

Title	Social Transformation Processes in Myanmar: Special References with the Marriage Customs of the Crown Cultivators
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Social Transformation Processes in Myanmar: Special References with the Marriage Customs of the Crown Cultivators¹

Moe Moe Oo²

The purpose of this paper is to describe the marriage customs of the *la-maing* groups (crown cultivator) of Konbaung period (1752-1885). This work put emphasis on the customs of crown cultivator groups are presented in ancient time. They highlight how crown cultivator groups had accepted method dynamically, the social conditions of the feudal society with reference to social relations of the under the feudal administration. In fact, the overall changes on the social life will also be covered by this study. This paper will deal with how the crown cultivator groups achieved the preservation of their social customs and suggested tips on preserving own culture, identity and marriage transformation process used in crown service group in feudal period.

Key Words: Dynamic Society, Marriage Customs, Own Culture, Transformation Processes

Introduction

Crown Cultivator Group is one of the Myanmar Crown Service Groups. During Pagan period there was no mention of the phrase *La-maing Ah Su* (Crown Cultivator Group). There was mention of the word *La-maing* depicting the Royal Orders³ issued in the year 999 (B.E) in which it was dictated that the *Daing* (shield bearers) and 12 contingents of *La-maing* shall be transferred to the lance-carried Shan Ah Su during the reign of king Thalun (1629-1648). So it was clear that the appearances of *La-maing Ah Su* definitely had been already emerged and existed in this period.

The hierarchy in governing the *La-maing* group consisted of the royal depot master, clerk, chief and Minister. The *La-maing* had to work in

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³J.S, Furnival, Tha-doe-thi-ri-thu-dama and Dr Pe Maung Tin, Za-bu Dipa Usaung Kyan (Research Series), Sarpay Beikman Press, Yangon, 1960, First Edition, 66-68 (henceforth Pe Maung Tin, 1960)

the royal fields and cultivate the corps for the king. Almost all the output paddy had to offer to the royal depot. The *La-maings* were the undermost class of Burmese feudal economy and in reality they are the serve. King Thalun about forty persons of the royal cultivators were rehabilitated in the *Khaing* (District) area irrigated by Nwadet weir.⁴ In 990B.E, donor of Razamanisular pagoda inscription showed that the granted the residential lands and cultivation lands to all of the royal land cultivators.⁵ *La-maing Ah Su* was considered to be the lowest class.⁶ They were cultivated the land owned by the king.⁷ They were primary class in the socio-economic life of the feudal period in Myanmar.

In general, the royal cultivators were mostly Burmese. But after the conquest of Manipur in 1120 B.E by king Alaungpaya, the Manipuri's prisoner of war also were assigned in the royal land to serve the king as the *la-maing*.⁸ As Manipuris prisoners of war were also being taken into the royal land, crown cultivators were now composed of two races, Burmese and Manipuris. These prisoners of war might discontent and dissatisfy themselves as the royal slave for being defeated and served and worked in the field under the alien king of difference race. They might not work hard in the field duel and dutifully, and not serve the king whole hear-tedly and faithfully. Therefore, it may be safe to conjecture that the intakes of Manipuri's prisoners of war to the royal field could cause to set off the deterioration of socio-economic circumstance for their lack of will and spirit.⁹

A discussion is also made on their life and social history. Their old traditions and ritual ceremonies are also discussed. If you want to know the ups and downs of *la-maing*¹⁰ group marital life or best or worst time of their marital life choose the census record. We could also ask any specific

⁴ Pe Maung Tin, 1960, 102

⁵ Pe Maung Tin, 1960, 101

⁶ Mya Kay Tu , *Nan Dale Hmatam Mya* (Record of Palace), Hnalone Hla Sapa,Rangoon, 1966, 189 (henceforth Mya kaytu, 1966)

⁷ Dr. Toe Hla, *Alaungmimtaya gyi's Kon-baung Shwepyi* (Alaungmintaya's Golden Country During the Kon-baung Period), First Edition, Aung Okkala Press, Yangon, 1993, 173

⁸ Mya kaytu, 1966, 183

⁹ Tin Aye, *History of Praedial Slaves*, M.A Thesis, History Department, Mandalay University, 1997, 10

¹⁰The word *lamaing* means one who cultivates and develops the land and it seems that the word *lamaing* eventually came down from the word *Lai-Hmaing*

questions, related to marriage, which is not covered in the above points. Absolutely, this is a very comprehensive marriage report at a very rare in Kon-baung period.

The analyses presented here challenge prior comparatively uniform and static models of crown cultivator through the documentation of a range of variability in multiple parameters, including settlement clustering, chronology, and differentiation.

The main structures concerned are the social stratification, political system and the cultural ideology. Caste system comprises the central principle of social transformation and traditionally it enjoyed great deal of internal autonomy. The process of social change ushered in by the feudal rule set into motion social and cultural dynamics that started reorganization of structural pattern of traditional crown service society.

Methodology

I believe that my findings and research work will be of significant value for the Southeast Asian Studies. It will shed light on some social events of the Crown Service Groups. The main theme of this research work is to investigate the origin, customs, believe system and transformation process of the Marriage Custom of Crown Cultivator with special reference to with their role in Myanmar history. New contributions make of systematic analysis and statistic method for manipulating information.

Research Questions

The Marriage Customs of the Crown Cultivators (1752-1885) is chosen as an attempt to portray the historical value of Myanmar. We can, however, guess their historical conditions by trickling such questionnaires.

- Which way did they arrive in here?
- Since when did the crown cultivator groups settle in Myanmar?
- How to transform the *Le Htun Mingala* (royal plough ceremony) painting?
- Why did *la-maing* men and women submit to marriage arranged by elder rather than simply lived together?
- How to prevent the shifting of other groups to another in feudal periods?
- Why Myanmar kings did organize such regiment-like social

status group?

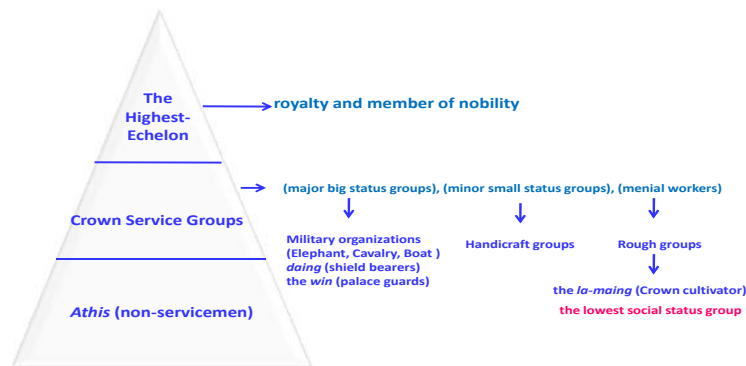
- Could the natives who informed them have misrecognized the basis of social inequality in their societies?
- Will the marriage be successful or end up in divorce or separation?

Findings and Discussion

Let me inform the close type society marriage pattern. It's are not modern society. I would like to show a little transformation in *la-maing* groups for merely dynamic society. We can analyze the seven factors transformation for this work.

- Settle Area Transformation
- Royal Plough Ceremony Painting Transformation
- Transfer to Other Groups
- Astrological Transformation
- Legal Marriage Age Transformation
- Shifting Marriage Pattern
-

Dynamic Society and Class structure



In the Kon-baung period, we see three major strata: royalty and member of nobility that formed a highest echelon at the social apex and then comes the crown service groups in the middle, and finally the *athis* (non-servicemen) at the bottom of the social pyramid. And the crown

service groups were also divided into the *su-gyi* (major big status groups), the *su-thei* (minor small status groups) and *su-gyan* (menial workers)¹¹. The *su-gyi* included such groups like the *daing* (shield bearers), the *la-maing* (crown cultivators), the *win* (palace guards) and the *ko-yan* (body guards). Excepting the *La-maing*, the others groups, i.e. the *daing*, the *win* and the *ko-yan* were sub-groups of the military organizations¹². There were other military groups. Among them were the cavalry, the elephantary, the infantry (musketeer or fusiliers) and the navy (boat men)¹³. Of them, the *la-maing* was regarded to be of the lowest social status group in civil society¹⁴. The relation of *la-maing* with regard to the king was invariably and obviously vertical, the king being on top of the top and the *la-maing* deepest in the lowest in the social order and structure.

War Captive

Which way did they arrive in here?

During the reign of king Thalun (1629-1648), *la-maing su* had been already emerged and existed. There were three races that made up of *la-maing*, Myanmar being the greatest in number, followed by Yuns and Manipuris in that order. Yuns were dictated by king Thalun.¹⁵ Manipuris *lamaing* were occurred after the conquest of Manipur by King Alaung Paya (1752-1760).¹⁶ The *la-maing* groups were being organized with captives who were taken as the prisoners of the war. They were mostly from the feudal kingdoms of Taungngu, Pyi and Yun.

¹¹ Tin, U, *Myanmar-min Ok Chok Pon Sa-dan* (Treatise on Myanmar Traditional Administration), Vol: III, Yangon, Government Press, 1967, 323 (henceforth Tin, 1976)

¹² Maung Magung Tin, U, *Kon-baung Zet Maha-Yazawun Gyi* (Great Chronicle of Kon-baung Dynasty), III Vols, Yangon, Lai-di Man-daing Press, 1989, 253-257(henceforth Maung Maung Tin, 1989)

¹³ Tin, U, *Myanmar-min Ok Chok Pon Sa-dan* (Treatise on Myanmar Traditional Administration), Vol: IV, Yangon, Government Press, 1976, 249 (henceforth Tin, 1976)

¹⁴ Mya kaytu, 1966,189

¹⁵ Map-I, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toungoo-Dynasty>

¹⁶ (a) Mya kaytu, 1966, 183

(b) Map-II, Jacques P. Leider, King Alaung Mintaya's Golden Letter to King George II (7 May 1756), 2009, 114

Settle Area Transformation

Since when did the crown cultivator groups settle in Myanmar?

It is interesting to note that in rehabilitating the captives, Kyaukse Khayaing (District) was being chosen as the most frequently relocating place giving the first priority to this land.¹⁷ For *la-maings* were being relocated by the royal order of the king, they shall not depart from the royal lands. This is one of the settle transformations. The *la-maing* villages allotted lands in Kyauk Se, Madaya,¹⁸ Mandalay near the lakes, weirs and cannels were as follows:

Table-1 Allotted Lands for Lamaing

No	Group Name	Lamaings Population ¹⁹
1	Shwenan Yoe	633
2	Aungpinle	1130
3	Sintgu	200
4	Natshin-setmi	310
5	Nanmadaw	40
6	Ledaw Loke	234
Total		2547

Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Aung Pin Le Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), Vol: 20, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Badon Kye Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), *Pe Taung Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), Vol: 27, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Inn Yaung Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), *O-Le Swe Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), *Sa Taung Nge Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), *Saing Ma Lan Ywa Sit-tan*, *Bauk Ywa Sit-tan*(Census), *Nyaung Pin Hla Ywa Sit-ta*(Census), *Sa Kone Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), Vol:13, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Myan Aung Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), Vol: 24, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Pupa Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), Vol: 26, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Salin Ywa*, *Kya Pin Ywa*, *Pyi Myo Sit-tan* (Census), Vol: 25, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *Taung-U Sit-tan* (Census), Vol: 21, Myanmar Literature Bank; Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, *U Tama Yit Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), *Pyu Kan Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), *Wa Yin Toke Ywa Sit-tan* (Census), Vol:22, Myanmar Literature Bank. (Henceforth: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26, 27)

¹⁷ See Map-III, <http://www.weather-forecast.com/locations/Kyaukse>

¹⁸ ThanTun, Dr.ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, (A.D. 1782-1787), Part IV, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, 525 (henceforth Than Tun, 1986)

¹⁹ Mya kaytu, 1966, 186

The *la-maings* had to work in the *la-maing Ladaw* (royal fields) and cultivate the crops for the king. Almost all the output paddy had to offer to the royal depot. The *la-maings* were served for Myanmar feudal economy. So *la-maing su* were primary class in the socio-economic life of the feudal age in Myanmar.

One focused on an individual’s or group’s current residence that is linked to access to land, resources, and local kinship obligations. Estimating the Frequency of Population Circulation Site occupation span is a good measure of the frequency of residential movement in mobile, agricultural societies were as follows:

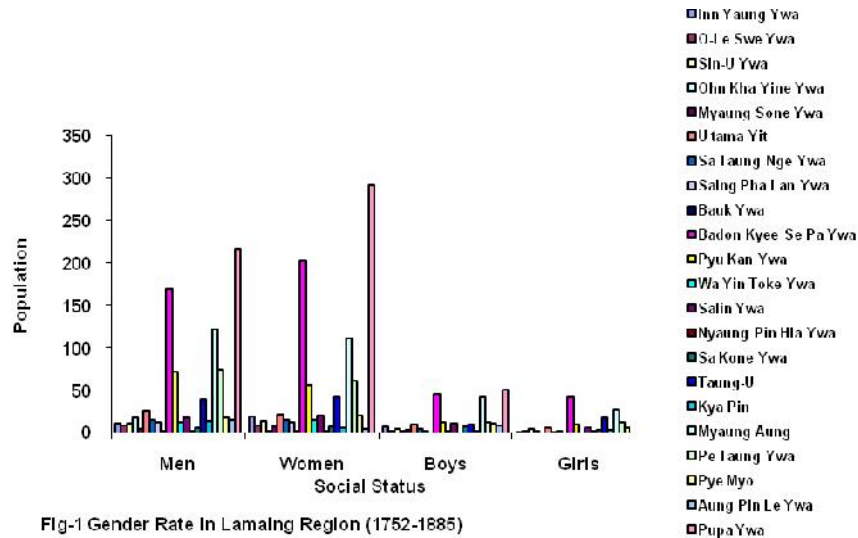


Fig-1 Gender Rate In Lamaing Region (1752-1885)

Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26, 27

By studying the impacts of residential mobility linked to agricultural practices. A number of different aspects of the *parabaik* records have been used as regional markers, including settlement patterns, and gender roles, but crown cultivator communities do not always exhibit overlapping geographic distributions. It provides an overview of the geography, environment, and socio-economic and culture history of the allotted land area.

Lehtun Mingala (royal plough ceremony) Painting Trans-formation

How to transform the *Le htun Mingala* (royal plough ceremony) painting?

They had many duties and responsibilities. Only in the occasion of *Le htun Mingala* (royal plough ceremony),²⁰ they had to serve the king. The most important duty of *la-maings wun* (Minister of Royal Cultivator) was during the Royal Cultivating Ceremony. Before the Ceremony preparation had to make before-hand. A palace where the Plough Ceremony was to make had to be fully prepared and organized road than ran from the Palace to the Ceremonial land plot had to be made smooth and furnished. Traditionally, the white sand was to spread along the road, temporary banana plantation had to be erected along the bamboo make shift etc. The land plot had to be well looked after, e.g, enough water had to be supplied in the field, how and arrow men had to be present to prevent the landing of bad and ill birds over the field. Besides temporary small place room had to be constructed in front of the plot facing the east. *Zat* (drama) or *Anyein* (non-dramatic performance) had to be ready to entertain. A pair of perfect and full white cows was made ready for the plough ceremony. The royal Plough and Hoe had to be in ready and *la-maing Wun* and *Kyidaw Wun* (Minister of Granary) were to be accompanied by the kings.²¹ The duty of the *la-maing Hmu* was to administer the affairs of the *la-maing* followers.²²

The duties of *La-maing Wun*, *La-maing Hmu* (Officer of Royal Cultivator), *Kyi Wun* (Minister of Granary), *Kyi Sayay* (Clerk of Granary) were to systematically gather the grains from the *La-maing Lai*, to administer the *la-maing* labors, to see justice was done to the cases and to prevent any disturbances while in carrying out the Plough Ceremony made by the kings. In this scene the king and his ministers are ploughing the field outside the royal palace with the sacred oxen which are hitched to wooden ploughs.²³

²⁰SeePhoto-1, Royal Ploughing Ceremony

<https://southeastasianlibrarygroup.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/burmese-court2.jpg>

In this scene the king and his ministers are plough the field outside the royal palace with the sacred oxen which are hitched to wooden ploughs. In the time of Myanmar Monarchy, the royal plough ceremony was held in the month of Waso (June to July) to ensure a good harvest to the whole country.

²¹ Mya kaytu, 1966, 227-230

²² Tin, 1976, 80

²³ (a)Photo, 1, Royal Plough Ceremony, <http://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/image/L0026533.html>

(b) Photo, 2, Royal Plough Ceremony, <https://southeastasianlibrarygroup.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/burmese-court2.jpg>

In the time of the Burmese Monarchy, the royal ploughing ceremony (*Lehtun Mingala*) was held in the month of Waso (June to July) to ensure a good harvest to the whole country.

Royal plough ceremony was a major works of *la-maings* were for economic prosperity notwithstanding.²⁴ These factors are the ideological underpinning which the group unity can easily be achieved. We can notice that the transformation of social status, standard and cow numbers from painting designs in feudal period.

Transformed to Other Groups

Could the natives who informed them have misrecognized the basis of social inequality in their societies?

Actually, Myanmar king did not allow the *la-maing* group move to other groups. The insurgent of the war, he had to need the accumulation of the soldiers for deference. So he allowed the transformation of *la-maing* group to military groups.

“According to the Royal Order dated 999M.E (1137A.D), the twelve laming groups transferred to the lance carried Shan *Asu* (Group).”²⁵

Even the *la-maing* was sometimes included in the military service group, especially in the later Kon-baung period.²⁶ Through the prime task of the royal cultivators were in the paddy fields. So according to the Royal Order (8 August 1787) showed that the royal cultivators were assigned only to the land, not to the battle field, for economic purposes.²⁷ But in the emergency of the country, the royal cultivators served in the royal army to defend the country in order of the king.

(c) Photo, 3, Royal Plough Ceremony, 76319e5440995536e0fec432de31

(d) Photo, 4, Royal Plough Ceremony,

Bodleian_Library_MS_Burm_a_6_Parabeik_illustrating_royal_pastimes_01-02

(e) Photo, 5, Royal Plough Ceremony, Manuscript_with_Festival_Scenes_LACMA_AC1994.113.1_(2_of_2)

(f) Photo, 6, Royal Plough Ceremony, Kon-baung Zet's Book, Back Cover

²⁴ Dr Toe Hla, *Alaungmintaya gyi's Konbaung Shwepyì*, First Edition, South Okkala Press, Yangon, 1993,173

²⁵ Pe Maung Tin, 1960, 66-68

²⁶ Maung Maung Tin, 1989, 391

²⁷ Than Tun, 1986, 562

Sometimes, *La-ming Su* were upgraded to the next higher rank of gunner group which was known by the fact that in the Royal Order (24 March 1788) showed that

... “Bring here to the capital all Royal land Cultivators of Sun Ye in the South and press them in the groups of gunners.”²⁸

Laming Su could not change their self from one group to another. Such self changing or transformation was strictly prohibited²⁹ but only in the will and order of the king such transformation of self promotion could be done. As for *La-mings*, the right to change themselves from lower group to higher one had a big meaning that signified a great chance for them. It may be considered that they had to serve in the royal army in times of dry circumstances (First Anglo Myanmar War).³⁰

We can study the class structure transformation based upon the administration circle of feudal politics. They highlight how crown cultivator groups had accepted method dynamically, the social conditions of the feudal society with reference to social relations of the under the feudal administration.

The Astrological Transformation

Why did *la-maing* men and women submit to marriage arranged by elder rather than simply lived together? In many a case rural folks in the traditional society of Myanmar were conservative and believed in all forms of magic and astrology. They used to consult with the astrologers whatever they wanted to do for special occasions in their family like the naming ceremony, cradle-placing ceremony, noviciation ceremony, ear boring ceremony and so on. They used to choose their life partners not always on the basis of their mutual love

²⁸ ThanTun, Dr.ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, (A.D. 1788-1806), Part V, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1986, 32

²⁹ Mya kaytu, 1966, 182-183

³⁰ Moe Moe Oo, *Mandalay Shwe-kyo-that Ne-mye Atwin-shi Asu Ahmudans mya Tha-maing* (Crown services Groups in Mandalay Royal Limit Area (1857-1885), M.A Thesis, History Department, Mandalay University, 1995, 31

but sometimes on the basis of astrological compatibility and on the mutual consents of the parents of both sides.³¹

In those days, parents had the right to arrange marriages of their sons and daughters on their own accord without the consent or arrangement of their children. If such an arrangement was not accepted either by son or daughter the parents used to disown them.³² Moreover, they could not register themselves in a social status group of the new place. Such migrants were then known as *Kappa* (migrants).³³ Even their children born in the new palace never became natives and could to be the member of the community. They also belonged to the social status group of their parents.

When we study the names in the *la-maing* family lists with their born days, we can check whether or not they complied with the astrological arrangements in marriage for brides and bridegrooms. Of course, it is not historically important but it is socially necessary. See the following (Fig. 2).

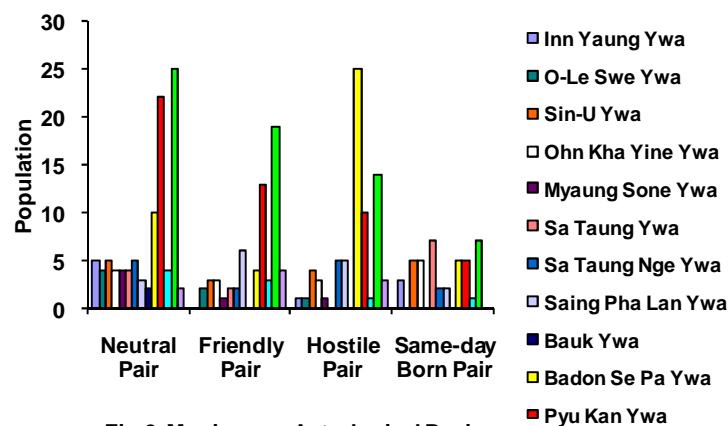


Fig.2. Marriage on Astrological Basis

Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27

³¹ The households list of Paung Taung Ku, *Parabaik MS*, no. 21, U Thaug (Yei - U) Collection.

³² Aye Cho, U, (M.A), *Myan Ein-thu, Myanmar-mu* (Myanamr's wife and Myanmar's Custom, Yangon, Sar-pei Bhi-hman Press,1993, 37 (henceforth Aye Cho, 1933)

³³ Ba Oo, U, *Myanma-Ok-chok-yei Pyin-nya* (The Art of Myanmar Administration), Mandalay, Baho-si Press, 1940, 241-242

The figure shows that major of the people used to comply with the astrological arrangement in marriage. But there were many people who did not take care of the astrological arrangements.³⁴ It might be for two reasons: illiterate and ignorant persons who did not know or take care of astrology, on the one hand, and literate persons who did not believe in mundane powers excepting the Buddha’s teaching, on the other hand. Let behind the astrological arrangement for literate society. One can find the transformation ideas for marriage custom.

Marriage Group of Lamaing

Generally employing quantitative and statistical methodologies, historians have focused on long-term European marriage patterns in various area including age, social status, and other characteristics of marrying couples.³⁵

The household lists of the Inn Yaung Ywa, O-Le Swe Ywa, Sin-U Ywa, Ohn Kha Yine Ywa, Myaung Sone Ywa, U tama Yit, Sa Taung Nge Ywa, Saing Pha Lan Ywa, Bauk Ywa, Badon Kyee Se Pa Ywa, Pyu Kan Ywa, Wa Yin Toke Ywa, Salin Ywa, Nyaung Pin Hla Ywa, Sa Kone Ywa, Taung-U, Kya Pin, Myaung Aung, Pe Taung Ywa, Pye Myo, Aung Pin Le Ywa and Pupa Ywa³⁶ submitted to the *Shwei-daik* (royal archive) by the village headmen and chiefs, reveal the marriage age of the young people of the Society (Fig. 3 and 4).

³⁴ Inner Hostile Pair: (A Twin Yan- Sat-Thu, Sun-Wed, Fri-Mon, Wed-Tue)
Outer Hostile Pair: (A Pyin Yan- Mon-Thu, Wed-Rahu)
Hostile Pair: (Dat Yan- Sun-Wed, Tue-Mon, Wed-Thu, Sat-Fri)
Inner Friendly Pair: (A Twin Meik- Mon-Wed, *Rahu* (Evening Wednesday Born)-Wed, Sat-Wed)
Outer Friendly Pair: (A Pyin Meik-Mon-Wed, Thu-Wed, Sat-Wed)
Friendly Pair; (Dat Meik-Mon-Thu, Thu-Wed)
Same-day born Pair: (Mon-Mon, Thu-Thu, Wed-Wed, Thu-Thu, Fri-Fri, Sat-Sat, Sun-Sun)
Neutral Pair: (Fri-Thu, Sat-Sun)

³⁵ Joel F. Harrington, *Reordering marriage and Society in Reformation Germany*, United States of America, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 7 (Henceforth Harrington, 1995)

³⁶ Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27

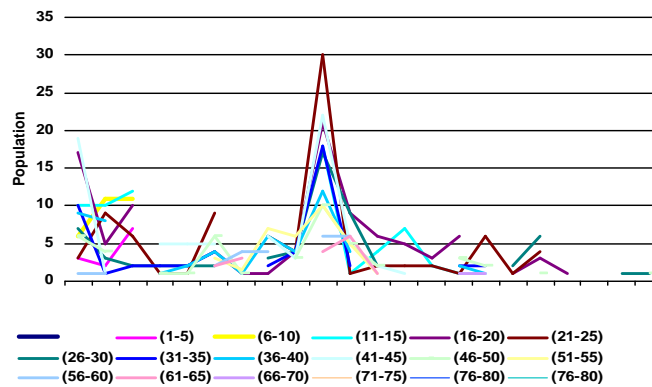


Fig. 4. Marriage Group of *La-maing* (Male)

Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27

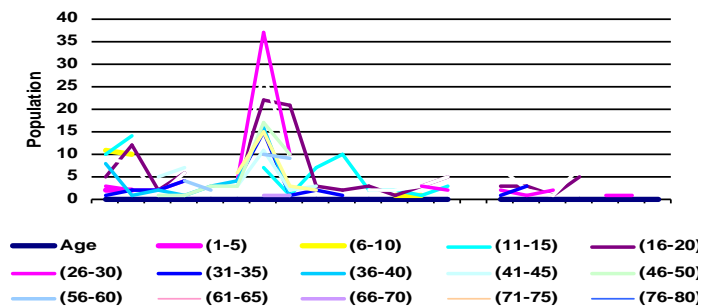


Fig. 5. Marriage Group of *La-maing* (Female)

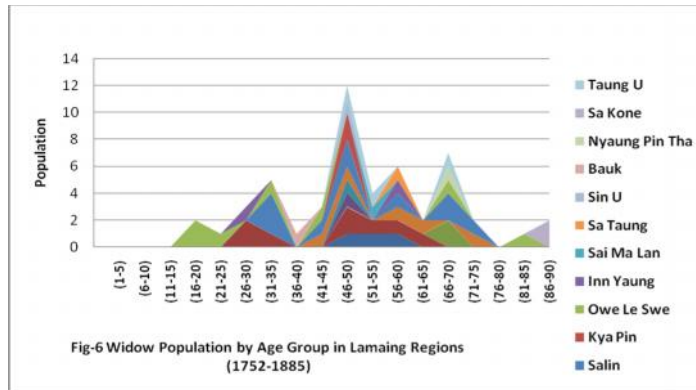
Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27

As the lists show, we see that most of the men and women entered the marriage life within the range of 14 to 54 years, and of them, most people used to lead family life between the age of twenties and thirties; and late marriage, i.e. around forty was many.

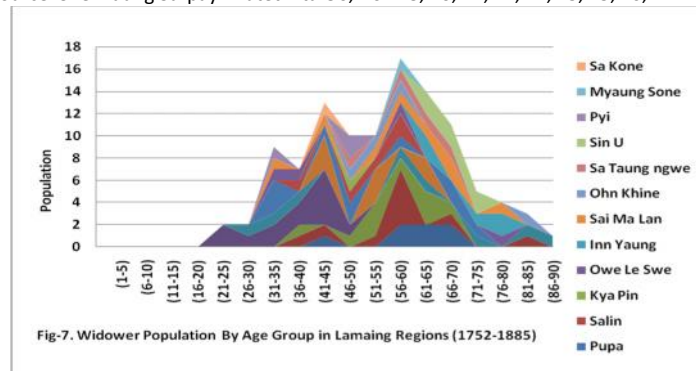
As I hope to illustrate, the meaning of many of the spatial life span that we identify in crown cultivator’s census are open to varying interpretations even when we are aided by seemingly objective quantitative techniques.

Widow and Widower

The house hold lists of the *Lamaing* villages³⁷ showed the widow and widower of the *lamaing* groups in the society.



Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27



Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26,27

In the list we also find Widow and widowers (Fig. 6 and 7). Such widow and widower were insignificant at the early age of marriage; but with the advancing age round about forty, the number of widowers were steadily rose up, especially the widow, indicating that women were much more vulnerable to death than men.

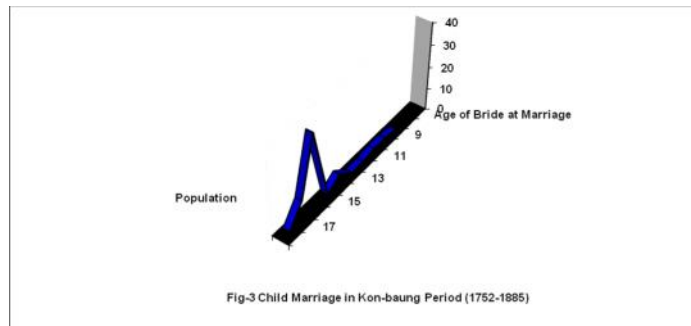
The final piece of my investigation of population circulation and community organization in the 19th century *la-maing* region is an examination of variability in social interaction networks.

³⁷ Shei haung , Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26,27

Legal Marriage Age Transformation (Child Marriage)

At what age was the marriage of a boy or a girl allowed in the kon-baung period? There had been no law that legalized the marriage age of a girl or a boy. In our time, a girl who attains the age of eighteen years is regarded to be a grown-up for a legal marriage.³⁸ Under that age a girl is not allowed to marry a man. The existing law forbids the child marriage. But in the Kon-baung period child marriage had existed in the society. The kings used to accept young girls under fifteen or fifteen odd when presented by tributary and princely states. Our information is confirmed for the most part to the aristocracy, and even there it is relatively unusual to know a bride's precise age.³⁹

As we have documents in relation with the marriage age of the people we can prove that there had existed child marriage in the *la-maing* groups. Also we come across child marriage at the age of 14 years or so. The list of child marriage in *la-maing* ownerships during the Kon-baung period are as follows:



Source: Shei haung Sarpay Thutethi ta Oo, Vol: 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 25, 26, 27)

We not exactly know life span of the people in the *la-maing*. The child marriage was prevalent in the society and teenage pregnancy was expected, infant mortality rate might be high and life span of the females might also be accepted shorter when we see more widowers than widows in the Kon-baung society.⁴⁰ We can notice that child marriage age should transform to legal marriage age.

³⁸ Aye Cho, 1993, 57

³⁹ Neil Mc Kendrick, *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social history of Marriage*, London, Stanhope Press, 1981, 18

⁴⁰ Toe Hla, Dr., *Kon-baung Hkit Lu-hmu Si-pwa Yei tha-maing* (Socio-economy

Marriage Custom

How to prevent the shifting of other groups to another in feudal periods? According to the customary laws, servicemen were forced to marry with women of their own groups.⁴¹ If the union between the two different groups was made, the children had to follow the inferior group of their parents.⁴² It was clear stated that if a cavalry official married a women belonging to a *laming-as*⁴³ the children born of them became degraded in status, and when they grew up, they could not serve in the cavalry. They had but to serve in low status groups.

Naturally, people from lower status groups made attempts to reach the higher groups through marriages or by other means. Such tradition was to be observed by both bride and bridegroom before their marriage. Moreover, how the hybrids born of such mixed marriage were registered is found as follows:

Table.2 Showing Registration of the Hybrids

Crown Cultivator	Other Status Group	Regd: Group of the Hybrid
Any Lamaing Member	Member of Royalty	Lamaing
do	Astrologer Group	do
do	<i>Neiya cha</i> (royal ushers' group)	do
do	Musketeers Group	do
do	Gold Miners' Group	do
do	<i>Asu gyan</i> (menial workers')	do
do	Magical Formula chanters' Group	do
do	<i>Athi</i> (Non-servicemen)	do
do	<i>Lamaing</i> (crown cultivators' group)	do
do	Slave	do
do	<i>Koyan</i> (bodard gard groups)	do
do	<i>Su Gyi</i> (major status group)	do
do	Kathes' Group (Manipuri Group)	do
do	<i>Thugyis</i> (village Headman)	do

of Kon-baung Period), Yangon, University of Historical Research Plan, September 1978, 159-60

⁴¹ Dr. Than Tun, 1986, 406

⁴² Dr. Than Tun, 1986, 718

⁴³ ThanTun, Dr.ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, (A.D. 1752-1781), Part II, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1985, 176 (henceforth Than Tun, 1985)

do	<i>Suthei</i> (minor status group)	do
do	Silver Tax Groups	do
do	<i>Daing</i> (shield bearers)	do
do	<i>Win</i> (palace guards)	do

Source: Than Tun, 1985, 176, 131, 258; ThanTun, Dr.ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, (A.D. 1819-1853), Part VIII, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1988, 534; Royal Orders of king Thalun and king Tanin Ganwe in 1000 ME, *Palmyra Palm Leaf, MS*, no. 1950, Yangon, National Library, kaw, wam (front), YNLC

It also means that the rulers discouraged any form of mixed marriages or exogamy.⁴⁴ But they did not strictly forbid the party not to enter such marital status. Instead, only the child born to them was forbidden from entering the higher social status group of either parent. It was because the rulers wanted to keep the crown service groups intact.⁴⁵ Even though exogamy (marriage with outsiders) was discouraged, it does not mean that those who marriage the outsiders were outcast from the original group. They were not ousted from the original group. Only their children were to be registered in a certain group in conformity with the customary law laid for such mixed marriage.

It was because the rulers wanted to keep the crown service groups intact. It was for some sound reasons that there might be social confusions in the community, claiming the right to succession to the hereditary office or registration of the children in a higher status group. The shifting of servicemen from one social status group to another might cause confusions in the local administration and in the society, unbalancing the social groupings. For these reasons, the kings tried to keep the status group intact.

Some have taken a broader and more anthropological approach, demonstrating powerful connections between legal authority, social restrictions, and religious ideology.⁴⁶

Shifting Marriage Patterns

As the evidence shows, divorce was mostly settled by mutual consent in the presence of the village elders.⁴⁷ Myanmar traditional of

⁴⁴ Dr. Than Tun, 1986, 445

⁴⁵ ThanTun, Dr.ed., *The Royal Orders of Burma, A.D. 1598-1885*, (A.D. 1853-1885), Part IX, Kyoto, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1989, 352

⁴⁶ Joel F. Harrington, *Reordering marriage and Society in Reformation Germany*, United States of America, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 9

family law had already laid down rules in relation with partition of family properties between wife and husband after their divorce.⁴⁸

For instance, if a member of musketeer had taken *la-maing* women as his wife he was being regarded unpurified and disgraced. Accordingly he was being put in, what the most inferior class of *la-maing*, regarded by many people of that day. He had to metamorphose himself from musketeer to *la-maing*. After the married, if the man from higher group wanted to restore his former status, he could ask for emancipation from *la-maing* by giving *ko-boe* (value of oneself in money or gold) in compensation. If he wants to divorce the *la-maing* women, his father-in-law would demand him compensation money as much as the weight of buffalo head that hung on the wall. Only after compensation money was being paid, he had emancipated. If he was a member of the Royal Palace dweller; he not only had to compensate the necessary money but also had to perform buffalo dance by putting bamboo-paper-made-buffalo-head on this head⁴⁹ and after that must be his parents' and relatives' pardon.⁵⁰ Still others have chosen to examine more carefully changes in what they consider the most crucial component to understanding shifting marriage patterns-dowry and inheritance⁵¹and another wider network consisting of potential marriage partners, longer distance kin networks, exchange ties, and participation in regional political and ritual groups and events.

Conclusion

Why Myanmar kings organized such regiment-like social status group was to get ever-ready servicemen for defense and for economic production of the country. Traditionally every person in the kingdom belonged to a certain social status group to which he or she perpetually attached. Thus the rulers could weigh equilibrium of the social groups in harmony with the nature of works they were engaged in. This Work dealt with the *la-maing's* social condition. Their social life style was that

⁴⁷ Yan-dameik Kyaw Htin, *Yei-zagyo-Hkon-daw hpyat-hton* (Decision of the Yei-zagyo Court) Rangoon, Han-tha-wadi Press, 1973, 4

⁴⁸ Thaug, U (Yei-U) "Pade Thayit Hkit-hma kye-ywa Taya-yone-mya. "Village Court of Feudal period", *Working People Daily*, 4 May 1970.

⁴⁹ Photo-7, Buffalo Head Design, <http://www.ritishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/Burmese/>

⁵⁰ Mya kaytu, 1966, 189-90

⁵¹ Harrington, 1995, 9

of rural culture and their social status and standard in connection with other groups was inferior and lowest in the feudal society. There is among them a considerable diversity of social viewpoint, theoretical approach and socio-cultural potentials in the transformation processes of the marriage custom.

Acknowledgement

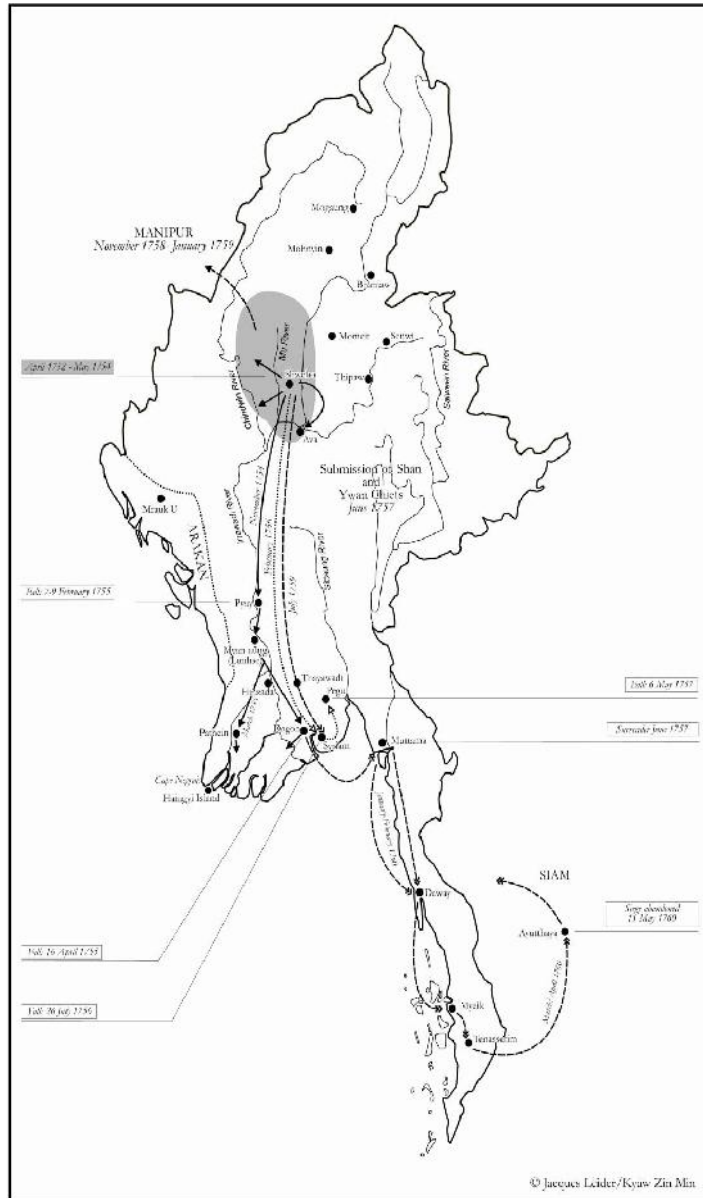
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Appendix-I
Map-1 Yuns were dictated by king Thalun



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toungoo-Dynasty>

Appendix-II Map-II Alaungmintaya’s wars in Upper and Lower Burma (1752-60)



Source: Jacques P. Leider, King Alaung Mintaya’s Golden Letter to King George II (7 May 1756), 2009, 114

Map-III Allotted land in Mandalay and Kyaukse Area



Source: <http://www.weather-forecast.com/locations/Kyaukse>

Royal Plough Ceremony (*Lehtun Mingala*)



Photo-1, <http://welcomeimages.org/indexplus/image/L0026533.html>



Photo-2, <https://southeastasianlibrarygroup.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/burmese-court2.jpg>

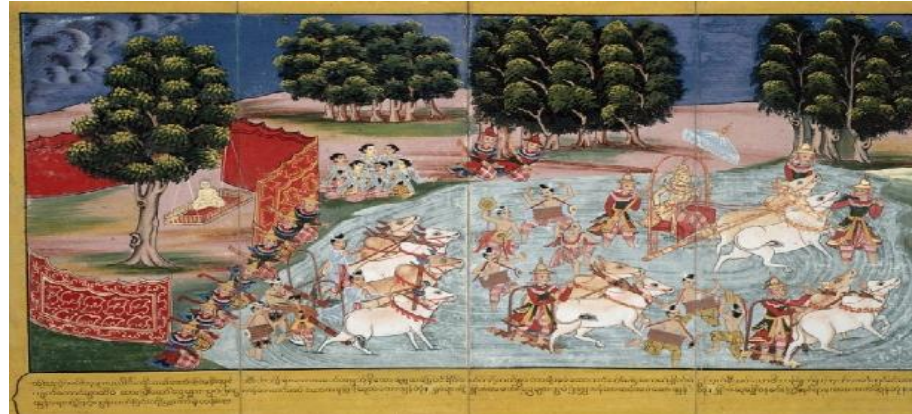


Photo-3, 76319e5440995536e0fec432de31

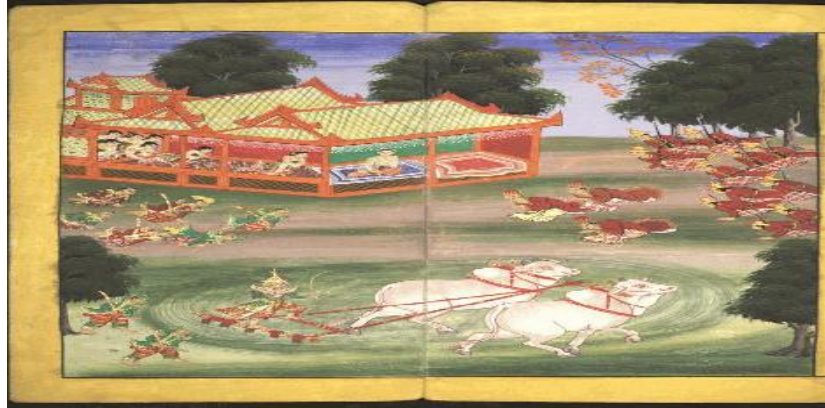


Photo-4,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Ploughing_Ceremony#/media/File:Bodleian_Library_MS_Burm._a._6._Para_beik_illustrating_royal_pastimes_01-02.jpg



Photo-5, Manuscript_with_Festival_Scenes_LACMA_AC1994.113.1_(2_of_2)

<https://collections.lacma.org/node/175177>



Photo-6,

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6a/Saya_Chone%27s_%22Royal_Ploughing_Ceremony%22.png



Photo-7, <http://www.Britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/Burmese/>

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Glossary

anyein (non-dramatic performance where a female artists dances and sings to the accompaniment of light music and is usually supported by comedians.)
asu gyan (menial workers’)
athis (non-servicemen)
daing (military organizations)
daing (shield bearers)
exogamy (marriage with outsiders)
infantry (musketeer or fusiliers)
kappa (migrants)
Kathes’ Group (Manipuries)
ko-boe (value of oneself in money or gold)
ko-yan (body guards)
ko-yan (military organizations)
Kwe Khaung (Buffalo Head)
Kyi Sayay (Clerk of Granary)
Kyi Wun (Minister of Granary)
la-maing (crown cultivators)
La-maing Hmu (Officer of Royal Cultivator)
lehtun mingala (royal plough ceremony)
Narkhan Pyawgyi (Liaison Officer)
navy (boat men)
neiya cha (royal ushers’ group)
Sit-tan (census report)
su-gyan (menial workers)
su-gyi (major status group)
su-thei (minor small status groups)
thugyi (village headmen)
win (palace guards)
Yuns (Shan)
Zat (drama)

Abbreviation

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