Government Press, 1900, p.7 (Henceforth: P.G.B)

⁸⁴ Nisbet, 1901, Vol.I, 237

have carried some truth. In 1899, of the 16917 prisoners, 3459 prisoners were opium addicts.⁸⁵

The number of cases breaching the Opium Act was 1632 in 1899; and 1493 in 1910. Of these, 1414 were taken action against. The number of 1928 persons was involved in cases, while 1862 cases were submitted to the court and 1550 persons were taken action against. In 1899-1900, 213065 seer of opium were seized; and 263258 seer of opium seized was 26577 seer of opium in Bamaw; 17018 seer in Katha; and 19515 seer in Myitkyina.⁸⁶

The British Government of India had allowed licensed opium shops in Rakhine Division to have more effective control of opium dealing.⁸⁷ It was probably assumed that the opening of legal licensed opium shops would decrease the illegal opium trafficking. But the fact that there were cases of opium seized in the Chin Hill shows that the lack of control was everywhere.⁸⁸

To have wider control of opium dealing, the Opium Act was confirmed according to the Notification No.35, issued on 21 June 1900, and the Notification No.66, issued on 30 November 1900, which was to cover "within the government residential area starting from Taungoo of the Shan State to Lashio".⁸⁹

In Lower Myanmar, concerning the opium control, the Finance Commissioner assumed that it would be too early to make the target date of 1st April, 1900, and proposed that the target date should be submitted only after that

⁸⁵ (a)RAB, 1901, 17, 69

(b)RPAB, 1900, 23

⁸⁶ PGB, 1900, 5

⁸⁷ PGB, 1900, 5

⁸⁸ PGB, 1900, 30

⁸⁹ (a) BLS, 1961, 1

(b) PGB, 1900, 34-39

(c) BBG, 1900, Pt. I, 477, 799

date to the Government of India.⁹⁰ Section 12 states that if a person accused was found to be guilty or acquitted from the accusation, the opium seized must be confiscated and kept at the treasury by the criminal judge.⁹¹ Here, the Finance Commissioner added a clause that though the accused was found guilty or not guilty, the opium seized should be usurped, and for the seizure of illegal opium the person involved for the cause should be awarded in accordance with the regulation. However, the Vice-Chancellor accepted the proposal, but replied that the action proposed could be made effected, not with the regulation, but with the administration order.⁹²

To make the effect of opium dealing control cover the whole country, the Law was made to come into effect over the Kachin Range and the Chin Range, which had formerly been out of control, starting from 9 February 1901. In the 1895 Kachin Hill Tribes Regulation Item 31,⁹³ also in the 1896 Chin Hill Regulation Item 33,⁹⁴ were included the restrictions.⁹⁵

With the reason of controlling opium effectively, the British government appointed, along with other levels, nineteen superintendents and nineteen inspectors at Excise Department for Lower Myanmar, starting from 1 April, 1902. As a result, 297724 seer of opium was seized in 1911-12, i.e., more than in 1900-01.⁹⁶ According to Section thirty-one of the Kachin Range Regulation, there took

⁹⁰ (a) PGB, 1900, 12

(b) PGB, 1901, 30

⁹¹ BLS, 1961, 9

⁹² PGB, 1900, 23

⁹³ Report on the Administration of Kachin-Hill Tribes Regulation, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1895, 261 (Henceforth: Kachin-Hill Tribes, 1895)

⁹⁴ Report on the Administration of Chin Hills Regulation, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1896, p. 292 (Henceforth: Chin Hills, 1896)

⁹⁵ PGB, 1901, 11-5

⁹⁶ RAB, 1902, 12,80

place three Opium cases in the Kachin Range. Two were concerned with the Chinese, breaching Section 9 (Ga) of the Opium Act. Fifty one viss of opium illegally trafficked to Mocok and Momeik was seized in Kachin Range.⁹⁷

There were also opium cases of the Opium Act in the Northern Shan such as Thibaw,⁹⁸ as well as opium trafficking in the Southern Shan. The case of the maximum amount of opium seized was that 79 balls of opium prepared at Loi-I region was seized in Yamethin district. Twelve defendants were arrested and were found guilty. Two people carrying opium from Thibaw to Yat-Sauk were arrested and were fined k.500 each.⁹⁹

There were twelve opium cases breaching the Opium Act in 1901, in Momeik region of Mandalay Division.¹⁰⁰ While there were cases of large opium traffickings from Penang to Meik by motorboat, these were considerably suppressed by the efforts made by the excise personnel newly appointed in 1912, as well as through negotiations over the price of illegal opium.¹⁰¹ There were between 2251 cases in 1902. 22414 seer of opium, was seized in Bamaw, and 11689 seer of where opium in Kyaukse at the maximum amount of opium.¹⁰²

The Ayeyawaddy Division Commissioner recommended that should any case breaching the Opium law be found in any village, the headman should be

⁹⁷Report on the Shan Frontier of the Mandalay Division 1901-02, Rangoon Government, Printing, 1903, 57,59,64-67 (Henceforth: RSFMD, 1903)

⁹⁸Report on the Administration of the Northern Shan States for the year, 1902, Rangoon Government Printing, 1901-02, 34-38 (Henceforth: RANSS, 1902)

⁹⁹Report on the Administration of the Southern Shan State for the year 1901, Rangoon Government , Printing, 1901-02,6(Henceforth: RASSS,1902)

¹⁰⁰RSFMD, 1902, 56

¹⁰¹*Burma Gazetteer Mergui District* , Rangoon Government Printing, 19

¹⁰² RPAB, 1902, 12,22

taken action against. He assumed that it would be better to punish than reward.¹⁰³

Therefore, generally, the headmen, satisfactorily, handled 6000 cases in 1903-04.¹⁰⁴

The following table shows the more control of cases breaching the Opium Act in 1904-05 than 1903-04:¹⁰⁵

Table-X
Control of Cases Breaching the Opium Act

Subject		Persons Arrested (1903-04)	Persons Arrested (1904-05)
Illegal Trafficking	Arrest	146	138
	Arrested	124	112
Illegal Cultivation	Arrest	6	1
	Arrested	6	-
Sale without license	Arrest	334	224
	Arrested	260	187
Illegal keeping in hand	Arrest	2399	2979
	Arrested	1952	2436

Source: Ireland, A. *The Province of Burma*, Vol.II, A Report Prepared on behalf of the University of Chicago, Cambridge, The Kiberside Press, 1907, 855

The Shan Chiefs gave aid in the opium control in Momeik, Thaung Thwut and Hsin Kalein, Kanti. But opium was a principal factor in the borderland areas,

¹⁰³Resolution on the Reports of village Administration for the year 1903, Rangoon Government Printing, 1904,2 (Henceforth: RRVAB, 1904)

¹⁰⁴ RAB, 1904, 11

¹⁰⁵ Ireland. A, *The Province of Burma*, Vol.II, A Report Prepared on behalf of the University of Chicago, Cambridge, The Kiberside Press, 1907, p.855 (Henceforth: Ireland, 1907)

so there were more or less opium trafficking.¹⁰⁶ Since the headmen had their main affairs to deal with, they could not pay much attention to the opium control.¹⁰⁷ There were 2680 opium cases in 1904; and 2567 cases in 1905. 2624 cases were submitted to the courts in 1904; and 2401 cases were given sentences. In 1904, there were 3351 persons involved in opium cases, and 2774 persons were imprisoned: in 1915, 3343 persons involved and 2644 imprisoned. In 1905, the maximum number of opium weight seized was 9127 seer in Tha-Hton; 1679 seer in Ma-U-Bin; 1143 seer in Yamethin; and 1040 seer in Kyauk-se.

The case of opium seized in Thahton District is note worthy as an event of opium trafficking of those days; in Nabu-Taung Valley, ten opium traffickers, one armed with a gun, met the Police Force, but did not surrender, and so it was after a gun fight, that they were arrested.¹⁰⁸

The British government appointed an Excise Commissioner in organizing the civil servants, in order to have tighter control of opium in 1905-06. In that year, of the prisoners, 2108 were opium addicts.¹⁰⁹ In 1906-08, under an arrest of opium trafficking, one who made an attempt to flee was shot to death. Then, in revenge, a police guard post in a Kachin village was under attack by the Kachins.¹¹⁰ This indicates the lack of control.

According to the Excise inspector's investigation in Katha hills concerning the abuse of opium, there were about 500 opium addicts in that region, and about 150 visses were used. Almost all of them got opium from Myitkyina and Bamaw district. Three Kachins were taken action against over opium case in Kachin

¹⁰⁶ RAB, 1905, 4-5

¹⁰⁷ RRVAB, 1905, 2

¹⁰⁸ RPAB, 1905, 22

¹⁰⁹ RAB, 1906, 2,23

¹¹⁰ Report on the Northern-Eastern Frontier for the year 1906-07, Yangon Government Printing, 1910, pp.1,3,4 (Henceforth: RNEF, 1910)

hills.¹¹¹ If compared with Upper Myanmar, the cases declined a little in 1907 rather than 1906.¹¹²

In Northern Shan States, there were 116 cases of opium in 1905-06; 162 cases in 1906-07; and 95 cases in 1907-08. The number of persons submitted to the courts was 217 in 1906-07; and 108 in 1907-08. The decline in number was caused by the low profit in opium trafficking.¹¹³ In Momeik, opium trafficking was often taken action against, and the maximum amount was 1963 seer.¹¹⁴

If compared with other years, 1907-08 was a peaceful year in the north-east borderland areas of Myanmar. There were less disruptive activities in China, as well. The Wa-yaung Village in Myanmar territory was invaded by one group from Sandra of China, and four buffaloes were taken away. It was done in revenge of a case of people of Sandras who were arrested for opium trafficking five years ago. Every year, in January, officers from both sides of the border area met and dealt with matters through negotiations Myanmar side strictly tightened the case of opium.¹¹⁵

When a formal diplomatic note of administrative appointment was given to the Shan lords of Myanmar, they were given responsibility for opium control. While they did not allow opium into Central Myanmar automatically, the government allowed it only through tax in accordance with the Regulation.¹¹⁶ Concerning the opium cases in 1907, 1908, and 1909 in Upper and Lower Myanmar, the cases and number of people involved are mentioned in the following table:

¹¹¹ RNEF, 1907, 11,12

¹¹² Report on the Administration of Criminal Justice in Burma, for the year 1907, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1908, p.9 (Henceforth: RACJB, 1908)

¹¹³ RANSS, 1908, 65

¹¹⁴ Report on the State of Mongmist for the year 1907-08, pp.101-2

¹¹⁵ RAB, 1908, 9

¹¹⁶ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Burma, Vol.II, Calcutta, Government Printing, 1908, p. 353 (Henceforth: *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908)

Table-XI
Opium Cases in Myanmar

Year	Cases of opium	Submitted Number	No. Actual Cases	No. Cases Submitted Court	Persons involved in last year's record	No. Accused	No. Imprisoned	No. Death, Escape, Transferred	No. Cases To Court
1907	Lower Myanmar	2557	2239	2584	2858	602	2187	16	53
	Upper Myanmar	617	574	604	712	135	559	1	17
									(one escaped)
1908	Lower Myanmar	2534	2278	2565	2927	574	2239	28	86
	Upper Myanmar	709	679	701	791	107	661	6	17
									(one escaped)
1909	Lower Myanmar	2580	2345	2620	2979	558	2357	16	48
	Upper Myanmar	575	541	572	672	117	534	6	15
									(6 escaped)

Source: RANSS, 1907-08,65

Since the Opium Act was prescribed since 1878, it was necessary to modify it over the thirty years. So the Governor of Myanmar approved the Burma Opium Law Modified Act, and the Viceroy of India gave approval on 13 December. Section one of that Act included the term, initials of name,¹¹⁷ location, cover area, date for effect; in Section Two, the definition of opium and specifications; in Section Three, the Criminal Judge of the Area of Jurisdiction, Criminal Judge of the Region or authority of officer assigned special authority; in Section Four, authority to make a surprise check and arrest in any vehicle, boat or ship, and authority to keep opium in guard.

In the 1878 Opium Act Section Nineteen stated;

The collector of the district, Deputy Commissioner, or other officer authorized by the local Government, in this behalf, either personally or in right of this office, or a Magistrate, may issue his warrant for the arrest of any person whom he has reason to believe to have committed an offence relating to opium, or for the search, whether by day or night, of any building or vessel or place in which he has reason to believe opium liable to confiscation to be kept or concealed.¹¹⁸

Then the First International Narcotic Drugs Congress was arranged, and three years later, with the President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt as the convener, interested thirteen countries all over the eastern world organized the Opium Commission. The meeting of that Commission was held in Shanghai in 1909.

¹¹⁷ RAC, J.B., 1907, 20-21, 1908, 18-9

¹¹⁸ (a) BLS, 1961, 12, 15-17

(b) BOM, 1925, 8, 10-11

The Commission had laid down plans for the prevention of drug trafficking, encouraging the local people to gradually suppress the opium smoking. It supported that trafficking of drugs to regions or countries which do not accept narcotic drugs legally should be banned. Moreover, the commission requested countries to collaborate with China by all means to keep an eye on all regions held by foreign countries in China. It seriously encourages the governments to take action strongly against the production and distribution of narcotic drugs produced from Morphia and opium. It did not lay down strict guidelines for the future.¹¹⁹

The opium trafficking has still been existing along the borderline areas in Myanmar. There existed even murders related to opium.¹²⁰ Many Chinese came to the Northern Shan State since the poppy plantations have been suppressed in Yunnan. Illegal opium dealing has grown and opium fetches good prices.

Since opium fetched good prices, more poppy was grown in Myitkyina and Bamaw. The seizure of 1419 seer of opium in Myitkyina¹²¹ indicates the prosperous poppy plantation and opium dealing. In 1908-09, there were 2628 cases related to opium; and 2387 cases in 1909-10. The 2297 persons were submitted to the court and 2185 cases were given sentence. A lot of opium was arrested in trafficking; 12552 seer in the Shan State; 7238 seer in Bamaw; and 13181 seer in Rakhine as the maximum amount. In Yangon, there were 105 cases

¹¹⁹ (a) *Anti-narcotic drug and Intoxicant Abuse Versus the United Nations (in Myanmar)*, the United Nations Headquarters. New York. 1972. Department of Information, 11,12 (Henceforth: *Anti-Narcotic Dru Campaign, 1972*)

(b) *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol.5, Chicago, willian Benton, 1973, 1051

(c) Dr. Tin Htun Oo, *Kaung Kyo Mapay-Muyit-say* (Narcotic Drugs Bring Only Bad Consequences) (in Myanmar), Yangon, Pyin Nya Beikman Press, 1979, 118-9 (Henceforth: *Tin Htun Oo, 1979*)

¹²⁰ (a) RAB, 1910, 9

(b) RNEF, 1910, 2

¹²¹ RAB, 1910, 1, 4, 94

breaching the Opium Act in 1908; and 336 cases in 1909. The highest percent of opium addicts among the prisoners in 1909-10 were in Henthada and Bamaw.¹²²

According to the 1909 Opium Modification Act, those who have become notorious for making a livelihood by opium dealing could be placed under arrest, so the Excise Superintendents could make more control of opium dealing than ever.¹²³ In 1910-11, because of the efforts of the personnel, 13031 seer of opium as the highest in opium trafficking were seized in Sittwe.¹²⁴ In Bamaw, 2318 seer of opium were seized. Since poppy plantation was under suppression in China, the price of opium three years ago soared from Rs.15 to Rs.50.¹²⁵

According to the Act No.7 to modify the 1909 Myanmar Opium Law, a declaration was issued; the Declaration of the finance Department on 19 April 1910.¹²⁶

According to the 1878 Opium Act, after acquiring approval from the viceroy in the Council Meeting, the Finance Department issued the 1911 Opium Regulation with Declaration No.21, dated 17 May 1910. In this Regulation are included: "Definition, specifications, Production and Preparation, keeping in hand, Registration of opium eaters in Lower Myanmar, bio-data and remarks on opium addicts in Myanmar opium trafficking, keeping in hand, dealing, retail and the sale list of licensed opium shops, management of remaining opium after the two-month validity of the license, general appeal and regulations included additionally in the law", altogether 28 section.¹²⁷

¹²² RAB, 1910, 26, 30-31, 35

¹²³ RAB, 1910, 94

¹²⁴ RAB, 1910, 14, 10-11, 18

¹²⁵ RNEF, 1911, 5

¹²⁶ (a) BLS, 1961, 25

(b) BOM, 1925, 15

¹²⁷ (a) BLS, 1961, 27, 57

(b) BOM, 1925, 19-37

In 1878, according to the Opium Act, the instructions were announced in Declaration No.173 of the Ministry of Finance on 5 September 1910. There were 12 Chapters, and 96 Sections.¹²⁸

According to the Regulations in the Opium Act, and the additional instructions, the amount of opium allowed to licenced opium shops had declined. there was progress in the control of opium sale from those shops. A more complete record of opium addicts was done. The total number of opium addicts in Myanmar was then 119867 persons in all races. There was approximately 3.9 seer in a person's use of opium per year. In 1909, the opium seized was 1483 seer; and in 1910-11, 1665 seer.¹²⁹ It can be concluded that the increase of the amount of opium seized has resulted from the better performances of the excise personnel.

In Tha-Hton, where opium use was high, starting from 1912-13, opium addicts were forced to be registered. Unless registered, they were not allowed to use opium. Later, they would not be allowed to register. So in 1903-04, the registered number was 1151; and only 665 in 1911. To allow the legal opium trafficking, the three opium shops, formerly closed, were re-opened. One excise officer was appointed at each shop to supervise the dealing and prevent those who were not legally registered. So the annual amount of opium abuse declined. Formerly, the use of opium was 17 Mounds. In 1909-10, only 16¾ Mounds were in use.¹³⁰

But the opium control was not a success every where in Sittwe, in 1911-12, the opium of 14337 seer was seized,¹³¹ which indicate this point. In Yangon, there were 426 cases of breaching the Opium Act, and 386 cases were given

¹²⁸ (a) BLS, 1961, 61-114

(b) BOM, 1925, 41-78

¹²⁹ (a) Opium Manual, 39-72

(b) RAB, 1911, 63

¹³⁰ Sandaway District, 1962, 91

¹³¹ RAB, 1911, 12

sentences.¹³² In 1912, in Thima Hills, Myitkyina District, opium of 1738 seer was seized. Since two years ago, poppy plantation had grown immensely, and production of opium had increased. Coffee plantations were replaced with poppy plantations. In Southern China, the opium dealing was strictly prohibited, so the national races in the borderland areas tried to traffic opium through Myanmar.¹³³

Reward had been given to excise personnel every year for making more efforts in opium control. In 1912, seven officers and 36 personnel were promoted. The 2121 excise personnel were awarded prizes, certificates and cash. In 1911, there were 2157 cases related to opium; and 2238 cases in 1912. Opium of 8126 seer was seized in Bamaw; 5471 seer of opium in Pathein; 4729 seer of opium in southern Shan State; 4043 seer of opium in Mandalay; and 4254 seer of opium in Yamethin was seized all in 1912.¹³⁴

There were 2238 cases all over the country, and 2212, cases were submitted to the court. By applying the authority included in Act Section 3 modified from the Opium Act, 2149 cases were given sentences. Of 2856 persons breaching the Opium Act, 1826, were submitted to the court, and 2288 were given sentences.¹³⁵

Formerly, there were the Excise Commissioner and one Excise Chief Superintendent, appointed in 1906. There were nineteen excise personnel appointed in 1902, but now twenty-nine excise superintendents were appointed. In 1902, there were 19 excise inspectors, but later 50 Excise inspectors were appointed.¹³⁶ The number of excise personnel had increased, but it cannot be assumed that such number of staff would have been sufficient enough to function effectively in practices.

¹³² RAB, 1912, 47

¹³³ RNEF, 1912, 6-7

¹³⁴ RPAB, 1912, 422

¹³⁵ RPAB, 1912, 22-3

¹³⁶ Civil List, 1910, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1911, 1

In summary, while the British government opened opium shops in Lower Myanmar, they also made efforts to do opium marketing in Upper Myanmar. Opium trafficking had been going on in Myanmar and Assam borderland areas.

As poppy seeds arrived in Chindwin regions, Chin hills, Kachin regions and Shan States in Northern Myanmar, poppy plantations had swarmed like locusts. The local nationals, who had earned simple living by cultivating on farmlands, now turned to poppy plantations which would fetch them high income.

The Myanmar people are active and energetic, and so are liable to get spoiled by opium and intoxicants more than the Chinese and the Indians. In prisons, Myanmar opium eaters increased. Opium caused cholera. Peasants who were addicted to opium eating would not work well, and the yield dropped. Consequently, the productivity of the nation had declined. Since opium causes the poor health conditions, generations after generations of opium eaters suffer emaciation.

The British government prescribed the Opium Act in 1910, the Excise Act in 1917; and the Harmful Drugs Act in 1931. According to the Myanmar Opium Act and Regulations, the opium addicts were made to get registered in 1878, and were allowed to buy opium of certain limited amount and kinds at licensed opium shops. Youths of below twenty-five years old were not to be sold opium. The Excise Tax is the tax from auctioning the opium shops and liquor shops. Auction tax varied, depending on the location of opium shop. The owner bought opium from the government, and sold it to registered opium addicts.

The British government earned tax on land, the Tathamedata tax, fishing, forests, customs, as well as on excise, which was the best tax. So knowing that opium could spoil the health and social affairs, etc., of the nationals, the British

government allowed the opium smoking and eating in Myanmar. Even the Excise Department was established and a lot of income was earned from it.

Thus, until Myanmar had gained independence, the British government used various means and methods to restrict and control opium cultivation and opium dealings, but since the focus was only on earning the tax, the attempts were unsuccessful. The consequences of opium abuse and dealing have been a breakdown of moral character, or Delinquency, decline of labour productivity, as well as a bad form of instigation to the local and foreign destructive elements.

CHAPTER THREE

OPIUM CULTIVATION AND PRODUCTION

Opium cultivation began in India about 11th century AD and opium consumption was widespread throughout the world in 16th century AD.¹ One William Griffith recorded about the opium cultivation in Myanmar who arrived Assam, Myanmar on 10 March 1837, that opium was cultivated at Tooroon belonging to Bon of Hukaung valley.² Therefore it comes to know that in Konbaung period, poppy cultivation had already existed in Myanmar.

Though it could not say that Assam or Yunnan was the origin of poppy cultivation, by the Anderson record, it was known that poppy was cultivated in the region from the hill regions in Myanmar to Momein in China. It was also learnt that in 1837, Jinhaw had cultivated poppy in the region, west of Ayeyarwady. Besides, poppy cultivation could be seen on the slopes of mountains near Taping valley. Some poppy fields could also be found in the hill regions northern part of Katha district where Kachins lived. Kachin poppy fields located at the places 5000 above sea level. Kachin grew poppy with white flowers in small plots in their house compounds. In winter, Kachins had cultivated poppy on alluvial lands up in the Ayeyarwady River.³ Poppy cultivation become widespread, as poppy seeds

¹ Kyaw Than Htun; *Mu-yit-bay hnit Taing-yi-say* (Narcotic dangerous and Indigenous medicine), Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, 1987, p.25 (Henceforth: Kyaw Than Htun, 1987)

² William Griffith; *Journals of Travels in Assam, Burma, Botton, Afghanistan and the Neighbouring Countries*, Calcutta, Bishops College Press, 1847, p.73

³ Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Pt.I, Vol.I, 276-277, 425; Part I, Vol.II, 258

were imported from Assam, which were cultivated in the northern Myanmar, Chindwin region, Chin Hills, Kachin region and Shan land.⁴

Poppy cultivation was not permitted legally in Myanmar, but in Kachin and Shan States it was legal. At the end of Lido road in India, there was a village known as Assam, where poppy fields under the care of British government, located. Poppy seeds from Assam poppy fields spread out to Kachin State, Nan Kham region adjacent to Kachin State, Momeik, Mabein, and Tomkwa in Shan State. Poppy in Kokant and Wa regions came from adjacent region of Yunnan.⁵

Poppy can grow in places of Leeward slopes, and plains, where cold and dry climate prevailed. Poppy is best at the 4000' above sea level and below it, its taste and odour the poor.⁶ Therefore, poppy cultivation could be seen in hill tracts of Kachin and Shan States.

Poppy is a small flower bearing plants. Opium is collected from its fruits. Poppy fields blossom about the end of February and fruits become well grown before the on set of monsoon. Poppy flowers are snow-white and its fruits are green. As poppy plants could not withstand with the wet and hot climate, opium from the poppy fruits are to be collected before the rains. Then the collected sticky opium is put in the sun, in order to evaporate its moisture content. At the time of opium collection, should the rain occur, as morphine can dilute in the rainwater, opium collection and dehydration are to be carried out well before the rains. After the sticky opium was dehydrated in the sun repeatedly, its colour becomes dark brown, which is called raw opium. It has a strong smell of fetid and rank. Raw

⁴ (a) Thaik Htun; 1980, 108

(b) See Photo (10)

⁵ Tekkatho Kyi Mar, *Ngayeban* (The Hell Flower), *Byaik Taw*, Yangon, Oh Way Sarpay, 1973, p. 25 (Henceforth: Kyi Mar, 1973)

⁶ Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Part I, Vol.II, 276-277, 425; Part I, Vol.II, 258

opium⁷ cannot store up so long, because the longer it stores, the larger it lost weight.⁸

Morphine content in raw opium can vary according to the class of opium. The best opium contains about fourteen percent of morphine at most and the poor one about five to ten percent of morphine. The treated raw opium is called "Hlawge". In the treatment, various kinds of admixtures are used, differing from place to place. Hlawge is an odourless material, that does not stain when handle it. It can store up for a long time and does not loose weight, with no pest. Once drug police measured their Hlawge, confiscated 40 years ago, they found that the weight of Hlawge was exactly as it was forty years ago.⁹

One viss weight of opium exactly is usually called a package of raw opium (bein-sein-ta-lone). Silver coins and bronze coins used in colonial period, are used in the measurement of opium in Kachin and Shan States, which in known as hao (Haung). One viss is equal to 48 haungs and one haung is equivalent to two and half ticals. Two bronze coins measure about six "mus". The common designation was that a package of Hlawge weighs about 80 Tolas, which is equivalent to seventy five and half ticals. Poppy in Tanaing region of Kachin State was very poor, from which opium can not get by means of normal scratching and collecting, instead opium is got by rubbing the fruit with a cloth or a cottons roll. Then these cottons are boiled with water and poured it on course cotton, where opium got stuck to the cloth. Then the cloth was rolled and sells it by cutting the wanted portion. This kind of opium is known as rag-opium.¹⁰

Though various kinds of poppy albeit, white flowered poppy is mostly grown, which is known papaver officinale, having an oval shape poppy fruit

⁷ See Photo (11)

⁸ Myanmar Swezon Kyan, 1963, 301-302

⁹ Thaik Htun, 1980, 80-81

¹⁰ Nyo Mya, *Bein Dika Thone Saung Twe* (The Opium three volumes), Yangon, Oh Way Sarpay, 1st impression, 1973, pp.70-73 (Henceforth: Nyo Mya, 1973)

bearing pedicle. Poppy seeds are white colour. The poppy that blossoms red or purple flower is called papaver somnifaram which has many pedicles. Its fruit is round and the seeds are of black. In the white flowered poppy, there are two kinds: one bears the flowers of snow white, the other with its petals slightly shinning. The red flowered poppy has its edge of petal red coloured, while some have the flower with the colour of red wine. The purple flowered poppy has two kinds, one bearing the colour of purple throughout the flower and the other bearing reddish purple flower.

As poppy plants are very tender, it can be destroyed easily by pest, wind, frost and untimely rain. Therefore same area extent of poppy cultivation cannot yield same amount of poppy. Poppy plant seldom grows more than two or three feet in height. The poppy fruit is slightly larger than that of duck's egg. Poppy seeds are sown in November or sprouted in the early days of January. At the end of January or in the early days of February, poppy fields begin to blossom, and in March or April poppy resin is collected. The collection of opium is like the following: in the early morning; poppy fruit is scratched with two or three pronged fork and in the next morning, the sticky gum secreted out from the fruit is collected and put the sticky opium in the banana leaves which are later packed into packages. Wa peoples used old cotton clothes instead of banana leave.¹¹

Opium harvest was big enough to supply the needs of local Kachin, Lisu and Chinese. Kachins grow poppy only for their consumption, not for export to other countries. Shans of Keng Tung, Lisu and Palaung peoples also grow poppy. Opium production in Keng Tung was found to be only fair amount and exported to the northern part of Siam and to the upper region of Laos.¹² Poppy is grown throughout undeveloped regions of Shan State and in villages of Khokhawsan, Seng Khaung, Saukkya, Taungaing, Naung lein and Panwaing in Kokant, poppy is

¹¹ (a) Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part I, Vol.I, 276-277, 425; Part I, Vol.II, 356-359

(b) See Photo (12,13)

¹² Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol.I, 424-425; Part II, Vol.I, 326, 414-415

grown as major crop. One-third of all poppy fields could be found in Yunnan and the rest in Kokant and Wa regions. Every Chinese village in Kokant region grow poppy fields of 100, 400 and 800 acres.

In Kokant area, one acre of poppy field yields about 1.74 seer or four to five pounds of opium. Kachin, Palaung, Lisu, Lahu, Akha and other nationalities in neighbouring areas grow poppy fields of about 10² feet to 100² feet. In some villages, all poppy fields of the village measured only about one acre and some only three to four acres.¹³ It seems that poppy cultivation and opium production scattered all over the country, as there was a Yamon who administered. Toya village, southern Hsenwi, Northern Shan State, where poppy cultivation was carried out on a large scale in 1883 and 1884.¹⁴

Opium cultivators and traders did not understand what their profession had posed the danger to mankind. Narpan village where Wa peoples lived, cultivated poppy and exchanged opium with salt and other necessary goods. There is one village Alet on the west bank of Ayeyarwady in the north of Myitkyina, where Maru peoples from Naunglan village lived. They also were poppy cultivators and opium traders.¹⁵ Local farmers changed their cultivation from crops to poppy, which was encouraged by the British government.¹⁶

Poppy cultivation in the northern Shan States notwithstanding, it was learnt that opium was smuggled into the country from India, China and Siam.¹⁷ In the

¹³ (a) Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 78-79, 128, 167, 231, 340, 360-73; Part I, Vol II, 663, 749; Part II, Vol III, 80

(b) *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Burma, Vol II, Calcutta, Government Printing, 1908, p.316

¹⁴ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 424-425

¹⁵ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol II, 585; Part II, Vol I, 5

¹⁶ Thaik Htun, *1980*, 108

¹⁷ Aung Than Htun, *1980*, 16

year 1891-92, the principal opium trade route passed through the southern Maikha river and Kachin hills, from where it leads to Mogaung, Bamaw and other parts of Upper Myanmar. As opium smuggling became heavy and serious. British government had to consider controlling these areas.¹⁸

Opium was greatly produced in Shan States. Raw opium and Hlawge could get from the regions, west of Thanlwin, Kokant and Wa land.¹⁹ British government also gave permission to grow poppy in Kachin hill tracts, Katha, Bamaw and Upper Chindwin districts.²⁰ Opium produced in Shan States and the one from India were regarded foreign opium.²¹ Chinese opium from Yunnan was first imported into Upper Burma without any tax, later it was levied about 15 Rupees per 1.32 seer.²²

British government issued eight licences for wholesale opium trade, and sixteen for opium retail selling. Nevertheless the opium import was found decreased from 5519 seer in 1889-90 to 1904 seer in 1890-91. But the government disbursement of opium to the licensed sellers was about 1814 seer. Though the data on opium could not be available poppy cultivation around 1900 became grew more and more.

¹⁸ (a) RAB, 1891, 16

(b) J.T Walkers: *Expedition among the Kachin Tribes on the Northeast Frontier of Upper Burma*, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1892, p.168 (Henceforth: Walkers, 1892)

¹⁹ J.G Scott; *Hand Book of Burma*, Cited in the *Pacification of Burma*, p.43

²⁰ RED, 1896-97, 4

²¹ BLS, 1961, 74

²² (a) Resolution on the Report on the Excise Department in Lower Burma for the year 1888-89, Rangoon, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Printing, p. 6 (Henceforth: REDLB, 1889)

(b) REDLB, 1889, 6-7

(c) Crosthwaite, Sir, Charles; *The Pacification of Burma*, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1968, p. 41 (Henceforth: Crosthwaite, 1968)

Government opium disbursement in Kyaukse decreased to 46 seer, while it was about 155 seer in Yamethin. The increase of government opium disbursement might be to offset the opium smuggling and illegal poppy cultivation. The expansion of poppy cultivation could be attributable to no-tax on poppy cultivation and the expose of new poppy fields by growing ground surveys.²³ These factors might create the equilibrium between local opium production and trade.

Chinese lived in Theinni, northern Shan State, and Yankawhlan village in Thanlyin valley, Kokant region in 1891, where they grew about 500 acres of poppy fields.²⁴ In 1892 about 200 to 300 acres of poppy fields were cultivated in Taungsaing village. About 1000 acres of poppy fields could be seen in Kokant region and it was estimated that more would be cultivated in Wa region. Such area extension of poppy fields was the reason for the emergence of Golden Triangle, after the deportation of King Thibaw. Almost all opium produced in Kokant region was exported to China, and very few amount of it, crossed over Salween river into Myanmar. Opium from Wa region arrived Myanmar proper through Keng Tung and Keng Kya. In 1896, it could buy 1.32 seer of opium with thirteen Rupees in Keng Tung and could resell it by sixteen Rupees. In Kokant area, poppy cultivation reached up to 1000 acres. With a yield of 1.752 seer per acre, Kokant produced about 14652 seer of opium.²⁵

In poppy cultivation areas, 1.32 seer of opium was about fifteen Rupees.²⁶ Though farmers got such meagre amount, they could not abandon poppy cultivation. For instance, in the year 1896, there was a total poppy cultivation of

²³ RAB, 1891, 77

²⁴ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol II, 378

²⁵ (a) Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 346, 360-415

(b) Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part I, Vol II, 466

²⁶ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 195

1140 acres in and around Loimaw village, southern Theini, Northern Shan State.²⁷

Therefore, it was estimated that about 2000 acres of poppy fields were already existed in Myanmar. In British colonial period, opium import was encouraged as well as that of poppy cultivation. These made opium acquisition easy, which could lead to the increase of consumption of opium, and accordingly the number of opium "eaters" (consumer). However, the population of opium eaters did not number as much as it should be, for the Buddhist culture and Myanmar tradition acted as a check and control on the use of opium, especially the one principle in the five precept, that reads, the abstinence of taking the intoxicant. Besides, successive kings forbade the use of opium by passing various edicts.

British government ordered not to carry out poppy cultivation throughout the country, except the Kachin villages in Katha, Bamaw and Upper Chindwin district for the year 1896-97.²⁸ This prohibition was imposed, as the government wanted to levy taxes on imported opium from Indian. The government collected taxes on poppy fields 8 annas per one fourth of one anna.²⁹ Village headman measured poppy fields and district surveyor town officer checked it. According to the government regulation, opium production could be done only by the following persons: (a) pharmacists and tatoos (b) licence holders of opium production and (c) nationalities in the poppy cultivation permitted areas.³⁰

Though the colonial government imposed prohibition on poppy cultivation, it became more widespread in Konbaung Thibaw region than before.³¹ In the year 1897, poppy fields and poppy cultivation location and regions grew in number and area extent. Large scale poppy cultivation was carried out in Fanlon village Loilon

²⁷ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol II, 68

²⁸ RED, 1897, 4-5

²⁹ 1 pe = 1.78 acres

³⁰ RED, 1897, 4-5

³¹ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol. I, 223

area,³² Loinon village in the eastern part of Mainglon, two Laungmu village governed by Tangyang town before in southern Hsenwi, O-si-khant village in northern Theini.³³ In the year 1868, there also was a heavy poppy cultivation in Tangmon area in northern Theini, thirty Kachin villages, five Shan villages, three Chinese villages and two Palaung villages. All opium produced was traded with China in the east and Shans in the west.³⁴

There also were poppy fields in villages of Pharsar and Mengtom in Southern Shan and in the southern Theini. In Southern Shan, at Mengbon village, Keng Taung district, a large scale poppy cultivation existed there. But only two acres of poppy fields could be found in Palaung village and Mettinlaing village.³⁵ A British official who travelled in Pindaya township, recorded about the poppy cultivation in Palaung village.³⁶

The local opium yield of 1905-06 greatly decreased, due to the untimely rain and flood throughout the Northern Shan States, where most of poppy cultivation carried out. Besides, there also was scanty rain in winter. The result was a decrease in opium trade with China and Siam.³⁷ In Keng Tung area, poppy fields grew well as the weather was not bad, instead fair weather prevailed.³⁸ At that time, the government imposed no control on poppy cultivation in Shan State. Opium produced was used wed for local consumption. At the market in Lashio,

³² Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 157

³³ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 702-703

³⁴ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part I, Vol I, 292

³⁵ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part I, Vol I, 200

³⁶ Nisbet, *1901*, Vol I, 447

³⁷ Report on the Administration of British Burma for the year 1905-06, Rangon, Govt-Prining, 1907, pp.3-4 (Henceforth: RABB, 1907)

³⁸ *Brief Histories of the States in the Southern Shan States for the year 1906*, Rangoon, Govt. Printing, 1907, p.3 (Henceforth: Brief Histories, 1907)

opium was traded freely.³⁹ In areas of Myitkyina, Bamaw, etcetera, number of poppy increased as well as the opium prices rose.

Poppy cultivation in 1907-08 was successful albeit, opium prices did not subside, as there was no reserve in 1906-07. In border area, opium prices rose up to twenty-two Rupees per 1.32 seer of opium.⁴⁰ The dear opium price caused to grow more poppy field in Myitkyina and Bamaw areas. In 1909-10, opium price rose three times.⁴¹ At that time, as many Chinese went down to Shan States, the opium trade subsided.⁴²

The government issued opium for Bamaw, Myithyina, Katha, Upper Chindwin and Lower Chindwin districts, from the confiscated foreign opium according to the rules of 1910-Excise Regulation (24). The opium prices were steadily rising, that the amount of opium which could be bought by one Rupee, in 1885, had to pay three Rupees in 1909-10. Feudal lords ruled China till 1910 and foreigners, exploiting the weakness of feudal kings, cultivated poppy in China by means of concluding various treaties. In 1905, Sun Yat-Sen began anti-feudal revolution in southern China, and started crack down on poppy cultivation, which led mass migration of unemployed Yunnan Chinese to Shan States. The downfall of Manchu dynasty in China could be seen as a reason for the expansion of poppy cultivation in Myanmar.⁴³ The reason was that these migrant Chinese could enjoy free reins in their poppy cultivation in Myanmar.

Besides, the dear opium price along the border encouraged poppy cultivation. In Yunnan, as poppy cultivation was suppressed till the year 1910-11, Chinese entered Myanmar and grew poppy in the region stretching from Fimaw in

³⁹ (a) Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol.I, 55

(b) Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908, Vol.II, 329-344

⁴⁰ RANSS, 1908, 69

⁴¹ RNEF, 1910, 4-5

⁴² RAB, 1910, 3

⁴³ (a) RNEF, 1910, 4-5

(b) RAB, 1910, 1-3

the northeast of Myitkyina to the Khantilon area in the north. They also expanded poppy cultivation around Patnoi Payam near the border. Chinese opium prices also increased from fifteen Rupees per 1.32 seer in 1908 to 50 Rs in 1911, which made the opium trade with the Western China grow up to the value of 1.4 million.⁴⁴

The international control in 1912 on opium trade set in. Accordingly, as the opium trade control began to widespread in Katha, Kachins, who once enjoyed the freedom in opium trade, had to buy the opium from licensed opium shops. Such curb and control notwithstanding, Kachin peoples stealthily cultivated poppy in their hidden small plots in the hills in Myitkyina district. In 1913-1914, poppy cultivation greatly expanded in the mountainous region of Seinlon Gaba. The government on its part tried at the best to restrict and prohibit poppy cultivation. However, as the government opened no licensed opium shop, Kachins grew poppy greatly and Shans produced opium.⁴⁵

In Bamaw District, the government also tried to curb the opium cultivation. Though it did not cultivate poppy in Shwegu mountains, stealth opium cultivation occurred in Seinlun mountains. The government's encouragement to grow wheat in lieu of opium, was also found ineffective. In January 1916, the authorities from Bamaw district and Northern Shan State met with their counterparts from Yunnan at Naungma to discuss territorial matters. Included in their agenda was to discuss about the conflict between the opium destroying Chinese troops and Chinese of Shan States. Meanwhile, as the Yunnan Independence was declared, the ban on opium cultivation came to a halt.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ (a) RAB, 1910, 10;
 (b) RAB, 1911, 4, b, 51
 (c) RNEF, 1911, R.5

⁴⁵ (a) RNEF, 1912, 71 (b) RNEF, 1913,6 (c) RNEF 1915, 2-3 (d) RAB, 1913, 6 (e) RAB, 1914, 6 (f) RAB, 1915, 9

⁴⁶ (a) RNEF, 1915, 8-9
 (b) RAB, 1916, 5

But in Myanmar, the restriction on opium cultivation went on strong and ever enforced. In 1915, the bad weather in late monsoon destroyed poppy fields. In the years 1915-16 and 1916-17, the government totally destroyed all poppy fields in Sipson Pana, Keng Hung and Meng Lung, that led a rebellion in Menglin, which was quickly put down by the government, and accordingly the rebellion was defeated.⁴⁷ Then, a conflict broke out around Lun Chang and Sanda between Kachins and Chinese soldiers concerning the opium fields. In this conflict, Kachins of Myanmar did not take part. By all these accounts, we are to understand that poppy fields grew greatly in areas where government control was out of reach.⁴⁸

The opium import from India looked like the ban on import was in tact, as the ships did not call the port regularly in 1915-16. In 1918, First World War severed commercial activities which hindered the opium trade. Meanwhile, the opium price soared owing to a number of reasons: opium import by parcel system from Calcutta; destruction of poppy fields by Chinese troops and the high opium demand in Yunnan induced by government permission of opium free trade. Therefore, all opium produced in Shan States went over to Yunnan. Only a fraction of opium output reached Myanmar proper. These situations forced hill tribes opium consumers to go to licensed opium shops. Poppy cultivators who knew these situations expanded their poppy fields in Myitkyina district, without no permission.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ (a) RNEF, 1916, 9

(b) RAB, 1916, 6

(c) RAB, 1917, 3, 5

⁴⁸ (a) RAB, 1917,5-6

(b) RAB, 1918, 4-7

⁴⁹ J.B.Affleck, Question as to the whether Compensation of Opium Cultivation in British Territory on the Kokang Border, Political Department Notes Record Group, No.7529, file: k.30. Pl.2, 1920, p.8, National Archives

One reason of the Indian opium import to Myanmar was that the British government did not want their currency to go out of their colonial empire. Thus the British government imported more opium in 1916-17, amounting to 5.19 Rs. lakh, compared to 3.66 Rs 39.25 Rs in lakh in 1916-17.

Around 1915, as the rain was irregular, poppy field did not thrive well. Besides as opium trade met hindrances, petty traders hired boys as porter to carry opium in bamboo containers Government arrest also grew in number.⁵⁰ Though poppy cultivation was bann in Myanmar, it went on cultivate in areas where government influence could not be felt. Chinese, who knew these situations and went on opium buying spree with large sum of money, were often killed. At that time in China, though the authorities did not enforce the ban on poppy cultivation effectively, they harshly cracked down opium smuggling and black opium trade. Whatever the crackdown on opium trade might be, the opium price stood at 280 Rs per 1.32 seer along the border in 1917-18.⁵¹

During a twenty year period from 1890 to 1917, the price of opium per 1.32 seer rose from 16 to 280 Rs, a fifteen fold increase. The price of other goods never soared like this. For opium addicts, the dear price did not matter for them and they bought it whatever the price might be. Therefore, skyrocketting opium price caused opium cultivation to be grown more and more along the border.

According to a report, it was learnt that a ground survey of poppy fields was done on 18 October 1917. At the Naungma meeting, the two governments decided to ban the poppy cultivation. Though the British government prohibited poppy cultivation, big poppy fields went on existing in Kachin State and along the border with China.⁵²

⁵⁰ RNEF, 1918, 9

⁵¹ RAB, 1918, 4-7

⁵² A.E.Easter, Report on the subject of opium for the quarter ended the 31st December 1917, Tengyweh Opium Report Records Group, 7495.6, 1917, 6, National Archives

In Southern Shan State, the opium production in 1918-19 was like the previous year, as poppy was grown on unsuitable lands for poppy. As poppy growers at that time, suffered from influenza, they could not tend poppy fields as much as they needed. The result was a low yield of opium. Contrary to this was found in the Northern Shan States, where the good rain greatly encouraged poppy growing which tremendously increased from 18626 acres in the previous year to 20760 acres in 1918-19. But the sponce rain in late monsoon period, made the poppy field modest, not more than the yield of pervious year of 1917-18.⁵³

Expansion of poppy cultivation in the year 1918-19 notwithstanding, the out put of opium decreased, whereas, the price of opium skyrocketted from 50 Rs per 1.32 seer to 100 Rs. The opium trade with China was like that: the import increased from 9.6 Rs (lakh) to 13.2 Rs lakh and opium export rose from 9.1 Rs lakh to 14.2 Rs lakh.⁵⁴ In Kachin hills, though license was not issued for opium shop, opium price came to fall.⁵⁵ In the year 1919-20, opium production dwindled to one-third of previous years, due to poor rain in the mid-monsoon season. At that time, opium price in China plummeted from 350 Rs per 1.32 seer to 25 Rs due to heavy extension of poppy field.⁵⁶

Licensed opium shops⁵⁷ were found economically unfruitful. The cost to get licence and opium shop could make opium price increase. The opium price in Myanmar was found connected with China. Chinese ban on opium cultivation caused the opium price in Myanmar to increase, while the expansion of opium cultivation in China drew the opium price down.

⁵³ RAB, 1919, 4-7

⁵⁴ RAB, 1918, 7-92

⁵⁵ RAB, 1920, 17

⁵⁶ (a) RAB, 1920, 11

(b) RAB, 1921, 6

(c) Nyo Mya, 1973, 265

⁵⁷ See Photo (14)

At the Burmese-China border, Chinese troops, crossing over Thanlyin River, entered Kokant-region in 1920 and destroyed poppy fields, for which British government had asked the Chinese government for compensation.⁵⁸ In the month of November, 1920, the government banned the opium from Kachin hills and Shan States to export, in order to control opium cultivation there. The government also checked opium smuggling to China, to be able to reduce poppy cultivation along the border. Opium cultivation was prohibited in Shan States and opium export to China and Siam was banned.⁵⁹

In Kachin State, draft rules for illegal poppy cultivation was amended and with a view to imposing total ban on opium cultivation, the government destroyed all opium fields in Katha Bamaw and Myitkyina. The government also prohibited Chinese not to grow opium. To control the government recognized opium cultivation, effectively, opium law was extended:

- (a) to grow opium only by the licensed-holders
- (b) to sell opium only by the licenced shop
- (c) to sell the prescribed amount only.

The government also permitted to grow opium only for local consumption in Salween region. It banned the export of illegal opium from Kachin State especially from Katha, Bamaw and Myitkyaina, to China.⁶⁰

Due to erratic rain, opium fields did not grow well in 1920-21. The Governor General tried to check the opium growing on Kachin hills in 1921. Taking the help from local governments, he banned opium cultivation in districts of Myitkyina, Bamaw and Katha. In Putao district, though opium growing was not

⁵⁸ J.B.Affleck, Question as to the Compansation of Opium cultivation, Political Department Notes Record Group, 7529, 1C.30, Pl-3, 1920, p.6, National Archives

⁵⁹ F.Lewisoen, Measure to be taken for the Control of the Growth of the Poppy, Political Department Notes Record Group, 7530, 1C.36, 1920, p.3, National Archives (Henceforth: Lewisoen, 1920)

⁶⁰ Lewisoen, 1920, 3-4

banned at present, he warned the cultivators, that later the ban would be imposed.⁶¹

For these reasons, opium trade grew well, buying about 30 to 50 Rs per 1.32 seer and reselling, it at 80 Rupees per seer. At the frontier of Myitkyina district, the opium price was about twenty-five Rupees per 1.32 seer and in Putao it could get up to 280 Rs, because of poor accessibility. At that time opium growing was greatly controlled in Myanmar, while it was greatly grown in China, encouraging opium trade. At the north extreme of Myanmar with Tibet, there could be poppy fields and opium smuggling to Myanmar and China.⁶²

Opium trade with China in 1921-22 came to a halt totally.⁶³ The opium price also fell down to 80 Rupees per 1.32 seer in 1923.⁶⁴ In Chin State, the Falam treasury sold the opium with one Rupee for 0.80 seer. When resold it got one Rupee and twelve annas per seer.⁶⁵ Chinese from Lashio made opium trade large and pompous to some extent, in that they went to opium fields directly by mortar cars. They hired car and the rental rate was 100 Rs from Lashio to Loimaw and 150 Rs to Tangyang. At that time, opium trade registration offices were opened between China and Myanmar. In 1922-23, the opium price oscilated between twenty-five Rupees and 80 Rs for 1.32 seer in the northern Theinni.⁶⁶

In both Northern and Southern Shan States, erratic rains in the years 1921-22 and 1922-23, opium fields did not grow well. But there was no shortage of opium, as Chinese opium flowed into the country incessantly. The ban on opium cultivation albeit, opium fields thrived well over the Kachin hills. At Sumprabum,

⁶¹ RNOF, 1921, 1, 7, 9, 17

⁶² RNEF, 1921, 1, 7, 9, 17

⁶³ RAB, 1921, 42

⁶⁴ RANSS, 1923, 122

⁶⁵ Report on the Administration of Chin Hills, 30th June 1923, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1923, p.9 (Henceforth: Chin Hills, 1923)

⁶⁶ RANSS, 1923, 22, 123, 125

though opium fields grew fairly, it did not grow well at Khantilon due to scanty rain. So also was true in Keng Tung.⁶⁷ Produced opium was locally consumed.

Shan States *Sawbwas* Council⁶⁸ held in April, 1923 a meeting to curb and control opium growing and opium trading in order to get more revenue in Shan States. Then effective control was enforced in northern Theinni, Southern Theinni and Menglon area. They made registration of opium growers and opium consumers and then began to issue licences for opium cultivation.⁶⁹

In order to control opium cultivation effectively, the British government in the year 1923-24 issued the following license for opium cultivation.⁷⁰

Licensed area	Number of Licence
Lechar	62
Menggaing	27
Mengnaung	81
Mengshu	7
Mengpun	607
Mengsit	19
Maukmè	62
Mengpang	311
Wanyin	60

⁶⁷ (a) RAB, 1921, 22, 44, 47

(b) RAB, 1923, 7-9

(c) RANSS, 1929, 8

⁶⁸ (a) RNEF, 1923, 9

(b) Council of Federated Shan Chiefs

⁶⁹ (a) RANSS, 1924, 125

(b) RNEF, 1923, 9-10

⁷⁰ Report on the Federated Shan State for the year 1923-24, Rangoon, Govt Printing, 1924, pp.32-35 (Henceforth: RFSS, 1924)

But in Putao frontier and Kokant, opium production went on steadily. In 1925-26, the government came to control well on poppy growing in the whole northern Shan States, west of Thanlyin. The government was able to destroy stealthily grown poppy fields in northern Theinni, before these fields were fully grown and the growers were punished. At that year, licensed poppy fields could produce as much as 3224.76 seer of opium.⁷¹ In later year, as the winter rain went wrong, in licensed poppy growing areas, the yield was not as much as expected. Illegal poppy fields grown stealthily on good cultivation lands were destroyed by the government.⁷²

Prohibition on the poppy growing albeit, poppy cultivation grew in Yunnan and opium smuggling into Myanmar also increased. The opium price was at the lowest 40 Rs per viss and at the highest 60 Rs. Though, about 8000 seer of opium were seized at the border, it was not much, compared to the smuggled ones.⁷³ Chinese crossed the border and came to Thanlyin to buy opium, though they could grow poppy freely in Yunnan. Chinese sold their opium at Nankham, with prices ranging from 50 to 60 Rs per 1.32 seer, sometimes it went down to 40 Rs per 1.32 seer.⁷⁴

There existed an opium factory at Chieng Tung, 5 kilometer away from Siam-Myanmar border, in Shan State. The factory could produce about 700 tons of opium pereannum, which was more than that of local consumption and the extra

⁷¹ RFSS, 1926, 21, 32, 33

⁷² (a) RAB, 1928, 5

(b) RAB, 1929, 5

(c) RAB, 1931, 5

(d) RAB, 1932, 52

(e) RAB, 1933, 7

(f) RFSS, 1935,9-10

⁷³ RNEF, 1923, 9-10

⁷⁴ RANSS, 1929, 125

was exported to everywhere. The existence of this factory shows that it was a difficult task for the government to control illegal opium production.⁷⁵

Keng Tung area which enjoyed the government license to grow opium, could produce about 2640 seer of opium in 1935-36 by its 844 opium fields of which about 1320 seer was consumed locally. In Kokant region around Thanlyin river and East MengLung, about 3316 acres of poppy fields produced about 13458.48 seer of opium. The opium sale in northern Shan States also increased from 2447.28 seer in 1934-35 to 3043.92 seer in 1935-36. It was found that in 1935-36, the expenditure on opium industry went down fall in northern Theinni, southern Lechar, Menggaing, Mengnaung and Mengpon.⁷⁶ In revenue collection, the excise was levied not only for opium yield, opium disbursement, opium selling and opium consumption but also for poppy cultivation.⁷⁷

Table-XII
The Excise Collection

Year	Poppy growing area	Revenue	Remark
1931-32	Whole Myanmar	2781000	
1935-36	Keng Tung	5464	
1935-36	Northern Shan States	147712	
1935-36	Southern Shan States	93639	
1937-38	Whole Myanmar	3861000	
1939-40	Whole Myanmar	4106000	

Source: RAB, 1932-33, 7

⁷⁵ J.Cladue, Report regarding the existence of an opium factory in Shan State of Chineg Tung Record Group, 4857, 1376 B 29, 1929, pp.1, 2, 4 National Archives

⁷⁶ (a) RAB, 1933, 7

(b) RFSS, 1936, 35

⁷⁷ RAB, 1933, 7

The above table shows that the revenue on excise was steadily growing. It seems that the opium industry in Myanmar had grown so alarmingly, that in the year 1938, League of Nations had tried to put the pressure on Burma for its growing opium industry, by describing about it in its annual report, released on 8 November 1938. Being opium consumer country albeit, Myanmar was not a major opium producing nation. But in Shan States, opium was produced as well as consumed. Therefore, Myanmar government accepted the demand put forth by league of Nations that in Shan States and Karenni State, poppy growing and opium production should be put under control.⁷⁸

British government officially imported opium chiefly from India. Opium was grown and produced in some parts. Nevertheless, opium was smuggled into the country from India, Yunnan of China, Siam and locally from the Shan States. Opium arrived Myanmar both by sea route and land route. In the case of the latter, opium came through Manipur to Upper Chindwin and Lower Chindwin district, but in small amount.⁷⁹ The legally imported opium from India was known as 'taxed' opium (Akauktaw), which was a product of Gazipur opium factory. Gazipur opium was distributed throughout the country, except in district of Bamaw, Myitkyina, Katha and Upper Chindwin.⁸⁰

In Japanese period, although opium was in shortage in Lower Myanmar, as there was no shortage of opium in Myitkyina, it was to understand that poppy cultivation still existed in the hills. After the war, British government banned

⁷⁸ W.H.Coles, Conference to Consider the limiting of the cultivation of the opium poppy and of the production of raw opium Records Group, 5779, 875 D(M) 38, 1938, pp.13-14, National Archives

⁷⁹ Report on the Administration of the Excise Department in Burma during the year ended 30th September, 1946, Rangoon, superintendent, Government Printing and Stationary, Burma, 1948, pp.25-26 (Henceforth: RAEB, 1948)

⁸⁰ BLS, 1961, 67

poppy growing throughout the country.⁸¹ However, it was understandable that there would be illegal poppy growing in the hills.

The easiness to buy opium, as it was adjacent to Yunnan where poppy was grown greatly, was one thing that made the number of opium consumers grown. Poppy growing became doubled than before the Second World War. In November 1943, British government issued a statement that it would ban the custom of opium "eating" and "smoking" and would close down the licensed opium shop in territories which they reoccupied.⁸²

The opium poppy is a monsoon crop like paddy. The opium trade was low between March and May and high between the period December and February. In the years 1945-1946, 0.80 seer of opium was about ten Rupees in the black market and in some places it was about twelve Rupees. In northern Theinni, the wholesale price for 1.32 seer of opium was about, 500 Rs and it was 550 Rs in retail market. In southern Theinni, the wholesale price for 1.32 seer of opium was about 600 to 700 Rs in the period between January and April, and 700 to 800 Rs in the period between May and December. The retail prices were 800 to 900 Rs in the period between January and April and 1000 to 1200 Rs in the period between May and December. But in Keng Tung, it was 500 Rs per 1.32 seer of opium throughout the whole year, and it even went down to 150 Rs per 1.32 seer of opium when new yield came into the market.⁸³

The government announced in 1946 that it would ban opium cultivation in Kachin State and the needed opium would be issued by the government. In reality,

⁸¹ (a) Nyo Mya, *1973*, 268

(b) Report by the Government of Burma for the Calendar year 1946, on the Trafficking Opium and other Dangerous Drugs, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1948, pp.3-4 (Henceforth: RTODD)

⁸² (a) Kyi Mar, *1973*, 52

(b) Thaik Htun, *1980*, 111-112

⁸³ RTODD, 1946,3, 5, 7

as the government could not supply the needed opium, Duwa and Slawgnea, in defiance of the government ban, began to grow poppy. Myitkyina district Deputy Commissioner suggested that if poppy growing produced more than that of the needed opium, the government should take action against it.⁸⁴ But it was a sorry thing that plans and projects concerning with opium never materialized until Myanmar regained her independence.

According to the report of Frontier Areas Committee's Enquiry, there were about 600 peoples who grew poppy in Keng Tung. The report further mentioned that there were large scale poppy growing in Kokant and Menglun, which could be seen that poppy cultivation was uncontrollable. The government tried to buy all opium and distribute it.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, opium industry was in the hands of Chinese, from whom the government bought . A small amount of opium was trafficked to China.⁸⁶ As poppy cultivation was permitted in Keng Tung, Meng pyin, Mengkhet, Meng Yang, Meng Tung, Meng Sat, Meng Haw, Meng Hpyat, Hopan, Kung Lung and Meng Phaw,⁸⁷ it could be estimated that there would be poppy growing and opium production in these areas till the year 1948.

With regard to poppy cultivation, British government tried to grow poppy in Arakan division. In 1872-73, the rate of land lease for poppy cultivation in Than-dwe district was one Rupee and 5 annas per acre. Though the table had the column with title of output, it did not mention the output, in number,⁸⁸ which might be due to unavailability of data. By studying these tables, we can deduce that the British government had tried to grow poppy in Arakan. But as further

⁸⁴ Nyo Mya, 1973, 272-273

⁸⁵ Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry 1947, Report, Rangoon, Govt. Printing, 1947, p.186 (Henceforth: FACE, 1947)

⁸⁶ FACE, 1947, 187

⁸⁷ Directive concerning with the growing of plants from which Narcotic Drugs can be made, 20 February, 1974, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

⁸⁸ RAB, 1873, 10

information could not get about the poppy plantation it could estimate that the experiment was a failure.

In opium trade, the biggest center was that of Cha-tau-shu, built in the year 1856 in Kokant region. The town was 20 miles away from Kunlung ferry, where a chief called "Tein" resided. Before 1856, Meng Tung was the office town for Kokant region. All opium produced was exported to China from Cha-tau-shu.⁸⁹

After independence, the Cabinet, on 11th February 1948, laid down the following decision concerning opium:

1. there shall be no opium selling with profiteering
2. to draw a plan, with an objective of opium eradication within five years
3. to substitute opium with other cash crops
4. the Excise Commissioner shall plan to set up opium addict treatment centers at every hospitals, not later than before April 1948
5. the Health Department shall make plans to acquire the necessary medicines from abroad for the opium addict treatment centers.

By observing these decisions, it can be understood that the Government of Burma intended to eradicate opium and opium consumption.⁹⁰

In précis, opium poppy was cultivated in areas across over Thanlyin River in Shan States, or along the border between Myanmar and China, of Kokant and Wa regions. Loimaw region, in the west of Thanlyin grew opium on commercial scale systematically. Opium growers were mostly Chinese and produced about 400 pounds of opium per season.

⁸⁹ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part II, Vol I, 78-79

⁹⁰ Nyo Mya, *1973*, 274-275

As both Shan and Kachin States are hill tracts, they are ideal geographically for opium cultivation. In Kachin State, geographical characteristics and features of Sadon and Sama regions are very suitable to grow opium. It was found that the opium got from these regions fetched the highest prices.

In Konbaung period, opium was grown only along the Chinese border, as Myanmar culture and tradition did not favour the use of intoxicant opium. After the British occupation of Myanmar, in the year 1890, opium growing became large and wide, which became two to three folds than before in the year 1910. The reasons that gave rise to grow opium in Myanmar were, firstly, in China after Sun Yat Sen government came to power, opium cultivation was greatly suppressed which caused mass migration of Chinese to Myanmar, who greatly expanded opium cultivation in the country. The second reason was that when the First World War broke out maritime trade cut off, that sparked off opium supply shortage which in turn caused expanded opium cultivation. Besides, the sky rocketted opium price between 1890 and 1917, lured poor farmers to grow more opium.

For these reasons, though the British government tried at its best to curb and control opium cultivation and opium production, it was found to be a fiasco. Poppy growing prohibited albeit, the government imported Indian opium and licensed opium shops were established, from which a sizable excise was collected. Though opium was banned on the ground that it destroyed morality and physical strength, opium cultivation persisted in colonial period.

CHAPTER FOUR

OPIUM DISTRIBUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Myanmar kings of successive dynasties prohibited the local opium trading, declaring opium as narcotic drug.¹ During the reign of King Badon, the royal order issued on 20 February 1782, reads thus:

There shall be no making, selling and consumption of any kind of intoxicant drink or inhaling a stimulant drug in the entire kingdom. There shall be no big game hunting in the entire kingdom. There shall be no gambling of any kind in the entire kingdom.²

However, despite the royal orders prohibiting the trading of opium, the production of opium did not come to a halt. Instead, it continued to prosper as even some men in royal service and soldiers abused the intoxicants. Thus was underlined in the royal order issued in the reign of King Badon to fight against the British:

Gambling drugs and intoxicant drink are not allowed. When the men are safely encamped after a day's march, all leaders from ten head to commander shall go with Pah Hha Chot-Sword.³

¹ U Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaungzet Mahayazewintawgyi* (Great Chronicles of the Konbaung Dynasty), Yangon, Ya Pyei publishing House, 2004, Vol.I, p.70 (Henceforth: *Konbaungzet, 2004*)

² Than Tun, 1986, Vol. IV, 220

³ Than Tun, 1988b, Vol. VIII, 300

The issuing of such royal orders clearly indicates the existence of opium trading.

The British annexed the Rakhine coastal region and the Taninthayi coastal region, in 1824-25 and continued to occupy the Southern Myanmar covering the region of Mye-de near the town of Thayet in 1852. The Rakhine coastal region was placed under the administration of five districts, namely the Sittwe District, the Town of Sittwe, Un District, Yan-Bye District and Than-dwe District. One Deputy Commissioner was appointed in each district while the Chief Commissioner of Rakhine Division was in charge of all divisions. The Taninthayi coastal region was divided into four districts, namely Kyaik-khami District, Ye District, Dawe District and Myeik District, while the Chief Commissioner was in charge of the district deputy commissioners. When Pegu and Mottama fell under the British, a divisional chief commissioner was appointed specially for Pegu while Mottama remained under the administration of the Divisional Chief Commissioner of Taninthayi. The Pegu Division was divided into six divisions, namely Yangon District, Patheingyi District, Hinthada District, Tharyawaddy District, Pyaw District and Taungtha District, each district being under the administration of a deputy commissioner.⁴

After the British Government had established the Than Dwe District in 1827, the Bengal Board of Revenue tentatively imported 1600 seers of opium.⁵ That opium was on sale from 1827 to 1830 for three years.⁶ Since the consumption in the region was low and the sale was unknown to the local people, the sale of opium had then been low. The government issued licenses for opium marketing or trading. The license holders were permitted to buy opium for trading from the

⁴ Soe Yin (Theikpan), *Myanmar-Naing-gan Oke-choke-ye-Thamai* ("The History of Myanmar Administration"), Yangon, Zeya Thein Press, 1957, pp.23-24, 25, 26, 28-29 (Henceforth: Soe Yin, 1957)

⁵ Mound: 40 seers; approximately 32½ pounds

⁶ Sandoway District, 1962, 91

government at the price of Rs.35 per seer. Opium was imported in an increasing amount from Bengal.⁷ So, starting from 1827, the British government imported opium from India in order to increase the revenue. Then, in the issuing of licenses, some measures were taken to control inflation of license by changing license every year or by issuing one Rupee Revenue-Stamp Contracts. Therefore, the revenue collected from opium trading was the maximum revenue for the government.⁸

Later opium trafficking increased, and so the opium price was reduced to eighteen Rupees in 1838, and to ten Rupees in 1846. Since the opium eaters could buy opium from the government at a cheap price, the importing of opium declined in number. In 1852, in Than-dwe District, the number of licensed opium dealers had increased to nineteen, and the amount of opium sold was 1960 seers. But in 1853, as opium was imported at a cheap price through trafficking, the amount of opium sold at licensed opium shops had declined to 280 seers. In 1860, in Than-dwe District, the price of opium, which had been sixteen Rupees since the last ten years, was raised to twenty Rupees by the government so as to cover the dampening of sale and the cost.⁹

In Ko-kant District, the town of Cha-tau-Shu, founded in 1856, was the most prosperous opium trading centre. It was about twenty miles from Kun-lon Lu. A Chief's Office called Tein was stationed there. Before 1856, the office town of Ko-Kant was Mai-Taung, on the west bank of the Than Lwin. All the opium produced was exported to China via Cha-tau-Shu.¹⁰ In 1875, Maung Myaung, Myo-Oke of Lay Myo ("The Governor of the Four Towns"), founded the Tharyarkon Village on the west bank of the Ayeyawaddy. It was located on the

⁷ Sandoway District, 1962, 79-89

⁸ Sandoway District, 1962, 89-90

⁹ Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Part II, Vol.I, 78-79

¹⁰ Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Part II, Vol.III, 281-282

route of jade trading. About 600 people and 300 mules passed their route every year, and they carried opium, too.¹¹ This indicates that opium trading had prospered in some regions of Upper Myanmar under the administration of the Myanmar king.

Opium produced from the Shan States was carried to Mandalay and Moe-gaung via Bamaw, and was distributed to the Jing-phaw shopkeepers. It was in Bamaw where the Chinese traders and the Kachin traders met and transacted opium dealing. Every shop sold baskets of opium rolls.¹² No action was taken by Myanmar kings against opium trading in the border areas.

The earliest finding on the revenue collected on opium trading in the British Empire was Rs.72, 680, the revenue collected on liquor and opium in 1855-56.¹³ Starting from 1860, the auction system was practised on opium shops. According to this system, the revenue collected on opium trading varied in the years from 1862 to 1868.¹⁴ The causes were that local people did not, then, know how to go about auction, and were uncertain about the benefits from winning an auction. It was noted that in the Rakhine Division, the revenue rate on the opium distributed in 1867-68 was reduced in 1868-69. But, formerly, opium shops were opened only in Sittwe, and now in the years 1868 and 1869, opium shops were opened also in Yan-bye and Than-dwe districts. So the revenue collected from the whole Rakhine Division increased to Rs.74, 905.¹⁵ Moreover, the floor price was reduced in the

¹¹ Mandalay to Mominn; A narrative of the two perditions to Western China of 1968 and 1875; pp.42, 300

¹² (a) Furnival, 1963, 170

(b) *Burma Gazetteer Insein District*, Rangoon Printing, 1965, p. 149 (Henceforth: *Insein District, 1965*)

¹³ Sandoway District, 1962, 90

¹⁴ RED, 1869, 4-5

¹⁵ RED, 1869, 5

auction of opium shops so as to extend the opium market. There was an increase of net revenue collected from opium trading because of the favourable circumstances for extending opium shops and the increased import of opium in Rakhine Division.

A holder of the license of opium auction from Maung Taw Town in 1868-69 at the river-mouth of the Naff, which lay in the borderline between the Rakhine region and the Sittakaung region got the permit of 420 seers of opium from the government, and distributed opium at the price of Rs. twenty per one seer of opium. Measures were then taken to make a distribution of 1160 seers of opium at this price at Sittwe. But while 720 seers of opium were distributed in Yan-bye and 350 seers of opium, at Than-dwe, only 650 seers of opium were distributed in Sittwe.¹⁶ So as not much opium was included in the auction at Sittwe, the opium auctioneers did not benefit as much profit as expected.

The British government in 1869-70 sold 2,968 seers of opium in Rakhine Division. An increased amount of 436 seers of opium was sold as 2, 550 seers of opium were permitted for sale in 1868-69. The opium auction winner was given permit for increased sale of seers, and so as approximate net profit of 48, 255 Rs was made in the sale. As the sale was Rs.40, 032 only made in 1868-69, profit of 7, 223 Rs was made. The auction winner of Maung Taw opium shop purchased 1,120 seers of opium; the auction winner of Kyauk-Phyu and Yan-bye, 1026 seers of opium; the auction winner of Than-dwe, 400 seers of opium. In 1868-69, 420, 1060, 720 and 350 seers of opium were respectively purchased. The amount of opium sold in 1868-69 and its gross price¹⁷ in Rakhine Division are as follows:¹⁸

¹⁶ RED, 1870, 3

¹⁷ Gross Price, *Pyin-nya-yat-sai-ya Wahara-mya* (Technological and Academic Terms), Universities Publications Committee Periodical, 1973, 32

¹⁸ RED, 1870, 3

Table-XIII
The Amount of Opium Sold in Rakhine Division

	Amount of opium	Gross Price
		Rs.
Sittwe	1060 seer (at the price of 24 Rs)	255, 440
Maung-Taw	420 seer (at the price of 24 Rs)	8, 400
Auction winner, Yan-bye	720 seer (at the price of 24 Rs)	17, 280
Auction winner, Than-dwe	350 seer (at the price of 24 Rs)	8, 400

Source: RED, 1869-70, 3

The revenue collected in respective districts in Rakhine Division had an increase of 19, 568 Rs, more in 1869-70 than in 1868-69. However, in 1869-70, the sale from the auction of opium shops was Rs-28050; and Rs.33, 872 in 1868-69: there was a decline of revenue to Rs.5, 822. The opium shop that earned the least auction was the Sittwe Opium shop. Although the opium shop of Yan-bye was put on auction, the auction winner was given permit of 42.5% increase of the weight of opium, but the revenue collected on opium dealing had been on the decline.¹⁹ The decline of sale was due to the fact that opium was available from illegal opium dealers since the price was cheaper. Therefore, the auctioneer did not make profit. It can be assumed that the amount of revenue collected from opium dealing declined because of the increase of illegal opium dealers.

In Rakhine Division, the sale of opium was 3, 180 seers of opium in 1870-71; and 2, 986 seers of opium in 1869-70, thus marking an increase of sale. In Sagaing district, there existed only one opium shop. Only 1, 080 seers of opium was permitted for sale in 1870-71, thus marking a decline of 40 seers of opium less than that of 1869-70. The same amount of opium was permitted for sale also in Kyauk-phyu, Yan-bye and Than-dwe districts, and one opium shop was permitted for the auction winner to be opened. But profit was made only in the Than-dwe district. The money gained from 1870-71, the last year of auction in

¹⁹ RED, 1871, 5-6

Than-dwe District, was Rs.4,000. The Than-dwe deputy commissioner prescribed the amount of opium to be sold for that year. No permit was given for sale of opium more than one-twelfth of monthly sale. Although the opium eaters could buy opium from the auction winner's opium shop as much as they liked, not more than 0.0125 seer of opium was to be bought within twenty four hours.²⁰ If without such a restriction, large amount of opium would be bought from the opium shop, and be sold to other opium eaters.

The revenue collected from the opium dealing was Rs.8, 188 from the whole Rakhine division in 1870-71. As Rs.76,305 was obtained in 1869-70, there was an increase of Rs.5, 575. The rental fees of opium shops were Rs.17, 800 in 1869-70 alone from the Sittwe district, and an increase of the fees was made to Rs.19, 000 in 1870-71.²¹ The revenue collected in 1871-72 was Rs.88, 747.²²

The British government permitted the extended opium dealings year after year in Rakhine Division. An increase of 340 seers of opium was bought from the government more in 1870-71 than in 1871-72. However, the price fell a little and so a decreased amount of Rs.2000 was obtained. In Namor Maung Taw, there were formerly three opium shops, but in 1871-72, only two opium shops were permitted. The opium shop that was banned was located in the territory in Yathe-Taung Township where illegal opium trafficking took place. The opium price was raised from twenty Rs per seer to twenty-five Rs. There was a little increase of price in Than-dwe. Although 145 seers of opium were sold in Kyauk-phyu and Yan-bye,²³ there existed no increase if compared with the amount sold in 1870-71.

In Rakhine Division, 13, 889 seers of opium were sold in 1880-81 and the sale was Rs.232, 253; in 1879-80, 12, 315 seers of opium were sold, and the sale was 205, 966 Rs. The comparison of the sale indicates that there was an increased

²⁰Sandoway District, 1871, 79,89

²¹RED, 1871, 5

²²RED, 1872, 4

²³RED, 1872, 4

sale of 1, 574 seers of opium in 1880-81, the increased value being 3, 776 Rs. The number of opium consumers increased in Kyauk-phyu District and Than-dwe District. It can be assumed that the increased number was because opium from the nearby districts and other regions where no licence for opium dealing was allowed was illegally trafficked to those two districts. In 1879-80, there existed ten licensed opium shops in Sittwe District. One shop was located in the Town of Sittwe while others were situated within the district. The sale of seers of opium was 295 seers lower than 1879-80 in Sittwe. The opium shops of Maung-Taw on the other bank of Sittakaung and on the bank of the Naff River sold 275 seers of opium more, while the opium shops of Kyauk-Taw sold 260 seers more. But as other opium shops sold less, the net profit increase in the whole district was only 85 seers. In Kyauk-phyu District, the use of opium had been increasing from year to year. There were five licensed opium shops in the district. There was an increase of Rs. 10, 950 in the sale more than that in 1879-80, and the sale of opium increased from 5, 654 seers to 6, 865 seers. Although the increase of sale can be said to have resulted from the increase of sale in almost every township and division, it can be assumed that the opium was purchased in Kyauk-phyu district, and then transported to Sittwe.

In Than-dwe District, although the opium sale had declined in 1879-80, it increased greatly in 1880-81. In 1878-79, 767 seers were sold, while in 1879-80 640 seers were sold, but in 1880-81, 909 seers were sold. There were only three opium shops during those years. The increase of opium sale resulted from the number of opium use among the fishermen who earned their living along the coast. At the end of 1880-81, a rumour had it that the government had been planning to stop the opium shops in the district, and it was found that, because of that rumour, opium-consumers had begun to keep opium for future use, and that as a result, the sale of opium had increased. So the British government had not only sold opium, but also banned the abuse of opium for the sake of increasing the revenue. There had been no considerable changes in the revenue within the ten

years. In 1880-81, the license fees were Rs.73, 895, while in 1879-80, the license fees were Rs.79, 610; and in 1880-81, Rs.14, 285.²⁴

Unlike the Rakhine Division, in the Tanintharyi Division, the British government tentatively introduced opium dealing in three districts. They were the Kyaik-kami District, Myeik District and the Dawei District. Licensed opium dealing was allowed in those three districts.²⁵ When the opium shops in Tanintharyi Division were put on auction, there was an increase in the government's revenue. However, there was a decline in revenue collected on opium dealing. The opium imported had declined from 5757 seers in 1867-68 to 4, 511 seers in 1868-69. So it was noted that the profit gained from opium dealing was lower than that in 1867-68. While the opium dealing had declined in Kyaik-kami and Dawei Districts, the opium dealing in Myeik and Shwe Kyin Districts had increased.²⁶

Table-XIV
Sale, Loss and Profit of Opium in respective districts

Subject	Year	Kyaikkami (Seer)	Dawei (Seer)	Myeik (Seer)	Total (Seer)
Sale of Opium	1867-68	4, 620	386	750	5, 757
	1868-69	3, 300	250	961	4, 511
	Increase	-	-	210	-
	Decrease	1, 320	136	-	1, 246

Source: RED, 1870-71, 7

After the Second Anglo-Myanmar war, the lower part of Mye-de fell under the British. In Upper Myanmar, Myanmar Kings had strictly banned the abuse of opium. The royal orders of King Badon recorded cases in which the opium consumers were sentenced to imprisonment. But as the opium consumers

²⁴RED, 1881, 4

²⁵RED, 1869, 5-6

²⁶RED, 1871, 7

continued to exist, the later royal orders contained even the orders sentencing the opium consumers to death.²⁷ While the Myanmar kings had continuously banned the abuse of opium, one may not fail to note that the opium shops were opened in the British-colonized Lower Myanmar. The first opium shops were two licensed opium shops in Hinthada district. Those shops sold 2, 773 seers of opium in 1879-80, and 292, 456 seers in 1880-81. There was only one opium shop in Tharyawaddy district. The licensed opium shop that was opened at the check-point at the water front sold 540 seers of opium. When it was moved to Thone-Hse, because it was located on a more convenient transportation route, it sold up to 2, 160 seers of opium. The report of the officer in charge of the excise read that it was doubtful if legal production of opium had been going on, because the opium consumption had greatly increased.

In the Tanintharyi Division, as in the Rakhine Division, opium shops were put on auction, and license taxes and revenue were collected. Although the license for opium dealing was issued in Shwe Kyin District, included in Tanintharyi Division, till 1868-69, there was no record reading the auction on the location of the opium shops. The revenue collected from opium dealing in the Tanintharyi Division was as follows:

Table-XV
Net Revenue on Opium in Respective Districts

Districts	1867-68 Rs.	1868-69 Rs.	Increase Rs.	Decrease Rs
Kyaik-kami	322, 916	257, 015		65, 901
Dawei	14, 179	11, 192		2, 987
Myeik	24, 221	29, 506	5,285	
Shwe Kyin	3, 650	4, 240	590	
Total (Rs)	364, 966	301, 953		6, 3013

Source: RED, 1868-69, 5-6

²⁷ Than Tun, *1988a*, Vol.VII, 488

In Kyaik-kami District, in 1868-69 the rental fees paid to the government for the permit of opium sale were Rs. 7, 600 more than that in 1867-68. In Dawei District and Myeik District, Rs.263 and Rs.2, 195 more were paid respectively.

Table-XVI
Rental Fees in Respective Districts

Rental Fee	Year	Kyaik-Kami Rs.	Dawei Rs.	Myeik Rs.	Total Rs.
	1867-68	68, 400	2, 887	5, 065	68, 352
	1868-69	60, 000	3, 150	7, 260	78, 410
	Increase	7, 600	263	2, 195	10, 058
	Decline	-	-	-	-

Source: RED, 1868-69, 25

The increase in rental fees resulted from rivalry among the Chinese auctioneers, who were the majority,²⁸ and from the increase of the Chinese abuse of opium.

In Tanintharyi Division, the number of opium sold to auction winners of opium shops in 1869-70 was 355 seers more than that of, 1868-69. The increase resulted from the use of up to 300 seers of opium in Kyaik-kami District and 155 seers of opium in Dawei District. So the profit on opium was Rs.5, 025 in Kyaik-Kami and Rs.1, 926 in Dawei. It can be said that there had been an increase of Rs.5, 946 over the whole division. The increase had resulted from the sale of Rs.7, 555.8 in 1868-69, and Rs.81, 514 in 1869-70.²⁹

Because there had been an increase of profit from opium, there had been higher rental from opium, there had been higher rental fees of opium shops from year to year until 1871-72, and more revenue was also obtained. The auction of

²⁸RED, 1869, 25

²⁹RED, 1870, 5-6

opium shops brought Rs.850 more in 1871-72 than that in 1870-71.³⁰ Since the revenue on opium in 1880-81 was Rs.120, 014, it was Rs.5648 more than that of 1879-80. The licence fees for twenty opium shops were Rs.125, 920 and so it was Rs.25m 478 more than that in 1879-80.

As the number of the Chinese resident in Myeik District had increased, the number of opium consumers had also been rising regularly. If compared with the last five years, the year 1880-81 saw an increase of fifty percent. So six licensed opium shops were opened, and the license fee of Rs.15, 360 was obtained, so Rs.2,110 more was collected than that of 1879-80. The weight of opium sold was 1,447 seers: the weight was 53 seers more than that of the year 1879-80. Only one licensed opium shop was permitted to be opened in Taungoo District, included in the Tanintharyi Division. Auctioneers competed to win the auction, and so the license fee amounted to Rs.16, 300. The license fee obtained from that single opium shop of Taungoo was Rs.10, 610 more than that of 1879-80. The auction winner, monopolizing the opium sale, raised the retail price in order to cover his cost, and ensure his profit. Since the opium dealing did not turn out to be a prosperous business, as expected by the British government, in Shwe Kyin and Than Lwin districts, no more opium licenses were given permit in 1880-81.

The annual opium revenue from Bago Division collected by the British government from 1865 to 1868 was Rs.15, 000.³¹ In 1868-69, the net revenue collected on opium from the whole Bago Division was Rs.394, 550, and so the revenue was fifty-eight percent higher than that of year 1867-68.

There were two licensed opium shops in Pyay District. 2280 seers of opium in 1879-80 increased to 3, 540 seers of opium in 1880-81. There were two opium shops in Thayet District: one was opened in the Town of Thayet while the other

³⁰RED, 1872, 7

³¹ RED, 1881, 6

one was opened in Alan (Aung-Lan). The sold weight of opium in 1880-81 was 171 seers greater than that of 1879-80. Although a report was demanded from an investigation of the opium dealing in the district, no report with an explanation was made. Only one single license was issued for the district in 1880-81³².

The prices of opium in different districts under the British administration varied. Prices fluctuated according to districts. But one report made by the Excise Officer commented that it was difficult for the British authorities to make an investigation of the true situation of opium dealing.³³

Opium Sales in different districts in the British-governed Lower Myanmar after the Second Anglo-Myanmar War as shown in Table XVII.

Table-XVII
Opium Sale in Lower Myanmar

District	License Fee Rs.	Weight of opium sold (seer)	Approximate sold license fee per one seer
Sittwe	52,350	6,115	8.5
Kyauk-phyu	36,000	6,865	5.2
Than-dwe	5,545	909	6.1
Yangon	140,000	8,604	16.2
Hanthawaddy	19,950	2,610	7.6
Thone-gwa	33,130	5,666	5.8
Pathein	41,700	6,319	6.6
Hinthada	13,460	2,924	4.6

³²RED, 1881, 5-6

³³RED, 1881, 7-8

REB, 1881, 21

Thayawaddy	15450	2,160	7.1
Pyay	28,880	3,540	8.1
Thayet	14,650	884	19.6
Mawlamyaing	59,301	2,237	18.3
Kyaik-kami	32,200	1,983	19.8
Dawei	2,760	460	6.0
Myeik	15,360	1,447	10.6
Taungoo	16,300	540	31.1
Shwe Kyin	No License issued		
Than Lwin	yet		

Source: RED, 1880-81, 3

In the earlier times, the opium-consumers were only the Indian coolies of India, who had to eat a little opium to bear the burden of labour. So it was out of the question to totally ban the use of opium. It was later decided that the Myanmar as shouldn't have the chance of tasting the intoxicant feeling that they never had.³⁴ Although revenue was collected on the opium, the Myanmar people's morality had gone down, and, it was feared, this would make an effect on the mechanism of administration of the British government. Therefore, attempts were made to stand against the increasing use of opium. In 1880-81, the British government began to lay down the policy of reduction of opium shops. The opium sale had suddenly changed by issuing only one licensed opium shop in each district and shutting down many opium shops.³⁵ Although the British government got revenue from opium shops, they had to make a reduction of the opium shops, because the

³⁴ R.E.V.Arbutnot, Sanction New Opium Shops, Separate Revenue Department, Record Group, 23, No.20.N, 1907, 28, National Archives (Henceforth: Sanction New Opium Shops, 1907)

³⁵(a) Morrison, 1963, 166

(b) Sandoway District, 1962, 90

Buddhism prohibited the use of any intoxicants and because the British government wanted to satisfy the demand of the majority of the Myanmars.³⁶

Some opium shopkeepers took out more opium from Ngwe-Taik (treasury), and distributed opium to legal users all over the country.³⁷ The British government intended to put restrictive control on opium trading starting from 1881-82, and reduced the number of 68 opium shops to twenty eight. In 1882-83, there remained only eighteen opium shops, and in 1885-86, only seventeen opium shops. At the same time, the government banks decided that the price for one seer of opium was generally twenty four Rupees, and that the price for one seer of opium in Pegu and Tanintharyi Divisions was two Rupees.³⁸

In Rakhine Division, the number of sold opium of 6,794 seers in 1883-84 declined to 4,378 seers only in 1884-85, marking a considerable decline in the weight of sold opium. In Pegu and Ayeyawaddy Division, there was flexible issue of opium depending on the nine licensed opium shops. However, there existed illegal dealings in small villages far from the opium shops, and in Tharayawaddy and Shwe Kyin Districts, where no opium shops were opened.³⁹ Concerning this issue, the Excise Report stated that the number of illegal opium trafficking would decline if new opium trafficking would decline if new opium shops were re-opened. The report also submitted that, though opium dealing should be allowed only in licensed opium shops, the situation could not be put under restrictive control since the administration of the country had not yet been stable.⁴⁰

In order to reduce the use of opium, the price of opium was raised while the number of opium shops was reduced. In 1880-81, the price of one seer of opium was Rs.34, but Rs.35 in 1884-85. Moreover, the amount of opium issued was also

³⁶ RAB, 1882, 110

³⁷ RPAB, 1883, 14

³⁸(a) RAB, 1881, 21

(b) RAB, 1882, 110

(c) Morrison, 1963, 166

(d) RAB, 1886, 117

³⁹RAB, 1885, 1-2

⁴⁰RED, 1885, 2

reduced. In 1880-81, the amount of opium of 54, 265 seers was issued; 44, 173 seers in 1883-84; and 41, 992 seers in 1884-85. The report went on to state that in the increase of sixteen percent in population within the last four years, the amount of opium sale was reduced to twenty-two percent.⁴¹

At that time, from 1867 to 1868, there existed no auction of opium in Myan-Aung and Pyay. In other towns, except Yangon, the revenue was Rs.100002 in Pyay; Rs.6, 942 in Taungoo; Rs.4,886 in Pathein; and Rs.1, 271 in Myan Aung. As the auction of opium was allowed to cover the period of three years in 1868, there arose a strong competition among the auctioneers. The value of the opium shop also rose higher than the original value. Then, although the appeals were made to reduce the rental fees, they were of no avail. The system of one single auctioneer's auctions of the opium shop was abolished only after the three-year term was over. Instead, each opium shop was allowed to be sold to the buyers, as in the former system. The amount of opium issued to the auction winners was twelve percent higher than that of 1867-68.

In Pathein District, the period of monopolizing the opium sale was extended. In 1868-69, the rental fee of opium auction was prescribed as Rs.13, 333. In Taungoo District, only 50 Rs. more were collected from the auction of opium shop. The following table shows a comparison of opium issue, opium shop rental fee and opium sale in the above-mentioned districts.

Table-XVIII
Opium issued, Opium shop Rental Fees and Sale in 1868-69

District	Seer	Opium Shop Rental Fee (Rs)	Rate of rental fee per one seer of opium sold (Rs)
Yangon	5040	208000	41.36
Pathein	1769	13333	7.42
Pyay	1440	21500	14.93
Taungoo	300	8100	27.00
Bago Divison	8,576	250933	29.25
Approx. Rate in			
1867-68	8,035	115351	14.35

Source: RED, 1868-69, 8-10

⁴¹RED, 1885, 2-3

In the whole of Bago Division, 7,041 seers of opium were sold at Rs.191, 958 bringing the profit of Rs.117, 937. In 1868-69, 8, 576 seers of opium were sold at Rs.143, 625, thus bringing a decline in profit and revenue. The cause of the decline in profit and the revenue was that the Indian sailors had trafficked opium.⁴² As the trafficking could not be effectively stopped, the value declined in the auction of opium shops. The allotted opium weight to be sold, as prescribed by the government, could not be sold out.

There were no changes in the value of the auction of opium shops in Patheingyi District. Since the auctioneer could satisfactorily sell opium, he benefited a lot of profit. It was observed that the auction winner of opium shop purchased opium of twenty-five seers more than that in 1868-69: he bought only four seers more from the government, and twenty one seers more from the illegal market. The reason of buying opium from such illegal market was that the price of opium at illegal market was lower than that of the government. The use of opium in Taungtha District was 300 seers. The price of the auction for the opium shop was raised from rs.8000 to Rs.9, 225. The rise in the auction price resulted from the increase of opium consumers. Since many projects were extended in the Public Affairs Department, the Chinese workers from Yangon were transferred to Taungtha. So it was noted that the number of opium eaters in Taungtha had increased.⁴³

The auctioneers of the opium shop were given permit to sell 6, 741 seers of opium in 1869-70, and 9, 420 seers of opium in 1870-71. So there was an increase of 2, 679 seers of opium sold out. Of these, the auctioneer from Yangon bought 1,500 seers of opium more, while the auctioneer from the Town of Thayet bought 60 seers of opium more. The auctioneer of the newly opened opium shop of Myan-Aung bought 1, 140 seers of opium. On the other hand, the number of purchased amount of opium from Patheingyi declined to twenty-one seers of opium.

⁴²RED, 1870, 4

⁴³RED, 1870, 4-5

The decline in the amount resulted from the sale of the opium seized at trafficking. In the districts mentioned above, it was prescribed that one seer of opium was sold at twenty-four Rupees.⁴⁴

The rental fee of the opium shop remained stable in Yangon and Patheingyi, while it declined in Thayet. The decline was because rental fee of the auction of the opium shop was formerly only Rs.7, 750 although the original price of the auction was Rs. 15, 150 on 1st April 1868, the auctioneer from Tayoke-tan (China Town) had won the auction at the annual fee of Rs.21, 500 for a term of three years. However, in 1869-70, the auctioneer had some financial difficulties. Since he could not pay the annual fee for the year 1870-71, he had to sell the auction to another auctioneer. The money gained from re-selling the auction and the money collected from the auctioneer who failed in the auction were Rs. 15, 400. Therefore, the rental fee of the opium shop at Thayet had Rs. 6090, subtracted.⁴⁵

The Let-patan, Zee-kon Township, Tharyawaddy District, then, had only a few opium smokers.⁴⁶ It was noted that the opium addicts of Tharyawaddy District had been using the opium that the Chinese had secretly sold.⁴⁷ The British authorities prohibited the opium trafficking from the British territory into the Myanmar King's territory. However, although opium trading from the Rakhine coastal region was prohibited by the Law of Opium, since the amount was inconsiderable, and the prohibiting was not effective.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Morrison, 1963, 164

⁴⁵ RED, 1871, 6-7

⁴⁶ *Burma Gazetteer, Tharyawaddy District*, Rangoon Printing, 1963, p.51 (Henceforth: *Tharyawaddy District, 1963*)

⁴⁷(a) "Report upon the Income and Expenditure of British Burma". No. 5179, dated Fort William, 2 Nov. 1880, Foreign Department, p.5 (Henceforth; RIEBB, 1880)

(b) *Tharyawaddy District, 1963*, 99

⁴⁸(a) *Sandoway District, 1962*, 80

(b) RIEBB, 1880, 5

In Yangon District, Bago Division, the rental fee of the opium shop declined in 1871-72. In those opium shops, except those of Yangon, the use of opium increased 2, 730 seers more than that in 1870-71. The opium sale in Yangon remained 3, 600 seers as in 1870-71. The opium sale was 1, 150 seers in Nyaung-Ton; 1, 260 seers in Twan-Te; and 960 seers in Bago. Concerning this increase of the opium sale, the Chief Commissioner commented that there might have existing either the increase of opium eaters or smokers or the increase of illegal opium traffickings.⁴⁹

An opium shop was opened in the Town of Ye-kin Mingyi in Bago Division, and Rs. 500 was paid for the license fee.⁵⁰ When an investigation was made in the Pathein Prison, where cholera broke out, almost all the prisoners were found to be opium addicts.⁵¹ The British government had issued licenses to open thirty opium shops in 1880-81 in the whole Bago division. Rs. 307, 140 was collected for the license fee for the whole division, having Rs. 45, 145 more than that in 1879-80. While more license fees were offered in some regions, the auctioneers sold opium at higher prices. In 1880-81, 32, 709 seers of opium were sold, the sale being 4, 436 seers more than that in 1879-80. The sale increased in Thon-gwa, Tharyawaddy and Pyay districts. The net income obtained from opium from the whole division was Rs. 851, 656, the income being Rs.120, 163 more than that in 1879-80. It can be assumed that the increase of income resulted from buying large amount of opium from the licensed opium shops, and from the government's selling the opium of illegal trafficking seized from the neighbouring towns and villages. Although the number of the opium shops had still been limited, it can be assumed that the abuse of opium had been rising high.

In Yangon District, Bago Division, eight opium shops were given license in 1880-81 as in 1879-80. As in the previous year, a group of the Chinese under the so-called Chinese Company was permitted a license: the license was purchased at

⁴⁹ RED, 1872, 4-5

⁵⁰(a) RED, 1872, 6

(b) Tharyawaddy District, 1963, 99

⁵¹RAB, 1873, 48

the price of Rs. 140, 000 costing Rs.19, 950 more than that of 1879-80.⁵² In Hanthawaddy District, there were three licensed opium shops. The license fee of Rs. 19, 950 was paid in 1880-81, the fee being Rs. 8, 750 more than that of 1879-80. There were six licensed opium shops in Thon-gwa District. The license fee of Rs. 33, 130 was paid, the fee being Rs. 1, 045 more than that of 1879-80. In Patheingyi District, there existed six licensed opium shops. The license fee of Rs. 71, 700 was paid, the fee being Rs. 3, 400 more than that of 1879-80. There were only two licensed opium shops in Hinthada District. Only Rs. 13, 460 was obtained for the license fee for the year 1880-81, the fee being Rs. 1680 lower than that of 1879-80.

There was only one licensed opium shop in Tharyawaddy District. In 1879-80, the licensed opium shop was located at the check-point at the water-front, and only Rs. 7, 150 was obtained for the license fee. In 1880-81, that licensed opium shop was moved to the Town of Thon-Hse. Then the license fee increased to Rs. 15, 450. The license was bought at auction by the Chinese who were the license holders. The Chief Commissioner commented thus:

The increase of 1, 920 seers of opium may not have resulted from the increase of the use of opium by the local addicts. The main factor was probably the illegal trafficking of opium into the Hanthawaddy District or to Yangon by the railway because there was the profit of ten Rupee per one seer. Illegal trafficking of opium was seized. Interrogation of the license holders was made more than once, yet no action could be taken against according to the Law of Opium.⁵³

There were two licensed opium shops in Pyaw District, the license fee fetching only Rs. 450 more than that of 1879-80 had increased to 3, 540 seers in 1880-81. The revenue collected on opium from the whole district was Rs. 88079, the revenue being Rs. 21, 556 more than that of 1879-80. In Thayet District there were two opium shops. These shops fetched Rs. 14, 650 for the license fee in 1880-81, the license fee fetching Rs. 4830 more than that of 1879-80. In 1880-81,

⁵²RED, 1881, 4

⁵³ RED, 1881, 5

only one single license was issued. This license alone fetched Rs. 20, 500 fetching Rs. 5050 more than the price of buying two licenses.⁵⁴ The Excise Report commented that the explanation made by the excise officer of respective districts was not very clear. Since all the opium licenses were in the hand of the Chinese, the license holders, as the comment goes, had kept the conditions of the opium dealings under their hand.⁵⁵

The Chinese competed with other auctioneers for winning the opium license. That was why the license fee had risen in many regions. The following table shows a comparison between the opium licenses issued in 1880-81 in advance of 1881-82.

Table-XIX
Comparison of license fees for selling the opium

District	1880-81		1881-82	
	No. shops	Rs	No. shops	Rs
Rakhine Division				
Sittwe	10	52, 350	2	810, 000
Kyauk-phyu	5	36, 000	1	37, 600
Than-dwe	3	5, 545	-	-
Total	18	93, 895	3	118, 600
Yangon	8	140, 000	5	109, 000
Hanthawaddy	3	19, 950	1	13, 000
Tharyawaddy	-	15, 450	-	-
Thayet	2	14, 650	1	20, 500
Thon-gwa	6	33, 130	3	25, 900
Pathein	6	41, 700	3	45, 000
Hinthada	2	13, 460	1	21, 900
Pyay	2	28, 800	1	28, 400
Total	30	307, 040	15	264, 200

⁵⁴ RED, 1881, 6

⁵⁵ RED, 1881, 4

Thanintharyi Division				
Mawlamyine	5	59, 300	3	36, 000
Kyaik-kami	6	32, 20	3	20, 000
Myeik	6	15, 360	2	5, 620
Taungoo	1	16, 300	1	22, 005
Dawei	2	2, 760	1	Sale Shut
Total	20	125, 920	10	83, 625
Grand Total	68	526, 955	28	466, 425

Source: RPAB, 1883, 13

In British-ruled Myanmar, there were 68 licensed opium shops in 1880-81, but they were reduced to eighteen opium shops, according to the policy of the 1881- opium shop reduction, in 1882-83.⁵⁶ The net revenue gained on opium in 1883-84 was Rs. 186, 242,⁵⁷ so it can be concluded that the revenue had slightly declined. The following table shows a comparison between the revenue of 1884-85 and those of the last two years.

Table-XX
The Revenue of 1883-84 and 1884-85

Subject	1884-85 (Rs.)	1883-84 (Rs.)	1882-83 (Rs.)
License fee	444, 660	480, 181	520, 290
Net Sale of opium	1011, 348	1030, 011	989, 628
Total	1456, 008	1510, 192	1509, 910

Source: RPAB, 1884-85, 7

The Maung-Taw opium shop in Sittwe District was shut down. But no effective control could be made on the illegal opium trafficking from Sittakaung. According to the request of the Chief Commissioner of Myanmar, the Government of Bengal issued opium of limited amount to the opium shop in Sittakaung

⁵⁶RPAB, 1883, 13

⁵⁷Morrison, 1963, 166

District. Similarly, only limited amount of opium was sold to the opium addicts. But as opium of 0.0125 seer was sold at the price of five Hmus at Sittakaung and at the price of one Rupee to four Rupees in Rakhine, there existed opium trafficking in some form or other.⁵⁸

After the British had annexed Upper Myanmar in 1885, the Chief Commissioner Sir Charles Bernard came to Mandalay, and, making Mandalay the headquarter, had Mandalay the Royal Capital and the three districts of Sagaing, Myingyan and Meiktila under his administration. In February 1886, the Viceroy himself came to Mandalay, and decided that Upper Myanmar would be placed under the administration of the British India starting from 1st March. The Shan State was to remain as a separate territory, and was under the administration of the Chief Commissioner, who represented the Viceroy. When the Viceroy left, the Chief Commissioner took the responsibility of the administration of the newly annexed regions.⁵⁹

Starting from the time when the administration of Upper Myanmar came into existence, all the matters related to excise were undertaken by the Department of Excise. The opium issued by the government was prescribed to the licenced opium dealers to sell 7.82 percent less in amount. No Myanmar were to be sold opium in Upper Myanmar.⁶⁰ But there had not been any control over the Chinese who had been dealing in opium trading.⁶¹ At that time, the Christian missionaries of Yangon sent a proposal to the Viceroy to totally ban the opium importing to Upper Myanmar or to have some limitations on the importing. In 1886, the Anti-Opium Association of England submitted the following memorandum to the Government.

⁵⁸BHC mfm. 50, 16, 77

⁵⁹ RAB, 1886, 4

⁶⁰ *Burma Gazetteer: Lower Chindwin District*, Rangoon, Central Press, 1912, p.188 (Henceforth: *Lower Chindwin District, 1912*)

⁶¹ BHC mfm, 50, 6

- (1) To totally prohibit the opium trading or use all over Myanmar
- (2) To prevent opium trafficking across the border into Myanmar and China
- (3) To totally wipe out opium from the list of the commodities for trading in Myanmar.⁶²

At that time, the British government did not give permit to opening licensed opium shops any where according to the policy of the Reduction of Opium Abuse. There is evidence which shows the government's banning the issuing of the license of the opium sale in Nin-gyan District, Upper Myanmar.⁶³

At that time, with reference to the Anti-Opium Campaign of the Christian missionaries, the government complied to the following demands:

- (1) Starting from 1 April 1887, all the opium shops in Myanmar, except the following regions, must be shut down: (1) Yangon (2) Sittwe (3) Mawlamyaing (4) Patheingyi (5) Myeik
- (2) Except in those regions, the holder of some opium for selling or holding, except for some medical purpose, whether a Myanmar or a Karen, shall be sentenced to a criminal action.
- (3) Any licensed opium shopkeeper, if he or she should sell opium to the Myanmar except in his or her appointed area in Myanmar, shall be sentenced to a criminal action
- (4) Since there occurred the loss of six lakhs of the revenue on opium, the revenue on salt shall be raised from three Pes per one maund (approximately equal to 29.70 seer) to twelve annas.
- (5) Since body resistance of the Shan, the Kachin, the Chinese and the Indian is not affected from the eating of opium except in the five regions of those nationalities, no license shall be issued to opium shops in any other places.

⁶² Nyo Mya, 1973, 257,258

⁶³ Lower Chindwin District, 1912, 189-190

- (6) The opium license holders, if they should sell opium to the Myanmar, shall be taken action against
- (7) The opium license holders are temporarily allowed to buy opium from the region of Yunnan and the Shan States.⁶⁴

An order was issued that, except the physicians, tattoo-drawers and medicine-makers, in regions which later came to be known as the Lower Chindwin District, nobody was allowed to hold opium in hand. In Kachin State and the Shan States, the national races used opium as medicine. Although the Kachin and the Shan, after their abuse of opium, were not problem makers, the Myanmar, eating or smoking opium, used to pick up some row. Therefore, when a licensed opium shop was opened in Monywa, the non-Myanmar people were given permit to hold only 1.0375 seer of opium in hand.⁶⁵

Although it can be said that the opium trading and trafficking had been in tight control by Myanmar kings in Upper Myanmar, there had existed no restrictions on the Chinese's opium trafficking. It was noted that in the reign of Myanmar Kings, among the cargo of the Ayeyawaddy Flotilla Company was included opium as a tax-free commodity. After Upper Myanmar had been annexed by the British, opium was categorized, not as a tax-free commodity, but as a restricted commodity. Some streamers of the Ayeyawaddy Flotilla Company transported opium as a legal commodity, and so action was taken against the Company.⁶⁶

While, on one hand, the British government put a tight control on opium trafficking inside Myanmar, it was willing to do opium trading with China on the other.⁶⁷ Till two or three years before and after the British annexation of Upper

⁶⁴ Nyo Mya, *1973*, 258-259

⁶⁵ Lower Chindwin District, *1912*, 189-190

⁶⁶ PAB, 1886, 6-8

⁶⁷ PAB, 1887, 4

Myanmar, the opium trading between Bamaw and Yunan had been prospering.⁶⁸ There were four trading routes running from Yunan to the Ayeyawaddy. The first route came from Nam-mali to Tar Lawgyi, the route being mostly used by the Shan and Kachin traders. The second route was the main road of the Nam-taphet Village to the north of the Nammali. The third route was the Mai-Mao route mostly used by the Shan-Chinese from Mai-La and Sanda and by the Chinese from Mo-Nyin. The fourth route was the route running from Thargara to Tharyakon,⁶⁹ which reached Thargara via Mai-Ti and Shan-si of China. When the British government had made an investigation of the opium trading in this route, it began to consider the measures to put a tight control on it.⁷⁰

According to the Notification No.5052 and No.72, dated 15 September 1885, by the Finance and Commerce Department, Government of India, the 1879 Act of Opium was announced to have effect on Upper Myanmar.⁷¹ The Act was to give permit to the Indian and the Chinese for the use of opium and to correct the affairs in opium trading. Tax was imposed on the opium import from Yunnan at the rate of thirty Rupees per 1.32 seer. In Upper Myanmar, the buyer of opium was allowed to buy up to 0.125 Seer of opium, which only 0.0375 seer of opium were permitted in Lower Myanmar. Although the opium of the best quality was imported from India, the Chinese and the Shan Chinese had trafficked opium at cheap prices from Yunnan, the kind of opium which the local opium addicts preferred.⁷²

⁶⁸ Nisbet, 1901, Vol.I, 448

⁶⁹ Scott and Hardiman, 1900, Part. II, Vol.II, 565-568

⁷⁰(a) BLS, 1961, ("Manual to the Act of Opium"), 1

(b) Nisbest, 1901, Vol. I, 448

(c) Lower Chindwin District, 1912, 190

⁷¹ Nisbest, 1901, Vol.I, 488-489

⁷² RED, 1889, 1-2

In Upper Myanmar, opium warehouses were stationed at Bamaw, Mandalay, Kyauk-se, Ya-methin, Thapeik-kyin and Kin-Tat, but later those warehouses were abolished. The fee for the warehouse cost in Upper Myanmar:⁷³

Table-XXI
Fees for the Warehouses

Division	Rs.
East Division	1056
Northern Division	2204
Southern Division	
Central Division	572
Total	3, 832

Source: RED, 1888-1889, 1-2

In Upper Myanmar, revenue was collected on the issuing of the license fee. The revenue collected on the issuing of the license fee of opium in 1888-89 was as follows:

Table-XXII
Fees on the issuing of the license fees of opium in Upper Myanmar

Division	Amount		License fee (Rs)
	Seer	Tola	
Northern	31	6	3, 915
Central	-	1	250
Southern	2	3	3, 938
Eastern	-	2	10, 950
Total	33	12	19, 053

Source: RED, 1888-89, 1

⁷³ RED, 1889, 9

The opium sale in Upper Myanmar did not decline. On the contrary, it had increased. The Chinese imported 13200 seer of rubber from India annually, and the price was fixed at twenty-eight Pes per 1.32 seer. There was a barter system between 22.44 seer to 26.40 seer of rubber and 1.32 seer of opium. In 1890, 330 seer of opium from China were bartered with rubber at this barter rate.⁷⁴

The consumption of opium had remained as usual. Since a long time ago, the Shan national race from the south of Saisa of China settled themselves on the east bank of the Ayeyawaddy, and did paddy cultivation. In 1890 there had increased the number of 50 to 60 houses in Loi-Maw Village and Kwi-Tu Village. Although there were monasteries for the Buddhist monks, it was observed that those monks, unlike the Myanmar monks, did opium-smoking.⁷⁵

In Wai-Maw Village of Myitkyina District, there were thirty-four houses, where the Li-paing Kachin lived. Before the annexation of Myanmar by the British, the Chinese passed this village in 500 loaded mules the loads including opium. In 1890, a district officer was appointed at Wai Maw Village, and authority was conferred on him to have administration over the area stretching to the north up to Mai-Na, to the south up to Nam-tabat, and to the west up to the Ayeyawaddy.⁷⁶ There still remained of illegal opium trafficking in Moe Kaung,⁷⁷ and also in the British colonial days, the opium trading had not declined, but was, as usual, prospering, as we may strongly assume. The clear evidence was the report reading that the British political officer had been doing illegal opium dealing between Kye-Thi Mansan and Sai Sai Lin Gyi for the northern Shan States in 1890.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part.II, Vol.II, 562

⁷⁵ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part.II, Vol.III, 331

⁷⁶ Scott and Hardiman, *1900*, Part.I, Vol.I, 347

⁷⁷ Kye Thi-Bansah, later known as Kye-Thi Man-san

⁷⁸ Lt. H. Daly; Record on the Northern Shan States, Rgn, Govt, Printing, 1890, p.8
(Henceforth: Daly, 1890)

In Monywa, of Lower Chindwin, a retail opium shop was opened in 1889-90, and a opium license was sold every year. In Monywa there were 536 Non-Myanmar national races. Then allowed weight of opium to be kept in hand was 0.125 seer, and only 0.125 seer was permitted for retail sale. There was no restriction about the amount of opium sale from the licensed opium shops within the term of one year. Opium could be imported from the border of Yunnan or from the Shan State, and fifteen Rupees was imposed as tax for one viss of opium.⁷⁹

At that time, the revenue collected from Upper Myanmar was as follows:

Table-XXIII
Revenue collected on opium in Upper Myanmar

Year	Licence Fee	Revenue on Imported Opium (Rs)	Govt. Opium Sale (Rs)	Fine, etc. (Rs)	Total
1889-90	97, 198	81, 069	31, 292	6, 650	151, 957
1990-91	92, 100	4, 000	50, 048	8, 736	161, 984

Source: RED, 1890-91, 77

In Lower Myanmar, in 1888-89, the government strictly restricted the opening of opium shops, so only sixteen opium shops were opened: one in Rakhine Division, four in Bago Division, four in Ayeyawaddy Division and seven in Taninthayi Division. As there were plenty of Chinese workers working in the mines in Tanintharyi Division, more opium shops were opened. A permit for the wholesale of opium was given to the licensed opium shopkeepers and to the doctors. As to the retailers, all the shops were not allowed to sell not more than 0.0375 Seer for one time. In 1888-89, the price of opium was twenty-eight Rupees per one seer in Rakhine Division, and Rs. thirty-two per one seer in other divisions. The maximum sale of one opium shop was 9,778 seers in 1886-87;

⁷⁹ Lower Chindwin District, 1912, 190

6,428 seers in 1887-88; and only 5,280 seers in 1888-89. But the Commissioner of Finance allowed the sale of 6,360 seers in 1888-89.⁸⁰

Starting from 1885, only one opium shop was allowed in Rakhine Division. The license fee of opium was Rs.71,250 in 1885-86; Rs.119,500 in 1886-87; Rs.176,500 in 1887-88; and Rs.100,500 in 1888-89. In Bago Division there had been no changes in the amount of the opium distribution. The income from the license fee was Rs.240,700 and only Rs.185,300 was obtained in 1887-88. The number of the issued license of opium was as follows:

Table-XXIV
Issuing the license of Opium

District	No. Opium License		License Fee	
	1887-88	1888-89	1887-88 (Rs.)	1888-89 (Rs.)
Yangon	2	2	133,000	170,000
Hanthawaddy				
Bago	1	1	33,300	30,700
Thayawaddy				
Pyay	1	1	19,000	4,000
Total	4	4	185,300	240,700

Source: RED, 1888-89, 7-8

In Tanintharyi Division, seven opium licenses were issued. In Thahton, Kyaik-kami District, the fee of opium license sold was Rs.1,500 lower than that of 1887-88. Formerly, although Mawlamyaing and Thahton had the same opium license, they now had different opium licenses. As auctioneers competed for winning the auction of opium in Dawei, the auction fee was raised Rs.1,350 higher than that of 1887-88. In Myeik District, two opium licenses were issued, fetching

⁸⁰ RED, 1889, 1-3

Rs.15830, having Rs.2705 higher than that of 1887-88.⁸¹ The following Table shows the opium shops and the license fees in respective divisions.

Table-XXV
Opium shops and License fees

Division	1887-88		1888-89	
	No. Opium Shops	License fee (Rs.)	No. Opium Shops	License Fee (Rs.)
Rakhine	1	176,500	1	188,500
Bago	4	185,300	4	240,700
Ayeyarwaddy	3	62,825	4	67,000
Taninthayi	7	119,925	7	118,500
Total	15	574,550	16	644,700

Source: RED, 1888-89, 8-9

The opium sale greatly declined in Rakhine Division, while the sale had regularly been increasing in Bago Division. In the Ayeyarwaddy Division, there was an increase of 3,400 seers, and an increase of 995 seers in the Taninthayi Division. The government got the net profit of Rs.229,180 from the opium sale, the profit being Rs.75,000 higher than that of the year 1887-88. Still the prices of opium remained different in various places as usual. In Rakhine Division, close to the Sittakaung, where the expenses were low, opium was sold at the price of Rs. twenty-eight per one seer while in other places opium was sold at 32 Rs.⁸²

In Rakhine Division, although the Commissioner wanted to issue licenses for opening opium stations at township headquarters in the division, the respected

⁸¹ RED, 1889, 7-8

⁸² RED, 1889, 6-7

patrons of Rakhine, being displaced with the plan, cancelled it.⁸³ Starting from 1885-86, only one opium shop was opened in Rakhine Division. The opium sale was as follows:

Table-XXVI
Opium sale of Rakhine District

Year	Opium Seer
1885-86	4,468
1886-87	6,771
1887-88	6,420
1888-89	4,787

Source: RED, 1888-89, 7

The opium sale declined in 1888-89. It can be assumed, therefore, that the abuse of opium in Rakhine Division had declined. There had been no change in the amount of opium and distribution of opium in Bago Division. The opium sale of Bago Division was as follows:

Table-XXVII
Opium sale of the Bago District

Year	Approximate Sale (Rs.)
1887-88	941,197
1888-89	646,059
Difference	4892

Source: RED, 1888-89, 8

⁸³ RED, 1889, 7

The demand of opium in Yangon and Bago declined in 710 seers and 60 seers lower than those of 1887-88. Locally, there were 6,000 seers in 1887-88, and with the rise of the Chinese population, the number increased to 9,619 seers in 1888-89.⁸⁴

In Tanintharyi Division, two opium licenses were issued, as in 1887-88. The amount of opium issued to be sold in Tha-hton, Kyaik-kami, was 383 seers in 1887-88, and 1,320 seers in 1888-89. Although Mawlamyaing and Thahton formerly had the same license, they now had different licenses. Although, formerly, there had been illegal opium trafficking in Tha-hton, it had now been strongly suppressed. It was noted that the opium shop of Taungoo had a decline of Rs.500 lower than that of 1887-88, and the study revealed that there was going to be a new opium shop in Pyinmana, close to the boundary of Upper Myanmar. The opium sale of Taungoo was 1,755 seers, being 135 seers lower than that of 1887-88. If compared with the sale of 1887-88, the opium sale of Dawei was 99 seers lower. In Myeik District, the opium sale was 1,870 seers, seeing twenty-five seers of increased sale more than that of 1887-88.⁸⁵

When the annual excise revenue was collected for the year 1885-86 in Lower Myanmar, the revenue was Rs.2,739,570, and so the revenue of 1885-86 had declined. The cause was that there broke out a war against the Myanmar after a strict control was made on the licensed opium holder by the Act of Opium.⁸⁶ Every year, the opium sale license was put on auction in March and the license was issued starting from 1st April.⁸⁷ The revenues collected on opium for 1888-89 and 1887-88 were as follows:

⁸⁴ RED, 1889, 7-8

⁸⁵ RED, 1889, 8-9

⁸⁶ BHC: mfm 50, 117

⁸⁷ RED, 1889, 3

Table-XXVIII

Revenue collected on opium in Lower Myanmar

Sr. No. Receipt	1887-88 Revenue Rs.	1888-89 Revenue Rs.	Increase (Rs.)	Percent of Increase
License fee	574,550	644,780	70,230	12.22
Net sale	1154,092	1219,180	75,080	9.51
Total	1720,642	1873,960	145,318	8.41

Source: RED, 1888-89, 1

Since the policy of the opening only a few opium shops⁸⁸ had been laid down, and was being implemented, only one opium shop was opened in the whole Hinthada district in 1889-90.⁸⁹ However, the revenue collected on opium in Lower Myanmar in 1888-89 was Rs.1869,134, and Rs.1,974,206 in 1890-91.⁹⁰ This does not lead us to say that the opium sale had been on the decline. In 1890-91, eighteen licenses for the wholesale were reduced to eight, but the retail license had remained unchanged. Although there had been a considerable decline in the importing of opium, as the amount of illegal trafficking had been on the increase, it appeared as if the declining import of opium had been balanced with the increasing illegal trafficking.⁹¹

The Administration Report of 1890-91 commented that the opium sale had been 3.32 percent lower, and that the decline of the opium sale resulted from the co-operation of the Chinese who had been in control of the opium sale in the whole Myanmar. The report continued to comment that decline originated from

⁸⁸ George, *1915*, 118

⁸⁹ Morrison, *1963*, 166, 167

⁹⁰RAB, 1991, 13

⁹¹RAB, 1991, 14

the Chinese opium auctioneers bidding low auction prices of the license in Sittwe and in the Ayeyarwaddy Division.⁹²

As the workers from India flooded in, the opium sale prospered more in 1890-91.⁹³ The following Table shows the amount of opium imported from India over the last fifteen years and in 1890-91.

Table-XXIX

Amount of opium annually imported from India into Myanmar

Year	Amount of Opium Imported from India		
	Lower Myanmar (seer)	Upper Myanmar (seer)	Total (seer)
1875-76	33630	-	33630
1876-77	36000	-	36000
1877-78	38970	-	38970
1878-79	46603	-	46603
1879-80	47797	-	47797
1880-81	54265	-	54265
1881-82	41857	-	41857
1882-83	41349	-	41349
1883-84	43291	-	43291
1884-85	41992	-	41992
1885-86	38710	-	38710
1886-87	45983	-	45983
1887-88	48226	-	48226
1888-89	51139	410	51549
1889-90	52321	746	53067
1890-91	57674	2173	59847

Source: Godley.A. Return of the Amount of India opium annually consumed in Burma during the last thirty years, Indian Stationary Office, 1906, 1

⁹²RAB, 1891, 74

⁹³RAB, 1891, 88

According to the table above, the imported amount of opium to Lower Myanmar was over 50,000 seers in 1880-81, but only over 40,000 seers of opium were imported in 1881-82. The decline of imported opium was found to result from the reduction of opium shops according to the policy of the reduction of opium shops by the British government. In the year 1885-86, when the Third Anglo-Myanmar War broke out, the imported amount of opium declined to 30,000 seers. So the least amount of imported opium was only during the war. In 1888-89, three years after the British annexation of Myanmar, although only 400 seers of opium were first introduced to Upper Myanmar, over 50,000 seers of opium were imported to Lower Myanmar. So it is noted the number of opium addicts in Lower Myanmar, which fell earlier under the British colony. In 1890-91, the amount of opium imported to Upper Myanmar had increased to 2,000 seers. So it is observed that the number of the opium addicts in Upper Myanmar had been on the increase.

The opium trading in Myanmar had interested even the government in England. The government requested in a letter dated 9 February, 1892, that a list containing such facts as the number of issued opium license, the issued districts and dates, the period of terms issued, the value of the license and rules on the issue was to be sent. Moreover, the government of England had interest in such opium trading, which was indicated by the report requesting the British Empress's suggestions on the issuing of the opium license. The Chief Commissioner's report from Myanmar read that, if compared with the year 1890-91, the opium license fee on retail sale in 1891-92 had considerably declined, and that the decline resulted from the restrictions on illegal opium trafficking, that the Chinese auctioneers in Mandalay had planned together to reduce the license fee, and that these auctioneers had time for such plans since the Finance Minister had delayed the target date of the license auction.⁹⁴ The British government, obviously, did not

⁹⁴ Godley.A. Return of the Amount of India opium annually consused in Burma during the last thirty years, Indian Stationary Office, 1906, p.1-4 (Henceforth: Godley, 1906)

want the decline in opium trading. It was observed that the revenue collection and the administration according to their will had depended on the trading of such commodities as opium.

In the following year, i.e, 1891-92, the revenue collected on opium in Upper Myanmar had remained stable. The cause was that the net revenue was Rs.131,537, which was Rs.3,421 more than that of 1890-91. But the license fee and the government's sale of opium had some changes. The license fee had declined from Rs.91,200 to Rs.45,412. The government's sale of opium had increased from Rs.32,916 to Rs.77,587. The maximum increase had taken place in the northern division. The opium sale in the southern and east divisions had been low.⁹⁵ In 1892-93, more license fees were obtained, and the revenue on opium was Rs.194,751.⁹⁶ The revenue had increased in 1893-94: Rs.252,957 was obtained. The maximum revenue came from Mandalay division while a little more came from the Central and East Divisions. It was noted that the revenue was low in the southern division. In 1893-94, the number of opium license was increased from twenty-seven to forty, thus fetching more revenue.⁹⁷

The main route travelled mostly by the opium cultivators was the route over the southern part of the Mekha and over the Kachin hills. Then, that route was used more and more by illegal opium traffickers to Moe-Kaung, Bamaw and all over Upper Myanmar. Therefore, the British government had come to take into serious consideration the matter of putting control on these illegal traffickings.⁹⁸ Although opium use was allowed to other national races, the Myanmar people were prohibited from the abuse of opium until 1893. Then, in 1893, the twenty-five-year-old Myanmar people were allowed to do opium dealing and holding in hand

⁹⁵RAB, 1892, 16,89

⁹⁶RAB, 1893, 14,105

⁹⁷RAB, 1894, 14,80

⁹⁸(a) RAB, 1892, 16

(b) Walker, 1892, 168

after the registration as opium addicts. The registration of opium eaters or Smokers came into effect from February, 1893, and the registration covered the period spanning to June, 1894. In 1894 and 1895, the weight of opium issued from the Sittwe Bank was 120 seers of opium sold to the Myanmar.⁹⁹

The opium sold to licensed opium dealers in Upper Myanmar was manufactured from the Shan State. It also came from the opium imported from India or the opium in the hands of the government. But in Lower Myanmar only the government's opium was sold, which was imported from Bengal, and kept in the bank. The opium manufactured from the Shan State and imported from Yunnan was imposed tax of seventeen Rupees per one viss. The government's opium was sold to licensed opium dealers at the price of twenty-eight Rupee per one seer in Rakhine; and at the price of thirty-three Rupees per one seer in Upper Myanmar and Lower Myanmar.¹⁰⁰

The opium trading had been continuously prospering in 1893-94, in the Northern Shan State and Kachin region. Bamaw, Myo-Thit, Dharwaddy, Maymyo and Momeik had been centres of opium trading. In 1892-93, opium was imported at the value of Rs.2685,699. In 1892-93, opium of the value of Rs. 32339, 180, and 1893-94, the value of Rs.1370,620 was imported while in 1893-94, opium of the value of Rs.1646,906 was imported. This indicates that opium trading had been prosperous.¹⁰¹

The revenue in 1894-95, collected on opium was Rs.323,310, fetching over Rs.70,000 more than that of 1893-94. Although the revenue increased, the sale was restricted. In 1893-94, 7,303 seers of opium were sold, but 5,704 seers of

⁹⁹(a) RAB, 1894, 74

(b) RED, 1897, 5-6

(c) Smart, 1957, 201

(d) Sandoway District, 1962, 90-91

¹⁰⁰ RED, 1897, 10

¹⁰¹ RAB, 1894, 58

opium in 1894-95. So it is necessary to investigate the cause of the increase of the revenue. The first cause was that, instead of the Shan and Chinese opium sold at the price of fifteen Rupees per one viss, the opium from Bengal, which cost thirty-two Rupees for one seer of opium, was issued from the bank. The second cause was that although the license fee of Rs. 69,485 was taken in 1893-94, the license fee was Rs.148,495 in 1894-95. The third cause was that two more opium shops were opened in Bamaw District.¹⁰²

While the revenue on opium had been collected from year to year, the illegal opium trafficking had been swelling up in the borderland areas of Myanmar. To prevent this, three more opium shops were opened in Myitkyina District. So there were twenty-three opium shops in Upper Myanmar, and more opium was issued. The revenue collected was Rs.326,047. One noteworthy fact about the year 1895-96 was that Rs.12,000 more was collected for the license fee in the southern division, while the fee declined to Rs.20,000 in the northern division.¹⁰³

While the revenue collected on opium increased in Myanmar under the British government, the number of Myanmar people, young and old, who had become opium addicts, had been on the increase. Naturally, their morality had been going down. So in the report of the Excise Officers submitted to the British government, it was recorded that opium-eating or smoking had spoiled the morality of the Myanmar people.¹⁰⁴ According to that report, the list of prisoners who were opium addicts in Lower Myanmar is given below:

¹⁰² RAB, 1895, 13,75

¹⁰³ RAB, 1896, 13,74

¹⁰⁴ Sanction New Opium Shops, 1907, 29

Table-XXX**Opium Consumers to the jail population for Lower Burma**

Year	Number of opium consumer in Jail	Percentage the number of opium consumers in jail to the total jail population
1883	1,823	18.00
1884	2,417	22.09
1885	2,891	23.19
1886	2,167	15.65
1887	2,472	20.95
1888	2613	21.07
1889	1945	17.42
1890	1898	18.93
1891	2330	22.66
1892	2437	23.30
1893	2248	20.50
1894	2483	17.30
1895	2381	16.20
1896	2618	16.70
1897	2377	17.10
1898	2207	17.23
1899	2535	18.87
1900	2087	16.04
1901	1721	14.06
1902	1645	12.93
1903	1754	13.59
1904	1595	12.57
1905	1777	12.12

Source: Sanction New Opium Shops. NAD, 115 (A):23, No,20-N, 1907, 29

Therefore, while importing the opium to the opium shops at the price of eight Pes per one seer from Bengal, the British government reduced the amount of the imported opium. In 1904-05, opium of the value of Rs.64,980 was imported

while in 1905-06, the amount was reduced to the value of Rs.608,306. The regional excise officers were also to reduce a little of the allotted amount to respective opium shops.¹⁰⁵

While measures were taken about the importing of the opium on one hand a control was made on the abuse of the opium on the other. So, according to the letter on the opium sale sent to the government of Myanmar in 1906-07, the value of opium issued to licensed opium shops was reduced to Rs.2.25 lakhs. Of the three opium shops of Mandalay in 1906-07, two were shut down. Control on the opium shops still remained. While 78,386 seers of opium were issued in 1905-06, only 74,731 seers were issued in 1906-07.¹⁰⁶

The following table shows the opened opium shops and revenue on opium in 1907-08 in northern and southern Shan State.

Table-XXXI
Number of Opium Shops and Revenue in the Shan States

Shan State	No. of Region	No. Opium Shops	Revenue (Rs.)
Northern	Urban Lashio		
	Southern Thibaw	16	21,096
	Southern Theinni	9	14,656
	Total	25	35,752
Southern	Urban Taunggyi		
	Nyaung Shwe		
	Le-Cha	1	300
	Moe-Ne	1	2,400
	Mauk-Me	1	600
	Mai-Pan	1	480
	Kyaing-Tun	1	83
	Total	5	3,863

Source: RANSS, 1907-08, 97

RASSS, 1907-08, 47

¹⁰⁵ RAB, 1906, 52

¹⁰⁶ RAB, 1907, 55,56

In the opium trading, the kind of selling one viss of opium at the price of seventeen Rupees from the bundle of opium loaded on horse, mule and oxen was popular in Kyaing-Ton.¹⁰⁷ In 1906-07, the exported opium was of the value of Rs.44 lakhs, and it was the value of Rs.37 lakhs in 1905-06.¹⁰⁸ During this year, the deputy commissioner of the north-east borderland district himself toured, and gave an explanation of the policy of opium, including other matters.¹⁰⁹ This indicates that the government had come to encourage the opium trading more than the earlier times. Although poppy cultivation had grown well in 1907-08, all the opium had been sold out in 1906-07, and so the opium prices had not dropped. In the borderland areas, The prices had increased to twenty-two Rupees per one viss of opium.¹¹⁰ So depending on the price of opium, poppy cultivation had been extending in Myitkyina and Bamaw region. In 1909-10, the opium price had increased three times in Ku-Yon.¹¹¹ But the government began to suppress poppy cultivation. At that time, the Chinese in large numbers immigrated into the Shan States in sacking jobs, and opium trading, once again, decreased.¹¹²

The opium price in China had increased within 1908 and 1911: the price of fifteen Rupees per one viss increased to fifty Rupees. The opium trading with China in 1910-11 had fetched fourteen Rupees lakhs more than that of 1909-10.¹¹³

The opium revenue had gradually declined from 1921-22 to 1927-28. Starting from 1927-28, the world economic crisis had occurred in 1930-31, causing the breakdown of economic stability. Starting from 1931-32, however, gradual developments followed. In 1937-38, the opium revenue fetched Rs.38.61

¹⁰⁷Brief Histories, 1906, 3

¹⁰⁸RAB, 1907, 46

¹⁰⁹RNEF, 1907, 5

¹¹⁰RANSS, 1923, 69

¹¹¹RNEF, 1910, 4-5

¹¹²RAB, 1910, 3

¹¹³RAB, 1911, 6,51

lakhs. In the year 1939-40, when the Second World War broke out, the revenue fetched Rs.41.06 lakhs,¹¹⁴ thus seeing a regular growth starting from 1931-32.

In the beginning of the Japanese Occupation, the tasks of the Excise Department had temporarily been suspended and then, the department's functions regularly operated again. Opium shops were reopened, and permit was again given to opium addicts.¹¹⁵ So the revenue did not drop. But the following table shows the fact that there was no exact record of statistics mentioning the revenue.

Table-XXXII
Estimate Revenue from 1940 to 1944

Subject	1940-41 Statistics (Rs)	1941-42 Maintenance cost (Rs)	1942-43 Maintenance cost (Rs)	1942-43 Statistics (Rs)	1943-44 Estimate cost (Rs)	1942-43 Finance Adjustments (Rs)
Opium	5265,233	5952,000	10,000	Nil	3052,000	Nil

Source: Japanese Occupation, Vol.II, 97

Therefore, although attempts were made in the Japanese Occupation to control the opium trading, it was of no avail.

In the colonial period, the price of opium per seer was Rs.450 (approximate). As one person was allowed to keep 0.0375 seer in hand, it would cost about 17 rupees.¹¹⁶ So an opium addict would need about Rs.20 everyday. He had to earn money for his family, but he wasted his time, money and labour by being intoxicated in opium, so there existing domestic problems.¹¹⁷ Then the opium addict with no money would at least commit theft. The behavior and habits

¹¹⁴ *Annual Financial Statement of the Government of Burma, 1941-42*, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1942, p.57 (Henceforth: AFSG, 1942)

¹¹⁵ *Burma During the Japanese Occupation, Vol.I, 1st October, 1943*, Burma Intelligence Bureau, p.55-56 (Henceforth: Japanese Occupation, 1943)

¹¹⁶ BHC mfm.50, pp.16-17

¹¹⁷ See Photo (15)

of the opium addict were very passive. So there scarcely occurred that the opium addict had committed robbery. So theft and opium were connected.

In 1885, there were 2,891 opium-related cases so about three thousand commoners were imprisoned because of the opium, being 23.19 percent of the total number of convicts. There could have been cases which were related to opium, but which did not get the opium addicts to be convicts. In 1896, there were 2,618 convicts related to opium, being seventeen percent of all the total number of the convicts. In 1905, the opium-related convicts were twelve percent of the total number of convicts.¹¹⁸ Starting from 1885, when the British had already occupied the whole Myanmar, the number of opium-related cases ranged from twelve percent to twenty three percent. So it was the one-tenth of the total cases of Myanmar.

Starting from 1855-56, the British allowed the opening of opium shops in Sittwe, Maung-taw, Kyauk-phyu, and Yan-Bye.¹¹⁹ A study of the opium shops in various district, show the following: after the First Anglo-Myanmar war, in Tanintharyi District under the British colony, nineteen opium shops in Than-dwe; ten in Sittwe; five in Kyauk-phyu; two in Hinthada; and one in Ye-Kin. So the Than-dwe district was of the maximum number in opium shops. After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, the British occupied Bago and Rakhine, and the whole Lower Myanmar fell under the British. Then, as there existed thirty opium shops in Bago and eight opium shops in Yangon, the maximum number of opium shops were in Bago and Yangon.¹²⁰

Before the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, there already existed 68 opium shops in Rakhine and Tanintharyi in Lower Myanmar. In 1885-86, when the Third Anglo-Myanmar War broke out, the number of opium shops declined from 68 to

¹¹⁸ Sanction New Opium Shops, 1907, 29

¹¹⁹ (a) Sandoway District, 1962, 90

(b) RED, 1869, 4-5

¹²⁰ RED, 1881, 4

seventeen.¹²¹ As there was a war between Myanmar and the British, the number had probably declined. It can also be assumed that, as the British government they no more wished to for the increase of opium eaters or smokers, the number had also declined. It can be assumed that within nine years after the British annexation of Upper Myanmar, there existed no opium shops yet. It was ten years later in 1894-95 that twenty three opium shops were opened in Upper Myanmar.¹²² Then, in Lower Myanmar, there existed 16 opium shops, with a fixed number.¹²³

The comparison between the number of opium shops in Upper and Lower Myanmar after ten years of the British occupation, the number of opium shops in Upper Myanmar was very few. Lower Myanmar fell under the British colony earlier, and was a sea port town, so foreign ships came and went easily and the number of the Chinese and the Indians was large. So the number of opium shops had increased. Probably the income of the opium shops in sea port towns was high. So in towns and cities where the Chinese and the Indians lived, the number of opium shops was large, and the owners were mostly the Chinese and the Indians. However, in Upper Myanmar, which was under the rule of the Myanmar kings, where the devotion to Buddhism was strong, the number of opium shops was presumably few. The Myanmar kings and the British government also decried against the Myanmar opium addicts. Although few problems arose from the Chinese, Indian, Kachin, Chin, La-hu and Wa opium addicts, the Myanmar opium addicts presumably picked up the row.

In summing up, we may come to the conclusion that it was the British colonists who had first introduced opium to the Myanmar territory. The Myanmar Kings had severely punished the opium eaters or smokers. King Badon even gave death sentence to the opium addicts while King Mindon sent them in exile to Bamaw as Phaya-Kyun (dedicated in service of religious affairs)-a severe

¹²¹ RPAB, 1886, 13

¹²² RAB, 1896, 13, 74

¹²³ RAB, 1896, 13, 69

punishment, too. So the Myanmar Kings did not fail to discern that opium had the potentiality to wreak havoc with the Myanmar society. As opium was grown in India and imported to China, Myanmar had, unfortunately, stood between India, the manufacturer of opium, and China, the user of opium. As the opium had spoiled the morality of the Chinese, as well as their economy and social affairs, the Chinese authorities had began to take action against opium, and there followed the breakout of the Opium War. This Myanmar kings may have been well convinced of. Accordingly, even death sentence was given to opium addicts in the monarchical days. It may be assumed that it was the Myanmar kings who first made death sentence to the opium addicts in the world. If the opium addict was a Myanmar, King Badon gave death sentence to him.

So the Myanmar kings had effectively prevented the social problems that could ensure from the abuse of opium. It may be assumed that there had existed no social problems related to opium until 1824 in Myanmar. After the Anglo-Myanmar war, when the Tanintharyi region fell under the British, there appeared the opening of opium shops and opium dealing in Lower Myanmar and it can be deduced that there occurred the social problems related to opium in Myanmar. The number of prisoners who became addicted to opium and committed some crime or other out of the financial difficulties was 200,471 in 1884 in Lower Myanmar. That number was twenty-two percent of all the prisoners. So it can be assumed that the opium-related social problems had been considerably growing in Lower Myanmar.

Although the abuse of opium had been strictly banned, even with putting the opium addict to death, in Upper Myanmar which had not yet fallen under the British government, the kings ruling the country after the reign of King Badon and before the reign of King Mindon had slackened in such control of opium abuse. It can be assumed that Upper Myanmar had felt the repercussion of the situations in Lower Myanmar where opium was legally and openly allowed for smoking, eating, trading or dealing. Although the number of opium addicts belonging to the common class has remained unknown, the devil of opium even penetrated the

royal circle: even the Queen Nanmadaw Me Nu, well known for her aggressive personality, had got addicted to opium. But as severe suppressions were made during the reign of King Mindon, it can be assumed that there existed no opium-related social problems in Upper Myanmar.

After the British annexation of the whole Myanmar, opium licenses were issued to dealers all over the country. Then, there appeared a fair number of opium smokers or eaters. Naturally, there ensued opium-related social issues. The effect of opium makes an opium smoker or eater feel dull and inactive, and so it would be difficult for him to work for his earnings. Accordingly, there followed the problems of his family income and survival. He would badly need money for buying the opium, too. As a matter of fact, the opium addicts who felt the dull sleepy effect of opium had not committed murder and terrorist crimes, as the study of the evidences reveals. But they were not reluctant to steal or pilfer. It is observed that almost all the prisoners who were opium addicts had committed the theft.

Another opium-related social problem appeared because of the opium black-marketing, which could fetch a large sum of profit. There also occurred crimes, as well as family social problems. The younger brother of the Kyaing-taung Shan Lord had been doing black-marketing of opium into Siam (Thailand) during the colonial period. When the Siamese government raised objection to that, the British government gave warning to the Shan Lord, who had to take action against his younger brother. As a tension arose between the two brothers, the younger brother assassinated the Shan lord, his brother.

Nevertheless, during the whole colonial period of the British government, it has been observed that the twelve percent and above of all the cases in Myanmar in that period were opium-related. In other words, it can be assumed that one-tenth of the social problems of Myanmar had been opium-related social problems.

CONCLUSION

Opium originated in Mesopotamia, and was grown in India in eleven century. It is observed that opium reached Myanmar in sixteen century. The original purpose of opium was to be used as the remedy, as figuratively called “the one and single remedy given by God”. But had consequences occurred because of its intoxicant nature of addiction and the abuse of it. The study of opium reveals that opium does not give bad effects only. It has the good points, as well. The labourers had to keep opium in mouth to have a good sleep after a day’s labour. The Sa-Lon natives, known as the great divers, exchanged the precious pearls with opium. It can be used with good purpose. As prescribed in Myanmar medical treatises, a wounded soldier could be given operation and treatment after feeding him with some opium. Opium is one of the ingredients in preparing medicines for healing such illnesses as cough, eye sore, head-ache, tooth-ache, cholera, rheumatic, piles, skin disease, fever, gastric, blood poison and delivery. Opium is also found in such medicines as Cold-Mix.

However, the excessive use of opium has spoiled the social and economic aspects of an individual person. For example, in China, the Opium War broke out as a result of stopping the abuse of opium because of the threat on the ruin of the whole nation. Like fire, the use of opium for a good purpose is beneficial while its abuse can be a great threat.

The opium was brought into Myanmar by the foreigners, not from a faraway land, but from India by the opium traders. But the Myanmar kings tried to stop its widespread use by issuing royal orders. Even death sentence would be given to an opium eater. It can be assumed that death sentence to the opium eater

was done in Myanmar for the first time in the World History till the eighteen century, in the reign of King Badon and King Mindon. In one royal order dated 30 December 1817, King Badon stressed that death sentence be given to any opium eater or smoker. So effective measures were taken against the abuse of opium. But such examples of Prince Min Ye Aung Din and Queen Nanmadaw Me Nu show that the abuse of opium had not been totally annihilated. The Myanmar's close contact with the opium was probably the result from the British colonial system: since opium shops were officially opened and opium was officially sold in those shops by the British government, the number of Myanmar opium eaters and smokers had increased. License were issued for opening opium shops after Upper Myanmar fall under the British colony in 1886. But Myanmar's situation had not deteriorated as badly as China because of the influences of Buddhism and Myanmar society. But over ten percent of all cases resulted from opium-related cases. So it is obvious that opium has caused damage to the socio-economy of Myanmar. Those who had prospered by the opium trading were the Chinese. Opium trade prospered most, where the Chinese mostly dwelled. It can be assumed that there could be a considerable number of opium addicts in cities where Indian Labourers lived. Until 1962, after Myanmar had gained independence, the old Opium Laws of the British government were still practiced.

On one hand, as technology developed, opium had been developed to heroin. The latter is more strongly addictive than the former. There were cases in which the heroin addict committed murder of own parents who did not give money. On the other hand, there were political issues: the insurgents in the border land areas sold heroin, and bought weapons to raise rebellion against the government the trading of opium from Myanmar to Thailand (Siam) by those insurgents had also affected the Thai-Myanmar friendship. As a result, there appeared the Golden Triangle. The opium of the value of k.5000 at the Golden Triangle fetched the price of k.50,000 in the street of New York, U.S.A. So

accusations and criticisms were made that the drug lords and the drug gangs had come into existence in the Golden Triangle. There had been issues raised by the United Nations. Myanmar government also issued laws and regulations against the drug abuse: the 1878 Opium Act issued by the British government; the 1895 Kachin Hill Tribes Section 31; the 1896 Chin Hill Tribes Section 33; the 1910 Opium Law; the 1923 Shan State Opium Order; the 1948 Chin Division Act 46; the 1950 Opium Den Annihilation Act; the 1955 Opium Addicts Registration Act, etc. So the opium abuse had come to be regarded as a criminal case. There had been evidences which could lead to the downfall of the whole nation. So it is every citizen's inborn responsibility to crush down the threat of opium. The opium which has taken root in Myanmar since the 15th century is seen as a threat to our nation still existing today.

Photographs



Photo (1)
Cultivating and Producing Opium Crop in India Since 11th Century

Excerpted From;

C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\Opium Pictures by Internet
\ opium sm_files\opiumcrop.htm]



Photo (2)
Self-consumption of Opium by Rich Arabs and Trading it throughout the World
C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\Opium Pictures by Internet\Smoker 4.htm

Excerpted From:

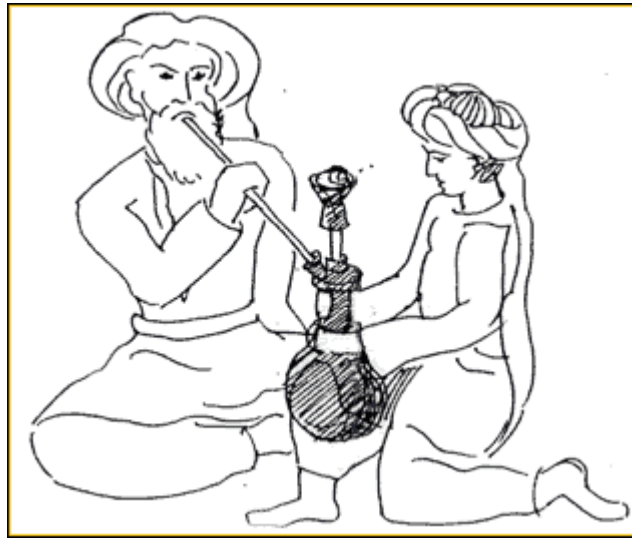


Photo (3)
An Arab Smoking Opium and a Woman in the Same Way

Excerpted From

G:\COLLECT 1\spe pip 01_files\world.htm



Photo (4)

**An Arab Teaching How to Use Opium and Sell it in Myanmar
Po-win-taung Mural Painting (17th Century)**

Excerpted from,

Dr Ba Maung, *Thai Settlements & Arts in Myanmar*, presented paper
in 25 October 2007) Yangon, Historical Research Centre, 2007, p 18



Photo (5)

**A Native being Taught How to Smoke Opium by a Foreigner Po-win-taung
Mural Painting (17th Century)**

Excerpted from,

Dr Ba Maung, *Thai Settlements & Arts in Myanmar*, presented paper ,
25 October 2007, Yangon, Historical Research Centre, 2007, p 18



Photo (6)
Foreigners Using Opium in Myanmar Po-win-taung Mural Painting
(17th Century)

Excerpted from,

Dr Ba Maung, *Thai Settlements & Arts in Myanmar*, presented paper,
 25 October 2007, Yangon, Historical Research Centre, 2007, p 18



Photo (7)
Opium Pipes

Excerpted From,

:\Opium Pipe Internet\p 13_files\CA369OHP_files



**Photo (8)
Opium Pipes**

Excerpted From,

:\Opium Pipe Internet\p 13_files\CA369OHP_files



Photo (9)
Tattooing a Burmese Boy, Permission to Use Opium while being tattooed and to have Opium in hand (Tattooer)



Photo (10)
Opium Seeds

Excerpted From;

C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\Opium Pictures by Internet\seed_files\oriental-opium-poppy-seed.htm



Photo (11)
Raw Opium and its Extract

Excerpted From,

www.narcotics.gov.bn/hitam.JPG

Photo (12)
Various Opium Crops

There are various kinds of opium crops, blooming in colours beautifully. The quality and productivity of white flower poppy is the best of all.



Blind -1



Beautiful Opium Flowers



CA Poppy Flower -2



White- Poppy-0

Excerpted From;

C:/Documents and Settings/ UHRC/Desktop/Opium Images/2004060-popyfields.htm

Photo (13)**Production of resin from poppy pod**

A ripening poppy fruits for producing resin.



To harvest opium, the skin of the ripening pods is horizontally scored by a sharp blade



Only one horizontal line is necessary for the best harvest.

Excerpted From

C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\ *Opium Pictures by Internet \ Harvest_files\ harvest.htm*



Photo (14)
A Licenced Opium Dem

Excerpted From;

C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\Opium Pictures by Internet\opium
Den 1_files\manilaopium.htm



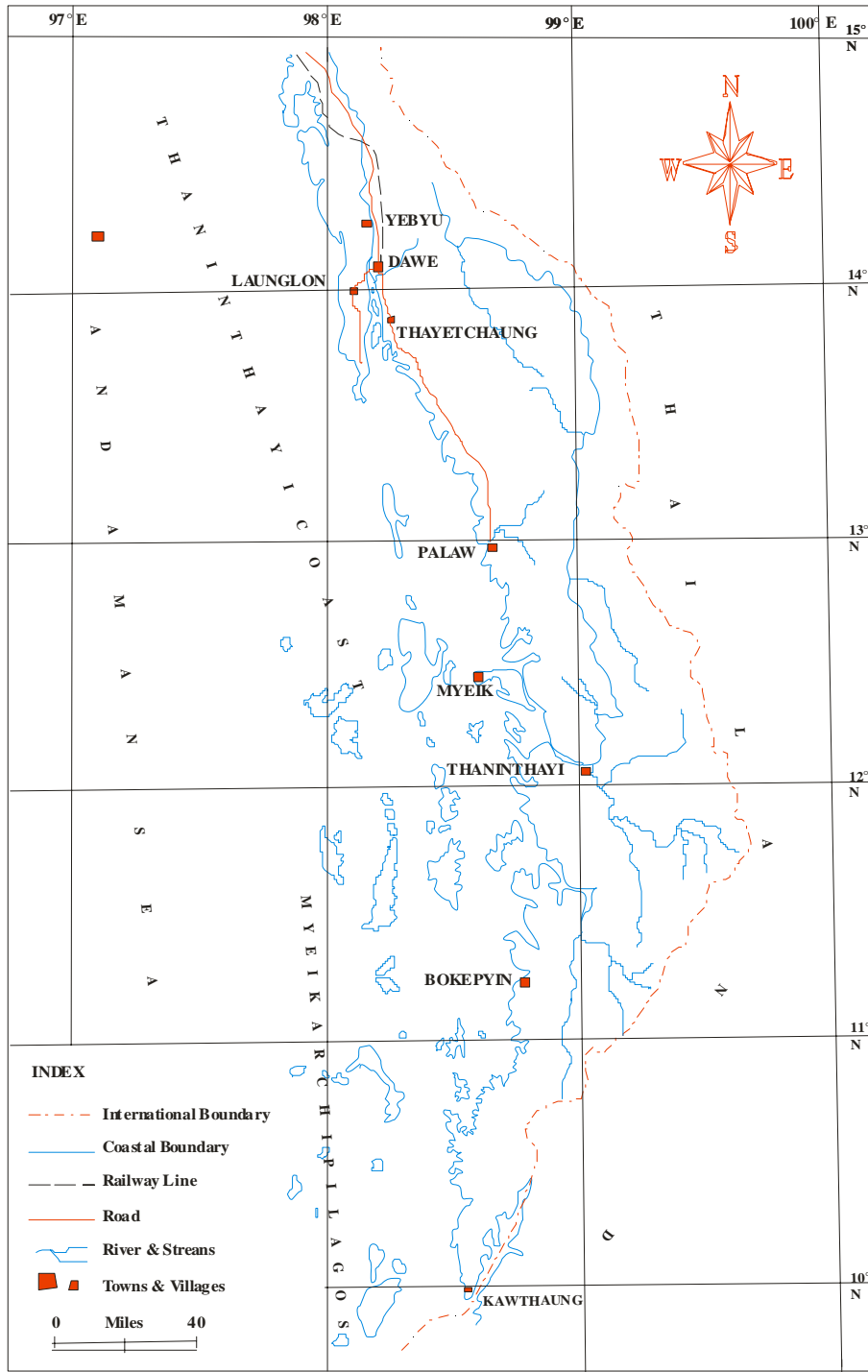
Photo (15)
Woman Opium Consumer

Excerpted From;

C:\Documents and Settings\UHRC\Desktop\Opium Pictures by Internet\Google op
woman.htm

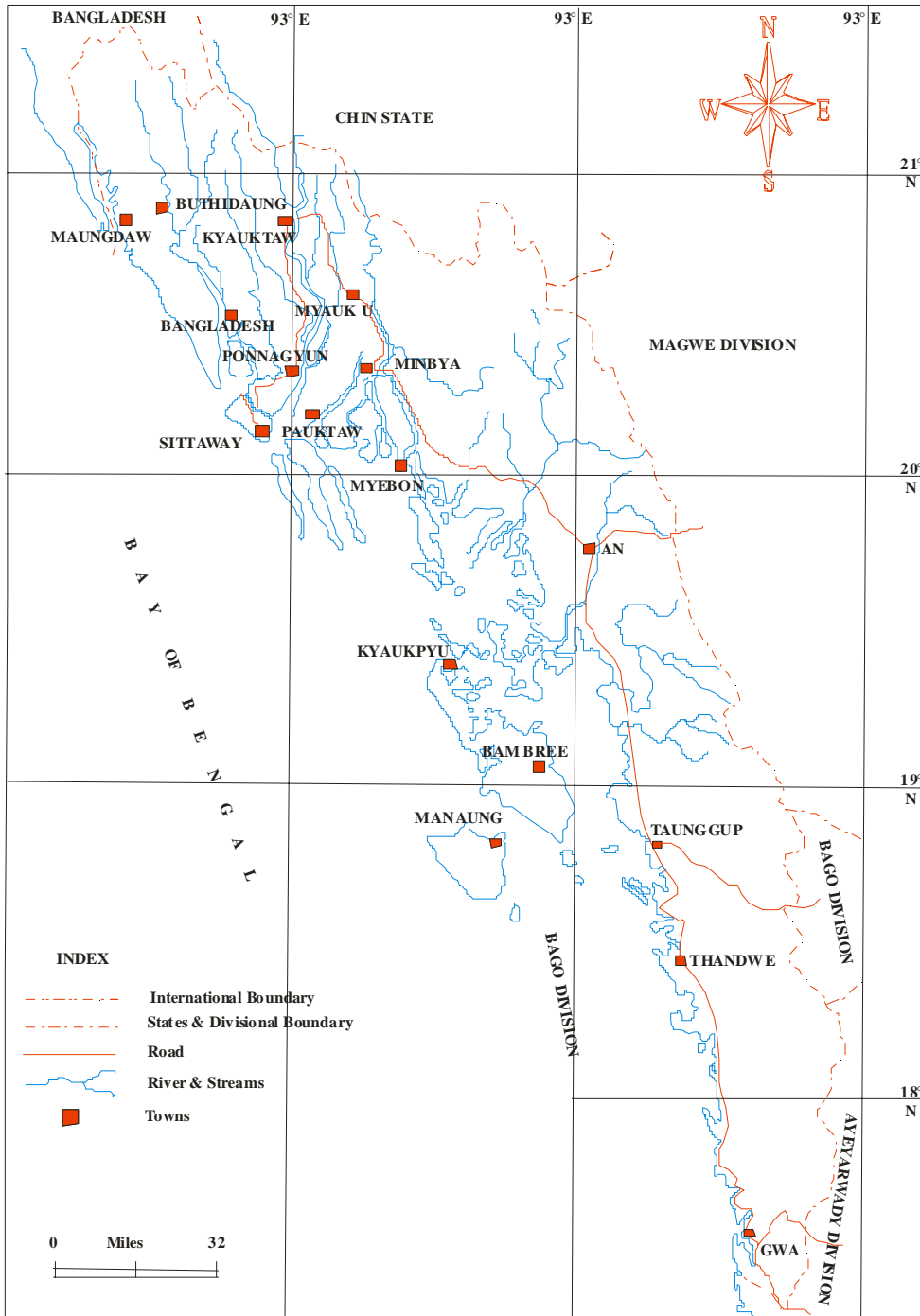
Maps

Map (1)
Opium Shops in Thaninthayi Division



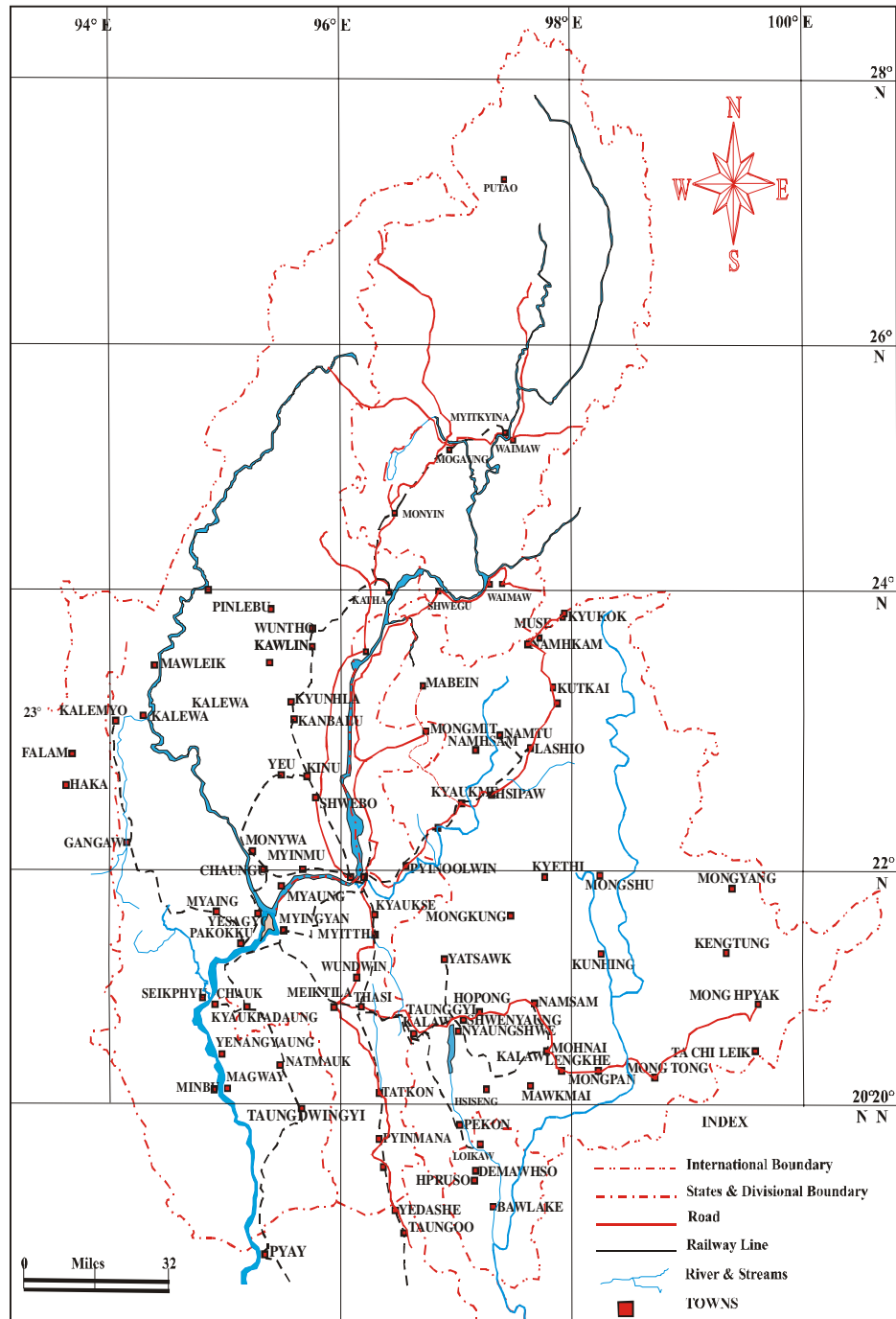
Source: Sanction New Opium shops, NAD, 115(A): 23, No.20- N, 1907

Map (2)
Opium Shops in Rakhine State



Source: Sanction New Opium shops, NAD, 115(A): 23, No.20- N, 1907

Map (4)
Opium Shop in Upper Myanmar



Source: Sanction New Opium shops, NAD, 115(A): 23, No.20- N, 1907

Appendices -1
Licenses Fee of Opium in Upper Myanmar

District	Year	Issuing license	License Fee (Rs)
Mandalay	1888-89	14	1720
	1889-90	4	45360
	1890-91	4	29210
	1892-93	5	20020
Bamaw	1888-89	29	769
	1889-90	2	2215
	1890-91	4	8040
	1891-92	4	6340
	1892-93	4	2920
Kathar	1888-89	1	300
	1889-90	2	2125
	1890-91	2	3670
	1892-93	4	4495
Ruby Mine (Moekot)	1888-89	1	410
	1889-90	1	825
	1890-91	2	1360
	1891-92	1	292
	1892-93	1	7400
Lower Chindwin	1889-90	1	3630
	1890-91	1	3050
	1891-92	1	2360
	1892-93	1	2050
Upper Chindwin	1891-92	1	490
	1892-93	1	570

District	Year	Issuing license	License Fee (Rs)
Myingyan	1888-89	2	2270
	1889-90	2	3480
	1890-91	2	6720
	1891-92	2	5020
	1892-93	2	4020
Pakhokku	1888-89	2	520
	1889-90	2	3070
	1890-91	1	5630
	1891-92	1	2760
	1892-93	1	2050
Minbu	1888-89	2	690
	1889-90	3	15970
	1890-91	4	16670
	1891-92	2	8950
	1892-93	2	4640
Kyaukse	1889-90	1	400
	1890-91	1	4820
	1891-92	1	2015
Ya Methin	1888-89	1	2350
	1889-90	1	1000
	1890-91	1	1910
	1891-92	1	2100
	1892-93	1	3250
Pyinmana	1888-89	1	86000
	1889-90	1	15000
	1890-91	1	10100
	1891-92	1	10000
	1892-93	1	8000
District	Year	Issuing license	License Fee (Rs)
Total	1888-89	53	17619
	1889-90	20	67083
	1890-91	23	91220
	1891-92	15	41327
	1892-93	23	59415

Source: Return of the Amount of India Opium annually. Consused in Burma during the last thirty years, Indian Stationary, office, 1906, 59

Appendices -2
Revenue Collected on Opium in Myanmar

No.	Year	Revenue (Rs)
1	1889-90	1869134
2	1890-91	1974206
3	1891-92	1911624
4	1892-93	2142045
5	1893-94	1874494
6	1894-95	1596117
7	1895-96	1658764
	1896-97	2362935
8	1897-98	2400156
9	1898-99	-
10	1899-1900	2656260
11	1900-01	2642884
12	1901-02	3128153
13	1902-03	3108020
14	1903-04	1646552
15	1907-08	-
16	1909-10	3975000
17	1910-11	3705000
18	1911-12	3426000
19	1912-13	4120000
20	1913-14	3917000

No.	Year	Revenue (Rs)
21	1914-15	3692000
22	1915-16	3753000
23	1916-17	3925000
24	1917-18	4113000
25	1918-19	4247000
26	1919-20	3958000
27	1920-21	3808000
28	1921-22	3357000
29	1922-23	4043000
30	1923-24	3942000
31	1924-25	3682000
32	1925-26	3572000
33	1926-27	3312000
34	1927-28	3209000
35	1928-29	3530000
36	1929-30	3466000
37	1930-31	3184000
38	1931-32	2783000
39	1932-33	-
40	1933-34	-
41	1934-35	3466000
42	1935-36	3551000
43	1936-37	-
44	1937-38	3861000
45	1939-40	4106000

Source: Report on the Administration of British Burma for the year 1889 to 1940

Appendices -3

Increase and Reduce of Opium Shop in Myanmar

No.	Year	Upper Myanmar	Lower Myanmar	Total
	1879-80	-	18	18
	1880-81	-	68	68
	1881-82	-	28	28
	1882-83	-	18	18
	1885-86	-	17	17
	1887-88	-	15	15
	1888-89	-	16	16
	1894-95	23	16	39
	1895-96	23	16	39
	1896-97	23	26	49
	1897-98	23	29	52
	1902-03	23	60	83
	1903-04	8	68	76
	1906-07	8	66	74

Source: Report on the Police Administration of British Burma for the year, 1883-1907

Appendices - 4

Increase and Reduce of Opium Shop of District in Myanmar

No.	Year	District	Number of Opium Shop	Remark
1	1852	Than-dwe	19	license of sell
2	1868-69	Sittwe	3	
3	1871-72	Sittwe	2	
4	1879-80	Sittwe	10	
5	1879-80	Kyauk-phyu	5	
6	1879-80	Hinthada	2	
7	1879-80	Ye-kin	1	
8	1880-81	Hanthawaddy	1	
9	1880-81	Pyay	2	
10	1880-81	Thayet	2	
11	1880-81	Bago	30	
12	1880-81	Yangon	8	
13	1880-81	Thone-gwa	6	
14	1880-81	Pathein	6	
15	1880-81	Hinthada	2	
16	1880-81	Tharawaddy	1	
17	1880-81	Pyay	2	
18	1880-81	Thayet	2	

Source: Report on the Police Administration of British Burma for the year, 1883

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