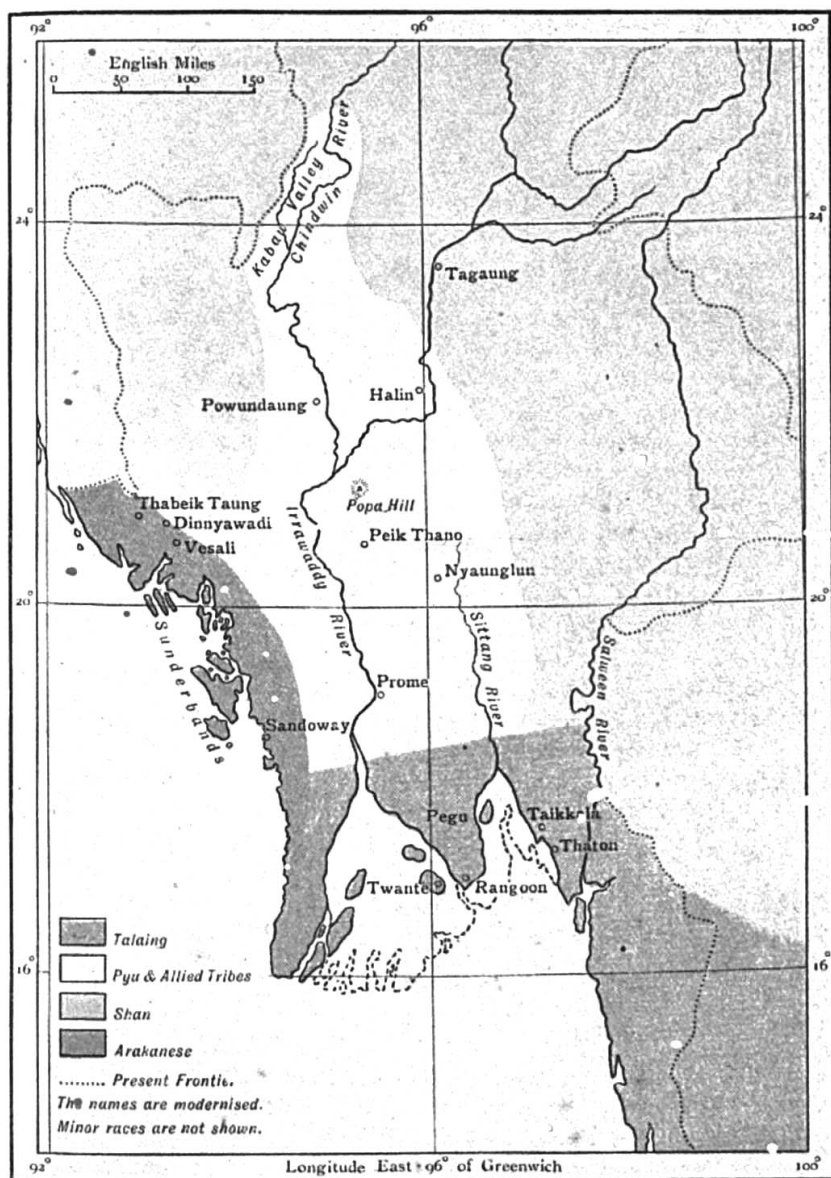


CHAPTER I
BURMA BEFORE 1044

BURMA ABOUT 700 A.D. (Conjectural)



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CHAPTER I

BURMA BEFORE 1044

BURMA,¹ being little more than the valleys of a river system shut off from the outer world by hills and sea, is fitted to be the home of a unified people. But even now the process of unification, though accelerated, is incomplete; and when history began, the country was a medley of tribes.²

Perhaps the earliest inhabitants were Indonesians but they have left scarcely a trace and in any case they were displaced by Mongolian tribes whose home was probably in western China. These were the Mon and the Tibeto-Burman tribes from eastern Tibet. Doubtless they came down the great rivers, but the routes, order, and dates at which they came are purely conjectural. The Mon (Talaings) spread over Burma south of Henzada. The traditional names of the Tibeto-Burman tribes are Pyu, Kanran, and Thet; perhaps the Thet are the Chins, and the Kanran the Arakanese; the Pyu, now extinct, may be an ingredient in what afterwards became the Burmese, and they seem to have been pushed inland from the Delta coast by Talaing pressure from the south-east, as if the Talaing route into Burma was down the Salween. The Karens may have been earliest of all.

These races came, owing to causes such as drought and ethnic pressure, in successive infiltrations, each driving its predecessor farther south. Down from the north they came,

¹ *Myamma* is the same word as *Mien* the Chinese name and *Man* the Shan name for Burma. The derivation from Brahma is on a level with the derivation of English from angels. The mediæval scribes with the name Brahma before them write not B.ahmadesa (land of Brahma) but Myammadesa (land of Myamma), and an eleventh century Talaing inscription (*RSASB* 1920 21) calls the Burmese *Mirma*.

² See the current Census Report, Imperial Gazetteer, *Lewis, Halliday, Smeaton*, *YBRS* 1911 Gilmore "Karen Folk-Lore" and Grant Brown "Origin of the Burmese" *ibid.*, Temple "The People of Burma" in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 1910 to which read *Vincent Smith* "Oxford History of India" 47.

tribe after tribe of hungry yellow men with the dust of the world's end upon their feet, seeking food and warmth in tiny homesteads along the fertile river banks, seeking that place in the sun which has been the dream of the northern races in so many ages. The infiltration lasted centuries. The Shans did not enter the plains till the thirteenth century and the Kachins were penetrating Upper Burma when the English annexed it in 1885. Many of the immigrants must have been settled in before the Christian era. They lay thinly scattered over the country, illiterate animist tribes with little political organisation. Men dwelt in isolated units, divided by forest and hill, a scanty population whose hut-fires sent up smoke here and there above the jungle. The unit was doubtless the village, with communal tenures and rigid clan customs.¹ If after a time kings came into existence they were little more than tribal chiefs

. . . in times long passed away,
When men might cross a kingdom in a day,
And kings remembered they should one day die,
And all folk dwelt in great simplicity.

We read of seven kings who went up to do battle against Taikkala (Ayetthima in Thaton district); but as their realms were all pressed in between the mouths of the Salween and Sittang rivers, each kingdom must have been no larger than a township.²

Indeed there can hardly have been political units of any size before writing came into use.³ Although it was not unknown before A.D. 500, no inscriptions of earlier date have yet been found. It was brought, probably about A.D. 300, from South India to the Pyus first of all, as part of the great Hindu expansion overseas; the earliest Pyu inscription contains Kadamba letters which were in use at that date near Goa on the Bombay coast. Hindus had come long before but it was not till this time that their cultural influence took root; they brought writing, customary law, and other elements of civilisa-

¹ Forchammer "Jardine Prize," Clayton, Hertz, Furnivall "Myingyan Settlement," his "Syrian Gazetteer," and his "Land as Free Gift of Nature" in *Economic Journal* 1909. As late as 1794, out of 8500 parishes in England 4500 were farmed on the common field system.

² *JA* 1893 and 1894 Taw Sein Ko "Kalyani inscriptions."

³ See note "Inscriptions the Touchstone" p. 307.

tion.¹ They founded kingdoms in Java and Sumatra, and dotted the coast from Bengal to Borneo and Tonkin with little trading principalities such as Prome, Rangoon, and Thaton. Their coming was generally peaceful, for if they came as individual traders they would be welcomed; and if they came in numbers to set up independent communities, there was usually room in so thinly populated a land. But as time went on there was less room, at any rate in the places most worth having; and a few traditions such as the following suggest that at times there was petty fighting:—

THE STORY OF THE TALAING HERO KUN ATHA.

Thamala king of Pegu [A.D. 825-37] made his younger brother successor to the throne and, promising to welcome him on his return, sent him to learn wisdom from a famous teacher at Taxila. Now on the border between the realms of Pegu and Thaton there dwelt an aged Karen couple working their *ya* fields, and they had a daughter and Thamala the king made her his chief queen. And the months and the years went by, and she conceived in her womb, and the king forgot his brother Wimala.

Now Wimala, having learned wisdom, bade farewell to his teacher, and returned home. But because his brother the king forgot his promise and welcomed him not, forthwith in anger he slew his brother the king. And inasmuch at that very time the queen gave birth to her son, he ordered that the new-born babe also be slain. But the queen, with grief in her heart, hid the babe outside the town near a pasture where buffaloes graze; and the *nat* fairies guarded him, and day by day he grew in wisdom and strength.

When he was sixteen years old, Hindu strangers came to the land. They were angered because the Talaings had driven them out, and they came back saying "We will fight and regain Hanthawaddy." Led by Lamba, a giant seven cubits high, they came in their ships and surrounded Pegu town and sent a letter to Wimala the king. And when he had the letter, Wimala the king sent out messengers to seek a champion; but though the messengers searched, they found no champion.

Now at that time a certain hunter went hunting in the forest, and he came to where the wild buffaloes graze, and lo! among the buffaloes there stood a valiant youth. And the hunter returned home, and he told his wife, and she said "Husband, if this be true, tell it to the king, and he will reward thee." And the hunter told the king, and Wimala the king sent ministers to fetch the youth. And when they brought him, at once Wimala the king knew him for his nephew,

¹ See also *IA* 1891 Temple "Burmese Arithmetic," 1886 Phayre "Notes on Early History of Pegu," 1897-8 Temple "Currency and Coinage among the Burmese," *Hobson-Jobson* s.v. "Viss."

and he ennobled him and called his name Atha-kumma, because he should conquer his enemies. Then Wimala confessed his sin, and in that moment Atha-kumma plighted his troth to fight the Hindu strangers. But first he waited seven days, and sought the buffalo who was his foster-mother to ask her leave, and she gave him leave and shewed him how to fight and conquer. Then he returned to Pegu town and did battle there,¹ and speared the Hindu giant in the side, and took prisoner seven ships and three thousand five hundred Hindu strangers. He built Kyaikatha [the pagoda of Atha, in Thaton district]. And Wimala the king made him successor to the throne. (*Nanda-thara*.)

The Burmese are a Mongolian race, yet their traditions, instead of harking back to China, refer to India. Their chronicles read as if they were descended from Buddha's clansmen and lived in Upper India. Even their folk-lore is largely Hindu. Most of their towns have two names, one vernacular, the other classical Indian,² just as the Latin Church made it the fashion for every city in Europe to have a Roman name whether the Romans had been there or not. A few of these classical names are due to actual immigration from the original namesake in India; thus Ussa, the old name for Pegu, is the same word as Orissa, and Pegu was colonised from Orissa. The surviving traditions of the Burmese are Indian because their own Mongolian traditions died out. The only classes who could read and write and keep traditions alive were their ruling class, the Indian immigrants.

In Upper Burma these immigrants came overland through Arsam; in Lower Burma they came by sea from Madras. In some localities, such as Thaton, Prome, Pegu, Rangoon, and in many a town in Arakan, Indian immigrants doubtless formed a large proportion of the population; indeed the name "Talaing" is probably derived from Telingana, a region on the Madras coast whence so many of them came.³ Like

¹ Tradition points to a stone pillar near a monastery at Hinthakan, half a mile north-east of the Shwemawdaw pagoda, as commemorating the site. See p. 113.

² The name of the Irrawaddy (Sansk. *Iravati* = "giver of refreshment") happens to be also the ancient name of the river Ravi in the Panjab. See *RSASB* 1915 31 and 1917 26, 35.

³ This derivation of Phayre's is still the best. See *Hulliauy, Hobson-Jobson* s.v. "Talaing," *JBRS* 1914 Blagden "Talaing." The ætiological tale that Alaungpaya christened the people Talaing meaning "downtrodden" is disproved by the occurrence of the name Talaing in Burmese inscriptions as early as 1107 (*Inscriptions* 1913 18).

good Hindus, they built little shrines; and it is probably those shrines that form the original strata of such pagodas as the Shwemawdaw at Pegu, the Shwedagon at Rangoon, and the Shwezayan at Thaton, all of which may well date back, in some shape or another, to before the Christian era. They brought their clergy with them, just as chetties and European merchants do now in Rangoon, and with as little result on the people at large. As a rule their religion was a domestic matter, but in the course of centuries they became so numerous as to effect peaceful penetration. Moreover, their Hinduism began to include Buddhist elements after 261 B.C. when Asoka conquered the Kalinga and introduced Buddhism into South India. Its spread there doubtless took some time—the absorption of a religion is a slow process—and its spread to Lower Burma probably took longer still. What, must have been a decisive factor was the rise, in the fifth century after Christ, of a great Hinayana centre at Conjeveram in Madras under the commentator Dhammapala; ancient Talaing writings frequently mention Dhammapala and Conjeveram, and the earliest Talaing inscription is in the Pallava alphabet used there in his time.

The faith existed side by side with Brahmanism. What the excavator¹ finds in Burma is often Hindu rather than Buddhist. In some sculptures Buddha appears as an incarnation of Vishnu. The legend of Duttapaung,² the Pyu chief, is tinged with Sivaism, for he is described as having three eyes; and what look like phallic emblems have been found at Pegu.

Doubtless these changes affected for the most part only the towns, the trade centres, and the rulers who, if not foreigners, intermarried with foreigners. The bulk of the people outside went on in their old quiet way worshipping stocks and stones—the usual animism and spirit worship of simple races. Religious strife is scarcely mentioned; but that there were occasional struggles between Hinduism and Buddhism is indicated by traditions such as

¹ See note "Ancient Sites" p. 309.

² *JA* 1893 Taw Sein Ko "Folk-lore in Burma—the three-eyed king."

THE STORY OF THE TALAING HEROINE BHADRADEVI (TALAHTAW).

Tissa [A.D. 1043-57] was a heretic king [of Pegu]. He . . . made no obeisance to Buddha, to the Law he hearkened not, he honoured the Brahmans. He threw down the images of Buddha, he cast them away into ditches and marshes.

Now there was a certain merchant's daughter who clung to true religion. Bhadradevi was this maiden's name. From her tenth year up she went out to listen with her parents and she hearkened continually to the Law. She had exceeding great joy in the Three Gems. Daily she said the Three Names of Refuge with care. And it came to pass that the time when she was in her first youth was the time when the king cast down the images of Buddha. At that time the maiden went down to bathe, and by chance she thrust her hand against an image of Buddha. And she drew it up, and it glistened with gold. She asked "Who has caused this image to be cast away?" And the old slavewomen made answer "Lady, this king follows the word of false teachers. Verily it is the king who has caused this image of Buddha to be cast away. Whoever greets, honours, or bows before Buddha at the pagodas, him the king causes to be slain and to be brought to naught." Thus said the slavewomen. When the maiden had heard their words, she spake on this wise "I obey the Three Gems. I can endure death. First wash the image clean, then set it up at a pagoda." She herself and the slavewomen washed it and set it up at a pagoda. . . . Now as she was setting up the image, these things were told to the king. And he sent runners to call her. The maiden, that ring adorned with gems beyond price, spoke to the king's runners saying "Let me abide here before the image." And she made haste to wash every image of Buddha as many as were there, and to set them up, every one. And after a time the king sent more runners. When the maiden came before the king, she spake unto him. But he listened with anger, and spake in this wise "Take her to the elephants that they may trample her to death." Then the maiden caused gentleness to soften the king and the elephants and the elephant-men, and continually she said the "I take refuge in the Lord" and she called on the Three Names of Refuge. And the elephant dared not tread on her, but he roared with his voice, neither could the elephant-men make him run at her. Many times they brought other elephants, but no elephant dared tread on her. So men told the king in fear. When the king heard these things, he spake in this wise "Cover her with straw for the funeral pyre." But the maiden caused gentleness to work again, and she called on the Three Names of Refuge. Men stirred themselves to burn her, yet she burned not. So they told the king in fear. Thus spake the king "Bring her here." They brought her to the king, and he said "O maiden! When I see the image of Buddha thy teacher fly up into heaven, then mayest thou live. But if from the image of thy teacher there fly not up seven images,

eight images, I will have thee cut into seven pieces." And he had her led to the foot of the ditch . . . and she prayed on this wise "O image of the Lord of Bliss! I thy handmaiden set up thy images. Buddha is lord everywhere, his Law is lord everywhere, his Church is lord everywhere. As Buddha, his Law, his Church are everywhere lord, so may eight images of Buddha fly up into heaven at the king's hall!" And in the twinkling of an eye there flew eight images up into heaven . . . towards the king's hall. And the maiden returned and pointed them out to the king. With many men he saw them, it was a wonder far and wide. Then said the maiden "O earthly king! Buddha my teacher is gone to Nirvana. Thou hast been able to see only his images fly up into heaven in his stead. Thou hast followed false teachers and called them better. Let thy handmaiden see *them* fly up." Then the king commanded them to fly. But the false teachers could not fly. And the king drave them away . . . and he caused the maiden to bathe and he raised her to be his chief queen . . . and he returned thanks and followed true religion ever after. (*Schmidt.*)

Civilising influences were strongest round the coast and in the Delta. Upper Burma lay inaccessible; true, it was nearer to China, which from the second century before Christ used trade routes through Burma,¹ but China's interest seems to have been limited to these routes, for traces of any influence of hers are hard to find (p. 73). Tagaung in Mogok subdivision received civilisation from Upper India, but not till some time later than the Talaings, judging from the fact that the earliest writing so far found there is in North Indian script of the tenth century.² Again, in the seventh century a Talaing princess married a Tibetan king. But though instances such as these show that the tedious overland route was in use, it was round the sea-coast that development centred, and especially in the south where the river mouths brought down the produce of the interior. Roman shipmasters,³ trading in Ceylon and Madras, heard of Sobanas River (Irrawaddy, Salween, cf. Suvannabhumi), and Golden Land (the Delta, Malaya and Sumatra).⁴ Ptolemy, the Greek geographer, writing

¹ Two were along the Irrawaddy and Salween rivers; the third, down the Chindwin river and through Manipur, took the caravans a three months' journey to Afghanistan where the silks of China were exchanged for the gold of Europe (*BEFEO* 1904 Pelliot "Deux itinéraires" and *Hunter* I. i).

² See note "Führer's Inscription" p. 310.

³ See note "Eastern Shipping" p. 310.

⁴ See note "Golden Land" p. 310.

in A.D. 140 even mentions a Tugma Metropolis, in a spot curiously like Upper Burma, as if it were Tagaung. But it is to Prome that the Chinese pilgrims chiefly refer when, in their travels, they speak from hearsay of Burma; and to the Arabs, whose shipping predominated in the eastern seas from the eighth to the sixteenth century, Burma was Arakan and Lower Burma:—

They say that the king of Rahma [Lower Burma] has fifty thousand elephants. His country produces cloth made of velvety cotton, and aloe wood of the sort called *hindi*. (Ibn Khordadbeh, years 844-8, Persian traveller from Basra, in *Ferrand*.)

The king of Rahma enjoys no great repute . . . His troops are more numerous than those of Ballahra, Gudjra and Tekin. They say that when he marches to battle he is accompanied by about fifty thousand elephants. He campaigns only in winter; indeed his elephants cannot stand thirst and so they can go forth only in winter. They say that in his army the washermen amount to between ten and fifteen thousand. In his states are found cloths not found elsewhere; a dress made of such cloth is so fine and light that it can pass through a signet ring. It is of cotton. We have seen a sample. For barter the people use cowries, which form their currency. But gold, silver, aloe are also found, and a stuff called *camara* [yak hair] whereof flyflaps are made. The same country produces . . . the rhinoceros, an animal which has on his forehead a single horn, and in this horn is a human figure. . . . We have eaten the flesh. He is numerous and lives in the woods. He is found in other parts of Ind, but here the horn is more beautiful, often containing the image of a man, peacock, fish or anything else. The Chinese make girdles of this horn and pay high prices among themselves, up to three or four thousand *dinar* and even more according to the figure's beauty. These horns are bought with cowries. (Sulayman, year 851, traveller from the Persian Gulf, *ibid*.)

In Ind lies a realm called Rahma, bordering on the sea. Its ruler is a woman. It is ravaged by the plague, and any man who comes from elsewhere in Ind and enters the country, dies there. Yet many come by reason of the great profits to be made. (Ibn al Fakih, Persian traveller, year 902, *ibid*.)

The above exports, to which ivory must doubtless be added, contrast curiously with the rice, teak,¹ and oil by which Burma is known to-day. But the scanty populations of the ancient world were self-sufficing and had no need to import rice; their consumption of oil was small, for it was not used industrially till after the development of power-plant in the eighteenth

¹ See note "Teak" p. 311.

century; their own forests had not yet been cleared, and sufficed for housing and shipbuilding. Power transport did not exist until the nineteenth century; consequently articles of heavy bulk could not be exported, and commerce was confined to luxury articles such as precious metals, jewels, ivory, pepper, silk and aromatic woods. As the above extracts show, few of these were found in Burma, and traders therefore ranked her below many other parts of Asia. Indeed most of the country was uncleared jungle. What is now the fertile Delta had not yet silted up; it lay beneath the tides, and the higher land was an archipelago of tree-clad islets. Thaton was on the coast, and the earliest traditions refer to Pegu town as an island in a shallow sea.¹

The imports included piece goods from the Chola kingdom in Madras and Buddhist images from Upper India. Possibly there was a regular manufacture of such images for the Burma market long after Buddhism had died out in Upper India—

In Benares land there was an ancient pagoda on the top of the river Ganges' bank. When the bank washed away, men picked up the relics and holy images that had been enshrined there, and gave them to their children to play, for there was no longer anyone to worship them. Now Nga Dula a ship's captain saw this, and he thought "The folk of the east country deem these images divine and worship them. I shall get gain if I sell them to the folk of the east country." So he bought them for a fitting price and came with them to the landing stage of Pegu. . . . Men told king Tissa [1043-57] . . . and he rewarded Nga Dula richly and ennobled him. (*Shwemawdaw Thamaing* 81.)

Probably every town of any size went its own way, receiving propitiatory homage from the surrounding villages and yielding it to some larger town whose chief happened to be masterful. The races inhabiting them were those which we see to-day and probably their appearance was much the same save that intermarriage had not yet produced the present uniformity of type. Perhaps the most interesting are the Pyu, now extinct.² Their language still existed in the thirteenth century; up to that time the Arakanese, and the Chinese till the tenth century, knew the people of Burma as the Pyu. The Chinese describe Burma in the ninth century as containing

•• ¹ See note "The Ancient Coastline" p. 311.

² See note "Pyu Physiognomy" p. 312.

eighteen states and nine walled towns all of which were dependent on the Pyu. Their chief town was Prome but traditions of them survive as far north as the Kabaw valley. Their elimination, leaving so few traces, renders it unlikely that they had a very noticeable civilisation but doubtless it was equal to any other in Burma at the time. They burned their distinguished dead and buried the ashes in large urns. The writing on these urns indicates the existence, at Prome in the eighth century, of a dynasty named Vikrama who may well have been rajas of Indian or half Indian blood. Prome was overthrown, probably not long after A.D. 800, by internal dissensions among the tribes. The chief town in Burma, it was a port not far from the sea which in those days came farther north. Its pagodas, such as the Bawbawgyi, Payama and Payagyi, are of a curious type not found elsewhere. It is the most extensive site in Burma, larger than any city the Burmese ever built, possibly because the whole population dwelt inside the wall. The remains of this massive wall at Hmawza show that, where seven or eight villages now stand amid brushwood and rice-swamp, there was once a great and powerful city.

When the P'iao king goes out in his palanquin, he lies on a couch of golden cord. For long distances he rides an elephant. He has several hundred women to wait on him. The wall of his city, built of greenish glazed tiles, is 160 *li*¹ round, with twelve gates and with pagodas at each of the four corners. The people live inside. Their house tiles are of lead and zinc, and they use the wood of the *nephelium liteni* [*kyetmauk*] as timber. They dislike taking life. They greet each other by clasping the arm with the hand. They know how to make astronomical calculations. They are Buddhists and have a hundred monasteries, with bricks of glass ware embellished with gold and silver vermilion, gay colours and red kino. The floor is painted and is covered with ornamented carpets. The king's residence is in like style. At seven years of age, the people cut their hair and enter a monastery; if at the age of twenty they have not grasped the

¹ The present *li* of 631 yards would make this 58 miles, but the *li* has varied greatly. The distance round the wall is actually 8½ miles, twice as much as Mandalay. Mr Taw Sein Ko at *RSASB* 1908 13 says, "The ruins consisting of earthen ramparts, walled enclosures, burial grounds, stone sculptures, and pagodas in all stages of decay, are found scattered within, roughly speaking, an area of 4.0 square miles, that is to say, within a distance of about 10 miles in the direction of the cardinal points from the Railway Station as the centre." But 10 miles to the east is across an old river bed (probably the old Irrawaddy), 10 miles to the west is across the Irrawaddy, the walls are quite clearly defined, and the area is 5.5 square miles.

doctrine, they return to lay estate. For clothes they use skirts made of cotton, for they hold that silk should not be worn as it involves the taking of life. On the head they wear gold-flowered hats with a blue net or bag set in pearls. In the king's palace are two bells, one of gold, the other of silver; when an enemy comes, they beat these bells, and burn incense to divine whether their fortune is good or evil. There is a huge white elephant-image a hundred feet high; litigants burn incense and kneel before the elephant, reflecting within themselves whether they be right or wrong, and then they retire. When there is any disaster or plague, the king kneels down before the elephant and blames himself.

They have no fetters. Criminals are flogged on the back with five bamboos bound together, receiving five blows for heavy, and three for light offences. Murder is punished with death. The land is suited to pulse, rice, and the millet-like grains. Sugar-cane grows as thick as a man's leg. There is no hemp or wheat. Gold and silver are used as money,¹ the shape of which is crescent-like; it is called *têng-ch'ieh-t'ò* [dingadaw] and *tsu-tan-t'ò* [sudandaw]. Having no grease for oil, they use wax and various scents for lighting. In trading with the neighbouring states they use porpoise [? skin], cotton, and rock-crystal and earthenware jars as barter. The women knot their hair on top of their heads and ornament it with strings of pearls; they wear a natural-tinted skirt and throw pieces of delicate silk over themselves; when walking they hold a fan, and the wives of great personages have four or five attendants at each side carrying fans. (Chronicles of the T'ang dynasty of China A.D. 618-905, chapter on "Southern Barbarians," at Parker "Burma, relations to China" 12 slightly amended.)

The eighteen chieftainships mentioned by the Chinese were probably in Central Burma and the Delta. In the third century the Khmer kingdom of Funan² held most of Indo-China outside Burma and included the present Tenasserim division among its feudatories. As for the north of Burma, the tribes there were dependent on Nanchao (Yünnan). The people of Nanchao, probably Shans, combined, in the middle of the eighth century, into a considerable state which defeated Chinese attempts at conquest until 1253. About 754 the Nanchao chief conquered the tribes of the upper Irrawaddy. In 800-2 two deputations of P'iao (Pyu), the latter of which was headed by their chief's son Shunant'ò (?? Shwenandaw), accompanied a Nanchao mission to the court of China at Hsi-an-fu; there the Pyu retinue sang songs containing Sanskrit

¹ Until 1861 the Burmese had no coined money, see *JA* 1897-8 Temple "Currency and Coinage among the Burmese."

² *Aymeret*.

words and went through spelling dances, lining up in a pattern which read "Nanchao sends Holy Music"; the Emperor was quite amused and he bestowed minor honorary offices at court on Shunant'ō and his father. But the secretary who drew up the patents gave vent to his private feelings in the following

POEM BY PO-CHŪ-I THE IMPERIAL SECRETARY ON THE OCCASION OF
A BURMESE PWE AT THE CHINESE COURT A.D. 802.

Music from the land of P'iao, music from the land of P'iao !
Brought hither from the great ocean's south-west corner
Yung Ch'iang's son Shunant'ō
Has come with an offering of southern tunes to fete the New Year.
Our Emperor has taken his seat in the courtyard of the Palace.
He does not press his cap strings to his ears, he is listening to you !
At the first blast of the jewelled shell their matted locks grow crisp.
At one blow from the copper gong their painted limbs leap.
Pearl streams glitter as they twist, as though the stars were shaken in
the sky,

Flowery crowns nod and whirl, with the motion of dragon or snake.
When the dance was ended the king's son addressed our holy Monarch :
" My father desires to be your servant, beyond the realms of T'ang."
From left and right a shout of joy bursts from all the court :
" How far is spread the virtuous name of our All-highest Lord !"
A moment later the whole Cabinet was assembled in the Chamber of
State.

Here it submitted documents to the Throne, counselling the Sovran
Lord
That such an occasion as an Emperor watching the P'iao presenting
new tunes
Ought to be recorded in the state annals, to be handed down to future
generations.

At that time there was an old farmer who hoed the earth and sang.
Secretly he sounded his Prince's heart, speaking quietly to himself :
" They say that you intend to exercise a wise and enlightened rule,
That you wish to move men's hearts towards bringing about complete
peace.

Moving hearts is done from within, it cannot be done from without.
Complete peace comes from realities, not from mere names.
If the state be regarded as a human body, the state may be well ruled.
The Emperor is that body's mind, the people are its limbs.
If the limbs are ailing, the mind also will be ill at ease.
If the people are at peace, the Emperor will be happy.
But the people of this era Chêng Yüan are far from enjoying peace.
Although he listens to P'iao music, surely the Emperor must be sad ?
Hearken, Lord ! If the people of Chêng Yüan were healed,
Even if no music came from P'iao, the Emperor would be hailed as
a saint."

Music of P'iao, in vain you raise your din.
 Better were it that my Lord should listen to that peasant's humble
 words.

(Translation, sent me by Mr Arthur Waley, from Po Chü-i's works,
 British Museum Chinese supplementary catalogue 15315.d.2, the
 Japanese edition printed in 1618.)

In 808-9 the Nanchao chief styled himself P'iaohsin (Pyushin), "Lord of the Pyu." He cannot have had any authority over Prome, but he overshadowed Upper Burma to the extent that whenever he wanted slaves he could make a foray and carry off people, as in 832 when he deported 3,000 Pyu people to populate Yünnan Fu; and they took care to placate him, as in 858 when they presented him with a gold Buddha in gratitude for having helped them against raiders. Upper Burma tribes such as the Kachins seem to have furnished levies for his great attack on Hanoi in 863. Several northern towns have Shan names—Tagaung is Takawng "Drum Ferry," Mogaung is Mōngkawng "Drum Town." Pyusawti, the title of a traditional chief at Pagan, is Shan Chinese, and his five successors bear names formed in the same way as those of the Mēng dynasty 649-902 of Nanchao.¹ Probably Upper Burma was half Shan by race and under Nanchao influence. Such influence was non-cultural, for Nanchao was not a civilising centre, and her existence as a barrier state furnishes a reason, in addition to China's remoteness, for the absence of Chinese influence on Burma during these formative centuries.

After the fall of Prome (p. 12) its people migrated to Pagan merged with the local tribes, and thereafter were known as the Burmese. A cluster of nineteen villages,² Pagan developed into a town which became the capital of all Burma from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. The situation is good, near the confluence of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers, and it was probably here that a trade route from the Shan states joined one from Yünnan on their way to Assam; yet so arid a spot seems singularly unsuited for a capital, and to-day the soil could not feed the population of any considerable city. But riverine islands doubtless yielded fertile crops and there are reasons for believing the climate of the Upper Burma dry,

¹ See note "Nanchao" p. 312.
² *BRS* 1911 Furnivall "Foundation of Pagan."

zone to have been humid and fertile.¹ It is difficult otherwise to account for the presence of forests which must have existed to provide fuel for the countless millions of pagoda bricks, for the tradition of the Myingyan folk that in past times they grew their own rice, and for mediæval inscriptions dedicating extensive rice fields in land at Pagan where now no rice could grow (p. 78).

To an early chief at Pagan, Popa Sawrahan 613-40, is attributed the introduction of the present Burmese era (Kacchapancha), starting in March 638. Siam uses it under the name Chulasakaraj. Doubtless it was drawn up by Hindu astrologers at one of the courts in Burma.² Popa Sawrahan's name suggests wizards and primitive beliefs at the volcanic peak of Popa, and perhaps it was about this time that the noble Mahagiri myth took its present shape—

This is the story of Mahagiri, brother and sister. Nga Tin De, son of Nga Tin Daw blacksmith of Tagaung, was famous for his vast strength. It is said that once he wrenched even the tusk of a grown male elephant. When the Tagaung king heard of it he commanded his ministers saying "This man will rob my prosperity. Seize and do away with him!" So Nga Tin De fearing to lose his life ran away a far journey and lived in a deep jungle. And the king was afraid; so he took the young sister of Nga Tin De and raised her to be queen. Long after, the king said to the queen "Thy brother is a mighty man. Send for him straightway, and I will make him governor of a town." And Nga Tin De came, thinking "He hath raised my sister to be queen, and now he sendeth for me desiring me to enter his service." But the king had him seized by guile and bound to a *saga* tree [*Michelia Champaca*], and he made a great pile of wood and charcoal and caused the bellows to be blown. And the queen descended into the fire saying "Because of me, alas, my brother has died!" Men say that the king clutched her by her hair, but rescued only her head and face, for her body was burnt. After their death brother and sister became spirit brother and sister and dwelt in the *saga* tree. Any man horse buffalo or cow who entered so much as the shade of that *saga* tree, died. And when this verily befell, they dug up the *saga* tree from the root and floated it in the river Irrawaddy. Thus it reached Pagan; and they carved images of the spirit brother and sister and kept them on Popa Hill. And king, ministers and people visited them once a year. (*Hmasnan* I. 211.)

¹ Carey 10, *YBRS* 1913 Mackenzie "Climate in Burmese History." Yet the Talaing inscriptions of Kyanzitha 1084-77 call Pagan *Tattadesa*, "torrid country."

² *YBRS* 1912 May Oung "Burmese Era."

They became the mightiest of *nat* spirits next to Thagyamin himself. Throughout Burmese history their seat on Poga was a delphic oracle, kings making pilgrimage there and submitting to them in matters of conscience.

Pagan was a backward hinterland compared with Prome or Thaton. Still, northern Indian influences not only came along the coast, leaving the Mahamuni¹ shrine in Akyab district, but also penetrated overland through Assam to Pagan, bringing, in the fifth century, Mahayanism and architecture of which the surviving witness is the lower structure of the Kyaukku Onhmin near Pagan.² To stand in this ancient refuge, looking up at the great stone vault, is to regret the supersession of north Indian influence, with its stonework and orderliness, by the Talaing brick and shoddy which swamped Burma after the eleventh century.

The Mahayanism thus introduced was of a low type; indeed Burmese chroniclers will not face the fact that it is Buddhism at all, and pass on with a few shocked references to "infidels." But the teaching of the Ari³ priesthood, who held sway for many generations down to the eleventh century in Upper Burma, is distinctly recognisable as one of the developments of Tibetan Buddhism. They centred at Thamahti village a few miles south-east of Pagan and they fostered a *naga* snake cult in which a Buddha and his *sakti* wives figure. They were bearded, grew hair four fingers long, wore robes dyed blue-black in indigo, practised boxing, rode horses, went into battle, and drank intoxicants (p. 314).

Now the farmer [Nyaung-u Saw-raham 931-64] became king and was great in glory and power. At his cucumber-plantation he made a large and pleasant garden, and he wrought and kept a great image of Naga Dragon. He thought it good thus to make and worship the image of Naga because Naga was nobler than men and his power greater. Moreover he consulted the heretical Shin Ari regarding the Zigon pagodas in the kingdom of Yathepyi [Prome] and Thaton, and he built five pagodas—Pahto-gyi, Pahto-nge, Pahto-thamya, Thinlin-pahto, Seitti-pahto. In them he set up what were neither spirit images nor images of the Lord, and worshipped them with offerings of rice, curry and fermented drinks, night and morning. . . . The teaching of the Ari lords at Thamahti was in general adopted, and in the reign

¹ See note "Mahamuni" p. 313.

² Forchammer "Report on the Kyaukku temple."

³ See note "Ari" p. 313.

of king Saw-raham the king and the whole country held that teaching. . . . The Ari lords, in order that the people might believe their doctrine, made manuscripts to suit their purpose and placed them inside a *tha-hkut* tree [*Dolichandrone Rheedii*, Seem.], and when the tree became covered with scales and bark, they sought and seduced fit interpreters of dreams and made them read and publish the manuscripts found in the tree, so that the king and all the people misbelieved. . . . Now the kings of Pagan for many generations had been confirmed in false opinions, following the doctrine of the thirty Ari lords and their sixty thousand pupils who practised piety in Thamahti. It was the fashion of these Ari monks to reject the Law preached by the Lord and to form each severally their own opinions. They wrote books after their own heart and beguiled others into the snare. According to the law they preached, a man might take the life of another and evade the course of *karma* if he recited the formula of deprecation; nay, he might even kill his mother and his father and evade the course of *karma* if he recited the formula of deprecation. Such false and lawless doctrine they preached as true doctrine. Moreover kings and ministers, great and small, rich men and common people, whenever they celebrated the marriage of their children, had to send them to these teachers at nightfall, sending, as it was called, the flower of their virginity. Nor could they be married till they were set free early in the morning. If they were married without sending to the teachers the flower of their virginity, it is said that they were heavily punished by the king for breaking the custom. This sending of the flower of virginity meant an act of worship. (*Hmannan* I. 227, 204, 241.)

They did nothing for the people. They had pretensions to clerkly lore, with books of magic and a Mahayana canon in Sanskrit;¹ but they treated writing as a secret art with which to fake tree scales. Pagan first became of importance in 849 when the chief, Pyinbya, enclosed it in a wall the remains of which still exist in the Sarabha Gate. The simplicity of the little state may be imagined from the manner in which Nyaung-u Sawrahan 931-64 came to succeed Theinhko—

This was the manner of king Theinhko's death. He rode abroad for sport in the forest, and being hungry he plucked and ate a cucumber in a farmer's field. And because he plucked it without telling him, the farmer struck him with the handle of a spade that he died. . . . Theinhko's horsebreaker came up and said "Ho, farmer, why striketh thou my lord?" He answered "Thy king hath plucked and eaten my cucumber. Did I not well to strike him?" And the horsebreaker spake wheedling words saying "Farmer, he who slayeth a king becometh a king." But the farmer said "I will not be king. Have not my cucumbers grown in my garden like pups sucking milk?" Then

¹ *Epigraphia Birmanica* I. i. 7.

spake the horsebreaker with wheedling words "Farmer, not only shalt thou have thy cucumbers, but also thou shalt flourish as a king. To be a king is exceeding glorious. Verily kings have fine raiment, victuals in abundance, gold, silver, elephants and horses, buffaloes, oxen, goats, pigs, paddy and rice!" So at last the farmer consented and followed him. And the horsebreaker, letting no man know, brought the farmer within the palace and told the queen all, and she praised him for his wisdom. And the queen, fearing lest the country and villages be cast into turmoil, let none come in or go out, saying "The king's body is not whole." And she instructed the farmer and made him bathe in warm water and cold, and rub himself with bath powders to remove all dirt and disease. . . . And on the day before the seventh day she sent causing a brazen gong to sound throughout the kingdom saying "To-morrow the king walks abroad. Enter, all ministers both high and low. Let none be absent." So at dawn all ministers and captains went up to the palace. And when they were met, the door of the throne was suddenly opened, and the ministers and the followers raised hands and did obeisance. (*Hmannan* I. 225, see note "Cucumber King" p. 315.)

Nyaung-u Sawrahan was overthrown by a pretender Kunhsaw Kyaungphyu who in his turn was overthrown by Nyaung-u Sawrahan's two sons—they enticed him to a new monastery of theirs on the pretext of invoking his blessing, and then forced him to take the robe. He lived in the monastery with his wife and their son Anawrahta. Of the usurping brothers, Kyiso¹ was accidentally killed with an arrow while hunting *thamin* stag in his favourite haunt, Bangyi in Monywa district; Anawrahta raised a following at Popa Hill, challenged the surviving brother Sokka-te to single combat, slew him at Myinkaba near Pagan, and seized the throne in 1044. Burmese history now begins to be less conjectural.

¹ A mighty hunter, he became the Yomashin Mingaung Nat spirit, *Temple* 50. Kunhsaw Kyaungphyu became the Hthipyusaung Nat, *IA* 1906 *Temple* "A native account of the Thirty-Seven Nats" 225.