

Title	King Mindon's Reforms and Achievements
All Authors	Mi Mi Hlaing
Publication Type	Local publication
Publisher (Journal name, issue no., page no etc.)	Proceedings on the conference on 92 anniversary of University of Mandalay, August , 2019
Abstract	<p>During the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, Prince Mindon revolted against his reigning brother King Pagan. When he ascended the throne, King Mindon realized that the urgent reformation was necessary to maintain his throne and independence of his kingdom. This paper primarily deals with the reformations of King Mindon in administration, religion and foreign relations. In administration matters, discussion is made on the transformation from old to new administration system. In religious matters, discussion is made on the king's efforts for purifications of Buddhist religion and appointment of <i>Thathanabaing</i> primate. This paper also examines the King Mindon's attempts to facilitate the foreign relations and perpetuation of the independence of kingdom.</p>
Keywords	administration, religion, foreign relations, reforms
Citation	
Issue Date	2019

KING MINDON'S REFORMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Mi Mi Hlaing*

ABSTRACT

During the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, Prince Mindon revolted against his reigning brother King Pagan. When he ascended the throne, King Mindon realized that the urgent reformation was necessary to maintain his throne and independence of his kingdom. This paper primarily deals with the reformations of King Mindon in administration, religion and foreign relations. In administration matters, discussion is made on the transformation from old to new administration system. In religious matters, discussion is made on the king's efforts for purifications of Buddhist religion and appointment of *Thathanabaing* primate. This paper also examines the King Mindon's attempts to facilitate the foreign relations and perpetuation of the independence of kingdom.

Keywords: administration, religion, foreign relations, reforms

Introduction

Of the eleven kings of the Konbaung dynasty, the longest reigning monarchs who devoted themselves in the development of kingdom were King Badon (1782-1819) and King Mindon (1853-1878). King Mindon ascended the throne of Amarapura on 17 February 1853 assuming the title of "Thiri Thudhamma Tiloka Pavara Maha Dhammarajadiraja".¹ He and his younger brother Prince Kanaung were sons of King Tharawadi by *Taungsaungdaw Miphaya*- Queen of Southern Chamber. When King Tharawadi fell sick, Prince Pagan took responsibility of the administration by taking help from Prince Mindon.² When Prince Mindon became king on 27 February 1847, Prince Mindon and Prince Mekkhaya; the senior princes of the court, were allowed to handle the affairs of the state through Hluttaw.³ This experience helped King Mindon to motivate himself for reformation of the kingdom after his successful rebellion.

Discussions

During the reign of King Pagan the Second Anglo-Myanmar War broke in 1852.⁴ While the Myanmar troops were facing with the powerful enemy to defend

* Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Mandalay

¹ U Maung Maung Tin, *Konbaung-set Maha Yazawindawgyi* (The Great chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty), Vol.III, 4th Published, Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 2004, p.11 (Henceforth: Maung Maung Tin, 2004)

² Taik Soe, *Mindon Min* (King Mindon), Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 1998, p.9 (Henceforth: Taik Soe, 1998)

³ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 56-7

⁴ Dr. Toe Hla, *Alaungmintayagyi Ei Konbaung Shwepyitharyi* (Konbaung Dynasty of King Alaungmintaya) 2nd Published, Yangon, Sarpay Loka Book House, 2002, p.115 (Henceforth: Toe Hla, 2002)

national prestige, Prince Mindon and his brother Prince Kanaung staged a coup against King Pagan. Prince Mindon completed the rebellion by taking Shwebo as his stronghold. He reigned in Shwebo for nine months. On 20 November 1853, he moved back to Amarapura.⁵ Before he ascended to the throne, King Mindon, on 5 January 1853, sent Maha Minkhaung Thihathu, *Kalawun* - Officer in charge of foreigners, to the British troops encamping at Pyay. *Kalawun* was accompanied by Minhla Thiri Minhtin, *Amaukwun* -Commandant of Royal Artillery. Myanmar delegation informed the British that Myanmar forces would not precede the war and offered terms of peace and friendship.⁶ King Mindon gave priority to practice appeasement policy in dealing with the British. After his accession to the throne, he one-sidedly stopped the war. He also understood that it is needed to overhaul the traditional administration.⁷ King Mindon wanted to achieve centralization of power to strengthen the kingdom and then he carried out administration reforms.

After the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, the territories located to the south of Myei-dè. The kingdom of Myanmar became a land-locked state. The loss of Lower Myanmar brought about the ruin of economy because the king had no more access to obtain rice, salt fishery products as well as lost the sources of revenues. The military disaster diminished the national prestige. This situation became the motivation for reformation.⁸ In other words, the loss of revenue from seaborne trade, ports and human resources devastated the economy and closed the outlet to dealing with the outside world. Indeed, King Mindon carried out his task of new state in vague way. He transformed the four sectors; namely, administration, economy, social and religious sectors which were important facades of society and kingdom.⁹

The basic achievement of King Mindon for the kingdom was administration. In King Pagan' time, the administration was in state of chaos. The king entrusted administrative matters to his favourite officials. The bribery and corruption were usual practices among the court officials. King Mindon knew that the fief granting system¹⁰

⁵ U Taikkha Dhamma Linkara & Dr Than Tun, *Myanmar Rakswè Thamaing* (History of Myanmar Chronology), 3rd published, Yangon, Seik-ku Cho Cho Book House, 2012,p.295-6(Henceforth: U Taikkha, 2012)

⁶ Maung Maung Tin,2004,105

⁷ Toe Hla, 2002,115

⁸ Toe Hla, 2002, 65-6

⁹ Dr Toe Hla, *Ko-hti Ko-nan Ko-kya-ngan Hnint* (A Study on the Palace as the center of Power and Sovereignty), Yangon, Lin Yadana Book House, 2005, p.141 (Henceforth: Toe Hla.2005)

¹⁰ U Thein Hlaing, *Myanmar-English Dictionary of Ancient Myanmar Historical Terms*, Yangon, Department of Historical Research and National Library, 2016,p.8

to the court official was the source of corruption. When the fief holding court officials submitted the prescribed portion of revenue to the king, they embezzled money for themselves.¹¹ In some case, they imposed extra taxes in their jurisdiction. The king, therefore, expected to practice the salary system by which he enabled to control his court officials and to produce more revenue for royal treasury. The basic salary of a minister in King Mindon reign was 1000 *kyats*. The minister received the salary in two installments in a month. The royal order, issued to promote Kinwun Mingyi Thado Minhla Sithu to *Wungyi* status, dated 16 January 1857, mentions that Kinwun Mingyi received 12,000 *kyats* as a annual salary.¹² Laung-shei *Myosa Wungyi* , Yenangyaung *Myosa Wungyi*, Khanpat *Myosa Wungyi* and Legaing *Myosa Wungyi* received 1000 *kyats* each as monthly income.¹³ *Atwin-wun-* the privy counselor received 660 *kyats* and *Wundauk* 500 *kyats* per monthly even though their rank was supposed to be higher than that of *Wundauk*. The salary system benefitted the king to squeeze more revenue and to diminish the power of court officials. The court officials naturally disliked the salary system because the fief-granting system created the big fortune for them. However, the king continued his plan by setting aside the wishes of court officials.¹⁴ Pakhan Mingyi, ex-royal tutor of the king, received 1000 *kyat*. He given 500 *kyats* to his wife and divided the remnant among his retainers.¹⁵ It is interesting note that *Myin-zu* (Cavalry Group), *The-nat-su* (Musketeers) and others did not receive their salary through the twelve months of 1871.¹⁶ Sometimes, the salary was issued once in two months or six months. The irregular payment of salary was partly due to the lack of running of royal mint in full capacity.

The first step of the king to overhaul traditional administration was the abolishment of fief-granting system which the imposition of revenue increased to some extent.¹⁷ Other reformation of King Mindon was the introduction of *thathameda*

¹¹ U Tin, *Myanmar Min Ok Chokpon Sadan* (Administration under Myanmar Kings). Vol.III, Yangon, Pa Ho Press, 1970,p.51-4 (Henceforth: U Tin,a 1970)

¹² Dr Than Tun , *Royal Order of Burma*,part IX,(AD 1853-1885),Kyoto,Center for Southeast Asian Studies.Kyoto University,1989,87 (Henceforth:Than Tun,1989)

¹³ Sir.George Scott,Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States,Volume I, Rangoon ,Government Printing,1901,483(Henceforth:GUBSS,1901)

¹⁴ Ma Kyan, *Thamaing Sharpontaw Khayee hniht Achar Sartanmya* (Searching the Myanmar History and Others), Yangon, Myanmar Yadana Sarpay,2002, p.46 (Henceforth: Ma Kyan, 2002)

¹⁵ Hmawbi Saya Thein, *Myanmar Wungyi Matgyi –mya Ahtokpati* (Biography of Myanmar Ministers) Yangon, Aye Aye Published House, 1967, p.29-33

¹⁶ Taw Sein Ko, *Hluttaw Hmattam*, (Records of Hluttaw), Yangon. Hanthawadi Publishing House, 1970, p.258

¹⁷ Toe Hla, 2005, 142

tax. It was theoretically an income to replace all other existing customary taxes and fees. On May 14, 1857 *athi*-commoner people of Innwa were instructed not to pay other customary taxes, but to pay *thathameda* tax or one-tenth of their income.¹⁸ In 1861 King Mindon appointed four *akhun-wuns* -revenue officers to impose *thathameda* tax after excluding religious bondsmen such as monastery slaves, pagoda slaves, and glebe lands. These *akhun-wuns* were Maha Mingaung Thihathu who had to take charge in the southern regions, Maha Thiri Thikhaya who was assigned to collect tax in the western part and *Thittawun*- forest officer Maha Minkyaw Sithu who was responsible to the northern part. The king justify himself that the imposition of *thathameda* tax was the privilege of the righteous kings like Mahathamada.¹⁹ On 22 May 1868, ministers of Hluttaw issued the rules in imposition of tax. According to these rules, the village headmen had to compile the list of *athis*, *asu-ahmudan*-crown service groups of other village. The destitute, handicapped persons, religious bondsmen were exempted from the payment of tax. After the imposition, tax collectors had to hand over the money to the respective officials before village *Thugyi Ywa-ok* –village headman, *Hse-ein-gaung*-headman of ten households. The list of tax payer would be copied to submit town office. The first installment of tax collection should cover fifty percent of assigned area and be completed in *Nayon* (May/June) and *Waso* (June/July). The government allowed *Thugyis* to enjoy ten percent of tax. The collector claims their expense. After excluding *Thugyis*'s share and expanse, the revenue officers must submit all taxes to the government.²⁰ At first, the rate of tax was three *kyats* per household and it later increased to five *kyats*. After the rebellion of Myingun-Myinkhondaing and Prince Badein in 1866, *thathameda* increased up to ten *kyats*. On 5 February 1870, an order was issued to *Asaung-dawmyè* Nemyo Thri Kyawkhaung and clerk Nga Bo to deal with the people benevolently in imposition of taxes. However they instructed not to embezzle and not to commit corruption while they were collected taxes.²¹ According to this order, the king attempted to obtain the taxes as exactly as possible. On 15 May 1867 an order was issued to those who collected taxes in Pin, Natmauk and Kyaukpadaung townships to allow the local people to pay either *Ywet-ni*- new lump currency

¹⁸ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 178

¹⁹ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 205

²⁰ Than Tun, 1989, 666-7

²¹ Than Tun, 1989, 725

(Flowered silver) or silver coins issued by the king. If a person who liked to pay *Ywet-ni*, his tax would cost five *kyats* of silver which equivalent to six *pyas* two *mus* and one *pè*. The tax collector had to receive remnant tax is silver coin which amounted three *kyats* seven *mus* and three *pè*.²² Hluttaw issued the list of those who were exempted from payment of taxes. On 23 May 1871 the government exempted 174 Brahmins from payment of taxes.²³ On 10 February 1869, the king issued *thathameda* law, comprising eight points, for his revenue officials.²⁴ The collection of tax in cash replaced the collection of tax in kind, i.e crops. It resulted in the development of trade and agriculture.²⁵ King Mindon expected to take care of the welfare of the people by reducing the collection of extra-taxes by his corrupted officials. Under this inspiration, Hluttaw issued a series of order relating to the collection of *thathameda* tax. Owing to the instruction of new laws in judiciary matters, former customary laws were replaced.²⁶ King Mindon realized that sound judicial administration was necessary laws in implementation of stable administration. On 24 April 1853, the king issued an order for judicial administration. This order clarified the lawsuits to be tried among *Shei-yon*, *Hluttaw*, and *Taya-yon*.²⁷ On 10 December 1873, the king prohibited the magistrates not to try the lawsuits in their hours.²⁸ The judicial fees were also prescribed by order issued on 23 April 1854. As the magistrates of *Hluttaw*, *Shei-yon*, *Taya-yon* claimed extra judicial fees on the civil lawsuits and divorce, the king prescribed the judicial fees. On 24 April 1853 the government issued judicial fees for ordeals the most primitive way of trials comprising chewing rice, lighting candle, drowning in the water and putting hand into boiling lead. *Atwinwun* Mingyi Maha Minhla Sitthu and Mingyi Maha Thihathu send instructions, mentioning that punishment would follow if anyone asking extra judicial fees, to *Sawbwa*, *Myowun*, *Sitkè Myothugyi*, etc²⁹ In addition instruction was issued to try the lawsuits as quick as possible.³⁰ On 26 April 1866, the king organized 36 new judicial courts which

²² Than Tun, 1989, 639-40

²³ Than Tun, 1989, 746

²⁴ Than Tun, 1989, 694

²⁵ Toe Hla, 2005, 142

²⁶ Toe Hla, 2005, 142

²⁷ Than Tun, 1989, 342-3

²⁸ Than Tun, 1989, 852

²⁹ Than Tun, 1989, 372

³⁰ Than Tun, 1989, 344-46

were called *Khon* in the royal capital and provisional areas.³¹ According to the 1867 treaty with the British, the mixed court was opened in the presence of British subjects, the British Resident would try the case. The rules of court were jointly drawn up by Major Sladen and Pakhan Mingyi.³² The first Myanmar magistrate of the mixed court was Aye-la Zeyathein Myoza.³³

When the British subject, who committed criminal offence in Lower Myanmar, fled to the kingdom of Myanmar or criminal from kingdom of Myanmar taken refuge in Lower Myanmar, the British Commissioner and Myanmar ministers negotiated to return the criminals.³⁴ In some cases, Hluttaw took part in the giving judgment of lawsuits by the mixed court. When the British seized the property of Chinese merchant, Hluttaw issued an order.³⁵ Generally, the reformation of the judicial administration seemed to be successful to some extent.

The people recognized the Buddhist religion was shining like “Sun and Moon”.³⁶ As a pious king, he sponsored the Fifth Buddhist Synod. *Tipitaka* Buddhist scriptures were revised and inscribed on stone slabs. The king regularly donated every necessity not only to the monks from royal capital but to the monks residing in the provisional areas. More importantly, the king organized supreme council of *Thathanabyu Sayadaws* to purify *Sasana*. *Thathanabaing*- Primate administered the local monk leaders known as *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk*. The administration of *Sangha* institution existed parallel to the secular administration, In some areas, *Gaing-ok* and *Gaing-dauk* were more powerful than town officers.³⁷ In late Konbaung period *Thathanabaing* was changed with the accession of new king.

The king usually appointed *Thathanabaing* on his own accord. Sometimes he consulted with court officials and learned *theras* to choose a monk who was well-known for his observing precepts and also well-verse in *Patipat* (Practice of Vipassina

³¹ U Tin, *Myanmar Min Ok Chokpon Sadan* (Administration under Myanmar Kings). Vol.II, Yangon, Pa Ho Press, 1970,p.255-7 (Henceforth: U Tin,b 1970)

³² *Hluttaw Parabaik Ahmat-athar Atokauk-hmatpon* (Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records)Vol : I+II, Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 2011 (Henceforth: *Atokauk*,2011)

³³ *Atokauk*, 2011, 216

³⁴ Daw Ohn Kyi, *Daw Ohn Kyi ei Lakrwesin Santammya*, (Selected Papers of Daw Ohn Kyi) Yangon, Universites’s Press, 2004,p.50 (Henceforth: Ohn Kyi,2004)

³⁵ Ohn Kyi,2004,72

³⁶ Myo Myint, *The Politics of survival in Burma: Diplomacy and Ststecraft in the Reign of King Mindon,1853-1878*,Ph.D,Dissertation,Cornell University.1987,p.160

³⁷ Toe Hla, 2005,149

meditation) and *Pariyat* (Learning of Buddhist Scriptures).³⁸ Ashin Nyeya Dhamma, second Maundaung Sayadaw, became *Thathabaing* in 1845.³⁹ When King Thayawaddy fell in sick and entrusted Prince Pagan to manage state affairs in 1845, the prince installed his teacher Ashin Pyinnyazawta as *Thathanabaing*.⁴⁰ When King Mindon ascended the throne Ashin Pyinnyazawta was conferred the title “Pyinnyazawta Dhammathirikawidaza Mahadhammarajadirazaguru”.⁴¹ However he was no more *Thathanabaing* because King Mindon reinstalled Ahin Nyaya Dhamma, second Maungdaung Sayadaw, as a *Thathanabaing* on 9 April 1853.⁴² On 20 April 1853, king issued an order by which *Thathanabaing* was empowered to deal with the affairs of monks residing in the kingdom.⁴³ In July 1862, King Mindon invited abbots of monasteries complexes in Mandalay and Amarapura to inform his decision that eight entrusted *theras*, who were conferred the medal of *Pariyatti* and *Patipatti*, shall give judgment on *Vinaya* (Code of disciplines of the monks) under instruction of *Thathanabaing*.⁴⁴

When he became *Thathanabaing* for second time, Venerable U Nyeya firmly established the ecclesiastical instruction. The successful achievements of U Nyeya in religious affairs greatly relied on the support of King Mindon.⁴⁵ However the king could not solve the split of Shwekyin and Thudamma Sets when Shwekyin Sayadaw Ashin Zagara and *Thathanabaing* U Nyeya went into conflict, King Mindon issued an order which stated that Thudamma Council and *Thathanabaing* shall not summon Shwekyin Sayadaw.⁴⁶ King Mindon invited Shwekyin Sayadaw from Shwebo to Mandalay and donated a majestic monastery of Maha Dammikarama Taik at the foot of Mandalay Hill. In addition King Mindon dedicated Htayanka Taik, Yamèthin Taik, Mingin Taik and Myadaung Taik to Shwekyin monks. These five monasteries complexes became known as Shwekyin Nga Taik.⁴⁷

³⁸ Shwekaingtha, *Ahmit Tayar Pyi* Mandalay, (Mandalay Centennial), Second Published, Mandalay, Ludu Press, 2007, p.245-6 (Henceforth: Shwekaingtha,2007)

³⁹ Khin Maung San, *Konbaung-khit Thathanabaing Hnint Sanwsaungchekmya 1782-1885*, (Primates of Konbaung and their Achievements 1782-1885), M.A, Thesis, Mandalay University. 1991, p.17 (Henceforth: Khin Maung San, 1991)

⁴⁰ Khin Maung San, 1991,19-21

⁴¹ Khin Maung San, 1991,21

⁴² Maung Maung Tin,2004,116

⁴³ Than Tun,1989,338-9

⁴⁴ Maung Maung Tin,2004,211

⁴⁵ Khin Maung San, 1991,59

⁴⁶ Khin Maung San, 1991, 24-5

⁴⁷ Shwekaingtha,2007.250

When *Thathanabaing* U Nyeya passed away King Mindon would like to appoint new *Thathanabaing* from Shwekyin *theras*. However he did not appoint another *Thathanabaing* and entrusted whole religious affairs to eight Thudhamma Sayadaws.⁴⁸ They were Pyay Sayadaw, Madaya Sayadaw, Maungdaung Sayadaw, Thetpan Sayadaw, Salin Sayadaw, Sankyaung Sayadaw, Thingayaza Sayadaw and Pakhan Sayadaw. They usually assembled in Thudhamma Hall, located at the foot of Mandalay Hill, on every Sabbath day to manage religious affairs.⁴⁹

Throughout late ten years of King Mindon's reign, two supreme posts were left vacant; namely the post of Crown Prince and to the post of *Thathanabaing*. The post of *Thathanabaing* was left vacant after demise of *Thathanabaing* on 27 January 1866 and the post of Crown Prince was left vacant after assassination of Crown Prince by Myingun-Myinkhondaing rebellion on 2 August 1866.⁵⁰ King Mindon did not install another Crown Prince to prevent from the outbreak of another court rebellion.

The task of inscribing *Pitakat* scriptures on stone had began on 14 April 1856. It was supervised by *Atwinwun Khanpat Myoza*, *Atwinwun Yaw Myoza*, *Khinma Minwun Mongkaing Myoza*, *Thandawzint Nyemyo Yazasithu*, *Ameindawyei Minhtin Zeyathu* and *Athon Sayei Nemyo Thirikyawthu*.⁵¹ King invited four learned *Thathanabyu theras*, thirty reader *theras*, fifty editorial *theras* and other fifty Sayadaws who well-versed in *Pariyatti* learning. After editing *Pitaka* scriptures, King Mindon supervised *Vinaya* and Crown Prince assigned *Pitakat* respectively.⁵² Buddhist Synod is assembling of learned *theras* to clarify and recite the *Pitakat* scriptures. Altogether 2400 monks, led by Thudhamma Sayadaws, assembled before the *Thihathana* (Lion) Throne⁵³ and began reciting of *Pitakat* scriptures from 15 April to 12 September 1871.⁵⁴ For this great effort King Mindon was known as the "Sponsor of fifth Buddhist Synod". On 4 May 1868 the work of inscribing *Pitakat* scriptures on alabaster stone slabs began. The scriptures from *Vinaya* five texts were inscribed on 111 slabs, seven texts of *Abhidhamma* were on 208 slabs and five texts of *Ni-kè* and *Sutta* scriptures were inscribed on 410 slabs. There are altogether 729 slabs, 42 of which were erected in the first rampart of Kuthodaw Pagoda, 168 slabs in the second

⁴⁸ Khin Maung San, 1991, 26

⁴⁹ Shwekaingtha, 2007, 249

⁵⁰ Maung Maung Tin . 2004, 230

⁵¹ Shwekaingtha, 2007, 255-6

⁵² Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 167-8

⁵³ Taik Soe, 1998, 83

⁵⁴ Maung Maung Tin . 2004, 262

rampart and 519 slabs were erected in the third rampart of same pagoda. Each slab was sheltered by brick shed.⁵⁵ Although he stood as a pious monarch, King Mindon looked after the other religions.⁵⁶

During King Mindon reign there were 217 monasteries-complexes, 1442 monasteries, 8718 monks and 6648 novices in Amarapura and Mandalay. According to a list of 1874, it is known that there were altogether 11,766 or 11066 monks in Amarapura and Mandalay.⁵⁷ The king created an incentive to the monks who passed religious examination with distinction. On 10 September 1854 the parents of Shin Kelatha from Pyinsala Town was exempted from payment of all taxes for their son's distinguish achievements in religious examination.⁵⁸

On 26 July 1855 a grand initiation ceremony was held for 500 novices and 500 monks. They went in procession on elephant back into the capital. The king donated 1000 sets of *Parikhaya*- eight necessities including robe, alm-bowl, etc, before the earth palace.⁵⁹ When studied, the number of monasteries and monks increased in King Mindon's reign. About 100,000 people donated over 10,000 monks and Brahmins. In other words 10 people took responsibility to provide all necessities of a month.⁶⁰ On 11 June 1883, over 1100 bondsmen were freed to initiate novices.⁶¹ On April 1858 information was sent to *Sawbwas*, *Myoza* and provincial officials to hold a ceremony of donation to the monks for the Buddhist Lent of 1858.⁶² *Padamabyan* religious examination was held at the congregation halls located at the foot of Mandalay Hill, from 8 waxing month of *Nayon* to 8 waxing month of *Wazo*.⁶³ In July 1855, King, Crown Prince, royalties and court officials donated food, robe and other necessities to the monks throughout religious examination.⁶⁴ The monks and people who attended the ceremony for donation were placed south and west of Kyauktawgyi Pagoda and east and south of San Kyaung (Grand Monastery).

⁵⁵ Maung Maung Tin, 2004,253

⁵⁶ Toe Hla 2005, 149-150

⁵⁷ Shwekaingtha, 2007, 172-3

⁵⁸ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 152

⁵⁹ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 158

⁶⁰ Dr.Than Tun, *Nei Hle Yazawin* (Field Notes on Myanmar History) First Published, Yangon, Pyisone Published House. 2003, p.305 (Henceforth: Than Tun, 2003)

⁶¹ Muang Maung Tin.2004,399

⁶² Than Tun,1989, 492

⁶³ Shwekaingtha, 2007,252

⁶⁴ Muang Maung Tin.2004,157

Even lay scholar who passed religious examination were greatly honoured and awarded. Generally young monks and novices temporarily derobe to enter *Pahtamabyan* examination. They were honoured by the king himself. The candidates of *Pahtamabyan* examination were divided into Senior class, middle class and junior class to put on the palanquins under golden parasols. Then the procession of candidates went out palace from U-theik gate. Those who passed *Pahtama-nge* and *Pahtamalatt*- junior class examination were awarded 1000 *kyats* of silver coin and clothings. Those who passed *Pahtamagy*- senior class examination were awarded a ruby ring, jade ring, 1500 *kyats* of silver coin and also exempted his parents and relatives, totaled fifteen, from payment of taxes. *Pahtama-kyaw*- celebrated senior class awarded a ruby ring, jade ring, 2500 *kyats* of silver coin and clothings. The king attended the awarding ceremony. Those who passed *Pahtama-kyaw* examination had have opportunity to become royal clerk to the rank of *Wungyi*. In other words, the religious examinations could produce secular privileges to the candidates.⁶⁵

King Mindon made efforts not only for the monks but for lay devotees. He built eleven sermon halls in Mandalay. Additionally, twelve praying halls were built nearby the gates of palace. He provided cash and clothings to those who preserved five precepts.⁶⁶ On every 5th of waxing moon of a month, his servicemen on elephant back went around the city to read out Garu Dhamma Ameindaw- royal order to motivate the people to keep five precepts and means of good deeds.⁶⁷

The king invited Shan Galay Kyun Sayadaw Shin Nanda, on 1 July 1855, who residing in Khawtaw village, Yadana Theinga (Shwebo), and donated a monastery.⁶⁸ The kin appealed Sayadaw to compile Dhamma Vinaya Order. The order was the compilation of *Vinaya*-codes of discipline of the monks. After completion, the new *Vinaya* Order was submitted to the Thudhamma Council for editing. Then the order was publicized throughout the kingdom. Indeed Dhamma Vinaya Order aimed that the people to study the codes of discipline of the monks. In order words the people had to worship the monks who behaved themselves in accordance with Dhamma Vinaya. The act of King Mindon aroused some monks who protested

⁶⁵ Shwekaingtha, 2007,254-5

⁶⁶ Shwekaingtha, 2007,170

⁶⁷ Shwekaingtha, 2007,259-260

⁶⁸ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 195

⁶⁹ Shwekaingtha, 2007,250-1

against Dhamma Vinaya. Later it was submitted again to Thudhamma Council.⁶⁹The efforts of King Mindon religious affairs affected to Srilanka. In 1859 the monks from Srilanka came to Amarapura to receive the decision of Thudhamma Sayadaw on dispute over the *Upasampada* ordination.⁷⁰

Other significant meritorious deed of King Mindon was the establishment of sanctuaries. On 18 April 1854, King Mindon conceded the demand of Yadana Htutkhaung Sayadaw to be established the sanctuaries at Kon-ywa Village, Kyauk-se Village and Sa-yay Village in Sagaing Township.⁷¹In June 1855, a sanctuary in 500 square *tas* around Tatl-ywa Monastery in Mekkhaya Township under instruction of Shin Varama. On 29 July 1855 Palaik Tawya Sayadaw asked the king to establish a sanctuary in vicinity of his monastery. The king established a sanctuary, measured 500 *tas* in Palaik.⁷²In April 1859, another sanctuary was founded in the precinct of Thayettaw Monastery, Shwebo.⁷³

The remarkable achievement of King Mindon was the hoisting new tiered umbrella of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. On 5 December 1869, a well-wisher Ko Tun Aung appealed the king to replace present old tiered umbrella with new one.⁷⁴Traditionally the putting finial of Shwedagon Pagoda was reserves as the royal merit.⁷⁵Thus the king decided to put a new finial on Shwedagon Pagoda. On 7 May 1870, the new finial was begun to make and 2 October 1871, King Mindon pour libation water to mark his donation of new tiered umbrella. The cost of umbrella was 1,400,470 *kyats* and nine *mus*. The cost of labour to be used in the hosting of new umbrella to Shwedagon Pagoda was 941,452 *kyats* and six *mus*.⁷⁶ At first High Commissioner of Lower Myanmar agreed to invite the king to attend the umbrella hoisting ceremony. However he cancelled the agreement for his worry on the possible influence of King Mindon on people of Lower Myanmar. He even limited the members of delegation to be the hoisting ceremony.⁷⁷Through the reign, King

⁷⁰Maung Maung Tin, 2004,195

⁷¹Maung Maung Tin, 2004,129

⁷²Maung Maung Tin, 2004,156-9

⁷³Maung Maung Tin, 2004,192

⁷⁴Maung Maung Tin, 2004,257

⁷⁵Taik Soe, 1998, 84

⁷⁶Maung Maung Tin, 2004,263-4

⁷⁷Taik Soe, 1998, 84

Mindon spent 226,000,000 *kyats* in religious affairs. Yaw Atwinwun U Po Hlaing criticized the king's reckless expenses in religion.⁷⁸

While Myanmar troops were fighting against the British troops in battlefield, King Mindon sent a delegation, on 27 January 1853, to discuss with Sir Arthur Phayre for ceased-fire.⁷⁹ When they met Phayre at Pyay, Myanmar delegation was informed by Phayre that the British authorities would like to deal directly with the king. On 5 February 1853, the British informed Myanmar Ministers that Myanmar delegation can come to Pyay to negotiate the terms of peace and that the government or troops of Myanmar shall not be disturb the British troops.⁸⁰ King Mindon realized how to deal with the British. He did not recognize the annexation of Lower Myanmar by the British. On 16 February 1853, Dala *Myowun* was instructed to inform the British that the government of Upper Myanmar would not disturb the ships went up and down stream of river under the desire of entering alliance. On 27 February 1855, an order was passed to deal with the British by sending delegation headed by Kyauk Maw *Myoza Wungyi*.⁸¹ He was accompanied by Father Paulo Abbona, Sarkies Manook and 3000 troops. The delegation went downstream to Pyay to discuss with the High Commissioner.⁸² King Mindon made decision on policy of foreign relations alone.

On 3 April 1853, Kyauk Maw *Myoza Wungyi* met with Phayre, General Godwin and Lambert. King Mindon wished to make peace through the payment of compensation not ceding any territories.⁸³ Father Domongo Torolly and Father Paulo Abbona, King Mindon's emissaries, had already arrived at Pyay.⁸⁴ When he met with them, Phayre said that the government of Myanmar shall add a clause to recognize the annexation of Lower Myanmar and Mon State by the British, if the king would like to negotiate peace treaty. In addition, the British wanted nothing but to sign the peace treaty immediately. Kyauk Maw *Myoza Wungyi* reported back to Hluttaw that the British had already occupied up to Myei- dè.⁸⁵ Although the British firstly aimed to occupy only Pyay, Phayre changed his mind and occupied the territories of Mons and

⁷⁸ Daw Myint Myint Than, “*Mindonmin lakhtak Okchokye Hnint Sipwaye Achene*” (Conditions of administration and economy in the reign of King Mindon), Journal of Literature and Social Science of Union of Myanmar, 1969,p.71

⁷⁹ D.G.E,Hall, Dalhousie- Phayre Correspondence (1852-56), London,Oxford University Press,1932,19-20 (Henceforth,Hall,1932)

⁸⁰ *Atotauk*,2011,59

⁸¹ *Atotauk*,2011,42

⁸² Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 115

⁸³ *Atotauk*,2011,47

⁸⁴ Than Tun,2003, 313

⁸⁵ *Atotauk*,2011,46-8

valuable forest.⁸⁶The British forced Myanmar to sign the peace treaty. Myanmar government, on the contrary, did not recognize the occupation and left the peace treaty unsigned.

When Phayre and Henry Yule visited Amarapura to negotiate with the Myanmar Government, they found that the city is located within the range of British guns installed to the ships.⁸⁷By taking advantage on the outbreak of war with the British, Thailand in 1853 invaded Kyaing Tong and nearby subordinate territories of Myanmar. King Mindon sent troops to drive out the Thai. Meanwhile King Mindon needed influential alliance to maintain the independence of Myanmar and to reoccupy the lost territories from Lower Myanmar. He chosen France, archrival of the British, and other European powers.⁸⁸D'Organi, so-called French envoy and general, arrived to Amarapura on 7 August 1853. He stayed in Amarapura from 4 June 1855 to 26 February 1856. During his residence in Amarapura, he could do nothing for benefit of Myanmar in foreign relations even though he received the title of Nemyo Thiri Zeya and 1000 *kyats* as reward. On 13 March 1854, an embassy was sent to Yunnan Province. However, it turned back to the capital due to Panthay rebellion.⁸⁹

While King Mindon residing in Amarapura, a British merchant who Thomas Spear, lived in the capital. He had intimate relations with the king and officials. King Mindon consulted with his officials to demand the lost territories to the British through the help of Thomas Spear. On 24 September 1854 a Myanmar embassy sent to India.⁹⁰Myanmar embassy led by Nanmadawwun Mingyi Maha Mingaung Yaza in 20 September 1854.⁹¹ The purpose of this embassy was to return the Bago Province from British hands. Hluttaw prepared 14 points to discuss with Dalhousie in Bengal.⁹² Although they discussed with Dalhousie on 23 December 1854, the Myanmar embassy returned with empty hands 14 February 1855.⁹³

During August 1855, the government of India dispatched an embassy to Myanmar. The embassy was led by Sir Arthur Phayre and comprised of Captain Henry Yule, Dr. John Forsyth, Major G. Allan, Captain Rennie, Mr. Oldham,

⁸⁶ Than Tun, 2003, 314

⁸⁷ Toe Hla, 2005, 71-2

⁸⁸ Shwekaingtha, 2007, 192-3

⁸⁹ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 126-8

⁹⁰ *Atotauk*, 2011, 49-50

⁹¹ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 152

⁹² *Atotauk*, 2011, 51

⁹³ Than Tun, 2003, 317

Photograph Tripe, etc. Total members of embassy, including security guards and servants, numbered 457. They arrived on board two steamships and two barges, on 17 September 1855 to Amarapura. Government of India sent a letter of friendship which mentioned that Phayre was appointed plenipotentiary ambassador to the Kingdom of Myanmar.⁹⁴ His embassy was comprised of experts on economic, warfare, photography, and artists to make records on the various points of view.⁹⁵ On 28 July 1855, Hluttaw instructed local headmen and officials to give necessary assistance and to provide food along the journey of embassy.⁹⁶ The embassy was welcomed by Magway wungyi U Kya U and Myadaung Wungyi U Hmo from the Residential Building.⁹⁷ They brought Phayre and members of embassy to the residential building.⁹⁸ When he met with King Mindon, Phayre asked to conclude a treaty with Myanmar Government. The king replied the negotiation of treaty should produce mutual benefit and delayed the discussion. Finally the British embassy quitted Amarapura on 22 October 1855 without any treaty.⁹⁹

In September 1862, Phayre visited to the royal capital as the second embassy. As the royal city was moved to Mandalay, Phayre was placed at the House of Maha Thiri Dabawga located at the west of Mandalay. The security of embassy was provided by the king.¹⁰⁰ There were altogether 47 members comprised in the embassy. King Mindon accepted Phayre gifted a gun to the Crown Prince and a compass to Magway Wungyi. On November 1862, King Mindon ordered to conclude a Commercial Treaty on 10 November 1862. After the conclusion of the Commercial Treaty with nine clauses, Phayre returned to Lower Myanmar on 14 November 1862.¹⁰¹ However, as the Treaty did not cover the requirement of the British, Colonel Albert Fytche arrived to Mandalay in 1867 to amend the Treaty.¹⁰² King Mindon who liked to show his ardent desire for the friendship with the British, awarded a golden shoulder sash and allowed to use two golden parasols. After negotiation for a new Commercial Treaty, new four clauses were added including the establishment of

⁹⁴ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 160-1

⁹⁵ Than Tun, 2003, 317

⁹⁶ *Atotauk*, 2011, 58

⁹⁷ Taik Soe, 1998, 36

⁹⁸ Maung Maung Tin, 2004, 160

⁹⁹ Than Tun, 2003, 322-5

¹⁰⁰ A Researcher in Ancient Literature, *Myanmar Hmatsa Padatha*, (Notes on Myanmar Literature), Vol:49, p.1-4

¹⁰¹ Than Tun, 2003, 325-6

¹⁰² Albert Fytche, *Burma Past and Present*, Two Volumes, London, C. Kegan Paul & Co., Vol. I, Paternoster Square, 1878, Vol. II, 252-3 (Henceforth: Fytche, 1878)

mixed court, discussion on the royal monopoly and revision of taxes.¹⁰³ On November, Fytche and Pakhan *Wungyi* signed the Treaty.¹⁰⁴ King Mindon's policy in foreign relations was the appeasement policy to the British and European countries. Although he like to see the withdrawal of British from Lower Myanmar after taking compensation, King Mindon's desire had never fulfilled. However he showed his sincerity and goodwill to the British by accepting the British embassies of 1855, 1862, 1866 and 1867 with hospitality.

Conclusion

Soon after his accession to the throne, King Mindon began his reformations. At first he introduced the salary system and coinage system by which he designated to eradicate the corruption and bribery among his officials. However the irregular payment and in acceptance of officials resulted the failure of salary system. Again the king overhauled the judicial system due to the penetration of western judicial system through the extra-judicial right of the British. A mixed court was established by which the British political agents were allowed to involve in the legal matters. In religious affairs, King Mindon was known in history as the supporter and promoter of *Sasana* and sponsor of Fifth Buddhist Synod. However the outbreak of *Dhamma Vinaya* problem, which motivated the discontent of monks, and failure to install the *Thathanabaing* showed his weakness in religious policy. In addition, the massive expense in religious matter undermined the state budget, Indeed, King Mindon's effort for modernization and reformation did not show success because lower half of his kingdom was annexed by the British. In this situation, he gave priority to the survival of this throne and to his prestige. The foreign policy of King Mindon was not retrograde one. He at least showed his sovereignty and his status of independent monarch through his embassies to Europe.

References

- A Researcher in Ancient Literature, *Myanmar Hmatsa Padatha*, (Notes on Myanmar Literature), Vol:49
- Fytche, Albert Burma Past and Present, Two Volumes, London, C. Kegan Paul & Co., Vol. I, Paternoster Square, 1878

¹⁰³ Than TUn, 2003, 329

¹⁰⁴ Fytche, 1878, 74-5

- George Scott, Sir, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Volume I*, Rangoon, Government Printing, 1901
- Khin Maung San, *Konbaung-khit Thathanabaing Hnint Sanwsaungchekmya 1782-1885*, (Primates of Konbaung and their Achievements 1782-1885), M.A, Thesis, Mandalay University. 1991
- Hluttaw Parabaik Ahmat-athar Atokauk-hmatpon* (Catalogue of the Hluttaw Records) Vol-I+II, Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 2011
- Maung Maung Tin, U, *Konbaung-set Maha Yazawindawgyi* (The Great chronicle of the Konbaung Dynasty), Vol: III, 4th Published, Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 2004
- Shwekaingtha, *Ahnit Tayar Pyi* Mandalay, (Mandalay Centennial), Second Published, Mandalay, Ludu Press, 2007
- Taikkha Dhamma Linkara, U & Than Tun ,Dr, *Myanmar Rakswè Thamaing* (Chronology of Myanmar History), 3rd published, Yangon, Seik-ku Cho Cho Book House, 2012
- Taik Soe, *Mindon Min* (King Mindon), Yangon, Yar-pyi Book House, 1998
- Than Tun, Dr, *Royal Order of Burma, Part IX*, (AD 1853-1885), Kyoto, Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Kyoto University, 1989
- Than Tun, Dr, *Nei Hle Yazawin* (Field Notes on Myanmar History) First Published, Yangon, Pyisone Published House. 2003
- Thein Hlaing, U, *Myanmar-English Dictionary of Ancient Myanmar Historical Terms*, Yangon, Department of Historical Research and National Library, 2016
- Tin, U, *Myanmar Min Ok Chokpon Sadan* (Administration under Myanmar Kings). Vol.II, Yangon, Pa Ho Press, 1970
- Tin, U, *Myanmar Min Ok Chokpon Sadan* (Administration under Myanmar Kings). Vol.III, Yangon, Pa Ho Press, 1970
- Toe Hla, Dr, *Alaungmintayagyi Ei Konbaung Shwepyi* (Konbaung Dynasty of King Alaungmintaya) 2nd Published, Yangon, Sarpay Loka Book House, 2002
- Toe Hla, Dr, *Ko-hti Ko-nan Ko-kya-ngan Hnint* (A Study on the Palace as the center of Power and Sovereignty), Yangon, Lin Yadana Book House, 2005
- Ohn Kyi, Daw, *Daw Ohn Kyi ei Lakrwesin Santammya*, (Selected Papers of Daw Ohn Kyi) Yangon, Universities's Press, 2004
- Myint Myint Than, Daw “ *Mindonmin lakhtak Okchokye Hnint Sipwaye Achene*”

(Conditions of administration and economy in the reign of King Mindon),
Journal of Literature and Social Science of Union of Myanmar, 1969