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HSENWI STATE CHRONICLE

by
Sir James George Scott

From this month we are serializing little known work of Shway Yoe entitled "Hsenwi State Chronicle". It was written by him in 1897, fifteen years after publishing his classic: "The Burman: His Life and Notions".

Sir James George Scott (Shway Yoe) was born in 1851 and died, in his 83rd year, in 1935. He devoted his life to the British Civil Service and was involved with Burma on and off for 35 years. He first came to Burma in about 1875 and while in Burma he taught school and wrote articles for both local and English newspapers and magazines.

In 1881 he returned to England to spend several years in study for admission to the Bar. He was unsuccessful in this attempt, but was later called to the Bar in 1895 or 1896. Consequently, he was in England when his first and best-known book, *The Burman*, appeared in 1882.

In 1886, Scott joined the Burma Commission, returned to Burma and became involved in administration—for the most part in the Shan States—until his retirement in 1910.

He was appointed Superintendent for the Northern Shan States in 1891 and Political Agent and Superintendent for the Southern Shan States in 1902, the post he occupied until his retirement.

The credit for unearthing this piece of treasure goes to our contributor Shan Swe.

WITH this summary by Mr. Ney Elias may be compared the following history of Hsen Wi now first translated. It is pieced together from two manuscripts, one furnished by the Northern Hsen Wi State, the other by the Southern, a division which dates from the British occupation. Both chronicles are modern compilations.

Hsen Wi Chronicle

The chronological history of the ancient governors (*Mahathamada Min*) of the Shan States from the beginning of the four cycles of time when fire, water, and wind separated and formed the earth and the four *Dats*; from the coming into existence of the world called *Badda*; from the commencement of the reign of Hkun Lu and Hkun La (called in Mr. Elias' history Kun Lai) to the present day.

In former days the golden town of Hsen-se Man-se Me-mong, mother of countries, had no governors and was administered by four Paw Mongs or elders. These were-

Htao-Mong Htao-lek of Ho-tu
Htao-Mong Htao-Kang of
Mong Ton

Htao-Mong Htao-Kang-Hawp
of Hsen-se

Htao-Mong Htao-Kang-Hawp
of Htu-mo.

These elders ruled over the country in harmony with one another and laid the foundations of the history of the Shan States.

The Hsen Wi Hsi-hso, Hsen Wi Hso-pa-tu, Hso-an-hpu, Hso-an-wu, Hso-mo (That is to say, the "Four Tiger Country.") What difference there is between Pa-tu, An-hpu, An-wu, and Mo tigers is a refinement which appears to have been now lost.), Kawsampi, the country of white blossoms, may be briefly described as follows.

The Country of white blossoms and large leaves was the name given to Mong Kawsampi, the country which lies near the golden Hpaw-di (the *Ficus religiosa*) in the *Myitsima* country, where the Buddha was born.

In Mong Kawsampi there lived a queen named Ekka-Mahehsi Dewi, who was great with child, and one day she lay wrapped in a red shawl in the sunshine on the terrace of the palace. There a monstrous bird, the Tilanka, saw her and took the red

shawl for a piece of raw flesh. He stooped down and carried her off beyond the reach of mortals into the depths of the Hema Wunta, the centre of the 3,000 forests. There he settled on a great Mai Nyu tree and would have devoured her, but the Dewi cried aloud and the Tilanka was afraid and flew away. The queen was then delivered of a male child on the tree and the cries of the infant attracted the attention of a *Rathi*, a holy man who lived in the wilds and was at the time repeating his doxologies. He came to the tree; the queen told how she had been carried off from Mong Kawsampi and he made a ladder for her and helped her down and she and the child went and lived with him in his retreat.

When the boy was 14 or 15 years of age the *Thagyas* came down from the skies and presented him with a harp, whose strains subdued all the elephants of the forests, and the boy was then known by the name of Hkun Hseng U Ting from the word *ting*, a harp.

Then Hkun Hseng U Ting gathered together all the elephants of the forest with the sounds of his harp and marched to the country of Kawsampi. There he found that his

father, the king, was dead, and he succeeded him on the throne and went back to the place where his mother was, and there he built a city called U Ting, afterwards known as Mong Ting, on the spot where the *Thagyas* gave him the harp. The spot where the queen had lain in the sun and had felt the wind raised by the wings of the *Tilanka* was called Mong Mao from the word *Maos* (to be dizzy), and it retains that name to the present day, and the country of the 3,000 forests, the *Hema Wunta*, was known from the time the *Hso-an-wu*, the *Hso-an-hpu*, the *Hso-mo*, also called the country of white blossoms, the province of *Siri-wilata* *Maha Kambawsa Sengni Kawsampi*, even to the present day.

In the year 1274 after Buddha's *nirvana*, corresponding to 92 B.E. (A.D. 730), there lived in Man Se, a country near Mong Mao, an aged couple on the banks of a lake called Nawng Put. They had a son named Hkun Ai, who used to go out daily with the others to guard the cattle as they grazed near the Nawng Put lake to the North of the town of Man Se. Hkun Ai was 16 years of age, and one day a *Naga* Princess came to him in the shape of a human being and entered into conversation with him. The conversation ended in love and they went together to the country of the *Naga* dragons. The Princess made Hkun Ai stay outside the town till she had explained the situation to her father, the King of the Dragons. In consideration of his son-in-law's feelings, the King ordered all the *nagas* to assume human form and the princess and her husband then lived very happily together in the palace which the Dragon King assigned to them. In eight or nine months' time, however, came the annual water festival of the *nagas* and the king bade his daughter tell Hkun Ai that the *naga* must then assume their *kraken* form and disport themselves in the lakes of the country. She told her husband to stay at home during the festival days and she herself went and joined the rest of the *nagas* in their festive gambols. Hkun Ai climbed on to the roof of the palace and was disappointed to find the whole of the country and the lakes sound filled with huge sportive *naga* dragons. In the evening they all assumed human form and went home again. The

princess found Hkun Ai very downcast when she came back and abruptly asked him what was the matter with him. He replied that he was home-sick and wanted to see his old father and mother again. Accordingly they went back to the country of men and arrived at Nawng Put Lake. There the *Naga* Princess told him she would lay an egg from which a child would be hatched, and this he was to feed with the milk which would ooze from his little finger whenever he thought of her. If ever he or the child were in danger, he was to strike the ground three times with his hand and she would come to his aid. Then she laid the egg and went home to the country of the *nagas*. Hkun Ai covered over the egg with hay and dead leaves on the bank of the Nawng Put lake and then went home to his parents, to whom he related all his adventures, but told them nothing about the egg, of which he was very much ashamed. They were in great joy at his return, but they noticed that every day after his meals he went away to the lake.

So one day they followed him secretly and found him nursing a child in his lap on the brink of the lake. Then he told them that this was his son by the *Naga* Princess and how he had hatched the egg under dry leaves (*tung*). So they called the child Hkun Tung Hkam and took him home with them and brought him up. From the day when the child entered their house they thrived and prospered and they became great people in Man Se.

When Hkun Tung Hkam was 15 or 16 years old, Sao Wong-Li was King of Meiktila (Mithila is the classical name for Mong Che, which to the Shan means rather Yunnan than the whole of China. The Meiktila here referred to, notwithstanding the title Sao Wong-Ti (Hwang-Ti, the Emperor of China), is evidently Yunnan-sen and not either Peking or the Meiktila of Upper Burma), and he had a daughter, the Princess Pappawadi, 14 or 15 years of age, who was very famous for her beauty. There were so many suitors for her hand from all the countries of the earth that the king had a golden palace built for her in the middle of the lake near the town and hung up in it a gong. He then announced that whoever got to the palace dry-shod without the use

of bridges, boats, or rafts and struck the signal gong should have the princess to wife. Hkun Tung Hkam heard the news and marched from Mong Mao with a large following. He found the lake surrounded with the camps of kings and princes who had come to sue for Princess Pappawadi and were holding great revelry, but had not devised means of getting to the golden palace. Hkun Tung Hkam went to the edge of the lake in the evening and struck the gong three times with his hand. His mother, the *Naga* Princess, appeared and made a bridge across the lake with her body, over which he walked and appeared before the princess Pappawadi. She was greatly struck with his bearing and they immediately fell in love with one another and struck the signal gong. Sao Wong-Ti had them brought to his own palace and there asked Hkun Tung Hkam who he was and whence he came. When he was told that the mother of the suitor was a daughter of the King of *Nagas* and his father a descendant of the ruling house of Hsen Wi Kawsampi, the country of white blossoms, he was much gratified and the marriage ceremony was carried out immediately.

Then Sao Wong-Ti, with all his ministers, marched back with the newly married couple and built a great palace for them to live in Mong Mao, and the town where the palace was built was called Tung Hkaw. In the year 125 B. E. (A. D. 763) Hkun Tun Hkam and the Princess Pappawadi became governors of the country and they had a son named Hkun Lu, who was elected king (Thamada Min) upon the death of his father, Hkun Tung Hkam, in the year 197 B. E., after a reign of 72 years. Hkun Lu reigned for 80 years and was succeeded by his son Hkun Lai as Thamada Min in the year 277 B.E. (A. D. 915). Hkun Lai reigned for 36 years and died at the age of 87 in the year 313 B. E. (A. D. 951).

The name Hsen Wi is derived from *Wi*, the bunches of plantains grown in the garden of the two aged cultivators of Man Se near the Nawng Put, the parents of Tung Hkam, and has been in use ever since in the form Hsen Wi Hsi Hso, Hsen Wi Hso-an-wu, Hso-an-hpu, Hsopatu, Hsomo, Kawsampi, the country of white blossoms in the

province of Siriwilata Maha Kambawsa Sengni Kawsampi.

After the death of Hkun Lai the country was left without a ruler for five or six years and all the eight Shan States agreed to be bound and governed by the decisions of the elders of the ruling family who remained. These were the four Htao-mongs; Htao-Mong Htao Lek of Ho Tu, who was elder brother of Htao-Mong Htao-Kang of Mong Ton and Htao-mong Kang-hawp of Hsen-Se, who was uncle of Htao-mong Kang-hawp Wing Tu.

To these four the people rendered their homage with presents of gold and silver and other precious articles every two or three years.

The names of these eight Shan States under the four Htao-Mongs were:

On the East

Mong Mao, Mong Na, Mong Hon, Mong Hkatre Se H pang, Mong Wan, Mong Ti, Mong Yang, Mung Kawn.

On the West

Mong Leng, Mong Kung Kwai, Mong Kawng, Mong Yantare, Lampalam, Man Maw.

On the South

Mong Hsi Paw, Lai Hka, Keng Hka, Mawk Mai, Mong Pawn, Ya Hwe, Sam Ka, Mong Kung, Keng Tawng, Mong Nai, Mong Sit, Nawng Wawn, Hsi Kip, Mong Pai.

On the North

Mong Ting, Mong Ching, Mong Lem, Mong Lon, Kung Ma, Mong Mong, Mong Him.

All these States rendered homage to the four Htao-mongs.

In the time of the first Maha Chamadamins, Hkun Lu and Khun Lai, the boundaries extended to Mong La, Mong Hi, and Mong Ham on the banks of the Mekhong. There was there a Chief named Hkun Lu Hkam, who had many sons governed under him in the province of Keng Mai.

The four Htao-mongs found the burden of affairs very great and therefore, on the eighth waning of the fourth month (March), in the year 316 B.E. (A.D. 954), they went, with representatives of the people, to the Chief of Mong Hi and Mong Ham, on the frontier of Mon La in the province of Keng Mai, on the banks of the Mekhong, with presents of twenty-one viss of silver and three viss of gold and other valuable articles, to ask Hkun Lu Hkam to give them his sons for their governors. The Chief consented and gave his five sons, Hkun Tai Hkam, Ai Hawm, Hkun Hkam Sen, Tao Hkun Wen, and Hkun Hkam Hsen, together with eight others of different parents, Hkun Hkam Pawng Hpa, Hkun Hseng Pawng, Hkun Tao Hseng Hkam, Hkun Tao Ao Kwa, Hkun Tao Nga Rung, Hkun Hpa Wun Ton, Hkun Tao Lu Lo, and Hkun Pan Hso Long, all of them descendants of the house of Hkun Lu and Hkun Lai, to go with the Htao-mongs and to be rulers over the Cis-Salween States. Accordingly they all returned together and arrived at Mong Tu in Hsen Wi on the day of the full moon of the seventh month (June) of 317 B. E. (A. D. 955).

In the following year the four Htao-mongs summoned all the people together to receive their respective rulers and then they and Sao Hkun Tai Hkam appointed them as follows:

Hkun Tao Ao Kwa was appointed Sawbwa of Mong Nai, Keng Hkam, Keng Tawng, and Mawkmai, as far as the Siamese borders.

Hkun Tao Hseng Hkam was appointed Sawbwa of Yawng Hwe, Mong Pawn, Hsi Hkip, Hsa Tung, Maw La Myeng, Nawng Wawn, Lai Sak Sam Ka, Yan Kung, and Mong Pai.

Hkun Tao Nga Rung received Mong Mao, Mong Na, Se H pang, Mong Wan, Mong Ti, Mong Hkao, and Mong Kawn.

Hkun Hpa Wun Ton received Mong Tin, Mong Ching, Kung Ma, and Mong Mong.

Hkun Tao Lu Lo received Mong Ham, Mong Yawng, and Mong Hkattra.

Hkun Pawng Hpa received Wing Hso.

Hkun Hseng Pawng received Mong Kun Kw oi and Lampalam.

Hkun Pan Pso Long received Mong Kut, Mong Long, and Hsum Hsai.

Hkun Hkam Hsen received Keng Lao, Man Maw, Keng Leng, Mong Yang, and Mong Kawng.

Tao Hkun Wen became Sawbwa of Mong Yuk, Mong Yin, Mong Maw, Mong Tai, and Mong Ham.

In the year 319 B. E. (A. D. 957) Sao Hkun Mai Hkam appointed his son Hkun Ai Hawm to be the governor of Mong Tu, with his headquarters in Hsen Wi town, and in the same year Sao Hkun Tai Hkam and his son Sao Hkun Hkam Hseng Hpa proceeded to establish the city of Hsen Se, which was to be the capital of all the Shan States, where State affairs were to be settled.

The newly appointed chiefs then left Hsen Wi Hsi-hso, Hsen Wi Hso-an-wu, Hso an-pu, Hso-pa-tu, Hso-mo, the country of white blossom, in the province of Siriwilata Maha Kambawsa Kawsampi and went to their respective States, where they built towns and palaces.

Mong Hsi Paw, Mong Hko, Mong Lao, Lawk Sawk, Mong Nawng, Mong Sang, Mong Lon, Mong Mong, Mong Kung, Lai Hka, Mong Peng, Mong Hsu, Mong Hu and Mong Pat were declared to be under the direct control of Sao Hkun Tai Hkam of Hsen Se.

Man Se Memong, Mong Maw, Mong Htam, Mong Ya, Mong Ko, Mong Wan, Mong Kek, Mong Si, Mong Hka, Ko Kang, Mong Paw, Mong Lawng were placed under the direct control of Hkun Ai Hawm of Mong Tu in Hsen Wi.

Mong Yuk, Mong Tat, Mong Mao, and Mong Nai were placed under the direct control of Tao Hkun Wen of Wing Nan Mong Yin.

Tao Hkun Wen of Mong Yin had a son named Hkun Tao Pa Pawng, and Hkun Tao Pa Pawng had a son named Hkun Tai Pawng. Hkun Tao Pa Pawng died during the reign of his father.

The History of Mongmit, Keng Lao, is as follows:—The Sawbwa Hkun Hkam Hken Hpa had three sons Ta Ka, Hku Yi Awng, and Hkun Sam Hso. Hkun Hkam Hken Hpa appointed the middle son to be governor of Mong Yang (Mohnyin), Mong Kawng (Mogaung), and Man Maw (Bhamo).

Hkun Hkam Pawng Hpa of Kare Wing Hso died without issue and consequently his ministers applied to Sao Hkun Tai Hkam of Hsen Se for a ruler and Hkun Sam Hso, the youngest son of Sao Hkun Hkam Hken Hpa, was appointed.

Hkun Sam Hso also died, but left a son Hkun Ting, who succeeded him.

In the year 429 B.E. (A. D. 1068) Hkun Hkam Hken Hpa of Mong Mit and Keng Lao died and his eldest son Sao Hkun Ta Ka succeeded him as Sawbwa and in the following year removed his capital from Keng-lao to Sung Ko (Singu). He had a son, Hkun Kom, who succeeded him on his death in 547 B. E. (A. D. 1185) Hkun Kom had one hundred wives, but none of them bore him a child. He therefore ordered them to pray to the *nts* for the gift of a son. One night a *nat* appeared to him to hold *pwes* for seven days and seven nights on the banks of the Nam Kiu (the Irrawaddy) with all his wives and all his people. Gold dust would come floating down the river and, if one of the queens swallowed this, she would bear a son. Hkun Kom told his dream and made arrangements for the holding of the seven-day feast. But a very violent storm burst and the river rose in flood and Hkun Kom and his queen returned to the town without seeing any gold dust. One queen with a few attendants remained behind and kept a careful watch. Her servants

found a strange fruit floating on the river and she ate it and went back to the palace. In a few months time she was delivered of a child. But the other queens were jealous and dropped the baby over the palace wall and told the mother that it was still born. The baby did not die of the fall, so the queens had it placed in the middle of the road where the cattle were daily driven past. Next day when the cattle were let out, a large spotted cow protected the child, took it up in her mouth, and carried it with her to the grazing-ground, where she fed it with her own milk and took it back with her every night to the cattle-pen. This went on for eighteen months and then the queens discovered that the child was not dead, but went to the fields every day any when any man came near, hid itself in the mouth of a large spotted cow. They therefore resolved to have all the spotted cows in the country killed and persuaded the doctors to tell the Sawbwa that it was necessary to sacrifice them to the *nts*, in order that he might have a son.

The spotted cows were all slaughtered, but the protector of the little prince had handed him over to the care of a cow buffalo, with whom he now stayed. When the queens heard this they determined to kill all the cow-buffaloes, but the one who watched over the prince fled to Kare Wong Hso and joined the herd that belonged to the Princess I Pawm, the daughter of the Sawbwa of Kare Wong Hso. The princess heard of it, questioned the boy, and was told everything. She went and told her father, Sao Hkun Ting, who said that the Sawbwa of Sung Ko (Singu) was of the true line of the Maha Thamadin and that therefore, since the little prince had been riding on a buffalo, he must be called Hkun Yi Kwai Hkam and must come and stay in the Haw with him.

The news soon came to the ears of Sao Hku Kom of Sung Ko and he sent his ministers to bring back his son, whom he received with great delight and acknowledged as his heir. Soon after the Golden Buffalo Prince married the Princess I Pawm and the *Thagyas* came down from the skies and presented him with a double-edged sword.

Tales about the prince spread abroad and reached the ears of Sao Wong-ti (Hwang-ti is the title of the Emperor of China, as used in Treaties and in reference to deceased sovereigns, like the Latin Divus), who sent an Embassy to invite him to the Gem Palace in China. Therefore the prince went there with a great retinue in the year 663 B. E. (A. D. 1302). The emperor received Hku Yi Kwai Hkam with great honour and proposed that he should go as an emissary to Hsihapadi, the King of Pukam Pawk Kan (Pagan), to demand the payment of the tribute of four elephants, eight viss of gold, and eighty viss of silver which had been paid by his ancestors every three years or every nine years. One hundred Chinese therefore accompanied Hkun Yi Hkam on his return. Fifty of these stayed with him in Sung Ko and fifty went on to King Hsihapadi of Pukam Pawk Kan. The King of Pagan refused to pay the tribute, put forty of the Chinamen to death, and sent back the remaining ten to tell the Sao Wong-ti that he was prepared for war. Upon this the Emperor of China sent an army and asked for support from Sung Ko under the command of Hkun Yi Kwai Hkam. Contingents came from Se H pang, Mong Hko, Mong Hkam Mong Yang, Mong Na, Santa, Mong Ti, and Mong Wan, and all the other Shan States under the Chief Sawbwa, Sao Tai Pong, and placed themselves under the leadership of Hkun Yi Kwai Hkam. It was in 639 B. E. (A. D. 1277), (there is a mistake of twenty-one years) that Sao Wong-ti declared war against Hsihapade, King of Pu Kam Pawk Kan. The Chinese forces with the Shan army invaded Pagan and drove the King and his son Hsiri Kyawzwa to Pyama Mong Myen. (See Marco Polo's Kingdom of Mien. Male was the place, according to the Burmese histories). This was in the year 641 B. E. (A. D. 1279) and in the following year Hkun Yi Hkam carried the head of Hsiri Kyawzwa to the Chinese Emperor, and the troops returned to their own country.

In those days Sao Tai Pong governed the whole of the Shan States except Mong Mit, Mong Yang (Mohnyin), Kare Wong Hso, Moug Kung Kwai Lam, Mong

Kawng (Mogaung), and Man Maw (Bhamo), which were independent of him and were governed by Sao Hkun Kom af Sung Ko.

In the year 318 B. E. Sao Tao Nga Run left Hsen Wi and began to develop Mong Nam and Mong No and lived in the town of Wing Mon of Mong Mao as the Sawbwa of these States, Sao Nga Run had a son named Hkun Tum, who was chosen by the people as their Sawbwa after the death of his father and subsequently took the name of Sao Hom-Mong. He had a daughter named Sao Mon La and a son named Sao Kaw Leng. In the year 419 B. E. (A.D. 1057) the King Nawrahta Mangsaw of Pagan went up to Mong Wong in search of the five relics of Buddha, and on his way back he stayed at Mong Mao and Mong Nan and met the Sao Hom-mong there and married his daughter Sao Mon La.

The descendants of Sao Hkun Nga Run failed in 457 B. E. (A. D. 1905) and Mong Mao was left without a ruler for some time, but the ministers went to the Sawbwa, Sai Tai Pong of Hsen Se, and asked him to appoint some one. He accordingly sent them his youngest son, Hkun H pang Hkam, who left Hsen Wi in 458 B. E. (A. D. 1906) and went to Mong Mao, where he built himself a capital at the town of Wing Wai. It was during his reign that one of the younger daughters of the Sao Wong-ti of the Gem Palace in China was killed in her own chamber by a huge tiger. The Chinese followed up the tiger's tracks and sent notices to the Sawbwas of the Shan country on both banks of the Nam Kong. The tiger measured twelve cubits high and travelled so fast that he passed through three mongs in the days and seven mongs in the nights. He crossed the Chinese frontier and came to Mo Kang Hso in Mong Lon territory. The Sawbwa of Mong Lon then devised chain traps along the banks of the Nam Kiu (the Irrawaddy; evidently the Salween is meant). The tiger was thus caught in an attempt to jump across the river at a place which has ever since been known as Ta Wut Kiu-hso-wen, from the tiger's leap.

(To be continued)

“ ငယ်က မွေးတဲ့ ရွှေကျေး ”

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THE PARROTS SHE HAS BRED

ANONYMOUS

(16th century Nursery Rhyme)

Translated by Kenneth Ba Sein

Five little parrots
The maid has bred,
Under the wicker cover:
Soon—one will fly
To perch on the mountain-edge:
One to the mountain's base
Will descend:
One on the mountain crest
Will sleep:
One will cross
The mountain-top:
And—one, yes—one!
With the fair young maid
And her beloved
Will stay to talk the human tongue:
The little parrot the maid has bred,
Unceasingly will chatter,
Babbling, prattling,
Prating, jabbering,
Non-stop like rice-pounding:
This fair maid's companion
Since young, is verily
A gentle, genial little bird!

Wicker cover—A high, conical, open-work cover of bamboo with an aperture at the top, used to catch fish or cover poultry.