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THE BURMESE EMPIRE
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

**THE
BURMESE EMPIRE
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO**

AS DESCRIBED BY

FATHER SANGERMANO

With an Introduction and Notes by

JOHN JARDINE

**JUDGE OF HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE
AT BOMBAY**

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INTRODUCTION

DURING all the past Burma has been a land of attraction to men of adventure, a region of delight to those, like the old travellers, whose eyes sought after what is picturesque and strange. This far-off part of India was, indeed, even in the later centuries, hardly known to the European merchants who had seen the cities under the dominion of the Great Mogul, and the castles and church towers which at Ormus, Goa, and other points along the coasts, marked the rising power of the Portuguese. To the people of India Burma had been known as the Golden Land from remote time, and it may very likely be that this old region was the Golden Chersonese of Ptolemy. Here, on the shores where the rivers Salween and Sitang join the sea, a number of powerful colonies from India, planted 2000 years ago, were engaged in constant struggles with the native tribes. The ruins of Golana-gar, the town of the Gaudas or people from Gour in Bengal, are still to be seen. Here, in the time of the Emperor Asoka (the third century B.C.), came the Buddhist missionaries Sona and Uttara, from the Council of Patna, to preach that faith which ultimately spread among the primitive peoples surrounding the colony. Albeit the Hindu communities fell in the end under the people of the land, they contrived for a time to establish powerful kingdoms, and left a strong impress of their own religions, science, and literature on the minds of these Talaings of Pegu. In that country also, as in India and Cambodia, the conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism lasted long. Although in the course of centuries

the former became the prevalent religion of Burma, gaining converts on all sides, the ancient powers of the Brahmans can be traced in the history as well as in the ruins of old cities, in the popular traditions and on the carven stones, such as those which Dr. Forchhammer saw at Thatôn, one of which reveals an early endeavour to compromise disputes, where the Dravidian immigrants from the south of India portray Vishnu in his ninth incarnation as Buddha, the Enlightened One. We have in these early facts of history apparent proof of the high antiquity of the influence of India over the various nations dwelling in Burma; whether or no the legends and traditions which describe an ancient incursion of Indians from Kapilavastu, under a royal leader of the Kshatriya caste, by the landward route through Manipur, and the founding of the dynasty at Tagaung (possibly the Tugma metropolis of Ptolemy), are to be treated as mere fable, or, as Sir A. Phayre, following Lassen, inclines to believe, as enshrining some foundation of fact, and accounting for the early use of Sanskrit in names of places and terms of art and law.

There is now more general agreement of scholars as to the races of men whom these Indians, colonists, and missionaries encountered in Burma. Into the upper region of the Irawadi the dominant race, now called the Burmese, had descended from Central Asia, which tract their physical resemblances and affinities of language with the people of Tibet show to have been the home of their forefathers. The clans became more or less welded into tribes, as among their 'younger brothers' the Chins of to-day; and in course of time we find dynasties of kings reigning at Tagaung, Panya, Pagan, and Prome, and others ruling the remoter countries of Arakan and Toungoo. The Tibeto-Burman tribes had, however, to contend with the Tai or Shan people, which in its different branches is perhaps the most widely spread of any race in the Indo-Chinese peninsula, including as it does the Ahoms of Assam, the Laos of Zimmé, and the Siamese. Face and language point to racial

connection with China, and the history and tradition of these tribes tell of an earlier home ages ago in Yunnan, of a Shan kingdom in the north of Burma, with its capital at Mong Maw Long on the Sheveli river, and another Shan kingdom of Tali, which fell under the conquering hand of Kublai Khan in A.D. 1253. Nearer the sea, along the coasts and in the fertile plains bordering the great rivers and creeks, were found another race, the old dwellers of Pegu and the country round Moulmain, who call themselves Môn's. These obtained the mastery of the delta, driving out the Taungthu tribe who originally tilled its soil, and establishing themselves so firmly there as to check for some centuries the ultimate conquest by the Burmans, who in contempt styled the Môn's 'Talaings,' or people 'trodden under foot,' and proscribed their language, after Alompra in 1757 had taken Pegu, and the Môn's had made common cause with the British in 1824. The Talaing language, which, it is said, is likely to die out, as the nation tends to merge in the Burmese, belongs to the Môn-Annam group of those languages which use tone or variety of pitch of voice, where we employ inflection to modify meaning. Captain Forbes has shown that the language of the Talaings and the Cambodians was originally one, and that before the intrusion of the Siamese the Môn-Annam monarchy dominated the deltas of the rivers Irawadi, Salween, Menam, and Mekong. There is a theory held by Sir A. Phayre and others that the Talaings and their language came from Telingana, in the south of India. But the researches of later scholars have shown that the Môn and Cambodian tongues are connected with those of China. It is true, however, that the Talaings were in closer touch than the Burman or Shan races with the higher civilisation of India—firstly with the Indian colonies where Brahman views prevailed, and next with Buddhist missionaries, who began their teaching there, and soon became involved in conflict with the Brahmans. During the first five or six centuries of our era,

adheres very closely to the orthodox books of the Southern Church, introduced into Burma from Ceylon in the fifth century of our era.¹ The learned Prelate's notes and essays are on all hands treated as authority about Burmese Buddhism, combining, as they do, long experience of men and things with sagacious and judicial reflections. He describes the sermon preached by Gaudama to a Nat, the specimen given by Sangermano, as a fair sample of similar performances; and this sermon is a compendium of almost all the moral virtues. Buddhism he calls 'a moral and practical system, making man acquainted with the duties he has to perform in order to shun vice and practise virtue.' Again, 'It will not be deemed rash to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the Gospel are to be met with in the Buddhist Scriptures.' The wonder therefore disappears that the Legend of Buddha should have been adapted into a Christian form by St. John of Damascus, and the saintly hero canonised by the Pope of Rome as St. Josaphat, to whom, according to Colonel Yule, a church at Palermo is dedicated. Monier-Williams believes the Buddhists to have been the first to introduce total abstinence from strong drinks into India. Rehatsek, after ascribing the civilisation of the Mongols to their conversion from Shamanism to Buddhism, writes: 'It is almost incomprehensible how the savage Mongols, who were accustomed to massacre whole populations in order to secure their rear from enemies, zealously submitted to a religion inculcating gentleness and kindness to all created beings, and how a nation that loved to raze cities to the ground, and to convert cultivated plains into deserts to obtain pastures, should have eagerly built temples, established convents, introduced useful institutions, and practised religious duties.' The

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tendency of the religion must have been the same among other savage tribes. Buddhism also supplies the mind with ideas of vastness and solemnity, not without elevating effect. The Burman woman, with her rosary in hand, may be heard any day repeating the formula about Vanity or Vanities—the words ‘Change, Pain, Illusion.’ The other sentence of the three gems, wherein the weary soul takes refuge, is equally familiar: ‘Buddha, the Law, and the Communion of Saints.’ We are told by Bigandet that the fervour and love with which Buddhists speak of the Law must be witnessed to be realised: in conversation regarding their faith they are sometimes moved to tears. This law, discovered by Buddha, governs the whole universe physical and moral, in heaven above and the earth beneath, through the operation of cause and effect. The dewdrop is formed, and the heart is tranquillised, and the practice of virtue is rewarded by means of causes that are alike in the manner of their operation. One must suppose that several generations passed away to their long home before the worshippers of ghosts and demons and tribal gods, people addicted to blood-feuds, and as ignorant of letters as the wilder Karens and Chins and Kachins of to-day, accepted a gigantic philosophical theory like this of Dharma.

Turning aside from the *tendencies* to what is known of the practical *results* of Buddhism in Burma, we find two of great importance—a general diffusion of education through the teaching of the monks, and the elevation of the character and position of women. The genius of the religion disregards caste, allows no difference between man and man except what is proved by superiority in virtue, and insists on imparting knowledge to all. The Census Report of 1891, which is the latest official document I have come across, speaks of the exertions of the monks in matters of education in those terms of praise with which we have long been familiar; they seem willing, even in the newly conquered province, to combine the new with the old, to attempt a reconciliation between

when Buddhism had spread over India, there was constant intercourse between the Coromandel coast and the opposite shores of the Bay of Bengal; and when the persecutions began to rage in India against Buddhism the victims sailed for refuge to the ports on the Burman side.

Conquered at last, and ill-treated by the Burmese kings, the trodden-down Talaings can apply to themselves what Seneca wrote of the Jews in the Roman Empire: '*Victoribus victi leges dederunt.*' It was to the Talaings of Thatón that about 450 A.D. the greatest Buddhist divine, Buddhaghosa, the author of the *Visuddhi Magga*, or Path of Holiness, brought a complete set of the Buddhist Scriptures in the Pali language from Ceylon. It was from Thatón that the ecclesiastic went who converted King Anorahta of Pagan to the orthodox Buddhist faith; it was to Thatón that the royal convert sent an embassy to procure the Scriptures, the Tripitaka; and on meeting with a refusal, and invading the Talaing country, and razing this mother-city of Burman Buddhism to the ground with all its pagodas and ancient buildings (A.D. 1057), it was thence he carried off to his own capital the thirty-two elephant-loads of the Scriptures and the 1000 monks, and gave that impetus to pure Buddhism in the Upper Valley of the Irawadi, which some writers treat as the first real planting of the faith in that region. It was a Talaing monk of Dala, opposite Rangoon, Sàriputta (*obit* 1246 A.D.), honoured by the King of Pagan with the title of Dhammavilâsa, who compiled the first of the Manu Dharmashasters known to the Burmese literature, the Dhammavilâsa promulgated in Pagan. It was the Talaing or half-Shan king of Martaban, Wagaru (*obit* 1306 A.D.), who caused the edition of this famous Code of Manu which bears Wagaru's name to be compiled—the same which the Talaing jurist Buddhaghosa translated two centuries later, and which the King of Toungoo adopted in 1580. It may therefore be said that the Burman races are indebted to India for their religion, their

literature and their law, received chiefly through the Talaings dwelling on the coasts and estuaries, and in close communication with the Hindu colonies which Anoahta overthrew at last. By these same channels of religion, literature, and law, came also the astronomy, astrology, computation of time, the arts of medicine and divination, and the alphabets known at the present day, all which bear the Indian sign and superscription.

Until intercourse with the nations of Europe began in later times, these influences of India were the most powerful that affected the contending Burmans and Talaings, from whom also the foreign civilisation spread to the Shans and other tribes connected with the Chinese—a development which still goes on so prominently as to be discussed in the Census Report of 1891. The greatest influence of all was and is the Buddhist religion, with which came into the northern valley, according to Sir A. Phayre's opinion, the simple handicrafts, spinning and weaving, and the cultivation of the cotton-plant. Before, however, dealing with the vast effects of this mighty agency, it were well to estimate the conditions, material and moral, of the peoples before its advent. We wish to know what kind of institutions the Burmans possessed before the great changes of Anoahta's reign. To this inquiry the learned Dr. Forchhammer gives an answer which is in general agreement with the opinions of our historians, and of those officials who have studied the rules and customs of the wilder tribes now under the Queen's sceptre. The Chins of to-day reflect the Burman as he was of old. We find them divided into many clans, according to occupation; the unity of the family is preserved by the worship of a family ghost. To this manes are made over offerings of rice, beer, pork, and buffalo-flesh in safe-keeping, to be enjoyed by the giver in the world to come. The Chin also propitiates other spirits (not manes) of evil propensities, who dwell in houses, forests, rivers, and trees. These are the real indigenous Nats or demons of

the tribes, carefully to be distinguished from the ogres, fairies, and dryads, the rakshasas, devas, and brahmas introduced through Buddhism and the Tantra school of India. Among these Nats is Maung Zein, who in an image-house in old Pagan, is made to kneel before Gaudama Buddha. The Burmans affirm that this Zein was one of their chief Nats before they became Buddhists; and, as Forchhammer observes, it is an admirable act of religious policy on the part of the Burmans that, after adopting Buddhism, and probably moved by a lingering fear of his power, they began to stultify it by changing him into a devoted pupil and adorer of Gaudama. By a converse process the seven evil spirits appear in a Buddhist law-book as seven kinds of witches and wizards. Like beliefs are found among the wilder Karens and Shans; and among the Kachin tribes whose rites are described by Mr. George in the Census Report of 1891. These frontier people, he says, worship Nats or spirits, of whom the numbers are endless, for any one may become a Nat after his death. This general worship of the powers of nature was widely common all over Central Asia until the Buddhist religion spread there, as is testified by that learned Orientalist, Rehatsek, in his *Essay on Christianity among the Mongols*.

‘The powers of nature had from the most ancient times been personified among Asiatic nations, and, according to them, not only the earth and its bowels, but also the sky, is full of spirits, who exert either a beneficent or maleficent influence on mankind; accordingly, it is no wonder that this belief was current not only among the Mongols, but also the Zoroastrians and Hindus. Every country, mountain, river, brook, tree or any other object of nature was by the Mongols believed to have a spirit for its tenant; not only violent natural phenomena, such as thunder, earthquakes, hurricanes, and inundations, but also bad crops, epidemics, all kinds of other diseases and evils, such as sudden attacks of epilepsy,

lunacy, etc., were ascribed to the wrath of these gods, who are divided into many classes, greatly differing in power and effect.'—*Journal of the R. A. Society, Bombay branch*, vol. xiii. pp. 152, 181.

This Shamanism appears not to differ much from Taoism, the belief of the great majority of the Chinese, on which Confucianism and Buddhism have been grafted. Rehatsek adds that although the spread of Buddhism and Islam has greatly curtailed this extensive faith in demons, it has by no means entirely disappeared from among the Mongols and Tibetans, with whom it still prevails in the midst of Buddhist tenets and ceremonies, nor have its traces entirely vanished from the wandering Mussalman tribes. According to Mr. Leland, similar beliefs survive among some of the ignorant classes in Italy, pagans in two senses of the word—those who delightedly believe in fays and talismans and spirits, and call this creed of theirs the *vecchia religione*, in spite of the Catholic Church and all the Christian centuries. Bishop Bigandet tells us that although Buddhism has a hold over the imagination and sentiments of the better educated, the Burmans all publicly and privately indulge in the worship of the Nats. Almost every city has its own patron spirit; and each household is under the guardian care of the family Nat. If calamity overtakes a Burman, he considers it to be the work of unfriendly Nats; and when he wishes to begin any important undertaking, he propitiates these direct representatives of the old animistic worship, the present cult of the Karens, Chins, and other wilder tribes. Still, we read in the Census Report of 1891 that Nat-worship is a decaying and despised religion, and that both Buddhism and Christianity have increased at its expense. Without giving up their aboriginal rites, the tendency of the unconverted races is to pass into Buddhism. The Chins, for instance, are not Buddhists, yet when living among Burmans they join in the Buddhist festivals, in the building of monasteries, and in the support of monks; they also prefer to secure

by a visit to the great Shway Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon the blessings of the Tavatimsa heaven. The census returns show a Buddhist population of 6,888,075 persons; the proportion being 9056 out of every 10,000, that of the Nat-worshippers being only 221. The Nat-worship is contrary to the principles of Buddhism; and although in Central Asia the Buddhist priests have organised the various kinds of spirits according to Hindu views, and act as exorcisers, magicians, and astrologers, in Burma the occult sciences are relegated to the Brahmans, Burma being the only Buddhist country in which the religious order is prohibited from such studies and arts. Gaudama of old classed them with palmistry, fortune-telling, oracles, and charms, as lying practices, and censured those who gain their living by such means, whom, it may be remarked, the law of England treats as rogues and vagabonds. It will, perhaps, be objected by the reader that in Christendom, even so late as the time of Burns, of Walter Scott, and the Ettrick Shepherd, the ancient beliefs in malicious or capricious ghosts and demons, and in the spells and charms of witches, lingered in the land,—survivals of opinions which had once ruled the masculine intellects of such eminent Christians as Chief-Justice Hale, Sir Thomas Browne, and John Wesley. Yet it is beyond the reach of doubt that the dogmas, sacraments, and morals of the Christian religion had a constant, penetrating, and weighty force; and it is to be noticed that writers on Burma impute many effects on character, customs, and law to Buddhism. Mr. Eales in his Census Report does indeed conclude that ‘the Buddhism of Burma at the present day is but a thin veneer of philosophy laid over the main structure of Shamanistic belief.’ On the other hand, Major Temple says with greater caution: ‘The Buddhism of Burma, as understood by the laity, may be well compared to the Christianity of the Russian moujik. In both of these countries the imported civilised religion has not yet succeeded in completely ousting the uncivilised Shamanism that preceded it.’ The fact appears

to be that the influences of the good and bad Nats are confined to the passing *events* of life, to good luck and calamity; the conduct of life, the moral sentiments, and the theology of the people are dominated, not by the old superstitions, but by the religion of Gaudama. It seems generally admitted that Buddhism in Burma has been a civilising institution; and, as Forchhammer tells us, the Burmans have in past centuries been zealous Buddhists; their ways of life, their social and private institutions, are thoroughly Buddhistic, and they would resent the idea of having still the tatters of their former savage condition clinging to them. But I have been unable to find any full estimate of the changes wrought by Buddhism or a summing-up of its elevating results. This desideratum is analogous to the absence of anything like a full account in the histories of India of the effect of Buddhism on laws and social life: scholars have been more fascinated by the theology and the ecclesiastical polity. Bigandet remarks that Gaudama paid little attention to the dogmatical portion of religion, but laid the greatest stress on morals; and there is abundant proof that the great ethical commands of the Buddhist system, as well as the formulas and creeds, have become familiar to the Burmans and Talaings, and more or less to the wilder tribes. The incessant teaching of the five binding precepts, not to kill, nor steal, nor tell a lie, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor commit adultery, must have had wide effect. The children of Burma are taught in the monasteries to read religious books, and the habit is kept up on holy days, and when they bewail the death of friends. 'They, without being aware of it, imbibe religious notions and become acquainted with some parts of the religious creed, particularly with what relates to Gaudama's preceding and last existence.' I quote my venerable friend Bishop Bigandet; and as to the persuasion towards virtue contained in the Life of Gaudama, whoever desires to know more should read his translation of the Burmese Legend, which, as Dr. Rhys Davids states,

adheres very closely to the orthodox books of the Southern Church, introduced into Burma from Ceylon in the fifth century of our era.¹ The learned Prelate's notes and essays are on all hands treated as authority about Burmese Buddhism, combining, as they do, long experience of men and things with sagacious and judicial reflections. He describes the sermon preached by Gaudama to a Nat, the specimen given by Sangermano, as a fair sample of similar performances; and this sermon is a compendium of almost all the moral virtues. Buddhism he calls 'a moral and practical system, making man acquainted with the duties he has to perform in order to shun vice and practise virtue.' Again, 'It will not be deemed rash to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the Gospel are to be met with in the Buddhist Scriptures.' The wonder therefore disappears that the Legend of Buddha should have been adapted into a Christian form by St. John of Damascus, and the saintly hero canonised by the Pope of Rome as St. Josaphat, to whom, according to Colonel Yule, a church at Palermo is dedicated. Monier-Williams believes the Buddhists to have been the first to introduce total abstinence from strong drinks into India. Rehatsek, after ascribing the civilisation of the Mongols to their conversion from Shamanism to Buddhism, writes: 'It is almost incomprehensible how the savage Mongols, who were accustomed to massacre whole populations in order to secure their rear from enemies, zealously submitted to a religion inculcating gentleness and kindness to all created beings, and how a nation that loved to raze cities to the ground, and to convert cultivated plains into deserts to obtain pastures, should have eagerly built temples, established convents, introduced useful institutions, and practised religious duties.' The

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Turning aside from the *tendencies* to what is known of the practical *results* of Buddhism in Burma, we find two of great importance—a general diffusion of education through the teaching of the monks, and the elevation of the character and position of women. The genius of the religion disregards caste, allows no difference between man and man except what is proved by superiority in virtue, and insists on imparting knowledge to all. The Census Report of 1891, which is the latest official document I have come across, speaks of the exertions of the monks in matters of education in those terms of praise with which we have long been familiar; they seem willing, even in the newly conquered province, to combine the new with the old, to attempt a reconciliation between

science and religion. The elevation of woman is rather more perplexing, as the theology treats marriage from the ascetic point of view: a wise man is to avoid it as if it were a burning pit of live coals, and to wander lonely on the path of life, like a rhinoceros. These counsels of perfection were met in India by the same sort of arguments that Chaucer puts into the mouth of the Wife of Bath in his *Canterbury Tales*. According to Monier-Williams, they checked the spread of Gaudama's religion. The people murmured and said, 'He is come to bring childlessness among us, and widowhood and destruction of family life.' All the same, Buddhism admits of nuns and lay sisters; and its love of equality comes to their aid. On so interesting a subject I am constrained to quote at length from the writings of the learned and impartial Bigandet. 'Who could think,' he asks, 'of looking upon the woman as a somewhat inferior being, when we see her ranking, according to the degrees of her spiritual attainments, among the perfect and foremost followers of Buddha?' Again, 'In Burma and Siam the doctrines of Buddhism have produced a striking, and to the lover of true civilisation a most interesting, result, viz., established the almost complete equality of the condition of women with that of men. In those countries women are not miserably confined in the interior of their houses, without the remotest chance of ever appearing in public. They are seen circulating freely in the streets; they preside at the comptoirs, and hold an almost exclusive possession of the bazaars. Their social position is more elevated in every respect than that of the persons of their sex in the regions where Buddhism is not the predominating creed. They may be said to be men's companions and not their slaves.' They are active, industrious, and by their labours and exertions contribute their full share towards the maintenance of the family. The marital rights, however, are fully acknowledged by a respectful behaviour towards their lords.'

The reader acquainted with the tendencies and some of the

results of Buddhism will perhaps be perplexed when he hears of the cruelties perpetrated in wars, or in the reigns of terror by some of the absolute monarchs. These atrocities, as well as the corruption and insecurity which despotic government caused, are depicted by Sangermano, and bewailed by our Envoys in their narratives. The King of Burma was the secular head of the religion, and it may doubtless be argued that he ought to have felt the restraining hand of Holy Church. It would, however, be unjust to blame religion for the secular crimes of uncontrolled kings: it is simpler to impute them in Burma to Oriental despotism. Over these tyrants the religion cast its terrors when it proclaimed the unchangeable effect of evil action; and in the law-books, which were often compiled by men of the sacred yellow robe at the behest of kings, we find long quotations from the Scriptures explaining the difference between dharma, or rule according to law, and the sinful decrees of passion and brute force. These Codes, originally based on the famous Codes of Manuic India, thus became saturated with Buddhist ethics; and one of the most visible results is the elevation of women in matters of status, marriage, and inheritance. The testimony of these law-books to this great social change is ignored by most writers, although in the general absence of original Burmese literature, except a few lyrics, these Dhammathats are, as Dr. Forchhammer pointed out, the only literary works which disclose to the student the practical effect of a religious system upon the social and political growth of the Talaings and Burmans. It must, however, be confessed that Buddhism did not abolish slavery in Burma or Siam; and our Envoys notice with pity a revolting incident of insolvency, whereby the wife or daughter might be sold at the suit of a creditor, and thus condemned to the public brothel. Turning from these non-feasances of the Buddhist Church, we must put in the other scale the religious toleration noted by Sangermano which allowed the Italian Catholics, and, later on, the American

Baptists, to confer benefits on the people, before we had gained any territory in Burma. Sometimes one sect of Buddhists has prevailed on the king to persecute the rival sect: but, as a rule, theological hatred shrank from taking human life, round which the religion sheds a sanctity. The Bishops and Abbots often interposed between the monarch or governor and the people, for purposes of humanity or justice; and at the present day religious fanaticism is almost unknown among the Buddhists, and rival sects live with each other on friendly terms. To avoid prolixity, I must now conclude my remarks on the racial origins and Indian institutions affecting Burma, and turn to the next great cause which more and more sways life and thought there—the intercourse with Europe ending in the conquest by England, and the regulative effects of our law and administration, which may fitly be compared to those of the Romans. It has been no part of my aim to discuss Buddhism in general, and I leave untouched the questions whether the Gaudama of the Legend was a real person or a solar myth, whether Buddhaghosa the divine is a mere name and allegory, and other matters of dispute in religion and philology.

In his *Narrative of the Mission to Ava* in 1855, Colonel Yule supplies a singularly full and accurate account of the intercourse of the Burmese countries with Western nations, to which, and also the last chapter in Phayre's *History of Burma*, I refer the reader, abridging here what otherwise I might have to say. The first European traveller of modern times seems to be Nicolò de Conti, a noble Venetian of Damascus, who travelled by Persia, India, and Ceylon to Sumatra, whence, after sixteen days' sailing, he reached Tenasserim, which district he says abounds in elephants and a species of thrush. He then crossed to the Ganges, and next went up the river Racha (Arakan) to the city of that name. Then he journeyed over 'mountains void of all habitations for the space of seventeen days, and then through open plains for fifteen days more' to the river Irawadi and the city of Ava, where, he remarks, the king rides

on a white elephant, and the women, as well as men, puncture their flesh with pins of iron, and rub into these punctures pigments which cannot be obliterated, and so they remain painted for ever. The Burman women have now given up this habit of tattooing, which the Chin women retain. The traveller was not strictly correct in saying that all worship idols: it is interesting to read about the devotion to the three gems. 'When they rise in the morning from their beds they turn towards the east, and with their hands together say, "God in his Trinity and his Law defend us."' About 1496 we find Hieronimo de Santo Stephano of Genoa in the city of Pegu. War was going on with Ava; and he had to wait above a year to get payment from the king for his merchandise. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese appear; and we find them often serving as mercenaries in the wars between the kings of the Delta. One of these military adventurers was the celebrated Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, who mingles romance with his history. Cæsar Frederike, a more trustworthy traveller, left Venice in 1563, and spent eighteen years in the East. He refers to the capture of Yuthia by Bureng Naung (A.D. 1569), and the return of the conqueror to Pegu with the spoils of Siam, Frederike being an eye-witness of 'his tryumphs and victorie, which coming home and returning from the warres was a goodly sight to behold, to see the elephants come home in a square, laden with gold, silver, jewels, and with noble men and women that were taken prisoners.' He describes the two cities of Pegu, the old and the new: the houses built of cane and thatched with leaves, the magazine or *godon* of brick, used as a common store by the merchants, the crocodiles in the ditch, the four white elephants, the gilded shrines with the four statues of gold, silver, brass, and copper alloy. He got an exaggerated notion of an army, mustering 4000 elephants and 80,000 harquebusses; the difficulty usually felt in a campaign, the problem of feeding so great a multitude seemed to him nothing great, as these troops would eat anything, 'very filthie or otherwise, all

serveth for their mouthes, yea, I have seen them eat scorpions and serpents,' like the King of Cambay in *Hudibras*,

' whose daily food
Was asp and basilisk and toad.'

In 1583 Gasparo Balbi, a Venetian jeweller, visited Pegu with a stock of emeralds. He gives a lively account of all that he saw: of Negrais with its swarms of flies, Cosmin the haunt of tigers, Dala with the ten large rooms full of royal elephants, 'the faire citie of Dagon' [Rangoon] with the long approach to the glorious pagoda, rising high in air like the Campanile at Venice. Then he sailed by Syriam, where the ruined walls showed traces of the war of 1567, and at length reached Pegu, where in solemn audience he gave the king an emerald.

Ralph Fitch, a London merchant, who after staying at Aleppo, Ormus, Cambay, Goa, and some places on the Ganges, reached Negrais in 1586, confirms many statements of Frederike's and Balbi's. 'Three days after, we came to Cosmin, which is a very pretty town, and standeth very pleasantly, very well furnished with all things. The people be very tall and well-disposed: the women white, round-faced, with little eyes; the houses are high built, set upon great high posts, and they go up to them for feare of the tiges, which be very many.' He went on to Pegu, and, like Frederike, who says the king 'far excels the power of the Grand Turk in treasure and strength,' he was impressed with all he saw of a pomp and magnificence which far

' Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.'

In the letters of these old travellers, Pegu stands forth as a right royal abode

' Where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric gold and pearl.'

Rubies were in such quantity, 'that they know not what to do with them, but sell them at most vile and base prices.' 'The merchandises that go out of Pegu are gold, silver, rubies,

sapphires, spinelles, great store of benjamin, long pepper, lead, lacca, rice, wine, some sugar.' The trade was conducted through brokers, and the practice of selling a debtor's wife and children as slaves is mentioned. There seems to have been a thriving import trade. Sometimes opium came from Cambay; and once a year a ship arrived from Bengal, and another from Madras, with bombast cloth. Martaban traded with Malacca. Wool, scarlets, velvets, opium, and chickinos came from Mecca, and the King of Acheen's ships brought pepper. But the Pegu king was menaced by the naval power of Arakan. Fitch went a journey of twenty-one days from Pegu to 'a very faire and great towne,' where merchants from China came 'with great store of muske, golde, silver, and many other things.' 'I went,' he writes, 'from Pegu to Iamahey, which is in the country of the Langeiannes, whom we call Iangomes.' This remote city is Zimmé, or, as our Foreign Office, which has established a consulate there, now spells it, Chieng-mai. Thither the East India Company's factor in Siam sent in 1618 one Thomas Samuel to open up a trade. The place had been captured from Pegu by the King of Siam; but after the fall of Pegu, the Burman king took possession of Zimmé, and carried off Samuel among other prisoners to Pegu, where he died. During the seventeenth century the Madras authorities of the East India Company started factories at Syriam, Prome, and Ava; and for a great part of that period the Dutch had establishments at the same places. In the great collection of Dutch archives made by de Jonge, we find a letter of 1608 from the King of Arakan, self-styled Salimscha, Kaiser of Pegu, and traces of contact with the famous Portuguese adventurer Philip de Brito, who afterwards ruled at Syriam.

The 'interlopers,' as the East India Company's servants called the private traders from England, soon appeared on the scene; and in 1687 the Company sent Captain Weldon in a ship from Madras to drive out the English settlers at Mergui,

then under Siam, by force. In a disturbance that followed some Siamese were killed ; and seventeen Englishmen who were in the town were massacred in revenge. After this, British subjects were for a long time excluded from Siam. In 1695 Mr. Fleetwood and Captain Lesley went as envoys from Madras to Ava, and in 1709 Mr. Allanson was sent there by Governor Pitt. For the succeeding period, including the reign of Alompra and his conquest of Pegu, the parts played by the English and French in that war, the capture of Syriam from the French in 1756, and the massacre of the English at Negrais in 1759, the best authority is Major Michael Symes' *Embassy to Ava in 1795*. In the following year Captain Hiram Cox, our Resident at Rangoon, visited the King Bodoahpra, or, as Sangermano calls him, Badonsachen. The entertaining and thoughtful narrative of Symes throws much light on the period, and in many respects supplements Sangermano's account of the Burman Empire. The next events of importance are the war of 1824, which led to the annexation of Arakan and Tenasserim by the British, and the sending of Mr. John Crawfurd on an embassy to Ava in 1826, of which he wrote a journal, which is very good reading. The narrative of Sir A. Phayre's mission in 1855, soon after the second war which gave us the province of Pegu, the city of Rangoon, and all the Delta, was written by Yule, and is in every way of conspicuous merit. This work stands in point of time between Sangermano and the official *Gazetteer of Lower Burma*, compiled by Colonel Spearman. Since this *Gazetteer* was published, Upper Burma has been conquered, and the Burman monarchy has come to an end. Great events like these strike those that make them: they have created a new and wider interest in the country, and added to the value of Sangermano's work as a description of a state of things now receding far into the past.

Sangermano's residence in Ava and Rangoon from 1783 to 1806, while the Burman monarchy was in full power and

undismembered, enabled him to understand the Burman and Talaing nations. He was one of the earliest of that type of Christian missionaries who, in order to influence the people, set themselves to study their languages, literatures, and institutions; and who were thus enabled to place at the service of the English officials much information, of the utmost use, first to the administrators, and afterwards to scholars. I may add to what is said of Sangermano's life in the Prefaces to the two earlier editions the notice of him written by Major Symes, to illustrate the above remark. Symes says: 'Among the foreigners who came to pay their respects to the English gentlemen was an Italian missionary, named Vincentius Sangermano, who had been deputed to this country, about twenty years before, by the Society de Propaganda: he seemed a very respectable and intelligent man, spoke and wrote the Birman language fluently, and was held in high estimation by the natives for his exemplary life and inoffensive manners. His congregation consisted of the descendants of former Portugeze colonists, who, though numerous, are in general very poor; they, however, had erected a neat chapel, and purchased for their pastor a piece of ground a mile from the town, on which a neat, comfortable dwelling was built and a garden enclosed. He is indebted for his subsistence to voluntary contributions of his flock; in return for their charity he educates their children, instructs them in the tenets of the Romish faith, and performs mass twice a day at the chapel. From this reverend father I received much useful information.' It seems to be the fact that Symes and Sangermano went into matters of learning in their talks, as appears from another passage where Symes notices the resemblance of a Persian edition of the Arakan Code to the Burman version of the Manu Shaster of India. 'I was so fortunate,' says Symes, 'as to procure a translation of the most remarkable passages, which were rendered into Latin by Padre Vincentius Sangermano.' It only remains to

add that the reputation of the Italian priest has stood the test of time. He is treated as an authority by Bigandet and every writer on Burma: he is cited also by Dr. Kern and most of the historians of Buddhism. The above considerations appear ample to justify the offer to the public of a new edition of his work.

The notes I have appended to Dr. W. Tandy's translation of the Italian text will, I trust, not interfere with the charm of Sangermano's story. Many of them are proofs of the accuracy of his observations: others throw side-lights on his views of things, especially where I cite the three historians of our embassies—Symes, Crawford, and Yule, whose interesting folios are not easily accessible to the general reader, and are less available for reference because, like Bishop Bigandet's book on Buddhism, they are wanting in indexes. These inconveniences attend some works of research produced in the last decade, Forchhammer's *Notes on Archaeology* and my series of *Notes on Buddhist Law*. The Blue-book containing the Census Report of 1891 is full of novel information on the subjects of ethnology and languages, with which Sangermano dealt according to his lights. Since his day, also, the natural history of Burma has received full and scientific treatment. In editing this work I have, where the limits of space allowed, aimed at supplying the results of most recent inquiry; and elsewhere have stated the source where the student of any branch of learning may find it treated. This aim is rendered more difficult, seeing that on many points where research is recent, the authorities propound varying theories and come to different conclusions. In matters of history I have here and there supplemented the author by reference chiefly to Sir A. Phayre's *History of Burma*; and while avoiding the vast questions about Buddhism upon which great scholars like Kern, Oldenberg, Monier-Williams, Rhys Davids, and Senart raise discussion, I have tried to answer those which arise out of the ordinary life of the people of Burma, by quotations from local

authorities, *e.g.* Bigandet, Forchhammer, Forbes, and Scott. The Italian phonetic spelling of Burmese and other names has been retained, as this affords evidence of the pronunciation in Sangermano's time. To assist the student, I have in many instances inserted in brackets the spelling of kings' names and technical terms used in Phayre's History and Hardy's books on Buddhism, and have given the names of most places of importance as commonly spelt. An index to the work has been supplied. The reader will also observe that here and there I have endeavoured to show what changes have come over the people, so that he may contrast and compare times present with times past.

Sangermano dwelt in Burma during the period of the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, the European wars that followed, and the Irish Rebellion of 1798. In India many things were allowed under British rule, such as criminal punishment by lopping off the feet, the sale of slaves, and the burning of widows, which in course of time were abolished by such reforming Governors-General as Lord Cornwallis and Lord William Bentinck. The criminal code of England was extremely sanguinary, as is noticed by such different men as Yule and Heine; and the whole condition of society in the United Kingdom, as well as in most parts of Europe then, was far behind what it is now. The crusade against colonial slavery had hardly begun. Facts like these must be borne in mind to balance what Sangermano says of the character of the people. It is only fair to the Burmans and Talaings to record that many competent judges think that the amiable Italian hardly does justice to their better and more agreeable qualities. Happily, two great changes have taken place, let alone the general increase of enlightenment. Slavery with all its cruel opportunities is abolished, and there is no such thing as the sale of a wife or child for debt. Despotism has given way to just rule: the sale of public offices, the favouritism, the corruption, the licentious treatment of women which went on

under the wilful king whose character Sangermano paints in such dark colours, exist no more. These abuses were far less prominent, indeed, in Upper Burma under the rule of the milder prince to whose court Phayre and Yule journeyed in 1855. Security of property and person is now established with the law over the whole land; and if we compare what the Director of State Education says in the Census Report of 1891, of the order of monks, with the estimate of the religious by Bishop Bigandet in 1880, we may fairly hope that the removal of the burden of despotism has infused a freshness of beneficent energy into these common schoolmasters of the people. Two causes, said the learned Bishop, made the Talapoins incomparably idle: the first a physical one, the relaxing heat of the climate; the second a moral one, the tyranny of the despotic government which, by making property insecure, destroyed the incentive to work, with all the useful moral discipline that labour affords. 'He who is suspected of being rich is exposed to numerous vexations on the part of the vile satellites of tyranny, who soon find out some apparent pretext for confiscating a part or the whole of his property, or depriving him of life, should he dare to offer resistance.' This sentence skims the philosophy of history. A vivid picture of the state of things about Rangoon in 1813 is found in the journal of Mrs. Judson, the wife of the American missionary. 'The country,' she writes, 'presents a rich and beautiful appearance, everywhere covered with vegetation, and, if cultivated, would be one of the finest in the world. But the poor natives have little inducement to labour, or to accumulate property, as it would probably be taken from them by their oppressive rulers.' The change from despotic violence to the rule of law must in time elevate the character of the subjects, and the English in Burma cannot reasonably expect the upward progress to be completed in one generation or even two.

In concluding this introduction I must express my thanks

INTRODUCTION

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to my friend Mr. Taw Sein-Ko, a native of Burma, and at present Lecturer in the University of Cambridge, for the learned aid I have received from him, and my hopes that he will resume on the spot his researches into the recondite lore of the Indo-Chinese countries when the Educational Board of Burma has, as it now proposes to do, changed itself into a University for all the countries and tribes of that part of the Queen's empire.

JOHN JARDINE.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN nearly every history of Burma, or account of the Burmese people, the reader finds allusions to Sangermano and often extracts from his book. But he is puzzled to make out who Sangermano was and when and where he lived, and is sometimes left in danger of supposing wrongly that Sangermano's remarks apply to the present times. If, attracted by the interesting matter that every author finds in him, the reader goes to the libraries to get Sangermano's book, he learns that there is no copy. If he goes to a private person reputed to have a copy, he returns disappointed, the copy having perhaps been lent long ago to some one else who never returned it. For several years this was my experience.

A few months ago I discovered that Colonel Spearman, of the British Burma Commission, had a copy, and he obliged me by the loan of it. This is the volume from which the present edition is reprinted by order of the Chief Commissioner, after obtaining the consent to this republication of the Right Rev. P. Bigandet, Bishop of Ramatha and Vicar Apostolic. It was deemed right to refer to him as being the present head of the Roman Catholic mission in Burma.

Cardinal Wiseman's preface to the edition of 1833 informs us that Father Sangermano arrived in Burma in 1783, and returned to Italy in 1808. Becoming President of the order of Barnabites at Arpinum, his native city, he employed himself in preparing his work for publication, but was prevented by his death in 1819. Bishop Bigandet informs me that this happened at Leghorn as he was about to sail for Burma, and that during his stay in Italy he was graciously treated by Joachim Murat,

king of Naples. The Roman Sub-Committee of the Oriental Translation Fund undertook to publish and translate the manuscript. The orthography was kept except in a few well-known names: hence the proper names are to be read as in Italian. In this reprint no alterations have been made.

The Oriental Translation Fund was instituted in 1828 under the patronage of King William iv. In the binding of Colonel Spearman's copy I find a prospectus showing that Sir Gore Ouseley, the Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society, was its Chairman, and John Shakespear and Dr. Rosen its Secretaries. 'This copy was printed for the Right Honourable the Earl of Clare, Governor of Bombay, a subscriber.' The motto of the Fund was 'Ex oriente lux.' Fifty years have passed and no second edition has been issued.

During this half century much has been added to our knowledge of the subjects described by Sangermano. The Burmese legend of Buddha has been translated and edited by Bishop Bigandet. The history of Burma has lately been written by Sir Arthur Phayre; and before this edition issues from the press the learning of Dr. Forchhammer will have thrown light on the Burmese Dhammathat or Code of Law in his edition of King Wagaru's code and his essay on Buddhist law. But all this increase of knowledge does not detract from the real value of Sangermano's work or lessen its charm. Even when he describes the abstract notions of the Buddhist religion, or the dry rules of law, we feel his contact with the people: we learn how the religion influenced their life, and how the despotic and capricious administration of the law produced results which the Dhammathat would never suggest. Sangermano's thoroughness is notable. He gets his account of Buddhism from a treatise drawn up by the king's uncle in 1763: he translated much of the Buddhist canon with the help of a former *pôngyi* learned in Pali. He went direct to the Burmese annals for his history; and his version of the Burmese Code, called the Golden Rule, shows that he used some such Dhammathat as the *Manu Sara Shwe Myin*, and took much trouble to understand it. Between 1768 and 1780 several new versions of Dhammathats had been compiled by learned Burmans such as *Kyaw Deng*; and it is probable that a scholar eager to get at their

real meaning would have found some of these lawyers or other learned men competent to teach him. Sangermano proceeded to make an abstract of one of these codes ; he seems not to have aimed at precise translation ; but after comparing his abstract with the Wagaru and the part of the Wonnana Dhammathat found in our Notes on Buddhist Law, I would be well inclined to treat this abstract as valuable in suggesting meanings of doubtful passages. There is now little oral tradition to explain the Dhammathats, at least in British Burma : but in Sangermano's time there must have been plenty : he was familiar with the king's officials, he had Pali scholars at his elbow, and he noticed the way the Burmese judges applied the law. In these several respects he had advantages which European scholars miss nowadays. Sangermano appends a few notes showing instances where the law was administered contrary to the code, and his earlier chapters on manners must be read in connection with it. I greatly doubt whether Dr. Richardson, who in 1847 translated the Manu Kyay Dhammathat (dated A.D. 1760), had seen this abstract. It is the only popular account of Burmese law that has ever been written ; it appears to be a useful manual of that law as understood in Rangoon a hundred years ago ; it fairly reflects the spirit of the Dhammathats, and in these respects seemed to me likely to be of such use to the officers freshly appointed to the British Burma Commission that I advised that it should be reprinted. On the other hand, I must remark that until it has been thoroughly compared, section by section, with the Dhammathats, it cannot be treated as equal to those originals or as a safe guide to settlement of doubtful questions. It is curious that nearly all later writers on the Burmese avoid mention or statement of the law ; so that information on the simplest questions hardly exists except in judicial decisions.

At the end of the book are two notes, compiled by the Roman sub-committee, to show the progress of Roman Catholic missions in Burma. I add a third, compiled from an Italian book lent me by Bishop Bigandet, Griffini's *Vita di Monsignor Percoto*, published at Udine in 1781.

The reader will time after time remark how some generalization of Sangermano's seems as true now as in his day. Burmese

xxxvi DESCRIPTION OF THE BURMESE EMPIRE

medicine, *e.g.*, has not advanced; 'they have themselves no regular surgeons.' But the trade in rice, the great wealth of Burma and principal export of the port of Rangoon at present, is not mentioned at all in the account of trade.

JOHN JARDINE.

RANGOON, 5th April 1884.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following work was drawn up by F. Sangermano, partly during his residence as a missionary in Ava, and partly after his return to Europe. He was sent out as a missionary in 1782, and in the July of the following year arrived at Rangoon, whence he proceeded directly to the city of Ava. But shortly after he was remanded to Rangoon, which was the scene of his future missionary labours. The cause of Christianity was greatly forwarded in this place by his exertions. He completed the church of St. John, which had been begun before him, as well as the college of the missionaries; both of which were built of brick. He superintended the college as long as he remained there; and under his direction it was very prosperous. It contained fifty students, who were instructed in several branches of learning and science; so that besides some ecclesiastics, it has produced skilful engineers, physicians, and even pilots. There is at present a young Burmese practising as a surgeon in Rome who received his education in this institution.

F. Sangermano was greatly esteemed by the natives of Rangoon: in particular, the Viceroy and his consort honoured him with many marks of distinction. The latter would often come to his church to be present at the Catholic ceremonies, especially those of Holy-week: and sometimes she would pay a visit to the Superior in his College, and hold long conferences with him on religion; so that it was thought that she would become a Christian. On these occasions she always came with her guards and her whole court. Her guards remained in the square opposite the college, but the rest of her suite entered with her.

F. Sangermano was also well known to the foreigners who frequented Rangoon, particularly to the English. From one of the latter he had a commission to make a chart of the port of Rangoon, which he executed with so much ability as to

receive a pension for life from our Government. He also experienced great attention from the English authorities when at Calcutta on his return home.

The individual who had given him the above-mentioned commission procured for him a letter of recommendation from the Governor-General, by which all English captains were required to afford him every facility for his return. He arrived in Italy in 1808; and after having got through the business which had recalled him home, endeavoured to return to his missionary labours. But the state of the times prevented him; and he was finally established as president of the college of his order at Arpinum, his native city. Here he employed himself in preparing the following work for publication; but his death in 1819 prevented the execution of his designs. His manuscript remained in the hands of the Barnabite Fathers, and would probably have never been presented to the public had not the Roman sub-committee of the Oriental Translation Fund undertaken its translation and publication. Although the primary regulations of this Society seem to sanction the publication of none but Oriental works, the Roman sub-committee felt themselves warranted in proposing this history to the parent committee, on the ground that it is chiefly made up of translations from important Burmese writings, whereof probably copies do not exist in Europe.

The following note found among F. Sangermano's papers, after the work was partly translated, indicates the original documents he has principally followed.

'1. The Burmese cosmography has been extracted almost entirely from a book expressly composed for the elder brother of the reigning monarch, by a Zaradò or master of the Emperor, wherein he succinctly describes the system of the world, as taught by Godama, according to the expositions and opinions of the most celebrated Burmese Doctors.

'2. All that is related of the ancient Burmese monarchs, and of the foundation and subsequent history of this kingdom, has been faithfully copied from the Maharazaven, that is, the great history of the kings.

'3. In what I have said of the superstitions, astrology, religion, constitutions of the Talapoins, and the sermons of

Godama, I have not followed the tales and reports of the common people, but have carefully consulted the classical writings of the Burmese, known by the name of Kiam. The chapters on the rules of the Talapoins and the sermons of Godama contain an abstract of all that is worthy of notice in the three Kiam, called Vini, Padimot, and Sottan. I have translated nearly the whole of these books with the assistance of an Ex-Talapoin of the name of Ubà, who was one of the most learned of that order in the vicinity of Nabek, where for several years our seminary was situated. He has also taught the Pali language to two of my scholars, one of whom is at the present time labouring in the work of the mission at Rangoon.'

Some slight transposition has been made in the chapters, in order to improve the connection between the subjects which they treat. The orthography of the manuscript has been kept, except in a few well-known names: hence the proper names are to be read as in Italian.

It cannot be necessary to enumerate the difficulties experienced in conducting a large English work through a foreign press. Independently of the great labour of correction, it required some courage to think of imitating the beauty of typography which distinguishes the works printed by the parent committee in London. We flatter ourselves that we have done as much as circumstances would allow us, and that our present attempt will be indulgently received, as an earnest of our desire to forward the useful and noble objects of the Fund.

N. WISEMAN.

ROME, *June 1, 1833.*

APPENDIX I

SEE CHAPTERS VI AND XX

SINCE Sangermano's time, much has been added to our knowledge of the peoples and languages of Burma. The best accounts I have found are :—*Notes on the Languages and Dialects*, by Dr. Forchhammer, Rangoon, 1884 ; *Burma Census Report*, 1891, by H. L. Eales, I.C.S., vol. i. ch. viii. and x. They are full of most interesting facts, and it is from them chiefly that this note is compiled.

Out of a total population of 7,605,560, the Burmese tribes were returned as 5,771,594, of whom 5,405,727 were Burmese proper. Mr. Eales takes exception to Max Müller's calling the Burmese an agglutinative language, and placing it in the Lohitic branch of the Turanian stock. Burmese has affinity with Tibetan : and Mr. Eales proposes to call it and the other languages spoken in Burma, as well as Chinese, polytonic for the following considerations. Variety of meaning is got by varying the tone or pitch of each sound, especially of vowels, which may be ejaculated, whereas consonants require the use of the tongue or lips. To use a simile which exactly conveys the meaning, the savage, having but few sounds, was forced to make as many words as he could out of them by uttering the sounds in different tones, like Paganini, who could play on one string of his violin. To avoid ambiguity of sense, synonyms (of which Sangermano gives some examples) are used at a later stage : and this is the first step to the agglutinative language—the use of synonyms to help the failing power of the ear. This is the tendency of Burmese and Chinese, and is manifest in Talaing.

Arakanese, an older form of Burmese, is the language of about 350,000 people. The Tavoy dialect resembles it, being that of an Arakan colony planted there before the conquest of Pegu by the Burmans. Both dialects are being rapidly absorbed into Burmese. The Chaungtha, Yaw, Kudo (or Kadu) and Danu dialects are now spoken by only 271, 57, 114, and 1160 persons respectively ; and the Yabein, which Captain Forbes proved to be a separate language, has died out. Among the Yaws, wizards are still found.

The next division, according to language, of the Tibeto-Burman stock is the Chin-Lushai or Chin group, containing the following :— Southern Chin, Pallaing, Kun, Daignet, Thet, An, Mro, Kami, Haka or Baungshe, Siyin, Shandu, Kyau, Lushai. These are mostly hill tribes, and aggregated 113,000, of whom 23,000 were returned as Buddhists, and the rest as Nat-worshippers. For some account of 'Chin Law and Custom,' see Forchhammer's *Jardine Prize Essay*, Rangoon, 1885, and my edition of Maung Tet Pyo's *Customary Law of the Chin Tribe*, a curious book, which, Sir H. S. Maine told me, was useful as helping him to understand the origin of the customs made law in the famous Code of Manu.

The next group contains the Kachin-Naga tribes, Kachin, Lishaw, and Sak or Thet. They are found on the borders of Assam, Yunnan, and Burma. A grammar has been compiled by Mr. Andrew Symington, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Burma Commission, and a long account of these people by Mr. George, I.C.S., is appended to the Census Report.

Leaving the Tibeto-Burman class, Mr. Eales says the next most important is the Karen class, of which the principal varieties are the Sgau, the Pwo, which includes Taungthu, and the Bghai or Bwe, which includes Karenni or Red Karen. The numbers in Burma speaking these languages are above half a million, mostly Buddhists, with above 40,000 Christians, belonging chiefly to the American Baptist Mission, which has done much to raise them from the despised state they held under the Burmans, and has checked later Burmanising tendencies. In 1834 this mission supplied the Sgaus and Pwos with a written language, adapting the Burmese alphabet. The present tendency is to coalesce into a Karen nation. The languages are thought by Forchhammer to be connected with those of Northern China; and M. de la Couperie's researches point to the Karens being a pre-Chinese race, driven southward into Burma by the pressure of the Chinese.

The next polytonic class is the Taic-Shan, sub-divided by Mr. Eales as follows :—

NORTHERN,	.	.	.	{	Abom (near Assam—extinct).
				{	Khamti.
				{	Chinese Shans, Maingtha.
				{	Burmese Shans.
INTERMEDIATE,	.	.	.	{	Khun.
				{	Lu.
SOUTHERN,	.	.	.	{	Laos or Yun.
				{	Siamese.

There are about 180,000 Shans in Burma, nearly all, except 400 Christians, being returned as Buddhists. Dr. Cushing gives proofs that these Tai races came from South-Western China, the migration beginning many centuries ago. Forchhammer states that most Shan words can be found under the same or nearly related letters in the dictionaries of the Amoy and Hok-Kyen dialects. The Burmese Shans use an alphabet derived from the Burmans, supposed to have been devised 300 years ago. They have some religious literature. The Tai contains five tones in three series, so there are fifteen possible different pronunciations of a single syllable.

The remaining polytonic class is the Môn Khmer or Môn Annam group, containing the Talaing or Peguan, the Palaung and the Khamu. The Talaings number above 466,000: their language was discouraged by Alompra, and furiously proscribed after 1824. There was much Talaing literature: many palm-leaf manuscripts were hidden in the caves at Pagat, the birthplace of King Wágaru, some of which were procured by Dr. Forchhammer, and are now in the Bernard Free Library at Rangoon. Complete sets are, it is reported, preserved in the King of Siam's libraries at Bangkok. The Talaing nation is being merged in the Burman; and some think the language will soon die out. It resembles the Cambodian. For the connections of the Talaings with that race and with the ancient Hindu colonies on the Burman coast, the reader is referred to Forchhammer's *Notes and Prize Essay*. The opinion that the Talaings were connected with Telingana in India is shown to be baseless, the name being a Burman term of reproach, meaning people trodden under foot. In the fifth century Buddhaghosa brought the Buddhist Scriptures from Ceylon to the Talaings. The Burmans have received these, as well as the Hindu Manu Code, from them, as also their alphabet, which was identical with the Indian Vengi characters of the fourth century after Christ.

The Palaungs are found near the Ruby Mines. The Khamus are stragglers from a tribe beyond the Mekong River.

The Selons or Selungs, sea-gypsies of the Mergui Archipelago, are believed to be Malays, and their language is not polytonic.

Besides all these there are many immigrants from China, the Straits Settlements, Bengal, Oude, the Madras Presidency and other parts.

APPENDIX II

SEE CHAPTER XI

IN *Crawfurd's Journal*, p. 287, under date 3rd Dec. 1826, I find the following account of a fire at Ava, which caused loss to the widow of the King's tutor, who complained to the King that 'the ministers, and especially Kaulen Mengyi, who was her husband's successor, and of whom she was very jealous, were not at their posts; for it appears that it is their special duty to attend upon such occasions. The King, who was still very much out of humour, summoned the ministers before him: sent for a sword, drew it, and ordered them, one by one, to come forward and swear upon it that they were present at the conflagration and assisting in extinguishing it. Kaulen Mengyi came forward and avowed that he was not present; but that he had gone as far as the Rungdhau, or town-hall, to give the necessary instructions upon the occasion. He was immediately ordered to be taken out of the Audience Hall; and to avoid being dragged thence by the hair of the head, according to usage, voluntarily made as rapid a retreat as could be expected from a man between sixty and seventy, and of a weakly constitution. An order was given that he should be punished after a manner which I shall presently describe. The other ministers, none of whom were present at the fire, escaped under various pretexts of business or sickness. The punishment now awarded to the first minister is called in the Burman language *Nepu mha lhan the*, or spreading out in the hot sun. The offender who undergoes it is stretched upon his back by the public executioners, and thus exposed for a given number of hours, in the hottest part of the day, with a weight on his breast, more or less heavy according to the nature of the offence, or rather according to the King's opinion of it. It was at first thought that the sentence, on the part of the King, was a mere threat. Not so; the most faithful and zealous of his ministers underwent the punishment this afternoon from one to three o'clock, and not, as is customary on such occasions with culprits of distinction, within the palace enclosure, but in the public road be-

tween the eastern gate of the palace and the town-hall, and in the view of a multitude of spectators. The old malefactor, whom I once or twice before mentioned as being at the head of the band of executioners, superintended the infliction. This person and others of the same class are themselves not entitled to a trial; but may by the law of the country be put to death by any of the ministers at pleasure and no questions asked. Here was the first minister, then, delivered over into the hands of this ruffian, in whose power it was to make the punishment more or less severe. Such are the anomalies of this truly rude and barbarous government. The stretching and sunning process, I ought to have mentioned, is the punishment of mere peccadillos, and is a very frequent infliction on persons of condition. Kaulen Mengyi has since appeared in Lut-dhau, and in the King's presence, and has been carrying on the business of the government just as usual. It cannot be supposed, however, but that the ignominy of such a punishment is felt by the person on whom it is inflicted: and consequently those who had seen the minister since described him as being low-spirited and downcast.'

While our envoys give general views of the administration, the letters and journals of the early American Baptist missionaries can be consulted for what I may call daily peeps at life in Burma under the reign of King Bodoahpra, described by Sangermano. They were eye-witnesses of two execution scenes presented in the note at p. 84. Mrs. Judson confirms Sangermano about the great local power wielded by the Viceroys and Governors. She, like the Italian, found a friend in the Viceroy's wife at Rangoon; and from this lady, not from the Viceroy himself, she obtained the requisite permit to depart to Bengal. These high officials were often related to the royal family by birth or marriage; and as the revenues of districts used to be given for their maintenance to queens and other great ladies, these acquired much knowledge of what went on in the districts, and influenced litigation, as shown at p. 272. The Judsons had personal experience of heavy and arbitrary taxes. In 1825, when the King Hpagyidooa was at war with the British, the Rev. Adoniram Judson was, with the other Europeans and Americans at Ava, suspected as a spy; and after being roughly arrested and pinioned by the executioner, the malefactor with the spotted face, he was cast into prison, and put in irons and in the stocks. For some time his life was in danger; but it does not appear that the king desired the death of the captives; and

the cruel suggestion of the successor of Bandula in the command of the army retorted on himself. Phayre's account agrees with Mrs. Judson's. The Pukhan Prince had been in disgrace, and was for some time in prison, along with the Europeans. 'He was a man of relentless cruelty. On being appointed commander-in-chief, he determined to inaugurate the assumption of his high office by putting the European prisoners to death—a horrible superstition, altogether outside and opposed to the national religion. The prisoners were sent to Aungpenglè, where this dreadful act was to be perpetrated. But the Pukhan Wungyi had many enemies. Having been twice punished by the king, it was suggested that he designed to raise himself to the throne. The dark deed he meditated seems to show a deeper design than that of success in the field. His house was searched, and it was said that royal insignia were discovered. He was trodden to death by elephants.'—Phayre, p. 251. At this period the queen, who was of low birth, had gained such entire influence over the king, that she was known as the 'sorceress,' it being seriously believed that she worked by witchcraft. Her brother, once a petty fish-monger, was then the most powerful man in the kingdom. Mrs. Judson writes: 'The king's mother, sisters, and brother, each in their turn, exerted their influence in our favour, but so great was their fear of the queen, that neither of them ventured to make a direct application to his Majesty.'

In the advertisement to Mrs. Judson's *Account of the American Baptist Mission*, dated 1827, I find the following notice of taxation and slavery:—

'Slavery is carried on, similar, in many respects, to that which prevailed under the Mosaic dispensation. When the father of a family is overwhelmed with debt he has recourse to the sale of his wife and children; and if the sum he receives for them be not sufficient, he offers himself in order to balance the account. Not unfrequently, under the despotic government of the empire, a tax is levied on an individual far beyond his ability to pay, and he is put to the torture until he has entered into an engagement to produce the sum required; the sale of his wife and children takes place for this purpose. Hence there are multitudes of slaves in the Burman Empire. But those slaves whose situation is peculiarly calculated to excite compassion, are children whose parents die involved in debt. The creditor immediately lays claim to the helpless orphans, and either retains them for his debt, whatever

may be its amount, or sells them for an equivalent sum.' Mrs. Judson proposed to apply the profits of her book to ransom some of these orphan girls. She describes the people as lively, industrious, energetic, frank, and candid, and neither pusillanimous nor revengeful. When, in another passage, she 'presumes to say' that there was not a single Burman who would not commit theft or falsehood, given a good opportunity, the statement appears too sweeping, and to require the qualifications which the great Indian statesman, Mountstuart Elphinstone, sets forth in the chapter in his *History of India*, where he treats of Hindu character. Alien missionaries, police magistrates, and tax collectors, he reminds us, do not see the most virtuous portion of a nation; and under a vicious government the lowest villager is often obliged to resist force by fraud. Such was the case in Siam, where, as Bishop Pallegoix, writing about the year 1854, tells us, the people while detesting theft, were robbed by the Mandarins of every grade. Falsehood was rare among equals; but lies were told to superiors in order to escape punishments. The Siamese, he says, are remarkably humane, affectionate to parents, kind to wives, and good to slaves, whom they treat better than servants are treated in France, and not like the negro slaves in other countries.

A perusal of Elphinstone's well-known *Report on the Deccan Territories* would enable an interesting comparison to be drawn between the Burmese administration and that of a contemporary Indian monarch, the Brahman Baji Rao, last Peshwa or King of Poona. The Maratha government seems to have been by far the more excellent, vigorous, and just of the two.

Leaving the subject of administration for that of philosophy, which has a wide influence among the peoples of the 'brooding East,' we can supplement Bishop Bigandet's statement of Burman Buddhist metaphysics in his chapter on the Seven Ways to Neibban, by some of the actual arguments used by Judson's acquaintance. Mrs. Judson calls the Buddhist system of ethics pure but powerless, 'like an alabaster image, perfect and beautiful in all its parts, but without life.' The Burmans are styled a nation of atheists; and I think that Sangermano in Chapter xiv. is rather misleading, when he uses the word 'god' in translating the Burmese term 'superior' or 'highest being' as applied to Gaudama and other Buddhas. The people with whom Judson argued about religion appear to have been startled by the concept of a supreme and eternal intelligence, as contrary to their own

dogma, which substitutes a law or principle in lieu of a personality. The logic of one convert reminded Judson of the Idealism of Berkeley and the Scepticism of Hume. Another inquirer rejected the argument that fixed fate implies a being who fixes it. But by fate they meant Karma, the influence of good and bad deeds, under which the punishment follows the crime as surely as the wheel of a cart follows the footsteps of the ox. Bigandet mentions, however, that the notion of a supreme Buddha, akin to the Adi-Buddha of the Northern school, has taken root in the philosophy of Burma; and since my note at p. 103 went to the press, Mr. Taw Sein-Ko has informed me of his own conjecture that what vague belief in a supreme intelligence is diffused in Burma may be a survival of a form of the religion brought into Upper Burma from Northern India with the Sanskrit language, many centuries ago. Some devout respect is also paid to Maitreya and other existing beings now dwelling in the heavens, who are destined to become the Buddhas and saviours of those worlds to come, which will take the place of the present universe.

The two most contrasted schools of Indian philosophy are the Sankhya and Vedanta. The first maintains the eternity of matter, and its principal branch denies the being of God. The other school derives all things from God, and one sect denies the reality of matter. Elphinstone, from whom I am quoting, says that the doctrines of the Sankhya school seem reflected in the atheism of the Buddhists. These speculations are remote from the ordinary thought of men, but are commoner in the East than those who have never lived there are aware. As instances among my own friends I may cite the late Gokalji Jhala, minister of Junagadh, and Gauriashankar Udayshankar, the distinguished Regent of Bhavnagar, both Nagar Brahmans, who found repose in the Vedanta, among weighty cares and private anxieties. Rhys Davids remarks on the difficulty which a mind impregnated with Christian ideas finds in realising the Buddhist tenet that self or soul has no existence. The true Buddhism alleges that man is never the same for two consecutive moments, and that there is within him no abiding principle whatever. The philosophy is said to mitigate the fervour of the believers; and it is easy to indorse the observation in the Census Report of 1891, that such a movement as the Crusades in Europe, or a jihad in Arabia could never be excited by Buddhist monks. No Buddhist could have written the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, or drawn the

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character of the noble Godfrey. The expression of Christian heroism and hope, found in that warrior's oration over his dead comrade Dudone in the third Canto, seems the literary antipodes of Buddhist sentiment. Likewise Godfrey's belief in the active providence of God, of whose will what men call Fate is a mere servant.

'Anzi giudice Dio, delle cui voglie
Ministra e serva è la Fortuna e'l Fato.'

—CANTO VII. 70.

APPENDIX III

SEE CHAPTER XXIV

IN spite of the absence of reasons based on theology, philosophy, and grammar, the learned reader of Sangermano's Burmese code, will, as noticed on pp. 87 and 221, readily recognise its general resemblance to Hindu law. As it is an abstract and not a translation, it is impossible to make a textual comparison with the Hindu codes and commentaries. This laborious work has, however, been done by Dr. Forchhammer for the Wagaru Dhammathat in his *Jardine Prize Essay*, pp. 44-59, where the parallel texts in the Institutes of Manu are given, as also the similar dicta in Yajnyavalkya, Katyayana, Narada, etc., which cover a considerable number of rulings of the Wagaru not found in Manu. The same has also been done for a great part of the Wonnana Dhammathat, compiled by Wanna Kyaw Din about the year 1772 A.D., in my *Notes on Buddhist Law*. But, as Forchhammer thought it important to notice, 'the deviations in the textual wording in the Sanskrit and Pali originals are far greater than the differences in the two languages require; if the latter were a translation of the former, or based upon a corresponding Sanskrit version, a considerably closer approach in the wording of the texts would have been the unavoidable result.' Again, 'A marked difference, however, distinguishes the Dhammathat of the Talaing king from the Hindu Sastras; the total absence, namely, of all that appertains to the Vedic and Neo-Brahmanic cultus. The Wagaru mentions neither Brahma, nor the Vedas, nor the sacerdotal class, and its innumerable rights and privileges, nor the sacrificial fire, or any other point bespeaking the influence of Brahmans and the religious and civil institutions peculiar to Brahmanic India.' One result in Burma is that marriage is not a sacrament, but an institution based on legal contract. Heirship, again, is not dependent on the offering of the funeral cake, as in India. In the Wagaru the direct religious element is almost absent; but, as Forchhammer explains at length, its peculiar nature is nevertheless the result of a religious tenet; and that tenet is the Buddhist Karma,

or the efficacy of good and bad works, a doctrine inseparably bound up with that of transmigration or renewed existence. According to Professor James Gray, a similar treatment has been applied in Burma to the ethical maxims of the Sanskrit Manu found in the literature called *Niti*, or proverbial philosophy, to bring them into accord with Buddhist tenets.

The Menu Kyay collection of laws, compiled about 1756 A.D. by order of the Emperor Alompra, introduces religious reasons freely, including long quotations from the sacred literature of the Buddhists, of which some specimens are given in the *Notes on Buddhist Law*. The jurist went to the *Suttapitakam* for the discourse of Yasodhara, the wife of Gaudama, before he became a Buddha, on the seven kinds of wives, those who are respectively like an executioner, a thief, a ruler, a mother, a sister, a faithful friend, and a slave. In another passage, the principle of government, that 'all men whatever, even of the most degraded class, are worthy to be raised to rank and station if the habits are good,' is enforced by the story of Gaudama's success in wooing and winning a lady of high degree, although in that former existence the embryo Buddha was veiled in the family scavenger. It is not easy to avoid suspecting that the Buddhist jurist, like his Brahman predecessors in India, found a number of common secular customs, and supplied religious reasons for them. In my preface to the *Customary Law of the Chin Tribe*, I have drawn attention to the resemblance of the rules of Burmese law to those of the *Thesawalamé*, which is a compilation, made by the Dutch Government of Ceylon in 1707, of the law of the Tamil Hindus of Jaffna, and which that great authority, Mr. J. D. Mayne, thinks may be taken as a fair statement of the Hindu law of Southern India before the English Courts with their Brahman assessors began to apply the rules of the Sanskrit books. I must add that the religion of the Jains of India is, like Buddhism, opposed to Brahmanism. Yet they are governed by the ordinary Hindu law. Hitherto, I have found no trace of a specially Jainist law-book.

The greater portion of the Burmese law is now abrogated. British Indian statutes of general incidence make up the law of crimes, procedure, evidence, contract, and relief in equity. Tort and damages are dealt with on English principles. Adultery is a penal offence, and slavery is abolished. Privileges and sumptuary laws are done away with. But our Courts are required by statute to administer to the Buddhists their own laws about marriage,

inheritance, and adoption: and the Dhammathats regulate these important matters, with the general assent of the people, given because of the conformity of the rules to Buddhist ethics. Thus women are placed in a favourable legal position, property is divided almost equally among the children, and husband and wife both retain rights over the property gained by their joint labour or capital. The contract of marriage now generally follows the consent of the parties themselves, and not that of the parents, as in older times, and among the Hindus still. The English rulers have found almost nothing to repeal in these provisions of the law: and the tendency of the native judges is to reverence the Dhammathat, as was shown in their objections to a proposed statute of distributions as unnecessary. One judge called the Dhammathat the Great Will. Another wrote—'It is very just, very subtle, very good, and very clear. All disputes on such matters can be settled by it. It is a second sun to the earth. Where then is there a Buddhist who can renounce the Dhammathat?'

The apparent likeness to the Hindu law is thus varied by means of Buddhist opinions, and also by the existence of Burmese and other customs, which are incorporated in these codes. It is, for example, a common practice for a young married pair to dwell with the bride's father (see pp. 228, 257, 258, etc.); the youthful wife is thus ensured more consideration and protection than in India and China. At p. 255, sections 18 and 19, we find recognition of damage caused by an unfriendly spirit, and a sanction given to private war and revenge. These sentiments belong to a lower stage of civilisation, like that of the Kachin and Hpun tribes, as appears from the highly interesting reports on them from the pen of Mr. George, Deputy Commissioner of Bhamo, appended to the Census Report of 1891. He states that among the Kachins the law of reprisal is the only one to which ultimate appeal is made, and that slavery is prevalent. Mr. George quotes informants who say that among the Kalangs, Kanons, or Kamans, and the Lings or Liangs, the old men and women are got rid of by being killed, cooked, and eaten. For a middle stage of civilisation, the *Customary Law of the Chin Tribe* may be consulted. No attempt has yet been made to collect the tribal laws of the Karens and the Shans. Much information about the wilder tribes is to be found in Mr. A. B. Colquhoun's work, entitled *Amongst the Shans*, to which M. de Lacouperie has written an introduction.

It remains to add that, according to Dr. Rost, the law of

Siam is based on the Dhammathat. The alleged Indian origin of the Code is mentioned by our envoy, Mr. John Crawford, in his *Embassy to Siam in 1821*, as also by Bishop Pallegoix. Many practices are common to India, Burma, and Siam, as appears by comparing the similar works of the Abbé Dubois, Pallegoix, and Sangermano. The kings of Siam, like those of Burma, often promulgated new codes, by which system the Siamese Manu is said to have been reformed and amplified. Java and the neighbouring island of Bali were for centuries the seats of Hindu colonies and governments, which were originally Buddhist, but in the course of centuries became subject to the religion of the Brahmans, and at a later period to that of the Mohammedans.

APPENDIX IV

SEE CHAPTERS XIV, XVII, AND XIX

DR. RHYS DAVIDS, in his work on *Buddhism*, writes—'It is probable that the idea of transmigration first originated in that curious trick of the memory, by which we sometimes feel so sure that sensations we are experiencing have been experienced by us before, and yet we know not how or when. Several interesting instances of this are given by scientific psychologists. See the cases quoted by Dr. Carpenter, *Mental Physiology*, p. 430, *et seq.*, and Sir B. Brodie, *Psychological Inquiries*, Second Series, p. 55.' The mystery of *Karma*, on which the Buddhist dogma of transmigration is based, has, he thinks, the same foundation of truth which lies at the bottom of the widely prevalent belief in fate and predestination. The ancient Egyptians believed in transmigration: and the Greeks, according to Herodotus, derived the doctrine from them. The poet Ennius introduced it among the Romans. See Dr. Paley's article on 'Metempsychosis' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Grote's *Plato*. There are traces of it in the *Apocrypha*; and it was held among the Gnostics. Origen adopted the belief as the only means of explaining some scriptural difficulties, such as the struggle of Jacob and Esau before birth, and the selection of Jeremiah (Jer. i. 5). Lessing taught it, and it forms part of Swedenborg's system. Montaigne in his essay on 'Raymond Sebond' calls it 'the most universal and received phantasy, and which endureth to this day,' and goes on to quote Pythagoras, Plato, and the rest of the ancient believers.

While there is abundant literature about the *doctrine of transmigration* in its various forms, I can find no notice of the *effect* on character and conduct of this great tenet of the Brahmans, the Jains, and the Buddhists. This is one reason for my inserting here the following estimate of its influence on the people of Burma, given me by an officer, who, from long service in that country, has had many opportunities of studying their character:

'The belief, most truly held by the Burman Buddhists, that the

present earthly life is but one of many that have passed, and of many that are to come, in which the individual has had and will have a place and a share, has a distinct influence on the personal and national character. It enters into every thought of their past, present, and future condition ; and produces in them a frame of mind affecting their whole life which it is difficult for those outside the faith to understand. The fact that, to them, the existing life is only a small portion of their experience of the earthly world, so enters into their estimate of life and character, that they may be said to find in it the most powerful factor in their acts as well as their thoughts.

‘That their past must influence the present is to them a living truth, and the wide results that flow from this cannot be easily described or realised. The first thought of a mother, with her new-born child, is turned to the unknown past whence it has brought into this world a legacy of merits or demerits. She is certain that the course of its life depends on the deeds of former days, and she anxiously watches for symptoms that may indicate whether these have been good or evil. If the child develops a bad disposition, she will conclude that its demerits are great : if a good disposition, she rejoices that its merits preponderate ; for she knows that all she may do for her offspring will profit little against the results of its previous existences.

‘But the acceptance of this truth does not lead to apathy or despair : on the contrary, there are no people who more thoroughly indulge in the constant expectation of some sudden reward accruing to them from the accumulated merit with which they may be endowed. The prospect of this happy turn which will bring with it an improved worldly position, or, better still, a step towards the great deliverance, is far more potent than any feeling of depression on the prospect of suffering in this life the burden of demerit. As between the two alternatives, the Burman Buddhist looks rather to the better issue.

‘The merit which follows a good deed will certainly bear fruit. Hence a hidden hope always rests in the mind of the amelioration of present trouble. The hope of a better life is never absent from the thought of a Burman Buddhist.

‘The knowledge that the vicious acts, or the misfortunes of individuals in their present condition, are not solely due to the existing faults of character, but rather that these faults are the results of former misconduct, leads to a lenient view of a fellow-creature’s

apparent wickedness, and from this comes the marked tolerance displayed by the Buddhist.

'One result of the belief in successive births is the consequent feeling of the comparatively unimportant nature of the present existence. It is natural, to those who look on the narrow span allotted to man as his one and only existence on earth, to attach a supreme importance to the conduct of this life. But this is a condition of mind very little experienced by the Burman Buddhist. He therefore takes life more easily, and exhibits a light-heartedness which is the special characteristic of the race.

'In addition to the blessings of a tolerant mind and light heart, the Burman Buddhist possesses the further virtue of being open-handed. By the ethical teaching of his faith he is impelled to generosity and consideration for others, and he is also influenced by the assurance that the exercise of these virtues will bring its reward. From this springs the current admonition, "Before you are old, before you are sick, before you die, perform good deeds, and so lay up merit." The Parables of Buddha-ghosa (which are supposed to have been uttered by Gotama, the founder of the Buddhist religion) show how deeply interwoven into the ordinary events of life are the results of former good or evil deeds, and prove how powerfully the Buddhist mind must be influenced, even in small matters, by the belief in successive existences on this earth, and by the relation which these bear to one another.

'From this belief can be traced the salient points in the Burman Buddhist's character and impulses, as seen now among the people. There may still be found the light heart and the open hand, the generous view of others' faults—the tolerance towards all creeds, and the hopeful spirit which spreads a cheerfulness over their whole life.'

Another reason for presenting this unique inspection of one of the great factors of character is connected with the view taken by some writers that the religion is without life and power, or at most only a 'thin veneer' spread over the real basis of older superstitions; a view that seems wholly at variance with the above. (See p. xiv.) Sir James Mackintosh, the historian of Ethical Philosophy (in his Note on Jonathan Edwards) lays great stress on the religious opinions of Augustine and Calvin about predestination as a powerful influence in the moral education of the Scots, the Dutch, and the people of New England. The two influences of dogmatic religion and empiric superstition exist together in

Burma as elsewhere, but are easily distinguished. Bishop Pallegoix, in his *Description of Siam*, mentions the Brahman fortune-tellers, and the occult practices of Indian, Chinese, and native origin; but observes also, that the *superstitions* one sees among the Siamese form no part of their *religion*, since Buddha has forbidden his followers to consult soothsayers, or put faith in omens, or, generally, to give themselves to any superstitious practice. Sangermano, while himself entirely free from any belief in such things, as shown by his remarks on witchcraft (pp. 149, 172) never suggests that the more credulous Burmans are not Buddhists. In *Hudibras*, as also in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, the reader will find an immense store of learning, displaying the prevalence of the same superstitions in Europe. Samuel Butler treats them with his usual burlesque humour in the second part of *Hudibras*, where the knight and the squire discuss whether a saint may resort to a sorcerer. In his Partition on 'Cures' Burton raises the questions, whether it is lawful to ask a wizard's advice, or to pray to saints—like St. Vitus or St. Valentine—in cases of sickness; and while pronouncing against both such means of remedy, refrains from shutting the believers in such practices out of the pale of Christianity. Nor does that learned canonist and upright judge, Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, go that length in his curious minutes in the divorce case of the Earl and Countess of Essex in 1618, found in the State Trials: he seems, indeed, to be in advance of his time, as he speaks of sorcery to thwart the chief end of marriage as a rag of Popery, and doubts whether, in England at any rate, the black art can create an impediment, now that we have the light of the Gospel, meaning the Protestant religion. The common law judges, however, went on treating witchcraft seriously, until Lord Holt left it as a matter of fact to the jury in a famous case where a woman had been ill-treated as a witch. Serious cases of such maltreatment are not uncommon in the Indian tribunals; and I lately adjudged one of homicide, in which a sick woman was killed by men whose aid she had implored to cast a devil out of her. They pretended to become enthusiast or possessed by good spirits for the occasion of the cure. Mysticism and magic have still a hold over the nations of the East, with regard to whom Whewell remarks, that we have no evidence, as with regard to Europeans we have, that they are capable on subjects of physical speculation of originating sound and rational general principles.

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Another proof of the close and general influence of Buddhism in Burma is found in the constant reading and teaching of the Niti literature, the system of prudence and morality found in proverbs and aphorisms. Professor James Gray, the translator of these works, tells us of the charm they have for the Buddhists, as guides to good conduct in this life, and thus helps to a better life beyond. The Buddhist, he says, firmly believes that his future happiness depends upon his behaviour in his present life, and relies more on practical deeds rather than on the faith which his religion demands. In Chap. xx. Sangermano gives some quotations from these aids to virtue. The Lokaniti is still taught in almost every monastic school in Burma.

Buddhaghosa's Parables, translated from Burmese by Captain T. Rogers, R.E., have been published with an Introduction by Professor Max Müller. Many of the stories relate to Gaudama's former existences. It is in this Buddhist literature, the Jatakas especially (see p. 180), that many of the nursery songs and the fairy tales, the comic stories and the fables, which are now the common property of Europe, are found in their oldest form. The Buddhist dogma disappears under Western influence. See Max Müller on the Migration of Fables, iv. *Chips from a German Workshop*, p. 175. The same essay relates how the transmigration of Gaudama Buddha himself into the Saint Josaphat of both the Greek and Latin Churches came about, an interesting story not generally known to the Buddhists of Burma now, nor to European scholars before 1859, when the *Lalita Vistara* was pointed out as the source of the *History of Barlaam and Josaphat*, the narrative of a hermit and an Indian king, written by Johannes Damascenus early in the eighth century. Thomas Warton had long before drawn attention to this work as containing the originals of many stories found in the *Gesta Romanorum*, in Boccaccio and Gower, in Caxton's *Golden Legende*, and elsewhere. Says Warton: 'As Barlaam's fable is probably the remote but original source of Shakespeare's "Caskets" in the *Merchant of Venice*, I will give the readers a translation of the passage in which it occurs, from the Greek original, never yet printed.' See Price's edition of 1840 of Warton's *History of English Poetry*.

APPENDIX V

WHEN I wrote the Introduction to this Edition, the long and valuable essays by Francis Buchanan, M.D., on the religion and literature of the Burmans, and by John Leyden, M.D., on the languages and literature of the Indo-Chinese nations, printed in the *Asiatic Researches*, vols. vi. and x., had not come under my notice. They are not mentioned by Cardinal Wiseman or his colleagues. Dr. Buchanan had accompanied our envoy, Major Symes, to Burma, where Sangermano gave Symes three treatises, composed by him in Latin, on Burmese Cosmography, the Religion of Gaudama, and the Ordination of Buddhist Monks. In Buchanan's essay, English translations are given, which contain substantially the information given in the present work. The dialogue found in Chapter xiv. is said to have been written by the king's confessor; and Leyden says the object of it was the conversion of the English, Dutch, Armenians, and others to Buddhism. Among many other interesting matters, Buchanan supplies a comparative vocabulary of languages, and an account of astronomy, with a fine engraving of the sixty-eight constellations.

Buchanan, at p. 304, makes the following statement about the law literature of Burma :—

‘On law, the Burmans have many treatises, both containing the laws of Manu and copious commentaries upon these. Whether they still have any copies of the law as originally imported from Ceylon, I know not; but I was told that the *Damathat-gye*, or Code in common use, has suffered several alterations and additions made by the decrees of various princes.’ Compare Sangermano, p. 223, Notes, pp. 87 and 221, and Appendix III. Leyden, whose essay was printed in the *Asiatic Researches*, vol. x., in 1811, the year that he died, had read Buchanan's article, and a number of works written by old Catholic missionaries in Burma. He mentions the Code of Law, and Sangermano's Compendium, but does not discuss its origin.

Probably when a practice became general, and had been recognised as a custom, it became incorporated in the next edition of

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the Code. One of the rules in Section 8, on p. 228, is better understood after reading Buchanan's account of the physicians. One curious custom, he says, may be mentioned: 'If a young woman be dangerously ill, the doctor and her parents frequently enter into an agreement, the doctor undertaking to cure her. If she lives, the doctor takes her as his property; but if she dies, he pays her value to the parents; for in the Burma dominions no parent parts with his daughter, whether to be a wife, or to be a concubine, without a valuable consideration. I do not know whether the doctor is entitled to sell the girl again, or if he must retain her in his family; but the number of fine young women which I saw in the house of a doctor at Myeda makes me think the practice to be very common.'

John Leyden, better known to Scotsmen as the poet of Teviotdale and the friend of Sir Walter Scott, sailed in 1802 for Madras, as an assistant-surgeon. His health giving way, he went to Penang, where he studied the Indo-Chinese languages. He was afterwards a professor, and then a judge at Calcutta. In 1811 he accompanied the Governor-General to Java, and died from a fever caught in the bad air of a warehouse of books at Batavia, which he had rushed to examine. Sir John Malcolm and Sir Walter Scott both honoured Leyden's memory with notices of his genius.

'Quenched is his lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour:
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains.'

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